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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT FOR THE INQUIRY

1. Introduction

I became a social worker because of my strong feelings about injustice. I was motivated to undertake this inquiry because I was frustrated, with being in a profession that espouses the value of social justice and is vague about how to put this principle into action. It appeared that the importance of social justice was not given the attention required to facilitate it. Thinking about the injustice in the world and the justifications for making and maintaining change toward social justice provoked me to question social work's role in light of the mandate of the profession to work for social justice. Therefore, I intend to start with an examination of Canadian social work in relation to social justice.

This inquiry seeks to open the discussion on social justice as a critical value of social work. The journey begins by questioning the assumptions behind the social work profession's statement on social justice, especially the Canadian social work code of ethics' (2005) statement on social justice. This is followed by an attempt to describe social justice and then follow a path to explore the consequences of efforts away from and towards social justice. This road is taken to achieve a better understanding of how social work can better facilitate social justice. The exploration is broad due to the complexity of the subject of inquiry.

Activists were interviewed for the inquiry primarily for two reasons. First of all they are the people on the front lines, working for social justice. Secondly, because activists are not necessarily social workers, their perspectives are shaped by experiences outside of social work. This holds potential to broaden social work's perspective. Literature is also used in the inquiry for the same reason and to validate perspectives found in the interviews. In the inquiry I am looking for ways to facilitate social justice.

The inquiry is built on the foundation of anti-oppressive social work practice. I use critical theory and constructionism to provide a process of inquiry that is congruent with the underlying paradigm of the inquiry.

1.1. Problem Description

In Canada social workers have worked to bring about reform to the existing system. The most activist social workers generally work hard to bring about changes to social policies and defend human rights. Although these are worthwhile actions they do not appear to be adequate to the task of facilitating social justice. It appears that actions taken by professional social work organizations focus on appeals to government bodies for change. Despite a turn to structural and anti-oppressive social work, social workers tend to overlook how the parts of structures fit together. Social workers also face many practical constraints, especially in their everyday work life, to bring about change.

It is argued that, on the one hand, society requires the amelioration, reform and control functions that social workers provide for the protection of the vulnerable and the reduction of suffering. Transition policies are required and ethically valid to relieve suffering and lessen the effects of social injustice (Gil, 1998: 90). If done in conjunction with working for structural change, radical reform in the area of policy can be a testing ground for positive future change and a path to a just future. On the other hand, as Zinn (1974) points out, past reforms have done little to change the everyday repression and living conditions of ordinary people. Therefore, it can also be argued that, mere reform does not address social work's social justice mandate (Gil, 1998, Mullaly, 2007). Social workers are constrained from facilitating social justice by the everyday practice of social work and by the structural constraints put on social workers, which come with being embedded in larger structures of inequality (Carniol, 2005).

It is in the everyday work world that social workers often work to ameliorate suffering, control clients' actions and seek the adaptation of clients (Gil, 1998). The values of social work agencies can conflict with social worker's personal values. Social workers may face conflict in their everyday work situations when they are forced to adapt to repressive conditions. Because social work is not politically neutral, social workers inevitably suffer from the contradiction between where they are situated in their everyday work worlds and the ethic of social justice (Ferguson, 2008, Gil, 1998, Piven, Cloward & Richard, 1993, Reisch & Andrews 2002, Mullaly 2007). The implementation of programs and policies offered by social services often see social workers cooperating to serve the needs of the capitalist system and thus the dominant class (Gil 1998: 67, Piven, Cloward

& Richard 1993: 417). In the everyday work world of even the most progressive social worker, little is done to address the systemic causes of oppression because so much time is taken up by everyday things like dealing with clients in crises and paperwork. Often social workers are forced to take a neutral stand of 'do no harm' instead of pursuing social justice, as there is often no time to devote to addressing complex systemic issues (Carniol, 2005).

More often than not, front line social workers have little control over the administration and organization of the services they provide. "The top-down flow of power becomes, among other things, a channel for punitive actions against social service providers, leading to a profound sense of alienation" (Carniol, 2005: 95). Front line workers and service users usually are not consulted about the writing of policies that affect the delivery of service. Policies trickle down from the government to multiple levels of bureaucracy that includes the managers and supervisors that directly regulate front line social workers. In one way social workers are held accountable for their service by being governed and having policies in place that give them boundaries in which to practice. In another way social workers often are forced to work under the mandate of governments that do more to serve corporations than people (Carniol, 2005). This also assumes that the function of governing has to be coming from the top. The profession of social work is embedded in top-down systems.

The profession of social work has sided with an unjust system on the one hand, and helped to lessen the suffering and oppression of individuals on the other. However, injustice at the individual level reflects broader cultural and institutional injustice (Zinn, 1974: 353). Like a canary in a coal mine, injustice at the individual level signals injustice at the structural level. Social workers in Canada, however, tend to principally work at the individual level of amelioration, adaptation and control rather than working to change the root cause(s) of injustice. There is a discrepancy between the value of facilitating social justice and the control and adaptation functions of social work. "This resulted, inevitably, in contradictions between the realities of practice, on the one hand , and the social justice mandates of the Code of Ethics of Social Work, and the social policy advocacy by leaders of the profession, on the other" (Gil 1998: 82). Unless social work addresses the root

cause of oppression and works for the actual transformation of society it can not claim that it is facilitating social justice.

In North American social work reflects the top-down hierarchical stratification of the state. In Canada social services are largely funded by the state with a push to move services to the private sector (Dominelli, 2010). However, state funded and community based organizations are typically embedded in complex stratified structures (Ferguson, 2008). Obvious differences between the two are the number of levels of stratification and size of the organization. "Agency hierarchies may reward certain competencies, but their patterns of promotion and salaries indicate that another priority is also being served: that the management of social work is governed by the large, structural relationships of society as a whole" (Carniol, 2005: 97).

Typically the work done by social workers takes place within the context of unequal power (Strier, 2006). "Social work is a profession highly conditioned by institutional inequalities. The encounters between the client and the worker, the worker and the agency, and the agency and the state are all shaped within the context of unequal power relations" (Strier, 2006: 2). Strier (2006) argues for social work to use an anti-oppressive stance in social work research to avoid reproducing inequality. Social work not only needs to avoid reproducing inequality but needs to work toward changing those institutional arrangements that caused the inequality in the first place.

The social work paradigm rarely questions the structure or system that neo-liberalism is imbedded in because social work is coupled to the state. Social work falls in line with the liberal world view that sees neo-liberalism as 'the' problem rarely questioning the structures that support the inequality that gave rise to this system in the first place (Gil, 1998). Advocating for the shuffling of wealth from one rich person's pocket to another's, as in typical liberal theories of retributive justice does nothing to facilitate social justice. The profession of social work would do well to reflect on the domination both from within social work and in the larger society and how these dominations intersect (Carniol, 2005). Reflection on how the delivery of services is affected by the process of governance must be questioned in light of ethic of social justice (Ferguson, Lavalette & Whitmore 2005). Here in Canada where social workers are

primarily government workers, tied to top-down institutions with their inherent unequal power relations, getting beyond our own hegemony is difficult (Carniol, 2005).

So it follows that where oppression is evident, and it is evident all over, social justice is not. In North America, due to the need to address crises situations, and the North American individualist perspective, social workers are often forced to focus on the individual level. Sometimes it is argued that as social workers we are put in a position where we do nothing more than damage control. Gil argues that to overcome oppression the basic underlying causes need to be examined.

> "Furthermore, since the coercive initiation, perpetuation, and intensification of systemic inequalities within and among societies has given rise in people's consciousness to values and ideologies stressing inequality, individualism, selfishness, domination, competition, and disregard for community (from local to global levels), social transformation seems to require shifts in consciousness toward alternative values and ideologies affirming equality, individuality, liberty, cooperation, community and global solidarity" (1998: 35).

The ideological hegemony that penetrates popular culture appears to be aimed at more of the same; more tweaking the system without sustainable change. The complexity of problems social workers face in the twenty-first century has increased (Dominelli, 2010, Ferguson, 2008, Fook, 2002). In North America little attention is given by the social work profession to the links between social welfare, health, the environment, governing structures and so on (Gil, 1998). It seems as if today, more than ever the world is in need of change. For example, many authors note that not only have social problems deepened, but environmental destruction has intensified to the point where our very survival is in jeopardy (Chomsky, 2003, Churchill, 2003, Jensen, 2000, Kovel, 2007, Shiva, 2005). So far there doesn't appear to be consensus about how to change this and the profession of social work in Canada is only beginning to develop an analysis about environmental issues (Zapt, 2009).

1.1.1. Perspectives of Social Work and Social Justice

Finding a comprehensive description of social justice in social work literature is a difficult task. Much of the social work literature that deals with social justice generally takes social justice as a given. Social justice is generally not defined (Mullaly, 2002: 32)

and mostly assumed to be congruent with what is inferred by codes of ethics. When a concept like social justice is presented as given, opportunities to question become hidden and tend to be overlooked.

The meaning of social justice is commonly talked about in indirect ways that imply fairness in the way services and economy is distributed (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2005, Pearson, 1993: xi). It is common to examine social justice in terms of principles and values that may or may not address oppression (Novak, 2000) but sometimes social justice is described as more of a dis-value. In other words, it is defined in terms of what it is not (Gil, 1998, Gordon, 2005). For example, social justice is not oppression, exploitation, domination, or inequality. The following three definitions of social justice are taken from social work literature to illustrate its diverse meanings:

What is fair and rightly due; "the thrust for justice implies that a right to equitable treatment exists and that without it society will be adversely affected" (Pearson, 1993: xi).

Social justice: "the elimination of institutionalized domination and oppression" (Young, 1990: 15 in Mullaly, 2002: 32).

"Justice is the absence of exploitation-enforcing domination; it implies liberty, while domination-induced injustice involves unequal, discriminatory constraints on liberty" (Gil, 1998: 10).

We can also examine concepts of justice in terms of the consequences; "differentiating appraisal" (Gergen, 1999: 41). Definitions of social justice could be considered for the consequences or outcomes of facilitating its fulfillment or realization. For example, some concepts of social justice may leave social structures that are the root cause of injustice untouched. Thus social justice is often a controversial concept and this is particularly more poignant where social work is concerned.

Harkening back to Hayek, Novak (2000: 1) makes the point that, "the trouble with 'social justice' begins with the very meaning of the term." Invoking social justice often leads to ideological intimidation. Justice is social by definition because it can only be found in individual services to humanity. In this view justice is aimed at the good of the whole and is a "work of virtue" (Novak, 2000: 2).

<u>1.1.2. Canadian Social Work Code of Ethics and Social Work's Commitment to Social Justice</u>

The Social Work profession recognizes the need to advance social justice. Indeed, the aim is clearly stated by international and national professional bodies. The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the Canadian Association of Social Workers affirm that social justice is a value the profession has a responsibility to promote (IASSW: 2008). The International Federation of Social Workers states the following global definition of social work:

> The social work profession facilitates social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing (IFSW, 2013).

Further the IFSW states that, "the overarching principles of social work are respect for the inherent worth and dignity of human beings, doing no harm, respect for diversity and upholding human rights and social justice" (IFSW, 2013). Human rights are a foundation stone of social work principles.

The Canadian Code of Ethics Value 2 States:

"Value 2: Pursuit of Social Justice
Social workers believe in the obligation of people, individually and collectively, to provide resources, services and opportunities for the overall benefit of humanity and to afford them protection from harm.
Social workers promote social fairness and the equitable distribution of resources, and act to reduce barriers and expand choice for all persons, with special regard for those who are marginalized, disadvantaged, vulnerable, and/or have exceptional needs. Social workers oppose prejudice and discrimination against any person or group of persons, on any grounds, and specifically challenge views and actions that stereotype particular persons or groups.
Principles:
• Social workers uphold the right of people to have access to resources to meet basic human needs.
• Social workers advocate for fair and equitable access to public services and benefits.
• Social workers advocate for equal treatment and protection under the law and challenge injustices, especially injustices that affect the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

• Social workers promote social development and environmental management in the interests of all people" (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2005, on-line).

Another way to look at codes of ethics, is to see them as a guide for the here and now for social workers to follow (Lundy, 2004). This may be seen as a set of specific directions for action to guide the conduct for social workers in practice. Social justice can further express an ideal. As an ideal social justice could be expressed as a condition of society, where, for example, social justice is referred to as a state of egalitarianism or to each according to their need. In other words, as an ideal, social justice can be seen as a model of justice that social workers facilitate. The *Canadian Code of Ethics* (2005), however, does not provide an ideal or model for social workers to pursue. While the Canadian code calls for fairness, it apparently fails to challenge the status quo. In particular, the code speaks to meeting basic needs and providing equal and fair treatment under law but fails to challenge and address existing structural inequality.

According to Oko, "ethical practice can therefore be described as the 'putting into action' of the values or principles that are attributed to professional social work" (2008: 41). The words that serve this purpose in the Canadian code are 'promote', 'act', "challenge', 'uphold', and 'advocate.' Correspondingly, the American code's action words are pursue, promote, and strive for.

Codes of ethics are standards that present values of practice (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2005, www.casw-acts.ca). Social justice is a fundamental value of social work practice (Gil, 1998, Lundy, 2004, Mullaly, 2007, Reisch & Andrews, 2002, Schriver, 2004). However, different codes express certain values in different ways that reveal their diverse underlying assumptions. For example, the American code directs social workers to **pursue** social change. When compared to the Canadian code, it is evident that the language in the American code is stronger, especially in light of the ethical principle and the value of working 'with' vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people as stated below. The Canadian Code only mentions 'all persons' in this regard, whereas the American code speaks about individuals and groups.

> "Value: Social Justice
> Ethical Principle: Social workers challenge social injustice.
> Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of
> vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social

workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people" (National Association Of Social Workers, Code Of Ethics, 1996 in Lundy, 2004: 228).

In the *Canadian Code of Ethics (2005)* social justice is described as a concept of fairness within the context of existing structures. The American code on the other hand talks about "equality of opportunity" and "meaningful participation in decision making for all people." In the Canadian code concepts such as 'fairness' and 'meaningful' are left open for interpretation. In examining the Canadian code one could ask: if social structures are not just and if domination prevails in these structures how can justice in a democratic sense exist? If barriers exist because some have privileges that others do not have, how is this justice?

To have "social fairness and the equitable distribution of resources" defined as justice in the codes of ethics implies that not only have differences of opinion been ignored but also that the Canadian profession of social work condones inequality. True liberty and social justice can not take place when some have more than they can ever possibly require while others cannot even meet their basic survival needs. Moreover this situation signals that systemic oppression is operating.

The concept of redistributive justice under the existing system, as defined in the *Canadian Code of Ethics* (2005), appears inadequate for the task of bringing about social justice. A careful examination of the Canadian code with regard to social justice shows that it misses the mark. The Canadian model leaves out the context of institutions that govern the distribution (Mullaly, 2007: 256). First, social justice is not linked to anti-oppression or to erasing domination. Oppression cannot exist in the same space as social justice. It also begs the question of who defines justice and who has a voice. Under redistributive concepts of justice, in societies where there is a large gap between rich and poor, where some have trouble meeting their basic needs while others have far more than they need, the gap only signals inequality not justice. Individualistic models of distributive justice, such as this, are limited. When, for example, some individuals are

given rights, oppressed groups remain disadvantaged because of their marginalization as a group (Mullaly, 2007). People are therefore seen as comparatively related to one and other by the amount of goods they have.

A just distribution of recourses would have to be a substantively equal distribution of not only resources, but burdens as well. In a just society no one would be hungry and homeless while some others have an excess of all resources. Furthermore, according to Mullaly (2002), social justice goes beyond distribution and includes the ability to participate in society with the means to develop capacity and communication, free from oppression (Mullaly, 2002). Similarly, the American code, although addressing 'equality of opportunity' does not mention equality between people.

To pursue social justice social workers need to do more than merely working to 'reduce' barriers for the marginalized, the disadvantaged, and the vulnerable. They need to work to 'eliminate' barriers so no one is disadvantaged or marginalized. This necessitates contributing to the transformation of oppressive social relations (Dominelli, 2002). Mullaly states that this requires the inclusion of context, rights, and opportunities in the formulation of the Canadian code of ethics (2007: 257). Equal access, not only to material resources but also to social and institutional participation, contrasts sharply with barriers caused by oppression and domination. The American code goes further than the Canadian code by incorporating the promotion of "sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity" (National Association Of Social Workers Code Of Ethics, 1996 in Lundy, 2004: 228).

A further observation about the differences between the American and Canadian codes of ethics is that the American code uses the word 'with' when it makes the statement about pursuing social change. The Canadian code has no reference to working 'with' people just as it does not mention social change. The IFSW states that, "As far as possible social work supports working with rather than for people" (2013). The *Canadian Code of Ethics* admonishes social workers to "advocate **for**" (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2005, on-line at www.casw-acts.ca). Using the word 'for' indicates that it is the social worker who largely defines and assumes responsibility for social justice.

Unlike the American code of ethics, the Canadian code also does not advocate for social change. Mullaly (2007) makes the following observation about the limited view of social justice in the current 2005 Canadian code:

> "Although the new Code identifies the pursuit of social justice as a value, it presents a limited and limiting view of social justice. That is, social justice is defined only in terms of distributing society's resources (i.e., distributive or redistributed justice), which excludes doing anything about the social institutions, policies, processes, and practices responsible for the inequitable distribution in the first place. A (re)distribution view of social justice simply compensates victims of social injustice and does nothing to change a society characterized by inequality along lines of race, class, gender, age, sexuality, and so on" (2007: 52).

Two values of anti-oppressive social work are missing from the *Canadian Code of Ethics* (2005). Firstly, to "encourage, support, and center the knowledges and perspective of those who have been marginalized and incorporate these perspectives into policy and practice" and secondly, to "have a vision of an egalitarian future" (Campbell, 2003: 1). When we advocate 'for' people, nothing is put on us to participate 'with' others and incorporate their ideas and perspectives. The Canadian code of ethics is also missing a vision of what social justice could look like in the future. In the Canadian code of ethics (2005) there is nothing to work towards. So it follows that, under the current code of ethics social work practice will remain a constant performance of amelioration, reform and control.

1.2. Some Injustices that Shape the World

Everyone knows something about injustice and suffering. As long as there has been a gap between the entitlements of some to others, there has been injustice (Gil, 1998, Isbister, 2001, Mills, 1997, Mullaly, 2002). When domination persists, oppression, exploitation and suffering is not far away (Gil, 1998, Isbister, 2001, Mills, 1997, Mullaly, 2002, Smith, 1999, Razack, 2002). Injustice is not unique to capitalism or neo-liberalism. The roots of domination are based on unjust, hierarchical structures, where some are above others, and the subjugation of some people such as in classism, racism, patriarchy and all other forms of oppression works to uphold the system (Gordon, 2005).

We live in perilous times. Issues of militarization (Sanders, 2009), the debt crises (Akram-Lodhi, Chernomas & Sepehri, 2005, Bond 2008a, Hanieh, 2008, Korten, 1995, Kovel, 2007, colonialism (Mills, 1997, Smith, 1999), corporate globalization (Kovel, 2007), neo-liberalism (Ferguson, Lavalette & Whitmore, 2005), and the lack of political will toward ecological sustainability, backed by racism, sexism, classism, homophobia and so on, paint a desolate picture of the future.

One cannot write about injustice without mentioning situations changing and injustices morphing into new shapes. Today the growth of the economy is seen as the number one priority. The economic crisis the world is in today has brought neo-liberalism to a crescendo (Akram-Lodhi, Chernomas & Sepehri, 2005, Bond 2008, Ferguson, Lavalette & Whitmore 2005, Hanieh 2008, Korten, 1995, Kovel, 2007). According to Wallerstein (1999), the historical capitalist system is disintegrating. We are in a period of world-wide struggle that demands that we make intentional choices about how we want the future to look. While Wall Street bails out the banks, programs for average people are cut. The story of neo-liberalism appears to have reached a climax (Hanieh, 2008).

Violence can be seen in many dehumanizing disguises. "Any situation in which some individuals prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence. The means used are not important; to alienate human beings from their own decision-making is to change them into objects" (Freire, 1970: 85). This powerful statement from Freire encapsulates the range of violence so prevalent in the world and calls on social workers to review their practice and their perspectives on social justice. Whether we use the words oppression or domination, all injustice is a form of violence.

> "Power itself must be abolished – and not solely in the refusal to be dominated, which is at the heart of all traditional struggles – but also, just as violently, in the refusal to dominate (if the refusal to dominate had the same violence and the same energy as the refusal to be dominated, the dream of revolution would have disappeared long ago). Intelligence consists of this double refusal" (Baudrillard, 2010: 47-48).

The human condition is rife with injustice on personal, cultural and structural levels (Mullaly, 2002), leaving people feeling powerless.

> "From scarring gender-based violence and haunting instances of child abuse in families across the globe, to communities torn apart, inter-group conflict and the blood-tinged wars of opposing nations, the human

condition is rife with perpetual tumult. The consequences of such conflict and violence weigh heavily on humanity: widows caring for children with uncertain futures, revolting poverty and other forms of human suffering, dilapidated schools, dysfunctional governments, shocking acts of terrorism, and an overwhelming sense of powerlessness and hopelessness that only serves to breed more conflict and violence" (Ndura-Ouedraogo & Amster, 2009: 1).

The status quo is maintained so those in power can maintain their advantage (Mullaly, 2002). It looks as if we have been hypnotized into a state of denial and apathy. The impression is that we are powerless. This engenders feelings of hopelessness (Chomsky, 2003: 10). The responsibility of change is overwhelming. We naively trust politicians and policy makers to take care of things, which in turn serve the interests of the status quo and preserves the dominant discourse (Wallerstein, 1999).

1.3. Motivation for the Inquiry

I experience social work as very rewarding. I am privileged to have people share with me on such an intimate level. I have been inspired by social work literature, such as Mullaly's (2002) anti-oppressive approach and Gil's (1998) strong analysis of society. In addition, social workers like Mildred[1] have been role models for me. At the same time, I have seen and heard things that tells me that the problems encountered by those who use social work services are not only the result of their own personal and family difficulties but also the result of unjust policies, the attitudes of social workers and ultimately the political system. I have seen social workers take neutral positions and show mere tolerance toward people and issues rather than take a stand. For social workers like myself who work in clinical settings, there is a tension between encouraging individual empowerment and social change. There is tension, however, in most if not all areas of social work practice.

In North America most social workers work for government, or community and development organizations (largely regulated and funded by government) that are generally underfunded (not a priority). Social work agencies usually reflect the

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[1] Mildred was one of my instructors when I was studying for my B.S.W. I also know her through her work with *Equal Justice for All*, a support and advocacy group for people who are poor. She is also one of the people interviewed for the inquiry.

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perspectives of the middle and upper class. When regulations and policies provide only inadequate or unjust services, it is the most vulnerable who suffer the most (Carniol, 2005). The most vulnerable have little participation in decisions that impinge on them the most, which says much about why they are so vulnerable.   Funding determines who makes the decisions and determines the structure of the organizations where social workers do social work. In these top-down structures, the service users are generally at the bottom and therefore they have little input (Carniol, 2005).

I work in Adult Community Services at Battleford Mental Health where I am the Intake coordinator[2] for the health region and I counsel individuals and couples from the general community. Some of these people have a diagnosis of one or more mental illnesses. In my role as a counsellor at Adult Community Service, service users come to my office for counselling because they are experiencing a variety of difficulties. The services I provide hopefully lessen some of the clients' pain and suffering. On the other hand, I know that the work I do does little to change the causes of injustice. Figuratively I have a revolving office door where people come and go. The door leading outside of mental health where I work often leads to the prison system and violence in all its ugly disguises.

My everyday work world is embedded in a culture that sees individual problems as individual pathology where individuals need to learn to be more normal. I am like other social workers who are governed from the top (I work for the regional health authority funded by the government) in an individualistic system based on evidence-based individualistic practice. My mandate is to help individual clients be better adjusted. Herein lays the incongruity between what I do as a social worker and what efforts I make to facilitate social justice outside of my paid employment or my official social work role.

It appears that social workers in the health field get co-opted by work cultures and employment environments that appear to focus on individual pathology. "[T]he social reform orientation of many social workers and their professional organizations did not lead to a resolution of their ethical dilemmas and contradictions. For, while they

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[2] Intake is the front door to Mental Health Services. People can get service by calling Mental Health, walking-in, referral or they sometimes are brought in by police or ambulance. I co-ordinate the schedule of intake workers, write procedures, do lots of trouble shooting and report the numbers of new people entering the system for the entire health region and work on intake. Intake is centralized, so it covers addictions services, adult services, child and youth services, psychiatry and mental health nursing.

consistently advocated reforms conducive to healthy human development, they usually neither acknowledged, nor challenged, the roots of individual and social underdevelopment, i.e., the structures of injustice and oppression in contemporary capitalist societies and cultures" (Gil, 1998: 81-82). Work environments after all are imbedded within the dominant culture.

Often social workers, me included, feel we have little power to change the way things are done within the hierarchical structures. Middle management is usually allied with those above them because this is the only way they can advance to the top (Carniol, 2005). Evaluations of workers and the lack of encouragement for mutual support have too often led to the undermining of others, even to the point of bullying (Gergen, 2009). The average social worker feels powerless and therefore is passive. In my experience, social workers will often take a neutral position to avoid conflict. Social workers often regulate the poor and other vulnerable people by facilitating and working for social services agencies that provide inadequate programs and services. Gutiérrez (2007, *Social Work Today*) states that social workers have been both agents of liberation and oppression.

I work in a top-down institution with layers of management coming down from the government level. I work in a bureaucracy that by most common standards is a very good place to work. My job is unionized, pays well, and I work with good and interesting people. Employees and direct management are dedicated to client service. On the other hand, my views and the opinions of other front-line workers and service users do not direct the formation of policy. Policies come from external sources that are outside of actual service delivery. Services are provided 'for' and given 'to' people. The bureaucracy is entrenched within interlocking layers of larger hierarchical social structures.

When domination is normalized in bureaucracies, people can become victims of cultural hegemony. Even in the everyday workplace, it becomes difficult to speak up against the status quo. People fear taking the risk of being misunderstood or worse being seen as uncooperative (Carniol, 2005). I am not exempt from finding it difficult to speak up to oppression, especially when the environment normalizes complacency or, worse, supports oppression. Nonetheless doing nothing maintains the status quo. Bureaucracy can also be deceptively accommodating. For example, even when front-line workers are

consulted on issues or procedures, consultations generally take place after decisions have been made. In the political climate seen today there appears to be a trend to deepen bureaucracy (Dominelli, 2010, Ferguson, 2008). Thus more rules, regulations, management and paper work are the result. One is forced to walk the party line. Bureaucrats, at the top, who usually do not have a background in social issues because they are most aligned with business, design the structure and policies that social workers work under (Ferguson, 2008).

I can be useful to my clients individually, but this does not address the root causes of their problems. In contrast, outside of my office, I, like some other social workers, are involved with networks of people who challenge power structures. Together with these activists we discuss theory and plan actions. These people are very much engaged in efforts to facilitate social justice. The contradiction is I am a social worker so the assumption is that I facilitate social justice and yet my everyday work provides little opportunity to make change beyond the amelioration of individual problems.

In a 2007 article in the American social work journal, *Social Work Today*, the top five issues facing social works are listed as: celebrating diversity, child welfare, healthcare reform, mounting poverty and economic injustice, and affordable housing. Although this article is from an American survey, problems in Canada are similar. The context is somewhat different however. For example, in the American context social workers advocate to develop health care, while in Canada social workers advocate to keep the existing health care system from further deterioration. This article makes some interesting points about advocating for people, being an ally and taking sides. According to Abramovitz (2007) social workers cannot afford to be neutral. We need to take sides because neutrality is unethical.

The motivation behind this inquiry is to find a way to enable a space for discussion and critical reflection on social justice and learn from the collaboration of partners and the examination of literature. Perhaps, by listening to the voices of those who wrote about social justice and activists who dared to confront injustices, we can critically reflect or assess if the profession of social work really facilitates social justice or, as a profession, only does good work.

I am passionate about social justice because I believe we live in a critical time that includes economic cuts to social programs and environmental destruction that is unique in human history. It is time that the profession of social work put the issue of social justice on the table (Social Work Today, 2007). Social justice is in our codes of ethics yet we fail to debate it or address it. In essence, what my motivation for doing the inquiry comes down to is my strong feelings of love and frustration about facilitating social justice.

1.4. Research question

Social justice is a central value of social work. In the inquiry I question the assumptions in the Canadian social work code of ethics (2005) on social justice. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, this was followed by venturing to describe social justice and then exploring the consequences of efforts away from and towards social justice. The purpose of the inquiry is to gain an understanding about how to facilitate social justice.

So it follows that the question asked in the inquiry is:

How can social workers and the social work profession facilitate change for social justice?

1.5. Primary Goals and Objectives of the Inquiry

I interviewed activists for the inquiry, in the hope that their ideas would broaden and even challenge the social work paradigm. Activists included in this inquiry are those who work in the direction of a prefigurative, egalitarian, collective standard. They work toward ideals that may not be actualized yet. Activists endeavor to discover possibilities. Going beyond the taken as given to the possible may open the door to the as yet not proposed.

The objective of the study therefore is to:

Broaden social work's perspective on social justice and explore ideas to facilitate social justice. Literature is also used in the inquiry to flesh out ideas about social work working toward social justice and system change. The literature and the perceptions and

shared experience of activists together draw attention to various possibilities. So it follows that the goals and objective of this inquiry is to:

- Explore and describe the experiences and perceptions of the participants' view of facilitating social justice

- Examine the literature to enable the broadening or stretching of perspectives for facilitating change for social justice.

- Explore and describe the participants' experiences and perceptions of the obstacles that they have faced when working for change and social justice and what has gotten in the way of making change.

- Develop themes from the interviews and guidelines for social work for facilitating change for social justice

- Analyze and critically reflect on if social work can really live up to the implications of facilitating social justice.

1.6. Research Process

A qualitative research process is used in the inquiry. The process is designed to enable the exploration of the participants' experiences and to explore literature on social change. The process followed is designed to integrate the lived experiences of the participants with the literature study, which in turn is done to explore and integrate perceptions about how the profession of social work can facilitate social justice. Recommendations to Canadian social workers come from this inquiry.

1.7. Value of the Inquiry

The inquiry's value is that it adds to the knowledge the profession of social work can use to discuss how to facilitate social justice. The inquiry rests upon the critical reflection of social workers and their actions, as a core value for social work discussions. The inquiry adds a unique perspective that can be used by social work to reflect on and further the standpoint and practice of social work. Because the method used in the inquiry and the choice of participants is unique to social work, it is hoped that this will facilitate a deeper understanding of social justice that reaches beyond social work's most common

theory. In addition, it is hoped that the inquiry will benefit social work by focusing attention on the relational dimensions of social justice.

1.8. Limitations of the Inquiry

Berg (1998: 217) argues that objectivity in research is linked to the ability to reproduce findings. So it follows that objectivity is linked to reductionistic forms of inquiry that endeavor to be predictable by searching for the common elements that can be measured. This inquiry does not fit this paradigm because it looks to discover the phenomena in context and endeavors to include the complexity and messiness of lived experiences. It looks at perceptions which are fluid and often difficult to pin down.

Being an insider or someone who travels in similar circles as the participants helped me to gain their trust and be more familiar with their backgrounds. It could be said that we speak the same language. At the same time, it could also be argued that it was difficult for me to be critical if the inquiry required this. I might take what is said for granted because their worlds touch my own. Conversely because it is perceptions that are being recorded, I am allowed to suspend judgment and be surprised. Participants also had the autonomy to direct the inquiry by leading the discussion due to the conversational form of the interviews. The research was relational: "The observer/observed is rejected in favor of the 'inquirer 'and 'participant' to emphasize the interpretive research relationship. There is no subject-object dualism. The inquirer and the 'object' of inquiry interact to influence one another. There can be no objective distance between knower and known. Since each is free and involved in a proactive role in the creation of reality, each is self-directing and self-correcting in the mutual interaction of the inquiry" (Rodwell, 1998: 17).

The sampling method used in this inquiry is purposive therefore it may under-represent the population of activists. It also does not include people from all the various networks that activists are involved in. In addition, because the participants in the inquiry are all North American, the inquiry reflects a perspective from this region. So it stands to reason that at the end of the day the voices included in the inquiry will not speak for all activists. Also because the participants were asked to describe what they imagine a just

society might look like or prefigure future possibilities, in effect the inquiry asks them to step into the mind's eye that defies reduction.

Perceptions change and evolve over time. People change their mind about things, forget insightful details, and contradict themselves. Two people, who experience the same event together, can come away with different perceptions and thus end up having different stories to tell. Social conditions can also change and shift, even as the inquiry proceeds.

Therefore the context will change both within participant's lives over time and as the inquiry takes place. As a result, the perceptions recorded in a phenomenological inquiry, such as this, cannot be generalized. As constructionist inquiry is bound to context, hence, the only claims made are time limited and bound to the context of the inquiry (Rodwell, 1998).

> "For a constructivist, the trouble with generalizations is that they do not apply to particulars. Generalizations are nomithetic or law like in nature. In order to use them for prediction and control, generalizations must be applied to particulars. This creates a kind of knowledge problem, called entrapment in a nomothic/idiographic dilemma. What is interesting about generalizations is that they should apply to specific instance, but they generally do not, so one is left wanting/needing the idiographic, when only a nomothetic is possible. A further challenge to constructivists is that generalizations, by their nature, tend to overlook the multiple perspectives that seem to be necessary to tell a full story. Generalizations depend upon the norm. For constructivists, generalizations cannot provide the description of range or depth necessary to relate a holistic picture of a phenomenon under investigation. For them, even the data on the margins have merit" (Rodwell, 1998: 31).

1.9. Clarification of Key Concepts

Although it is not typical in a phenomenological inquiry to define concepts, it can be instructive to clarify some of the key concepts for the benefit of the reader. As concepts can and do reduce and make static what is contextual, evolving and complex, the descriptions of the following concepts are offered for consideration only.

Activism: A doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action especially in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue. "Taking collective action in attempting to bring about change as an alternative to seeking change through elected representatives" (Harris & White, 2013: 7).

Activist: noun of activism (Merrian-Webster Dictionary, retrieved May 13, 2012).

Advocacy: "Helping and supporting people to speak up for what they want or speaking on their behalf when they find it difficult or impossible to do that for themselves" (Harris & White, 2013: 11).

Affinity: "Practically, affinity consists of a group of people sharing common ground and who can provide supportive, sympathetic spaces for its members to articulate, listen to one another, and share concerns, emotions, or fears. The politics of affinity enables people to provide support and solidarity for one another. Ideally, such a politics of research should be built on consensus decision-making – which is non-hierarchical and participatory – embodying flexible, fluid modes of action" (Routledge, 2009: 84-85).

Anarchist: "one who rejects all forms of external government and the state and believes that society and individuals would function well without them" (Marshall, 1992: xiii). Horizontalism is the philosophical foundation. Contemporary anarchism generally is described in terms of pre-figurative and participatory politics.

Anti-**oppressive** social work: opposes classism, patriarchy, racism, ageism, heterosexism, and so forth, on individual, cultural and structural levels (Mullaly, 2002).

Capitalism: has private ownership, market allocation, corporate divisions of labor, remuneration for property, power, and output, and capitalist class domination of decision-making (Albert, 2003: 24). Capitalism is based on the premise of economic growth and expansion.

Democracy: when power resides with the people.

Direct action: "Action without intermediaries, whereby an individual or a group uses their own power and resources to change reality, according to their own desires. Anarchists understand direct action as a matter of taking social change into one's own hands, by intervening directly in a situation rather than appealing to an external agent (typically the state) for its rectification" and further "direct action can also be invoked in a constructive way, whereby anarchists directly pursue not only the prevention of injustices, but also the creation of alternative social relations free of hierarchy and domination" (pre-figurative politics), (Gordon 2009: 269).

Facilitate: "to make easier; help bring about." (Merrian-Webster Dictionary, retrieved November 29, 2012).

Hegemony: "A term introduced by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) to describe consent by the dominated to the social order and their own domination, through the representation of the interests of the ruling class as being everyone's interests and there being no alternative to ruling class ideas. He distinguished this non-coercive form of social control through 'common sense' from direct domination and the use of force under capitalism and located hegemony predominantly in the 'civil society', the

non-state areas of personal and social life. Gramsci argued that hegemony was not fixed bur represented a succession of unstable equilibria and, as a consequence, counter-hegemonic struggles could be waged against the prevailing hegemonic ideology. Gramsci described these struggles as 'war of position' in which the object of counter-hegemonic efforts was winning people's hearts and minds. He saw intellectuals, a term he used in a very broad sense, as playing a central role in such battles over ideas. Some Marxists have identified social workers as intellectuals who can play such a role. In contemporary use, hegemony is often used to mean simply having considerable influence over" (Harris & White, 2013: 241).

Liberalism: also referred to as reluctant collectivism. "Worldview that emphasizes the importance of the global market, but with allowances for government interventions to correct faults. Such action is concerned with preserving the existing system and reducing poverty, for example, rather than addressing structural inequalities." (Karabanow, personal communication, 2003 in Campbell, 2003: 7).

Neo-liberalism: "liberalism refers to the laisser-faire capitalism without state regulations, workers' rights or social programs that existed at the birth of capitalism. Thus, the regime of cutbacks, privatization, deregulations, market fundamentalism, and tax cuts that has become so familiar today is known as neo- liberalism" (Rebick, 2009: 5).

Oppression: "a second-class citizenship that is assigned to people, not on the basis of failure or lack of merit, but because of one's membership in a particular group or category of people. Oppression exists because it carries out a number of positive functions for the dominant group at the expense of subordinate groups" (Mullaly, 2002: 50).

Othering: "is an important aspect of the process of oppression. 'Othering' involves constructing an individual or group as the 'other', that is, as someone who is excluded from the normal hierarchies of power and labeled inferior or pathological. In 'othering', the normative yardsticks of the ruling group are used to reach decisions that label 'others' as inferior and legitimate the exercise of *power over* them. Thus, 'othering' processes are exclusionary ones aimed at reproducing relations of dominance. These create a 'them-us' division which particular social order as a taken-for-granted aspect of their lives. Meanwhile, those cast in the 'them' category are outsiders who are not valued as human beings on the same basis as those in the 'us' group. 'Othering' can occur on a range of different attributes and involve a range of binary divisions so that a person can be 'othered' on multiple levels. 'Othering' is socially constructed through social interactions within the biological, social, political and/or economic domains" (Dominelli, 2002: 18

Radical: "One who advocates radical changes in government or social institutions, especially such changes as are intended to level class inequalities; - opposed to conservative" (thinkexit.com retrieved March 13, 2011).

Radical Sustainability: "We use the word radical (derived from the Latin word radix, meaning root) to stress that we need to address issues at their fundamental root cause, not just the symptomatic manifestations. Radical sustainability confronts the underlying reasons our current path is not sustainable and works to create genuinely sustainable alternatives. A radical sustainable viewpoint recognizes the inseparability of ecological and social issues and the necessity of ensuring the solution of one problem does not create or worsen another" (Kellogg & Pettigrew, 2008: xiii).

Social Justice: As an ideal state of: equality, freedom from oppression and domination, participatory democracy on a continuum of levels from the personal to the structural. Pursuing or working for social justice frames the ideal state as a goal of action and of process.

Structural oppression: "the means by which oppression is institutionalized in society. It consists of the ways that social divisions, practices, and processes, along with social institutions, laws, policies, and the economic and political systems, all work together to benefit the dominant group at the expense of subordinate groups" (Mullaly, 2002: 97).

Structural social work: "while the goal of social work is change, it is the nature and method of change that distinguishes the structural approach from others. The structural approach is based on a critical analysis of the social, economic, and political context and promotes a restructuring of the social structures that exploit and dehumanize people" (Lundy, 2004: 67).

Sustainability: "…the idea of living in such a way that the resources available today will continue to be available for an indefinite number of future generations" (Kellogg & Pettigrew, 2008: xi – xii). Further, being on treaty six territory it is respectful to use the traditional indigenous Cree concept of sustainability, which is described as maintaining the state of the world in harmonious balance for the benefit of the seven generations to follow.

1.10. Layout of the Chapters

Chapter One, the background and context for the inquiry, introduces the inquiry and describes the problem under inquiry. It looks at social work and perspectives of social justice with reference to social work codes of ethics and social work's commitment to social justice. Some injustices that shape the state of the world and the motivations for undertaking the inquiry are discussed. This chapter also includes the research question, the inquiry's goals and objectives, the research process, the value of the inquiry, and its limitations. A clarification of key concepts as well as an outline is also included in this chapter.

Chapter Two, social work's historical legacy, includes a brief history of social work in Canada, with an emphasis on social work with indigenous people in Canada and the social function of social work.

Chapter Three includes a critique of what social workers do at work, how social work is a liberal reformist project, social work education, and some theoretical assumptions that inform social work and alternative paradigms of theories of social work and social transformation.

Chapter Four, the process of the inquiry and research methodology, includes the paradigm or point of departure of the inquiry, the anti-oppressive and constructivist premise of inquiry, values and principles of anti-oppressive social work, the process taken and the methodology of the inquiry, the approach of inquiry, the design of the inquiry, an explanation of exploratory inquiries descriptive inquiries and phenomenological inquiries and how they fit together. The method section includes questions that were used to start the conversations with participants, how literature is used, engaging partner/participants, collecting and processing information, coding the interviews, content analysis, the unique contributions of the inquiry, ethical considerations, the dissemination of the inquiry and the authenticity and credibility of inquiry.

Chapter Five presents the literature including an overview of some well-known social movements, including Gandhi, the Green Belt Movement, the Global Justice Movement, the Occupy Movement, an Indigenous perspective, and the Nazi ethos as an example of change away from justice. This chapter also discusses different social change paradigms, including reform and revolutionary change, domination and complicity, first and second order change, cybernetics and complexity theory, leverage points, compassion as the foundation of social justice, awareness, participation and collective action.

Chapter Six, social work and social justice, critiques Rawls' theory of social justice and discusses other theories pertaining to social justice, includes a discussion on the human rights perspective and a discussion about moving beyond paternalism and false generosity toward solidarity.

Chapter Seven introduces the participants who were interviewed and the themes taken from the interviews.

Chapter Eight presents lessons learned in the process of inquiry that form guidelines informing social work toward social justice and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORICAL LEGACY OF SOCIAL WORK IN CANADA AS THE
FOUNDATIONAL CONTEXT OF THE INQUIRY

2. Introduction

This chapter provides the reader with a historical and a Canadian context by looking at the history of social work in Canada, the role the profession of social work has played in Canada in particular with Indigenous people, and the social function of social work.

2.1. A Brief History of Social Work in Canada

The history of social work in Canada is not altogether one to be proud of. Durst (2006) outlines the history of social work in Canada from the 1890s to the present and divides the history into three phases: "the era of moral reform, the era of social reform, and the era of applied social science" (Durst, 2006: 6).

The beginning of social work in Canada has its roots in moral reform and charity for the poor. The era of moral reform was characterized as a response to urban poverty by religious organizations. "A clear distinction was made between deserving and undeserving poor" (Durst, 2006: 6). According to Carniol (2005) there was more sympathy for the deserving poor. Sympathy was withheld from the undeserving poor because they were considered unemployed due to their own laziness. Although social work was not a distinct profession at this time, the more well-to-do people, especially women, gave charity to the poor with a concern for their moral living (Dominelli, 2010).

The 'Charity Organization Society' (C.O.S.) was transplanted in Canada from England. Carniol (2005) states that the organization of charity was in response to factory workers increased interest in socialism and wealthy people becoming tired of the poor asking them for charity. The C.O.S. provided 'friendly visitors' to the poor to help them become better people (Ferguson, 2008). "Given the assumption that the poor were morally inferior, it was logical that assistance became defined as moral advice on how to

uplift the poor into becoming better individuals. It was conceded that as time went on, morally uplifted individuals might even escape their poverty" (Carniol, 2005: 43).

Immigration eased economic tension back in the colonizing countries, particularly England. Children of the poor (home children) were sent to Canada to live with settler families. These children were often treated as servants and were abused (Dominelli, 2010: 13). Although workhouses were evident in English Canada, jails by and large became a place to house many poor and marginalized people (Carniol, 2005). Any Charity given was meant to be meager, demeaning and uncomfortable therefore punitive measures were often employed to deal with social problems (Carniol, 2005).

This era coincided with Canadian confederation[3] in 1867. The churches, particularly the Catholic Church in Quebec and the Anglican in the rest of Canada, were principally state churches that "retained significant privileges in the colonization of the Northwest, and were de facto partners of the state in the attempted assimilation of the First Nations in residential schools and other colonizing endeavors…" (McKay, 2008: 220). The colonizers also thought themselves and their culture superior to indigenous cultures and began the process of 'civilizing the Indians' (Dominelli, 2010).

Canada's history of colonization provided a legacy for social worker as a tool of the government in the colonization project; removing indigenous children from homes and the delivering of children to religious residential school for their moral/Christian assimilation (Carniol, 2005). "The history of Canada's responses to the poor and other oppressed groups evolved on the heels of the horrific dispossession of the Aboriginal peoples. Colonial violence, racism, and exploitation not only shattered the economic self-sufficiency of the First Nations peoples, but also wreaked havoc with their communal and family life" (Carniol, 2005: 38).

In the next era, from 1891 to 1940, Canada, while still a frontier with fur traders, lumberjacks and voyageurs, was becoming more urbanized by settlers. This era of social work history came to be known as "the era of social reform" (Durst, 2006: 6). This is the era when the social gospel was a driving force for social reform (McKay, 2008) and for social work (Durst, 2006). During this era, questions regarding social justice and equity

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[3] Confederation is when this part of North America became the country called Canada. North American Indigenous peoples refer to North America as 'Turtle Island.'

entered the debate (McKay, 2008, Durst, 2006) and social work became a profession in Canada.

The settlement house movement was initiated by white middle-class women to help with the cultural integration of immigrants. Upper-class citizens moved to poor areas and set up houses in most cities in Canada (James: 1998). "In North America the settlement movement emphasized the instruction of non-Anglo-Celtic immigrants, together with members of the Anglo-Celtic working class, in the benefits of capitalist democracy. In Canadian settlements citizenship education meant not only instructing prospective voters in the workings of Parliament and the laws of the land, but also the fostering of a hegemony of middle-class ideals, values and culture" (James: 1998: 49). "Their purpose was social reform through education, recreation, and social and emotional support" (Durst, 2006: 6). The settlement house movement in Canada was initially backed by the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association[4]) in Toronto, Ontario. Initially young educated women volunteered to serve the needs of other less privileged young women. Later the movement evolved to include males. Although women were included in physical education the activities designed for women centered on the domestic (James: 1998).

Dominelli, (2010) writes that the settlement house movement advanced social work toward structural social work and opened the door to community and group work. Dominelli (2010) also says that the settlement movement lacked the force of control that governmental social work held. In 1914 Canada's first school of social work opened at the University of Toronto (Canadian Association of Social Workers, retrieved July 2, 2010). The first school of social work in Canada was largely promoted by many of the women who inspired Evangelical settlement house in Toronto. The women who volunteered their time at the Settlement Houses went on to be educated as social workers (James, 1998).

This was the time when public welfare programs began to be funded by government. "During this era, there was a shift from moral judgment and private charities to public welfare funded by government. The services were provided by trained paid workers; hence the emergence of the social work profession. The worker's role was to

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[4] YWCA's still exist in most major Canadian cities today.

assist the client in finding solutions to the problems that they were encountering. The worker used skills in gathering information and applying scientific theory on behavior and social processes to find practical solutions" (Durst 2006: 7).

This area of social work's development carries the legacy of English moral judgment of dividing the poor by treating people as deserving and undeserving. This is why, even in this day and age, social assistance rates are kept below minimum wage and people who live in poverty must still prove they deserve welfare (Carniol, 2005).

Social work began with privileged women doing charity work. Women and what was seen as their unscientific ways were seen as unprofessional. Therefore, when social work sought professionalization[5] it was not admitted into the prestigious professional realm with other male-dominated professions (Dominelli, 2010). Today, social work in Canada remains one of the least prestigious professions (Dominelli, 2010, Carniol, 2005). In Canada social work is still a female-dominated profession, but also a profession where men occupy most positions of power (Dominelli, 2010).

The last period of history that defines social work is, "the era of applied social science: 1941- present" (Durst, 2006: 7). In this era social workers largely implemented government policies and programs in their work and became active in the country's economy. After the Second World War, social programs came closer than they had previously to adequately meeting basic needs of those receiving assistance and the 1970s saw Canada becoming a 'welfare state'[6] In 1946, Family Allowance was introduced to encourage women to leave the work force to provide jobs for men returning from the Second World War. Social work policy was shaped by a common ideology of women's

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[5] The Canadian Association of Social Workers was founded in 1926 (Canadian Association of Social Workers, retrieved July 2, 2010).

[6] Welfare state is a term that was apparently first used in the English language in 1941 in a book written by William Temple, Archbishop of York, England. For many years after, post-war British society was frequently characterized (often pejoratively) as a "welfare state," but by the 1960s the term commonly denoted an industrial capitalist society in which state power was "deliberately used (through politics and administration) in an effort to modify the play of market forces."

For Asa Briggs, the author of this definition in an article appearing in *The Welfare State* (1967), there are 3 types of welfare state activities: provision of minimum income, provision for the reduction of economic insecurity resulting from such "contingencies" as sickness, old age and unemployment, and provision to all members of society of a range of social services. Under this definition, Canada became a welfare state after the passage of the social welfare reforms of the 1960s (*Canadian Encyclopedia on-line at www.canadianencyclopedia.com*).

economic inferiority rather than based on the needs of the people. Family allowance was followed by Old Age Security and Unemployment Insurance and benefits for people with disabilities (Durst, 2006). Originally costs for programs were shared equally between provincial and federal government, except for First Nations programs which are the responsibility of the federal government.

There has been a steady decline in social programs, starting in the 1980s, to be replaced by offloading programs to the private sector. Programs that people were once entitled to have become stop-gap measures to provide only temporary support and assistance (Durst, 2006). "Having convinced the public to equate 'waste and efficiency' with government, corporate leaders led a reckless charge for tax cuts, which continues today at the expense of social programs, creating a critical deterioration in the well-being of most Canadians. One result is that social services providers are left trying to work with service users who are trapped in desperate situations" (Carniol, 2005: 52).

The emphasis of social programs has changed from social responsibility to individual responsibility for hardships experienced. "Since the 1980s, the federal government has promoted the concept of privatization and sought an end to universal social programs. Canada, like other welfare states has experienced serious attacks on the principles of redistribution and the provision of health and social services" (Durst, 2006: 8-9).

Social workers are often caught in the middle as social work practice in Canada usually takes place in the interface between government policies and programs on one side, and everyday and disadvantaged people on the other. Most social workers are now income workers who regulate social assistance, child protection workers who remove children from their homes, and so on, under provincial legislation and policy. Social workers are left with regulating the poor who can not afford to pay rent[7].

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[7] In major Saskatchewan cities, a family with four children receives $688.00 per month for rent (Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services, 2011). In rural areas, they receive less. The average monthly rent for a three bedroom apartment is 999.00 (Canadian Immigrants, 2011).

Rent money is often taken from money needed to buy food[8]. Families who are low income and working can receive a rental housing supplement, but this does not raise them out of poverty. Yet it is the social workers who apply the means-tests of eligibility for these programs and regulate the poor to make sure they do not cheat the system[9]. It is difficult to see how social workers can effectively work on the side of the poor.

2.2. The Legacy of Social Work in Canada with Indigenous Peoples

In Canada, during the area of moral reform, treaties were signed with many Indigenous peoples, except in British Columbia where the land is still unceded territory. *The Indian Act* of 1876 (pre- social work history in Canada) was designed to civilize the Indian and has had a devastating effect on Indigenous communities, particularly women and children.

Social workers were complicit with the government and churches' cultural genocide of Indigenous peoples in Canada (Carniol, 2005). Under the *Indian Act* children were taken from their families and their collective cultural communities to be assimilated into white culture by social workers.

> "The Indian Act is a Canadian federal law that governs in matters pertaining to Indian status, bands, and Indian reserves. Throughout history it has been highly invasive and paternalistic, as it authorizes the Canadian federal government to regulate and administer in the affairs and day-to-day lives of registered Indians and resrve communities. The authority has ranged from overarching political control, such as imposing governing structures on Aboriginal communities in the form of band councils, to control over the rights of Indians to practice their culture and traditions. The Indian Act has also enabled the government to determine the land

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[8] In major Saskatchewan cities, a family with four children receives $688.00 per month for rent (Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services, 2011). In rural areas, they receive less. The average monthly rent for a three bedroom apartment is 999.00 (Canadian Immigrants, 2011).

[9] To apply for social assistance in Saskatchewan, individuals must phone a call center, and apply over the telephone. This causes problems for individuals who do not have a telephone, who do not speak English as a first language and who have a cognitive or a mental disorder. Their applications are slowed down because their applications are red flagged and a worker from their community needs to contact them. Those that do not have a telephone must leave a contact number that may be unreliable. Many people fall through the cracks in the system for the reasons mentioned above and because of other reasons such as lack of transportation and childcare. Many single parents are given temporary assistance and required to find work. This is difficult because of lack of the transportation and the childcare needed to find and keep a job.

base of these groups in the form of reserves, and even to define who qualifies as Indian in the form of Indian Status" (Hanson, 2009: 1).

It is important to note that because social work practice was regulated and directed by government legislation it was complicit in the racism and the sexism[10] of the Indian Act (Sinclair, 2009).

In Canada, social work's legacy begins with encounters with indigenous people. Social work practice took place within the parameters of state legislation and dealt with the fall-out of colonization. This pattern has continued to the present day. These encounters began with social workers accompanying Indian agents on reserves to remove children and place them in residential schools. Residential schools were operated in partnership between the federal government and the churches; most notably the Catholic Church. Social workers in Canada, then and now, carry out the law of the government (Sinclair, 2009).

> "Indian residential schools date back to the 1870's. Over 130 residential schools were located across the country, and the last school closed in 1996. During this era, more than 150,000 First Nations, Metis, and Inuit children were placed in these schools, often against their parents' wishes. Many were forbidden to speak their language and practice their own culture. It is estimated that more than 80,000 former students are living today. The ongoing impact of residential schools has been felt throughout generations. The Indian Residential Schools Settlement is Canada's largest class action lawsuit" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012, unpublished).

Today it is well known that abuse in residential schools was widespread. Children also suffered from being removed from their family and losing their culture. Residential schools were set up to assimilate Indigenous people, not for their protection (Sinclair, 2009). Imagine being the parent of a small child when your child is dragged from your arms to be placed in a school that is foreign to your culture. Many parents did not know if

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[10] Women were non-persons under the Act. The government at the time did not acknowledge that some tribes were matrilineal. Indigenous women lost power and place in their own communities and had none in the larger society (Blair, 2005). Until 1951, they were not allowed to vote or enter into any contracts. In their own communities, they were not allowed to stand for chief or council and, unlike Indian men, who did not loss their status when they married white women, if women married white men they lost their status as Indians (Blair, 2005: 1). Over time this gender inequality has set indigenous women up for domestic violence and state violence. For example more aboriginal women than white women are arrested and go to jail and are more likely to be abused in their own communities (Early Canadiana, 2012, on-line).

they would see their children again, and many did not. Now imagine being pulled away from your family, at a young age, and growing-up in an institutional regimented system. People who grew-up in the often abusive and strictly controlled residential school system did not grow up with parental models (Ross, 1992). Today the legacy of residential schools and the policies of assimilation of Indigenous peoples are evident in high rates of suicide, violence, and high numbers of Aboriginal children in foster care (Ross, 1992).

In the '60s, social workers removed countless children from indigenous families and this action was called a 'scoop' because during that period so many indigenous children were 'dredged' away from their homes. "Social work has negative connotations to many Indigenous people and is often synonymous with the theft of children, the destruction of families, and the deliberate oppression of Aboriginal communities" (Sinclair 2004: 49, in Sinclair, 2009). Even today it is said that when a social worker enters a reservation the people hide their children. This is also true in Canada among other poor and marginalized groups where Canadian social workers are known as 'baby snatchers'. Social works' complicity in the assimilation of indigenous peoples demonstrates the control function they play and the risk of cultural hegemony most clearly.

Historically status Indian[11] people in Canada became wards (like children) of the federal government under the *Indian Act*. Until the 1960s, in Canada child welfare and all other programs were fully directed by the federal government. Today some functions have been devolved to First Nations government under the direction of Indian people, particularly in the area of child and family services (Sinclair, 2009). This move to more services directed by Indian or First Nations people is however a mixed blessing. On the positive side, Indian social services are now more culturally sensitive. The down side, however, is that their connection to provincial and federal government policy and standards ties them to very restrictive and insensitive ways of dealing with children and families (Ross, 1992). Ideally many First Nations' people wish to replace government

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[11] The term Indigenous refers to the original inhabitants of Turtle Island and their descendants.
The term Indian refers to the original inhabitants and ancestors who signed treaty with the Imperial Crown of Great Britain. Indigenous peoples became Indian in accord with the language used in treaties.
Since the *Canadian Constitution Act* of 1982 was adopted, the term Aboriginal refers to First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

policy and standards with their own Indian policy and standards. Governance by bureaucracy was not part of traditional indigenous culture in Canada. Indigenous people had their own culture and ways of dealing with social issues long before settlers came to teach them the right way (Ross, 1992). Unfortunately the settlers in their arrogance missed an opportunity for learning (Sinclair, 2009). For example, traditional foster care and adoption prior to European contact was handled by the community. Care of children, in the Indian way, is the responsibility of the family and the community (Anderson, 2011). Ross (1992) points out that First Nations peoples have had enough of an imposed system that does not fit with their culture. "Most disturbing is evidence that another 'scoop' of Aboriginal children appears to be underway, driven by systemic disadvantages in Aboriginal communities coupled with the drastic under-funding of First Nations child welfare agencies by the federal government" (National Collaborating Centre For Aboriginal Health, 2010).

General welfare, such as food, housing and utilities, are administered by band councils via federal government funding; however, the funding and legislation for child and family services are currently channeled from the federal government through provincial child and family service agencies. Tribal councils sometimes play a coordination role in delivering services. Generally speaking, funds are inadequate to meet needs in delivering child and family services (National Collaborating Centre For Aboriginal Health, 2010).

Like other social workers, Indian social workers are often middle-class individuals who often support the status quo. Therefore, they are not often inclined to be sensitive to the concerns of less privileged First Nations people or other disadvantaged groups. Social work's liberal orientation preserves the existing system and historically has not addressed structural inequality. It has worked to reduce the effects of oppression rather than working to remove the root causes and thus has been complicit in the implementation of unjust policies. Being orientated towards the authorities, social workers rarely engage in direct action. To a large extent, the practice of social work has been directed by government policies that are not inherently just. A telling example is social work's involvement with Canada's Aboriginal people. During social work's early years in Canada reforms were designed to address poverty and child neglect; nevertheless

they carried a deep racism and cultural hegemony (Ross, 1992). Canadian social work has a dark history of oppression.

2.3. The Social Function of Social Work

Social work was designed to serve people and enhance the well-being of individuals through social institutions. In Canada social work carries a legacy of individualism and liberalism however. On the other hand, there have always been social workers who have been radical and opposed oppression (Ferguson, 2008). Radicals within the social work profession have been tamed by the pressure from the state that reflects the conservative culture of Canada.

The history of social work in Canada and the United States bears the liberal legacy of individualism (Gil, 1998). According to Gergen (1999) individualism is socially problematic. The ideology of individualism alienates people from each other and therefore causes a sense of isolation and mistrust. From this perspective people outside of one's close circle of family and friends are treated as the other. The primary mission, according to Gergen (1999), becomes looking out for one's self. When one is looking out for number one, relationships are reduced to personal gratification. This, in turn, makes it difficult to find a reason to engage in public service. From the foundation of this ideology, social institutions were developed based on mistrust and competition (Gergen, 1999).

According to Dominelli (2010) from its beginning, social work has been based on a commitment to serve people. Social work's conception of social justice has developed within the context of citizenship and human rights. Social workers therefore work to enhance the well-being of individuals through social institutions, which has become increasingly difficult in the twenty-first century according to Dominelli (2010). The Western neo-liberalism states no longer defend peoples' rights to social services and freedoms despite being signatures to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Dominelli, 2010, Ferguson, Lavalette & Whitmore 2005). Cuts to welfare have been overwhelming in Canada. "[M]any feminists and socialists have withdrawn their allegiance to the state as the unconditional protector and guarantor of individual and collective rights" (Dominelli, 2010: 22).

According to Reisch and Andrews (2002) social work in North America once had many radical social workers who worked to make changes to the institutions and structures of society. In addition Ferguson (2008) states that social work has renewed its commitment to social justice, especially during the 1960s and 1970s, by involvement in social movements, such as the women's movement, the civil rights movement and trade unions. These social workers questioned the oppression they saw around them. Although there have been many different political streams running through social work (Domenilli, 2010, Ferguson, 2008), social work in the West has predominantly abandoned its radical stream (Reisch & Andrews, 2002). According to Wallerstein (1999) radicals were, by and large, co-opted by the power of the liberal state.

In North America the state has implemented bureaucratic structures. Social change has therefore become managed by specialists and experts. These professional experts had the authority of the state to back their advocacy for policies within the bureaucratic state structure. Political parties mobilized militants with the hope that everyone's situation could improve. The economy was booming and technical advances promised the good life for every citizen in the second half of the twenty-first century (Wallerstein, 1999). This is how the liberal state's reforms tamed the dangerous classes according to Wallerstein (1999).

Colonial and imperialist powers, at the same time, brought economic development to so-called underdeveloped nations (Wallerstein). Social workers took part in many of these development programs. In Canada, for example, social workers assisted the state in the residential school and child welfare programs that focused on civilizing Indigenous peoples (Sinclair, 2009).

Social works' liberal legacy worked to domesticate the radical classes to keep them from seeking change to the existing system. As Gil (1998:14) explains, "an important function of social work and social services throughout history has been to modify and fine-tune the intensity of oppression and injustice in societies, and to ameliorate their destructive consequences for human development. Social work and social services were, however, never meant to eliminate inequalities, oppression and injustice, and their consequences" (1998: 14).

Wallerstein (1999) writes that in Europe between 1848 and 1917 political reforms developed in response to the suffering and the complaints of urban wageworkers and the poor. These reforms, which included the following: suffrage, work place legislation, compulsory education, and the redistribution of benefits, were passed onto the colonies, including Canada (Wallerstein, 1999: 9). According to Wallerstein these reforms were combined with White racism (1999: 40) as the birth of the welfare state propped up the liberal state. According to Wallerstein (1999), social movements, including trade unions, evolved along with the liberal state.

Reforms from the welfare state were designed to lessen suffering but not to address the causes of suffering. The 'Old Left' came to power between 1945-1970 and enacted the policy programs from the liberal state (Wallerstein, 1999). Keynesian models of social welfare, full employment, and the welfare state were instituted (Durst, 2006). The 'Old Left', which mainly had Marxist underpinnings, compromised their hope of democracy and never brought down the system. The hope and faith for liberalism that once appeared so promising have been shaken. .

> "Liberalism essentially promised that gradual reform would ameliorate the inequalities of the world-system and reduce the acute polarization. The illusion that this was possible within the framework of the modern world-system has in fact been a great stabilizing element, in that it legitimated the states in the eyes of their populations and promised them a heaven on earth in the foreseeable future. The collapse of the Communisms, along with the collapse of the national liberation movements in the Third World, and the collapse of faith in the Keynesian model in the Western world were all simultaneous reflections of popular disillusionment in the validity of the reformist programs each propagated. But this disillusionment, however merited, knocks the props from under popular legitimation of the states and effectively undoes any reason why their populations should tolerate the continuing and increasing polarization of our world-system" (Wallerstein, 1999: 2).

No one knows what the future will be. The collapse of the Keynesian model of social welfare, if it hasn't already, appears to cause disillusionment among Western social workers. Our social role and our very jobs depend on the liberal state. Social work in the West has based practice on policy reform and the hope that eventually these reforms would lead to social justice. The collapse of the current system would mean the collapse of the social role of social work, as we currently know it in the Western countries. Social

work in Canada is individualistic. Its function has been to lessen the suffering of individuals. It has not, however, addressed inequality or oppression. The practice of social work has tamed the dangerous classes through policies that favour the rich and domesticate the poor.

2.4. Conclusion

The history of social work in the Canadian context demonstrates that although social work has always intended to serve people it has also suffered from the cultural hegemony of the dominant culture. Social workers have operated in First Nations as bureaucratic agents of the state and brought interventionist forms of practice into a culture based on the maintenance of harmonious relationships (Ross, 1992). The history of social work in Canada is an example of oppression caused by the domination of one culture over another.

Despite the fact that social workers are doing good work, the history and current practice of social work also shows that we do not really work towards removing social injustices. When social work is imbedded in hierarchical structures of inequality with many levels of people having power over other people, social workers do not have the power to work towards social justice. The question then becomes: Is the profession of social work too scared, institutionalized or perhaps just complicit in injustice?

CHAPTER THREE

SOCIAL WORK TODAY AS FOUNDATIONAL CONTEXT OF THE
INQUIRY

3. Introduction

This chapter is intended to give a clearer view of social work in Canada by providing additional background and context regarding social workers at work, the liberal reform functions of social work, social work education and assumptions of theories that guide social work practice. The work world of social workers today, the liberal reformist function social work has filled, and general theories of social work are also covered in this chapter.

3.1. Canadian Social Workers at Work

The Canadian Association of Social Work (CASW, 2012, on-line) describes where social workers in Canada work as follows:

> "Social workers work in a variety of settings: family services agencies, children's aid agencies, general and psychiatric hospitals, school boards, correctional institutions, welfare administration agencies, federal and provincial departments. An increasing number of social workers work in private practice.
> 93% of those in the social worker occupational category are employed either in the health and social services or government industries, with 74% in the former and 19% in the latter. Relatively few social workers are employed in private practice offices, but the number almost doubled between 1991 and 1996."

As Ferguson, 2008, Lundy (2004), Reisch & Andrews (2002), Gil (1998), Mullaly (2007), Specht & Courtney, (1994), The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the Canadian Association of Social Workers (2005) and other social work writers tell us, social work's heart is working toward social justice. It is this fact that distinguishes social work from all other professions. For social workers, the original mission toward social justice is written in codes of ethics. Yet beyond social work professional

organizations making statements about social justice and appealing to the powers that be for justice, nothing appears to change. Congruence between social work principles, actions, and the structure of social work institutions seems to be missing in North America. Most North American social workers do not engage in social or political action even of a reformist nature and some authors say "social work has never been a radical profession… some writers regard this gap between rhetoric and reality as a betrayal of the profession's original mission" (Reisch & Andrews, 2002: 2). In the past, progressive or radical social workers largely identified themselves as Marxist and later as feminist; today's radical social workers do not identify with any particular ideology (Reisch & Andrews, 2002: 210-211). "They emphasize instead the 'transformative' aspects of practice, focus on such issues as militarism and violence in U.S. society, seek the linkage between 'cause and function,' formulate generalized anti-oppression strategies, and stress the development of dialogue, mutuality, and greater political consciousness among workers and clients" (Reisch and Andrews, 2002: 211). Most radical social workers today do not identify with any particular mode of practice for working on specific issues and helping to organize social movements. Most are against the harm of governments and corporations and see working for social justice as community work at the grassroots (Reisch & Andrews, 2002: 211).

Considering what an uphill battle making reformist change is, one has to wonder why someone would attempt to make radical change and do activist work in the first place. Many feel that the power of the system is too entrenched and powerful to resist. However opportunities to engage in discussions can help build a wider perspective (Gil, 1998; Graeber, 2009). Making change often seems to be an uphill battle with no end in sight. Reisch and Andrews (2002) outline the sources of radical social worker ideology. Examples given as the source of the radicalization of social workers are personal history, the effect of historical events, involvement in social movements, reading and study, and experiences gained from working in the social work field (Reisch & Andrews, 2002: 216-220).

Many individual social workers in Canada do not find consistent support within the profession (Mackinnon, 2009). Social workers in Canada may work in isolated areas or they often have co-workers that buy into the individualism of conservative ideology.

This dominant cultural ideology is also reflected in most places where social workers work.

Environments can change people away from the values they began with when oppressive cultures are normalized. People adapt themselves to the context of their environment. Social workers may risk being co-opted by bureaucratic systems for the sake of keeping a job. It is safer to partner with power than to be the odd person on the margins, especially when the people who hold the power are from the top echelons of society (Carnoil, 2005). Social workers, like everyone else, need to make a living to support themselves and their families. So like everyone else, social workers are trapped by necessity. Social workers work for the same system they may want to change.

The contradiction between the desire to facilitate social justice and the reality of the everyday work world can cause a lot of stress for individuals (Carniol, 2005). A case in point is Hudson's (2009) report on a study that McDonald published in the British Journal of Social Work. Among the social workers interviewed their work caused a high level of stress. "[T]hey found barriers to retention and use of professional knowledge at three levels" and further "they were fearful of blame for their actions and had become dependant on a raft of procedures and routines" (Hudson 2009: 31). Social workers relied on the procedures and routines of the work place rather than on what they had learned in their social work education.

When social workers are threatened with job loss and have little support, especially when they work in a context of top-down centralized policies and power, it is difficult for them to not only work for reforms but harder still to transition to working for structural change. When power is centralized at the top, those who work at the bottom, like front-line rank and file workers, have to fight for the right to have any input at all (Carnoil, 2005). In top-down structures workers cluster together in terms of such things as friendship, share interests or proximity.

> "Put in these terms, the inadequacy of the pyramidal structure is most glaring. Decisions made on high are typically monological. They do not issue from the relational clusters that create the realities and values through which daily work is accomplished. The decisions are imposed on this process. Such announcements as, 'The budget must be cut by 10%,' 'We are closing down the unit,' or 'The benefits package is going to be reduced,' are often thrust into the clusterings as if they had commanding

presence. Yet, according to the logic of co-action, pronouncements such as these have no meaning apart from those who respond. They come into meaning as others interpret them, and those on top do not control the interpretations. Within the various clusters, orders from elsewhere may not be accepted as reasonable and desirable; they may in fact be constructed as 'mindless,' 'insensitive,' 'punitive,' or 'misguided.' There may be forced compliance within the clusters, but the stage is set for negative vitality" (Gergen, 2009: 322).

Social workers in government-funded organizations are disadvantaged by managerialism that often reflects a cost-benefit business version of accountability (Dominelli, 2002, Ferguson, 2008, Fook, 2002). As Oko (2008) explains, such organizations often have a psychological orientation where management performance indicators are drawn from professions other than social work. "Practice may become skewed towards meeting these performance targets and a situation where predetermined and measurable outcomes become more important than process" (Oko, 2008: 75).

The high degree of dependence on government funding underlies social work's vulnerability and the risk of losing that support. "When governments find that they can't control the alternative services, funds are eventually cut or eliminated" (Carniol, 2005: 114). Inequality is perpetrated in social work by top-down bureaucratic institutions in work places, education, and policy development (Carniol, 2005) and social work's pursuit of social justice is often truncated by the ideology and political agendas of government (Ferguson, 2008). Gil (1998) and Carniol (2005) advocate for the development of alternatives to transform social work. Gil (1998) calls upon social workers to transform the practice of social work by prefiguring future possibilities.

"Radical social work would have to involve efforts to transform the style and quality of practice relations and administration in social services from vertical, authoritarian, non-egalitarian patterns toward horizontal, participatory-democratic, egalitarian ones, as far as this is possible in prevailing realities. Every space within existing settings, which radical practitioners can influence, could be transformed to reflect alternative possible human relations. In this way, elements of alternative realities, or prefigurations of future possibilities, could be created experimentally, within existing service organizations, by and for the providers and users of the services" (1998: 107).

To achieve liberty and overcome oppression and domination, Carniol asserts that "social and economic and environmental justice demands a transformation of power,

including a basic democratization of wealth-creating activities – so that the practice of democracy comes within the reach of everyone"… (2005: 158).

3.2. Incongruence in Social Work Practice and Theory

Social work is a unique profession because it concerns itself with social justice and making institutions responsive to human needs (Dominelli, 2010, Ferguson, 2008, Reisch and Andrews, 2002, Lundy, 2004, Mullaly, 2002). The Canadian Association of Social Workers (C.A.S.W.) defines social work as the following:

> "Social work is a profession concerned with helping individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective well-being. It aims to help people develop their skills and their ability to use their own resources and those of the community to resolve problems. Social work is concerned with individual and personal problems but also with broader social issues such as poverty, unemployment and domestic violence.
> Human rights and social justice are the philosophical underpinnings of social work practice. The uniqueness of social work practice is in the blend of some particular values, knowledge and skills, including the use of relationship as the basis of all interventions and respect for the client's choice and involvement. In a socio-political-economic context which increasingly generates insecurity and social tensions, social workers play an important and essential role" (C.A.S.W. on-line, retrieved June 1, 2012).

Dominelli (2010) outlines the history of social work in Europe as a response to the industrial revolution and, when it spread to North America, a response to further the rationalization for colonization.

> "Social work developed as a profession to deal with the social problems emanating from the process of industrialization. It relied heavily on philanthropic initiatives to begin with, but it soon became an outlet for the energies of middle-class women, who were instrumental in challenging definitions of what constituted professional social work, developing its scientific elements and eventually staffing the welfare state. Consequently, social work became a '**handmaiden' of the nation-state**, especially in Europe, where it became active in colonizing ventures that sought to spread messages about the superiority of Western culture. Its dependency on state funding also meant that social work was unable to finance its own autonomous development. Its low professional status was rooted in this dependent infrastructure and the social devaluation of caring labour. This

has created a problem that persists today, despite its greater role in world affairs through consultative status at the UN" (Dominelli, 2010: 28).

Liberalism can be defined as the, "worldview that emphasizes the importance of the global market, but with allowances for government interventions to correct faults. Such action is concerned with preserving the existing system and reducing poverty, for example, rather than addressing structural inequalities" (Karabanow, personal communication, 2003 in Campbell, 2003:7). As outlined above, social work has concerned itself with carrying out government policies, even to the detriment of groups of people such as Indigenous people(s).

Specht and Courtney (1994) argue that social work in North America has a socially progressive legacy and that this social perspective is being left behind in pursuit of better working conditions. As a result, social workers are going into private counselling practice that is more psychology-based than social work-based. They further argue that psychology should not be a model for social work practice. "Social workers should not be secular priests in the church of individual repair; they should be the caretakers of the conscience of the community" (Specht & Countney, 1994: 28). Specht and Courtney's attempt to promote community-based care is reminiscent of the settlement house movement.

Oko (2008) sees the role of social workers as mediators between society and individuals, families, groups and community that may be controlling and/or therapeutic. The perspective that frames social workers as mediators is a liberal assumption that bypasses the structural root of problems and issues. Models of social work practice can be organized into "those that stress personal deficiency, ecological factors, or the larger political economy" (Lundy, 2004: 52). This third model could extend to all forms of domination and oppression, but generally is focused on seeking reform from the state. Reisch and Andrews (2002) also talk about the historical tensions between radical and liberal or reformist social workers as well as the repression of radical social workers both within and outside of the profession. There are tensions in social work over the role of social workers in the kinds of work they do (Reisch & Andrews, 2002, Specht & Courtney, 1994).

Social work has become a professional project rather than a project for social justice (Olson, 2007). "More narrowly, social work's professional project consists of standardizing and codifying methods of intervention into 'evidence-based practices' so that they form a professional standard of care in all of the various venues in which social work is conducted" (Olson; 2007: 47). This is a far cry from a social justice paradigm that is constructionist in nature and starts in reflection and incorporates dialogue-action with others. Evidence-based practice is common in social work practice. With its claim to a scientific standard of 'the truth,' it is contrary to constuctionism and to Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed (1970). Evidence-based practice relies on objectivist epistemology while social construction sees knowledge as a process of engagement with others (Gergen, 2006). Evidence-based practice is top-down, from the experts to the client, whereas constuctionism and Freirian dialogical change models start with engaging 'with' others.

Working for social justice calls for action beyond amelioration and reform. If we are to go beyond just maintaining a steady state of neutrality that sides with the status quo, we must work to change our own institutional arrangements (Mullaly, 2002). Until then, the contradictions and incongruence between social work in practice and theory remain. The work of social work is necessary and important yet insufficient when it comes to social justice. Until social justice is attained and sustained over generations we really do not have social justice. Facilitating social justice also requires that we work to change those contextual relations that prevent it from being sustainable (Mullaly, 2002).

Regardless of the size of an organization and the orientation of particular social workers, the disadvantage for service users is that the organizational culture is individualistic and tends to decontextualize the service users. It is almost expected to ask service users to adjust to oppressive situations when we, as social workers feel forced to do the same (Carniol, 2005). The problems that the service user brings to the social worker are seen as resulting from what goes on in the service user's head, their lack of personal skills, or their inability to cope, where the social context is ignored. For example, Carniol writes about how the orientation and organizational culture are shaped by business and professions' concerns with efficiency (2005: 93). When writing about the orientation of a social work agency in Canada, Carniol describes how the board of

directors, where he was working, viewed his joining a protest with clients who were on welfare as 'unbecoming of a professional' from the board's perspective of social problems.

> "They believed in general that things were being taken care of efficiently and properly, for the basic good of all concerned. The few problems they saw were limited to 'abuses' of the system, usually emanating from the service user end of things. Sometimes they saw problems as being caused by 'bad apples' or malcontents: social workers who were not trying hard enough to make things work; or service users who were not trying hard enough to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. At the most, they thought, the problems called for some careful, judicious, and 'realistic' mediating" (2005: 93-94).

Like everyone, social workers are forced to work in systems of domination because this is the context of the world we all live in. The difference between social workers and, say, plumbers is the social workers' ethic of social justice. The plumbers' association (if there is such a thing) does not espouse social justice as a value related to their work. Social workers, like everyone else, need to support themselves and, like everyone else, are trapped working in systems that reproduce themselves. This is a vicious cycle of pushing for reforms to reshape institutions that snap themselves back into their original power structures with each reform.

Social work is a unique profession because it concerns itself with social justice and making institutions responsive to human needs (Dominelli, 2010, Reisch and Andrews, 2002, Lundy, 2004, Mullaly, 2002). Social work however has mainly played the role of mediating between the state and the oppressed. Social work can no longer afford to sustain a practice model based on helping service users cope or adjust to unjust circumstances (Mullaly, 2002). In order for social work practice to remain credible it cannot be content with 'systems tinkering'. As Mullaly (2002: back cover) declares, "If, in our personal lives and in our social work practice, we assist in making oppression acceptable by helping people to cope with it or adjust to it, we not only fail them, we fail ourselves and we become the problem." Social work is most at home ameliorating suffering, advocating on behalf of clients, and asking the government to make changes to policies. Working for improvement in policies, taxation, political representation and other areas that impact the options and opportunities of individuals is a significant area of

social work attention. Neutrality in the face of injustice is an ethical blunder. To do nothing supports the status quo and therefore is complicit with systems of injustice.

3.3. Social Work Education

Social work education not only provides valuable information and analysis, it empowers students by functioning as a tool for consciousness-raising. Historically, in North America at least, what is learned in school remains difficult to implement in the everyday work world because we are tied to government policies that may or may not be in the best interest of service users (Carniol, 2005). For example, in Canada when a service user applies for income security (welfare) benefits they have to pass a means test to prove eligibility. If they are lucky enough to get welfare, the low amount of money they are forced to live on is inadequate to meet basic needs (see Mildred's interview, Appendix 1, Article Four). Service users cannot afford to pay their bills and feed themselves. Individuals and families do not have a 'right' to welfare and they are not given the benefit of the doubt in the system. Since social workers are agents of the government rather than advocates for the client, the service user may encounter many obstacles when asking a social worker for support and thus are left with few options. Social workers, in turn, also encounter many obstacles when trying to help clients. Social workers in Canada generally lack the autonomy to facilitate social justice or to build anything new in their everyday work worlds. In other words it is difficult to adhere to the values of social justice and build more egalitarian structures from within the context of the bureaucratic structures where social workers work and learn.

Social work education programs have traditionally provided students with a functional education in how to practice social work. So it follows, the reason their education is functional, is because it prepares social work students to match their practice with the context of the world as it is, not as it should be (Gil, 1998).

On the other hand, social work has separated itself from other disciplines by establishing its own sphere of specialized knowledge and theory. The danger in this is that the profession of social work risks creating barriers to relationships and knowledge based in the real-world context (Gergen, 2009). In addition, social workers, who often work in isolation from their professional peers, run the risk of blindly adopting the

theoretical philosophies of their co-workers (Reisch & Andrews, 2002). For example, social workers often adopt a disease/cure medical model of care in mental health settings or a 'best practice' model that follows an individualistic psychology model. These models of individual repair are reductionist and they decontextualize the service user. They do not add to the social in social work and contribute to the invisibility of issues of social justice (Specht & Courtney, 1994).

Social work academics face similar problems. Individual pursuits in the academic fields have put social pursuits and public engagement secondary. "Further, personal ambitions and pressure to gain tenure keeps these academics internally focused and unlikely to become publicly engaged" (Mackinnon, 2009: 520). Academics have to contend with competition for funding, corporate funding that dictates the direction of research, reduced public funding and criticism from peers. "For social workers, this narrow focus on individual rather than structural change is common. And as power and influence of business increasingly seeps through university walls, social interests are increasingly squeezed" (Mackinnon, 2009: 518). Universities are also hiring more sessional lecturers as a form of cheap labor that, according to Mackinnon (2009), makes the university environment more competitive. Sessional lecturers are usually front-line social workers, with graduate degrees, who work at other jobs. They have their own insecurities, making it very difficult for them to be publicly engaged in social issues.

Front-line social workers who are hired to teach classes at the university often do so, because they need extra income. They have to contend with precarious employment in their front-line work and at the university. This causes them to feel insecure because they know they need both jobs to make ends meet. It is difficult for them to be engaged in social issues because work consumes so much of their time. They fear that if they do not comply with the individualistic orientation of work culture they may lose their jobs. It is therefore, safer to be complicit than poor (Mackinnon, 2009).

3.4. Integration of Theory and Practice

A broad theoretical foundation is of importance to social work to explain its assumptions, to compare different ideologies, and to understand the reasons behind certain approaches that are used every day in social work and inquiry. Theories also help

conceptualize perspectives toward social justice (Fook, 2002, Gil, 1998). Reflecting on the tensions between ideas can also be a catalyst for change: a call to listen, reflect and engage with others (Smith, 1999).

According to Mullaly, (2002) social workers ought to have a role to play both in action and in theory development on the road ahead in order to address the broader issues and causes of problems. However, Mullaly says, "Unlike the sociological literature, the social work literature contains a dearth of discussion or explanation of the nature and causes of social problems. It is an unfortunate paradox that the helping professions in general, and social work, in particular, which deal with the victims of social problems on a daily basis, tend to accept social ills as an inherently problematic given. Consequently, they failed to provide a general definition or explanation of social problem" (2002: 6).

Mullaly (2002) like Oko (2008), points to a variety of social work theories (social pathology, social disorganization, value conflict perspective, deviant behavior perspective, labeling perspective, critical theory, constructionist perspective). A detailed examination of them is beyond the scope of this thesis which intends to address social justice issues primarily based on critical and constructivist theory. However, the varieties of theories points out that the theoretical positions social workers take largely determine how they approach problems (Lundy, 2004, Mullaly, 2002, Smith, 1999). In other words, how one sees the world (theory) determines one's values and actions. Conversely, it may also be argued that one's values and beliefs determine the theory one may use or develop.

Fraser and Solovey (2007) describe how our level of understanding determines the resolution of troubles. Social workers often appear to simplify complex problems and to apply first order solutions on second problems. However, when first order solutions are used on second order problems [Chapter Five on change], the problem does not get solved and often becomes worse. "The only way to take different or even opposite action is by moving to a different level of understanding. This kind of shift is what we presently define as …second order change" (Fraser & Solovey, 2007: 14).

Korten (2009) says we need to treat the system, not the symptoms. We need a theory that looks upstream to find the source of social problems. According to Korten (2009), if we continue to use bad theories, we risk doing more harm than good. "A bad theory can lead us to false solutions that amplify the actions that caused the problem in

the first place. Indeed, a bad theory or story can lead whole societies to persist in self-destructive behavior to the point of self-extinction" (Korten, 2009: 6-7).

Every theory explains reality from a particular perspective based on certain assumptions/principles and values. The practical implication is that theory is the foundation of the skills, techniques and attitudes social workers bring to practice (Fook, 2002). Schriver (2004) points out that theory can be categorized in two distinct paradigms: traditional/dominant paradigms or alternative/possible paradigms. The inquiry follows an alternative/possible paradigm, which will lead, I believe, to anti-oppressive social work. Assumptions are outlined to highlight the difference between individualistic and social theories and theories directed toward changes in the system. Critical theory, complexity theory which will be highlighted in the chapter on social change, and social constuctionism are also theories that come together to explain change at a social level. For example, anti-oppressive social work, constuctionism and Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed could all be subsumed under the broad category of critical theory.

Theories as models or frames for concepts do not stand by themselves as they often share many similar premises. Moreover, in reality, we often use parts of different theories in the construction of our perspectives and assumptions. For instance, a plethora of writers have presented a wide variety of frames or models of critical theory and constructionism. It is also evident that we often shift from one perspective into another for practical reasons and tend to fall back on what is familiar. Therefore, it would be impossible to incorporate all into one framework at the same time. With this in mind, I present the following as background and as a point of reference for the inquiry.

3.4.1. Assumptions behind Dominant Expert Theory

Traditionally, it has been assumed that theory brings understanding to life and experience. Theory provides a frame to understand what is 'really' going on (Gergen, 2006). In other words, theory provides direction by providing a guide or map to reality.

All theories carry assumptions (Gergen, 2006, Mullaly, 2002). According to Mullaly (2002), it is unfortunate that most social workers do not question the assumptions behind the theories they follow, blindly following the dictates of the dominant culture instead. While talking about how the oppressed buy into their own oppression, Freire

explains that "….one of the greatest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that the oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings consciousness" (1970: 51). Oppression exists because people believe in the structures that support it (Ward, 2011). Social workers buy into such theories and practices unconsciously. Theory that blames individuals for their oppression is prevalent in the North American individualistic context that surrounds social workers. Therefore, social workers are not only asking service users to adjust to oppression; we are turning our back on the pursuit of social justice. Neutrality is often the blind disguise of oppression.

The following list outlines some of the assumptions about the origin of problems from different common theories, common in social work practice outlined by Mullaly (2002: 5):

Table 1: Assumptions of Problem Resolution Perspectives:

PERSPECTIVE	ASSUMPTION ABOUT CAUSE OF PROBLEM	RESOLUTION OF PROBLEM ASSUMPTION
Social pathology	Character flaws in individual	Sick maladjusted must be treated by expert
Social disorganized	Social disorganization from rapid change causes personal disorganization	Humanitarian social care Bring equilibrium to system by minor social reforms
Value conflict	Competing interests, differential access to resources	Everyone has opportunity and resources under the same rules
Deviant behavior	Adaptation to structural arrangements that preclude achievements of social goals and expectations by legitimate ways	Create opportunities for the disadvantaged
Labeling	Powerful people label or define social reality	People define themselves
Critical theory	Social structures favor certain groups and oppress others. Oppressed vulnerable to social problems.	Transform society to reflect social equality that replaces dominate-subordinate relationships.

In most areas of social work practice, interventions are done to people in the context of therapeutic change. Gergen (2006) examines the assumptions of therapeutic realities and points out the following: "As widely recognized, traditional therapy is based on a medical model of disease and cure. Patients (clients) confront problems – typically indexed as pathologies, adjustment difficulties, dysfunctional relationships, etc. – and it is the task of the therapist to treat the problem in such a way that it is alleviated or removed ('cured'). It is the assumption of 'the problem' that underwrites the process of diagnoses and indeed, fuels the development of diagnostic criteria (e.g. the DSM)" (Gergen, 2006: 76).

Gergen (2006) further states that there are three assumptions made about communication: the realist assumption, the subjective assumption and the strategic assumption. The realist assumption says that words reflect what is real. This assumption supports the distinction between objective facts and subjective opinions according to Gergen (2006: 30). For example, diagnostic categories are assumed to be objective and can therefore scientifically measure pathology. In contrast, the subjective assumption supposes that we live in our own private worlds. This gives support to individual ideology and assumes that no one can really understand someone else. The third assumption is what Gergen calls the strategic assumption. This assumption supposes that communication is how we influence each other's actions (2006: 32). This assumption takes the perspective that goals are private and individual and that relationships are about one person manipulating another to serve their own interests.

Further Gergen (2006) highlights that the expert therapist emphasizes insight as the aim of interventions.

> "Traditional therapies, linked to the presumption of individual psychological deficit, have also focused on the individual psyche as the site of therapeutic change. Whether, for example, in terms of the transference of psychological energies, catharsis, self-understanding, self-acceptance, re-construal, or cognitive change, most therapeutic practices have been built around the assumptions that successful therapy depends primarily on a change in the mind of the individual, further, it is typically supposed, this change can be accomplished within the therapeutic relationship. The concept of the 'therapeutic breakthrough' epitomizes this point of view; once change is accomplished in the therapeutic chamber there is hope that the individual will depart emancipated from the preceding burden with which he/she entered therapy" (Gergen, 2006: 78).

Traditional therapies and social work practice draw from empiricist conceptions of knowledge (Gergen, 2006). For example, the idea of 'best practices' is that research will determine what are the best methods and the best therapy for specific kinds of problems and infirmities. It is assumed that science will reveal the truth; science is value neutral and unbiased. The assumption is that the clinician or social worker is the expert because they know more than the client. This puts the client in an inferior position to the expert (Gergen, 2006). So it follows that the client is problemized. The social worker's perspective, by virtue of being the expert, is privileged over the client's perspective (Gergen, 2006). The problem orientation in turn adopts the objectified language (psychological language) of the client. The language uses a lens of the client's deficits; dysfunctional, impaired, sick and so on. The client is not seen in context and other discourse is oppressed (Gergen, 2006).

A significant assumption about the contribution of mainstream theory is that it promotes individual agency. The individual is encouraged to make changes for themselves. The individual stands alone.

> "As many argue, there is substantial dark side to construing a world of individual agents. Where we make a fundamental distinction between self and other, we create a world of distances: me here and you there. We come to understand ourselves as basically alone and alienated. We come to prize becoming a 'self made man', who 'does it my way.' To be dependent is a sign of weakness and incapacity. To understand the world as constituted by separate individuals is also to court distrust; after all, one never has access to the private thoughts of others. And if alienated and distrustful, what is more appropriate than 'taking care of number one?' Self gain becomes an unmitigated virtue –indeed for the economist, an unavoidable rational calculus–until the ethicist comes along and pleads that we 'love the other as the self.' Loyalty, commitment, and community are all thrown into question, as all potentially interfere with 'self-realization.' Such are the views that now circulate widely through the culture" (Gergen, 2006: 25).

If we refer back to the Canadian Association of Social Worker's definition of social work, it states that social workers are concerned with individual and social problems. "Human rights and social justice are the philosophical underpinnings of social work practice. The uniqueness of social work practice is in the blend of some particular values, knowledge and skills, including the use of relationship as the basis of all

interventions and respect for the client's choice and involvement" (C.A.S.W. on-line, 2012). As Ross (1992) explained, interventionist theories can conflict with relational ways of dealing with difficulties, like those found in Indigenous communities. In the everyday world of social work in Canada, the focus of practice is on the individual.

As Gergen notes, the assumption of individual agency leads to a world of distances, alienation and distrust where self-gain becomes a virtue (2006: 25). In a culture, such as seen in North America, it is easy to see how individual agency became a virtue. In a country based on the myths of cowboys who use their individual might and cunning to settle this empty and brutish land and the self-made millionaire who everyone can be like if only we work hard enough, the hegemony of the individual is part of how one sees one's self. However, Gergen (2006) points out that there are alternatives to these assumptions.

3.4.2. Assumptions behind Alternative Paradigms

The following section highlights the alternative paradigm taken in this thesis. This is highlighted to reveal the rationale behind the methods used and the philosophical foundation of the inquiry. Critical and constructionist theory are presented as background to not only the inquiry's paradigm but also as background for anti-oppressive social work.

The traditional/dominant paradigms reflect: "masculine attributes and patriarchal perspectives" and value people based on status and whiteness (Schriver, 2004: 46). Traditional paradigms can be read as opposition to alternative world views. Alternative paradigms are alternative because they are based on different values and assumptions, not because they reject science or quantitative inquiry. According to Schriver (2004), alternative/possible paradigms possess the following characteristics:

- "value and reflect feminine attributes and feminist perspectives.
- evaluate persons worth and importance according to standards of the inherent worth and dignity of all humans, and they especially recognize the benefits of human diversity…
- Structure relations with others around recognition of the interconnected and personal nature of our relationships with other persons and with the elements of the worlds around us…
- Focus on the integrative and complementary nature of differences among people and ideas...

- Seek recognition of oppressions and the elimination of conditions and relations   that allow some persons and groups privilege at the expense of others…" (2004:57).

The above outlines dimensions of alternative paradigms that can be used to evaluate theories for inquiry and practice. Examples of theories that fit alternative paradigms are feminist theory, anti-racist, anti-oppression, critical, anarchist theories, and Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed. One such theory, which runs through this inquiry, is constructivist theory.

Conservative ideology views privilege as earned by individual, personal merit. If you work hard you will get ahead; we all have equal opportunity. In contrast, a radical perspective recognizes that some people gain from privilege in terms of class, race, gender, ability and so on. Carniol (2005) sees the roots of inequality and injustice in the abuse of power that privileges some and oppresses others. These privileges and oppressions intersect and have a multiplying effect on each other (Dominelli, 2002, Mullaly, 2002, Carniol, 2005). Freire (1970) counters this notion by calling on those who work for justice and liberation to work '**with'** others in solidarity and not **for** the oppressed in 'their' struggle, thus challenging the dynamics of top-down theories. The assumption of alternative paradigms is that we work together.

3.4.3. Critical Theory; Alternative Frameworks for Social Critique

The following discussion about critical theory is intended to provide an overview of the main premises of the theory. This section brings forward a number of theories that fall under the umbrella of critical and conflict theory to demonstrate the diversity and the flexibility of it. In addition the contrast between order and conflict theory is presented to show the difference between these two paradigms.

In social work, critical theory includes a cluster of theories that provide analysis and alternatives to social problems (Mullaly, 2002: 15). These theories contrast with what Schriver (2004), as presented above, termed the traditional/dominant paradigms. Critical theory encompasses a range of theories aimed at discovering the root causes of social issues by critiquing social and cultural arrangements. Conflict theory is one theory in the cluster of critical theories that examine power. Radical feminism, Freire's pedagogy of

the oppressed, pre-colonial theory, structural social work, anarchism and anti-oppressive social work are also included in this cluster.

Macey (2000) says theories are never politically innocent. "They express political prejudices and reproduce them, even when they deny it. To reveal those prejudices in order to neutralize them was the great ambition of the critical theory of the Frankfurt School[12], of the Barthes[13] who unmasked 'mythologies' with such sardonic glee, and of the feminist critics and historians who refused to go on being hidden from history" (2000: 1).

Conflict theory is closely identified with critical theory as both see the structures of society held together for the benefit of the dominant class, and believe this social order needs to change. Social problems result from the oppression and hegemony established from the dominant group (Mullaly, 2002).

The order perspective, in contrast to conflict theory, sees competitive individuals predisposed to disorder and therefore inclined to create structures to maintain stability. Society needs laws and prisons to maintain order. From this perspective problems stem from individual behavior and deviance from the norms of society (Mullaly, 2002). Social stability is maintained by institutions (i.e. police and social workers) helping individuals conform to social norms. From this perspective social problems are resolved by liberal adjustments to the system, such as changes to laws and policies.

Mullaly (2002) and Lundy (2004) use the order and conflict perspectives to show where the more social and emancipatory paradigms of social work theory originate. Theories are based on values and principles emanating from a particular way of seeing things and the theories, in turn, are translated into the actions that are taken. Mullaly (2002: 9) adopted the following table (modified from Horton, 1966, in Mullaly, 2002), to illustrate how our perspective shapes the way social work is understood and practiced.

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[12] "Collective term applied to the group of German philosophers, sociologists and economist associated with the Institut Fur Sozialforschung (Institute for Social Research) set up in Frankfurt am Main in 1923 and with the intellectual trend usually referred to as Critical Theory" (Macey, 2000: 139). The Frankfurt School is Marxist in philosophy (Macy, 2001).

[13] Roland Barthes (1915-80) was a French literary critic and theorist. "His fundamental concern is with the relationship between language and the social world, and with the literary forms that mediate between the two" (Macey, 2000: 31).

Table 2. Assumptions of Order and Conflict Perspectives

	ORDER	CONFLICT
Beliefs about Human Beings	competitive, contentious, individualistic, acquisitive	co-operative, collective, social
Nature of Social Institutions	must endure and regulate human interactions (political economic, educational, religious family) to avoid disaster	dynamic with no sacred standing; facilitate economic cooperation, sharing and common interests
Nature of Society	consists of interdependent and integrated institutions and a supportive ideological base; viewed as an organism or system with each part contributing to the maintenance of the whole	in a society of structural inequality the social nature of human existence is denied, with social institutions seen as serving private rather than public interests
Continuity of Social Institutions	Prevail because of agreement(consensus) among society's members	prevail in a society marked by dominant-subordinate relations because of control and coercion
Nature of Relationship Between People and Society	members are expected to conform and adapt to consensus-based social arrangements	acceptance, conformity and adaptation to a coercive and hierarchical social order is questioned
Nature of Social Problems	socialization will occasionally whereby reverence for institutions and respect for rules will not be learned; such occurrence on a large scale is a social problem	faulty socialization is more a matter of discriminatory institutions and defective rules that promote the interests of the dominant group
Approach to Social Problems	behaviour must be changed through resocialization (rehabilitation, counselling) or neutralized through formal systems of state control (criminal law, prisons, Asylums, etc.) social reform can only involve minor adjustments that are consistent with the nature of the existing system	institutions, ideology and social processes and practices must be changed to protect the social nature of human existence and promote the celebration of cultural diversity behavioural change can only involve minor adjustments consistent with cooperation and collective nature of society; massive commitment to behavioural change is a

		form of blaming the victim
Social Work Theories and Approaches	psychodynamic,systems, ecological	feminist, radical, structural, anti-racist, anti-oppressive

Conflict theory, as a critical theory, can be used to help people move toward liberation by revealing oppression. Once people understand that they are oppressed they can begin to act against their oppression. A theory of action 'with' the people according to Freire (1970) is liberating (Whitmore & Wilson, 2005). This is not to say, however, that critical theories are homogenous in their theoretical assumptions and philosophy. As a matter of fact, one critical theory may be used to critique another one. They may match on some points and differ on others, but what they have in common is they critique the power imbalance in society. For instance, Marxism and some anarchist theory agree on historical materialism but disagree on the role of the state and whether there is a role for an avant-garde. Marx wrote that the proletarians or wage laborers would bring about the revolution and that all other classes are not revolutionary but conservative (Marx & Engels, 1888). Anarchists on the other hand work from the bottom up and include all strata of society left out by Marx. In contrast however, Principles of participatory democracy, horizontalism and inclusion are fundamental value of anarchism. "The political economy approach refers to anti-capitalist, anti-racist, and feminist models based on assumptions that individual troubles are connected to structural inequalities" (Lundy, 2004: 53).

The political economy model fits with the social work value of pursuing and advancing social justice. In this role, social workers attempt to address the structure of oppression and domination at a systemic level. In other words, theory that seeks structural solutions are anti-oppressive. This tradition and associated values are reflected in a profession that embraces the pursuit of social justice in codes of ethics nationally and internationally (Lundy, 2004). Marx, having a Ph.D., has a long romance with academia and contributed much analysis to social work (Mullaly, 2007 & 2002, Reich & Andrews, 2002). Mullaly takes his theory for anti-oppressive social work from different perspectives such as "conflict and social constructionist and postmodern insights" (2002: 5). The assumption is that conflict theory examines the power disparity in society. Critical theory attempts to analysis the power disparity and looks for solutions.

3.4.4. Constructionist Theory: Alternative Framework for Social Critique

Rodwell (1998) says that constructivist philosophy is compatible with social work. She describes the theoretical elements of constructionism and constructivism the following way.

> "Basically, both emphasize human agency and assert that reality is socially and psychologically constructed. Both hold an interactional view of human behavior and a connectedness between the individual and the social environment. Both assert a reflexivity in understanding and meaning making. Both reject the 'received view' of reality in that for both there is no objective reality 'out there' to be received/perceived and understood through sensory perceptions. Instead, there is no single reality. Both assert that structures (cognitive and social) that exist beyond oneself cannot be completely objectively known due to the nature of language and social process" (1998: 19).

The table below highlights the contrast between objectivist and constructivist epistemology. In other words the following describes the contrast between the assumptions that underlie these two paradigms.

Table 3: Contrasting Objectivist and Constructivist Epistemology

Objectivist (Traditional) Epistemology	Constructivist Epistemology
1. REALITY exists 'out there' Independently of the observer	1. REALITIES are constructed as experience = the relationship between the observer and the observed.
2. ABSOLUTE TRUTH about reality is available to us.	2. TRUTHS are relative to the frame of reference of the observing systems.
3. KNOWLEDGE consists of verifiable facts about the world, people etc.	3. KNOWLEDGE is constructed as a product of the social and individual assumptions and is developed through language.
4. MEANING resides externally in symbols and combinations of symbols.	4. MEANING is constructed both internally and socially as processes of interpretation.
5. PROCESS OF KNOWING is through categorization and conceptualization.	5. PROCESS OF KNOWING is an ongoing process of interpreting present events from within the observer's interpretive framework.
6. SCIENCE is a method for discovering truth and reality.	6. SCIENCE is an interpretative process through which observers test consensually derived distinctions for their utility.
7. CAUSALITY is linear. That is, under specific conditions, if X occurs and Y follows, then X may be said to be the cause of Y.	7. RECURSIVITY Each element in a system provides conditions of operation for other elements in the system.
8. PERSON Behavior is fully determined and could be explained if only we understood all relations between all variables.	8. PERSON Behavior is indeterminate. People have agency and have choice, constrained by recursive relations between self and the environment.

(Fisher, 1991: 15)

According to Gergen (2006), constructionist thought flips the idea of theory as maps that show the way and provide understanding. Traditionally, theory is political and moral because it defines the way one is to go. In other words all theories come from a

particular frame of reference projected from a particular cultural lens. For constructionists, in contrast, the process of inquiry and questions come before theory and thus shape theory according to what comes from relational interaction. Theory is therefore created after practice rather than before practice. The assumption about values therefore is rather than following a feminist or best practices theory let's say, constructionists values multiple perspectives, "and caring that our own perspectives do not dominate, suppress, or silence others. These are also times in which the constructionist emphasis on the social origins of meaning nourish the way we prize collaborative practices, mutual appreciation, and peace-building. No, social constructionist ideas do not give us the rock-solid reasons for our values. But for me, this is an added strength of constructionism: it does not declare itself as fundamentally true, thus condemning all that is not constructionism. Again, this supports my politics and values by implication – but better by implication than proclamation" (Gergen, September, 2011, on-line).

Constructionist notions shift from individual agency to coordinated relationships (Gergen, 2006). "In effect, meaningful communication in any given relationship ultimately depends on an extended array of relationships, not only 'right-here, right-now,' but how it is that you and I are related to a variety of other persons, and they to still others –and ultimately, one may say, to the relational conditions of society as a whole" (Gergen, 2006: 43). The assumption is that change and understanding are produces of collaborative action that do not dominate or silence people. Constructionism is defined by the process of dialogue and begins with the social rather than beginning with the individual (Gergen, 2006).

Constructionism is pragmatic. It does not problemise or label issues by seeking 'the single solution' to a problem, such as the best theory that promotes best practices. Instead through dialogue themes and agreed upon courses of action are generated through relationship. It is the consequence of action that determines the way forward. So it follows that the language of deficit discourse is transformed to a diversity of conceptions that are built on strength and appreciation of the complexity of the social.

Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed (1970) links to concepts of critical constructivism. As Kincheloe explains, "[c]ritical constructivists reiterate the notion that

knowledge is not a substance that can be deposited like money in a bank (Freire, 1970) and taken out when the time for transmission arrives" (2005: 3-4). Reflection is necessary for educators as well because they need to overcome the influences that surround them and cause them to accept the mechanistic concepts of education. Freire (1970) speaks to the conception of action and meaning that cross pollinate critical theory and constuctionism respectively. The essence of constructionism is meaning making (Bodner, 1986, Fisher, 1991, Rodwell, 1998).

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of social work education and the work that social workers do. Assumptions that underpin the theories that inform social work practice were explored while emphasizing theory for social transformation. This chapter presented constructionist theory as the golden thread that runs through the inquiry. Constuctionism fits the premise of the inquiry because it sees people as having agency to construct their own solutions and relations. In addition, constructionism is a relational theory that assumes that people can work together. Relational theories move away from the assumption that the expert (social worker) must use an intervention to fix problems.

Theory evolves from the process and is grounded in the method. This congruence between theory, method and focus are particularly important as one seeks to explore social justice from an anti-oppressive perspective, and this inquiry seeks places where there is integrity between process and content.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROCESS OF THE INQUIRY AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4. Introduction

This chapter covers the anti-oppressive premise of the inquiry, the approach taken in the inquiry, its design, method, and how the inquiry will be disseminated. The approach includes the point of departure of the inquiry. The design of the inquiry is constructivist, exploratory and phenomenenological. The discussion on method includes sections on engaging the partner/participants, collecting and processing information, the unique contribution of the inquiry and ethical considerations.

In the previous chapter alternative theoretical paradigms were outlined (Schriver, 2004). These paradigms were outlined as traditional/dominant and alternative/possible. I chose to follow the latter in this inquiry. Critical theory and constructionist theory were also discussed in the previous chapter. These theories, in particular, are the foundation of the anti-oppressive premise of the inquiry and the basis of the research methods used.

Guba and Lincoln (2004: 17) emphasis that paradigms as in belief system or worldview direct the method used in an inquiry. One's worldview comes first as it determines what approach one will take. "Questions of the method are secondary to questions of paradigm, which we define as the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method, but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways" (Guba & Lincoln in Nagy Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004: 17).

4.1. Point of Departure of the Inquiry's Form

Knowledge is political. In the book *Beyond Method*, Wilson (1983) points out that research is more than a way to acquire knowledge about social structure and social interaction, but rather is "a form of social interaction expressive of certain structural and normative properties endemic to advanced industrial societies" (Wilson, 1983: 247). Furthermore, Wilson (1983: 250) says, "The asymmetrical power relationship between social scientist and subject that characterizes the research process is but one aspect of the

wider social division of labor." Wilson (1983) sets the groundwork for developing an anti-oppressive research process. Carrying on from Wilson, one could ask the following about epistemology:

> "Defined narrowly, epistemology is the study of knowledge and justified belief. As the study of knowledge, epistemology is concerned with the following questions: What are the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge? What are its sources? What is its structure, and what are its limits? As the study of justified belief, epistemology aims to answer questions such as: How we are to understand the concept of justification? What makes justified beliefs justified? Is justification internal or external to one's own mind? Understood more broadly, epistemology is about issues having to do with the creation and dissemination of knowledge in particular areas of inquiry."
>
> -Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,
> *First published Wed 14 Dec, 2005*, retrieved February 3, 2008.

This inquiry does not make claim to any truth. It is interested in meaning, how participants' perspectives influence their actions. "What constructivism allows is that we do not have to get caught up in whether or not someone's view is right or wrong, correct or incorrect. Rather, given a particular position, we can examine the consequences of holding that position" (Fisher, 1991: 17). Positions can be challenged on the basis of their consequences rather than on their correctness. Further, Rodwell (1998) informs that the measure of constructivist inquiry is in the process. The inquiry process is evaluated by its authenticity, which Rodwell describes as a "dimension of constructivist research rigor focusing on the quality of the research process, rather than on the research product. Composed of fairness, ontological, educative, catalytic, and tactical aspects" (1998: 253).

4.2. Anti-Oppressive Premise of Inquiry

Mullaly developed his theory of anti-oppressive social work from conflict and social constructionist theory informed by post-modern insights (2002: 5). As Mullaly admits, he constructed his theory from parts of theories that fit together. The theory's complexity of ideas, meaning, and experience is used in the inquiry because it is in accord with social justice.

The *Canadian Code of Ethics* (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2005) and its position on social justice and the premise of anti-oppressive social work also assist in establishing a foundation for the inquiry.

4.2.1. Values and Principles of Anti-oppressive Social Work

While there are variations, theories and practitioners that ascribe to an anti-oppressive approach are characterized by the following core values:

- "share the values of equality, inclusion, empowerment and community,
- understand the nature of society and the state of an individual's consciousness [to be] critically related (Howe: 121) and therefore link the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of individuals to material, social, and political conditions,
- link personal troubles and public issues,
- see power and resources as unequally distributed, leading to personal and institutional relationships of oppression and domination,
- promote critical analysis,
- encourage, support, and 'center' the knowledges and perspectives of those who have been marginalized and incorporate these perspectives into policy and practice,
- articulate the multiple and intersecting basis of oppression and domination while not denying the unique impact of various oppressive constructs,
- conceive of social work as a social institution with a potential to either contribute to, or to transform, the oppressive social relations which govern the lives of many people,
- support the transformative potential of social work to work with diverse individuals, groups, and communities,
- have a vision of an egalitarian future" (Campbell, 2003: 1).

The anti-oppressive approach, incorporating the value of an egalitarian future and the rejection of all forms of inequality, clearly goes beyond utilitarianism and simple distributive justice as espoused in the *Canadian Social Work Code of Ethics* (2005). The anti-oppressive approach not only provides social workers with an opportunity to reflect on their own value system, but it also rocks the boat of social work conventions.

Potts and Brown in their essay, *Becoming an Anti-oppressive Researcher*, which can be found in the book *Research as Resistance*, (edited by Brown & Strega, 2005: 206-262) provide three emergent tenets of anti-oppressive research:

"1. Anti-oppressive research is **social justice** and resistance in process and in outcome.

Choosing to be an anti-oppressive researcher means choosing to do research and support research that challenges the status quo and its process as well as its outcomes. It seeks to resist oppression embedded in ourselves, our work and, our world.

2. Anti-oppressive research recognizes that all knowledge is **socially constructed** and political.

So how do we know what we know? This is a question of epistemology, and it is key for understanding an anti-oppressive approach to research. From an anti-oppressive perspective, knowledge does not exist in and of itself, isolated from people. Rather, it is produced through the interaction of people, and as all people are socially located (in their race, gender, ability, class identities, and so on) with biases, privileges, and differing power relations, so too is the creation of knowledge socially located, socially constructed. Recognizing that knowledge is socially constructed means understanding that knowledge doesn't exist "out there" but is embedded in people and the power relations between us. It recognizes that "truth" is a verb; it is created, it is multiple: truth does not exist, it is made. Therefore, in anti-oppressive research, we are not looking for a "truth"; we are looking for meaning, for understanding, for the power change.

3. The anti-oppressive research process is all about **power** and **relationships**.

In anti-oppressive research, constant attention is given to these relations, and care is taken to shift power from those removed from what is trying to be "known" to those closest to it - that is, those people with epistemic privilege or lived experience of the issue under study."

This is in line with Freire's critical form of theory that is radically democratic and constructive. "Critical constructivism's respect for subjugated knowledge helps construct a research situation where the experience of the marginalized is viewed as an important way of seeing the socio-educational whole, not simply as a curiosity to be reported. Such a research perspective is counter-hegemonic (i.e., a threat to entrenched power) and radically democratic as it uses the voice of the subjugated to formulate a reconstruction of the dominant educational structure" (Kincheloe, 2005: 15).

For the reason stated above, in this inquiry the testimonials that echo the understanding of the participating activists will provide the context by discovering their worldviews and their perceptions of their experiences. The stories reveal how the world shapes people and also how people act on the world by the choices they make. The inquirer strives to present a coherent framework where there is congruence between philosophy, method and subject matter (anti-oppressive structural social work).

I take an insider anti-oppressive standpoint, in line with Brown and Strega's (2005) claim that research can be resistance if there is congruence between methodology and epistemology. This is fundamental to an anti-oppressive stance.

Anti-oppressive change must happen on a structural level if it is to be sustainable. Critiquing ourselves and what it means to be radical social workers requires constructing alternatives from outside of the North American individualistic ethos that blames individuals for being oppressed.

As Mullaly says, "Anti-oppressive social work at the structural level attempts to change those institutional arrangements, social processes, and social practices that work together to benefit the dominant group at the expense of subordinate groups" (2002: 193).

Just as constructionism, Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed and anti-oppressive theory intersect and support each other, so is it true that democracy is not possible if any group is subordinated. In keeping with this questioning of knowledge and belief, research as resistance asks whose knowledge is being privileged. In this inquiry, I aim to reflect a change in social arrangements that flip the privilege of the oppressed and the privileged.

4.3. Constructionist Premise of Inquiry

The idea that knowledge does not exist isolated from people is a social constructivist one. As Kincheloe states in his book *Critical Constructivism*, "the world is socially constructed – what we know about the world always involves a knower and that which is to be known. How the knower constructs the known constitutes what we think of as reality" (2005: 2). Knowledge is socially constructed by where we are located historically, culturally and in terms of power:

- "All knowers are historical and social subjects. We all come from a 'somewhere' which is located in a particular historical time frame. These spatial and temporal settings always shape the nature of our construction of the world.
- Not only is the world socially and historically constructed, but so are people and the knowledge people possess. We create ourselves with the cultural tools at hand. We operate and construct the world and our lives on a particular social, cultural and historical playing field (2005: 2).
- Critical constructivists are concerned with the exaggerated role power plays in these constructions and validation processes. Critical constructivists are particularly interested in the ways these

processes help privilege some people and marginalize others"
(Kincheloe, 2005: 3).

Bodner, when writing about constuctionism says that knowledge is not transferred intact from the mind of the teacher to the student but "knowledge is constructed in the mind of the student" (1986: 873).

Social constructionism recognizes the preponderance of influence the social has on how a person makes meaning. Here communication and self in relation to others and the world are key to how we make meaning as well as how we change the meanings we have made (Raskin, 2002: 13). As Fisher says, "Meaning is constructed both internally and socially as a process of interpretation" (1991: 15).   How we construe the world determines what meanings we give to our experience, what is emphasized and what we do to make change. As a result, constuctionism challenges objectivist mechanistic[14] claims to the truth as well as the individualism of the biomedical models so common in North America (Gergen, 2006). Truth is neither a linear nor a measurable something out there. Objectivist mechanistic and therefore biomedical models decontextualize people from environment. These models reduce people to parts rather than seeing them as part of the whole (Fook, 2002).

The issue of choosing to work from either an objectivist or constructivist epistemology is important for social work.

> "The issue is important for social workers because objectivism justifies the exercise of power by certain groups and individuals over other groups and individuals. This is so because if "I" can claim access to the truth and to knowledge that "you" do not have access to, I am in a privileged position. We establish these positions through differential access to opportunities and the differential exercise of abilities. Our power is established, those in power usually not only seek to sustain their own power positions, but also come to see themselves as being entirely justified in doing so. The acquiescence of the subordinates, the power addressees, consolidates and sustains the power holders' position such that they may accept the

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[14]   "Critical constructivism recognizes the reductionism of viewing the universe as a well-oiled machine and the human mind as a computer. Such ways of seeing subvert an appreciation of the amazing life force that inhabits both the universe and human beings – a life force that positivism works tirelessly to deny. This machine cosmology has positioned human beings as living in a dead world, a lifeless universe. Ontologically, this Cartesianism has separated individuals from their lifeless surroundings, undermining any organic interconnection of the person to the cosmos. The life-giving complexity of the inseparability of human and world has been lost, and the social study of people has been removed (abstracted) from context" (Kincheloe, 2005: 83-84.

established order, rebel or suffer it. No matter which way the power holders and power addressees act, so long as it is in reference to the power structure, then that form of reference affirms the "objective" reference of power." (Fisher, 1991: 14).

Constuctionism validates meaning rather than assumptions and shares power. People construct meaning from their own reference points and deconstruct meaning to build new ones through recursion, commonality and fit (Fisher, 1991). "Construing is the process of giving meaning to events… we use emotional-cognitive processes to bring forth our experiences of events and our interpretations of those experiences" (Fisher, 1991: 35). We all construct our knowledge from particular historical and social contexts. Accordingly examining alternative knowledge helps facilitate broader and deeper understandings (Kincheloe, 2005). Coherence "means that as we construe, we actively fit current events into our pre-existing frameworks" (Fisher, 1991: 37). Fit means that our actions worked (Fisher, 1991: 39). If actions work, they can be assimilated. If they do not work, they can be deconstructed and the process can begin again. Constructive alternativism is the assumption that all our meanings can be revised or replaced (Fisher, 1991: 41). By sharing and reflecting upon our own ways of knowing and considering other perspectives we come to new understanding.

4.3.1. Constructionist Hermeneutics

Interpretive "hermeneutics is a form of philosophical inquiry that focuses on the cultural, social, political and historical nature of research. Hermeneutics maintains that meaning-making cannot be quarantined from where one stands or is placed in the web of social reality" (Kincheloe, 2005: 21). Kincheloe (2005) notes that constructionism can move one to higher orders of conscious awareness as it enables one to make a distinction between describing a phenomenon and understanding how power shapes the world through a dialectic process. Informed by hermeneutics, critical constructivists understand that any act of rigorous knowledge production involves:

- "Connecting the object of inquiry to the many contexts in which it is embedded
- Appreciating the relationship between researcher and that being researched
- Connecting the making of meaning to human experience

- Making use of textual forms of analysis while not losing sight that living breathing human beings are the entities around which and with which meaning is being made
- Building a bridge between these forms of understanding and informed action" (Kincheloe, 2005: 21).

By understanding our historical location, we come to understand how our perceptions have been shaped. The hermeneutic circle is described by Rodwell as: "a circular conversation among and between interested parties (including relevant texts), wherein perspectives and insights are shared, tested, and evaluated" (1998: 256). People learn through dialogue and relationship. Rodwell (1998) says that social transformation can be part of constructivist research because of its participatory process. The hermeneutic dialectic, as described by Rodwell is "the process within the hermeneutic circle where perspectives are compared and placed in contradiction so that, through testing and evaluation, a higher level of sophistication can be achieved" (1998: 256).

In the inquiry, a circle was formed by examining participant interviews and the literature. Rodwell sees the researcher as an "an agent of change" (1998: 86) and that participants can change through the dialectic process by gaining understanding and being empowered. The writer, however, takes a different view. In the inquiry all participants, me included, are agents of change; we share ideas to broaden the perspectives of the reader. The constructivist process in the inquiry takes an egalitarian perspective where all, the reader included, are involved in an ongoing dialectic process of discovery.

4.3.2. Complexity

Complexity theory states that, "complex systems interact with multiple contexts and possess the capacity for self-organization and creative innovation" (Kincheloe, 2005: 28). Awareness of the complexity of life expands one's understanding beyond linear causality to a broader understanding of the world according to Kincheloe (2005). Understanding and meaning are seen as interconnecting webs. This is in stark opposition to reductionism and informs constuctionism theory which strives to see the relationships between things.

Complexity theory and constuctionism are intimately related. Both are premised on interrelated sets of connections or networks and the importance of context. The following aspects of complexity, according to Kincheloe, inform constuctionism:

- "Things-in-the-world often involve far more than what one notices at first glance.
- Things that appear isolated and fixed are parts of larger, ever-changing processes.
- The way one perceives an object may change dramatically when one encounters it in another context.
- Knowledge of the world is always shaped by the position of the knowledge producer.
- Ignoring relationships that connect ostensibly dissimilar objects may provide us with a distorted view of them.
- Windows into revolutionary new understandings may be opened by exploring the contradictions and asymmetries of the social, physical, psychological and educational spheres" (Kincheloe, 2005: 30).

4.4. Approach of Inquiry

The approach of inquiry is linked to anti-oppressive social work, constuctionism and complexity theory. The approaches are interconnected and value relational meaning making, sharing power and recognize that actions happen in context. The approach used in the inquiry strives to be egalitarian and to acknowledge the interconnection of all life.

The inquiry is a qualitative study. Strauss and Corbin (1998: 10) describe qualitative research as "any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification." The qualitative approach is congruent with constructionist research. Rodwell (1998) explains that aggregately gathered data does not fit comfortably with constructivist research. Qualitative research methods fit the complexity of describing the understanding people have of their world. "Qualitative methods are preferred because of their intersubjective focus and adaptability in dealing with multiple, less aggregatable realities, which are of interest to constructivists" (Rodwell, 1998: 57). Qualitative inquiry is the only approach that matches an inquiry based on anti-oppressive, and constructionist premises, as the inquiry incorporates rich interviews and the experience of participants (Creswell, 2009, Rodwell, 1998, Groenewald, 2004). Further, Rodwell (1998) explains that qualitative methods are preferred in constructionist research because they adapt to many realities. Qualitative

methods "allow easier access to the biases of the investigator and are more sensitive to mutual shaping influences" (Rodwell, 1998: 260). Similarly, meaning is central in a phenomenolgical approach taken in the inquiry. Phenomenology seeks to stimulate the growth of the reconstruction of perceptions therefore qualitative method also fit with this approach (Halldorsdottir, 2012: 50).

The inquiry utilizes an examination of literature on issues related to social justice and change as well as interviews with activists. Doing phenomenological studies can be interpretive/constructionist. "People construct meanings from phenomena and make constructs, which are in turn treated like phenomena by others" (Halldorsdottir, 2000: 47). The inquiry employs conversational interviewing and written responses in order to capture and safeguard the context and meaning that participants wish to convey. The aim is to privilege the stories and meanings of participants. The fundamental nature of the inquiry determines that first person content, with the center of attention directed to the political or activist underpinning of life experience, should shape the inquiry. Oral or written narrations with a focus on political change provide the materials and context for a collaborative construction. The emerging narratives from the inquiry highlight how we construct what we imagine to be a reality through critical pedagogy.

4.5. Design of the Inquiry

Research design calls for congruence between the needs of any particular inquiry, its purpose, and the theory followed or constructed. In addition, "A research design describes a flexible set of guidelines that connect theoretical paradigms first to strategies of inquiry and second to methods for collecting empirical materials" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008: 33). As such, the needs of this inquiry require a design developed from a particular philosophical and ideological standpoint. Therefore, the design of the inquiry is exploratory, descriptive, phenomenological and contextual.

4.5.1. Exploratory Inquiries

Cherry, (2000: 12–13) describes the use of an exploratory research approach as being, "very useful when we know little about phenomena or group of people that begin to merge with similar human service needs. Exploratory research gives us a broad picture

of what is going on." Constructivism inquiry is exploratory because it does not start with a hypothesis. The process allows data to emerge and results cannot be generalized (Morris, 2006).

The literature and the perceptions of activists will be explored in the inquiry. I will also examine and compare these perceptions to discover possible patterns and themes. Finding out, through exploration, what participants agree about and what they perceive differently will be useful in knowing more about the ways of activists who work toward social justice.

4.5.2. Phenomenological Inquiries

The inquiry brings phenomenology into play to capture the lived experience and perspectives of the participants. "The goal of qualitative phenomenological research is to describe a 'lived experience' of a phenomenon" (Waters, 2012: 1, on-line, retrieved June 12, 2012).

Halldorsdottir (2000) advises that the inquirer begin the process of inquiry in silent reflection and read about the phenomenon one wants to explore. Silence helps to empty the inquirer of preconceived ideas. Reading helps to expand ideas about the construction of the phenomenon in one's mind.

Creswell (2009: 13) tells us that phenomenology generally takes place with a small sample of people. This inquiry is phenomenological as it lets the process discover the meaning of the essence of what the activist partners present in order to capture the lived experience of others and the meanings that they ascribe to their experience. "Phenomenological research is a qualitative strategy in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants in the study" (Creswell, 2009: 231). Radford (2005: 165) makes the point that we cannot know the life story of another because we do not know their history or know where memories fit in the context of another's life. We can, however, access our own life stories, which give us reference points for understanding the lives and context of the experience of others. In this inquiry the perceptions of participants are formed from their lived experiences and the process of interviewing them brings out their meaning (Rossman & Rallis, 1998: 72).

Using a phenomenological approach, researchers can examine their own assumptions and emotions. These reflections are recorded in order to give the project a backdrop consisting of the researchers' own reactions as well as their cultural bias or assumptions. This way of self-reflecting is ongoing throughout the process.

In phenomenology it is expected that one suspend all theoretical and philosophical assumptions to allow the extraction and description of sensual experience in a purer form. Phenomenology tries to suspend any pre-conceived notions that inevitably interact with the subject under investigation. Bracketing is used to corridor off the experience and meaning of the interviews and dialogue in order to eliminate any assumptions, theories, or preconceived ideas that could colour the meaning of the subject's experience (Cohen, Kahn & Steeves 2000: 7). Kahn (in Cohen, 2000: 65) says that writing field notes to describe what cannot be discerned by the interviews such as physical environment can also be used to reduce bias and assumptions by reflecting on our own perceptions (Cohen, et al 2000: 85, Kirby, 2008: 35).

Phenomenology sees the world of experience as having many different realities and meanings for individuals (Palys, 1997: 16). The places where these experiences meet and intersect provide themes that are used to legitimize reality or perceptions. The philosophy that grounds phenomenology seeks to eliminate prejudice and bias by removing itself from the theory or assumptions of any discipline (Creswell, 2009).

4.5.2.1. Phenomenological Contextualization of the Inquiry

Phenomenology considers that people are part of and effected by their environment. Thus the inquiry can be defined as contextual because it considers the social and historical context that surrounds participants' narratives. The richness of the interviews is also appreciated within the context where individual experience occurs. It's not just a matter of what goes on in one's head, but the influences, the interactions, and the relationship between them give meaning to individual experience. Cohen, et al (2000: 3) tells us that: "phenomenological research is used to answer questions of meaning. This method is most useful when the task at hand is to understand an experience as it is understood by those who are having it." Phenomenology incorporates the concept of lived experience, lived body, live human relationships, and live time in analysis. These

elements provide a context that shapes and explains why and how different people can experience the same thing but perceive it very differently (Cohen, et al, 2000: 3-6). Below Radford explains why autobiography is preferable to biography.

> "Autobiography is preferable to biography, because the person writing the autobiography is the same person who has lived and experienced the life. The autobiographer has intimate knowledge of events and contexts that the biographer could only approximate. The author of an autobiography seeks the connecting thread in the history of her life. In memory, she singled out and accentuates moments that are experienced as significant, while others fade into forgetfulness: "from an endless, countless multiplicity. What is worth recording has been pre-selected" (Dilthey, 1906/1976b, p. 215). Any particular action or event derives its significance and meaning from its relationship to the totality of the person's life and its place between past and future, which can now be charted. However, the autobiographer can never state absolutely, what the significance of any event is or will be since the autobiographer's life is still ongoing" (Radford, 2005: 164).

It should be noted that by reading what has been written in the inquiry, some of the writer's ideas, perceptions and biases have already been revealed. Just the fact that I wrote a proposal and came up with preliminary questions demonstrates that I have pre-conceived ideas on what would be considered important. According to Rodwell (1998), in the interpretive position, values are expected. "The inquirer is value bound by the inquirer's choice of problem to be researched; in the framing, bounding, and focusing of that problem; by the theory chosen to guide the investigation; by the inquiry paradigm chosen to inform the design and data collection; by the values that are inherent in the environment of the inquiry; and in the interpretation of findings. These values must be explicit if the inquiry is to produce meaningful results" (Rodwell, 1998: 17-18).

Bias and pre-conceived ideas can be lessened by self reflection and diligence but never totally eliminated. This suggests that it is still necessary for me to be open and to be surprised by the perceptions of the participating activists and to privilege their voices above my own. I also believe it is necessary to reveal my own thoughts and perceptions in order to achieve transparency in the interest of sharing power. In addition, in a constructivist inquiry the participatory egalitarian process requires the removal of the researcher off center stage to be replaced by a web of interactions and meaning' (Gergen, 1999). We make meaning together.

4.5.3. How the Design and Approach Fit Together in the Inquiry

Phenomenology is used in the inquiry to construct understanding and meaning with the participants, so it is congruent with social constructionism. Both seek meaning and both see reality constructed from experience. Truth is subjective. Both are exploratory and descriptive. Relationships between people, social interactions and human experience make meaning according to both phenomenology and constuctionism. Meaning is created together with others and the world. As such, meaning is socially constructed. In the inquiry emphasis is placed on the experience of participants over ideology and method, in keeping with these assumptions. As well, emphasizing participant/partner experience and incorporating their input into the inquiry is anti-oppressive because it encourages their self-determination and works 'with' people rather than on them (Dominelli, 2002). Given that this inquiry looks at meaning to create understandings, the literature used to orientate the inquiry and the inquiry are both seen as constructions.

As stated above, anti-oppressive theory was developed from conflict and social constructionist theory (Mullaly, 2002: 5). Since a large part of the literature used in the inquiry was taken from social work, alternative publishers, and writers that write about social issues, the inquiry fits with conflict theory and therefore is an anti-oppressive approach. Potts and Brown (2005: 206) also state that anti-oppressive research challenges the status quo in process and outcome. Challenging the status quo fits the social work and the activist ethic of facilitating social justice. The approach adopted by the inquiry is constructionist and phenomenological as it constructs meaning and recognizes that meanings are constructed from lived experience (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). It also recognizes power relations and is critical of historical and oppressive contexts. Refusing to be neutral, the present approach is explicitly critical and political (Mullaly, 2002).

The approach of the inquiry fits an anti-oppressive paradigm as it asks participants about their visions for an egalitarian future. The approach of the inquiry and its theory fit features of anti-oppressive social work and social justice of egalitarianism, freedom from oppression and domination, and participatory democracy on a continuum from the personal to the structural (Campbell, 2003, Dominelli, 2002). Pursuing or working for social justice frames the ideal state as a goal of action and of process.

Democratic practice in the construction of theory and in process is what I aspire to in the inquiry.

The design, approach and the construction of theory that underscore the inquiry are critical, constructivist and anti-oppressive. This fits with privileging the voices and participation of the interviewees over any theory and over objective approaches. It looks for meaning in first-person experience by using activists' perceptions as a way to make new meanings outside of the dominant social work discourse. "In their search for ways to produce democratic and evocative knowledges, critical constructivists become detectives of new ways of seeing and constructing the world. In this context they come to value knowledges and forms of meaning- making traditionally dismissed by dominant culture and mainstream academics" (Kincheloe, 2005: 4).

The final construction of the inquiry is created with and from what participants said in their interviews and any further input they desired. The interviews were conducted in an open way that allowed participants to lead the conversation and to fit their memories into the context of their own lives.

4.6. Method of Inquiry

Pre-conceived methods cannot be imposed on phenomenological research according to Groenewald (2004). When doing constructivist and phenomenological inquiry, the design and method emerge from participant perspectives, relationship, and the experience of the process of inquiry.

> "The research process develops according to an *emergent design*, that comes from the experience rather than being totally developed a priori. No researcher will know enough beforehand about the context and the multiple realities that will emerge to adequately devise a design. Exposure to the special circumstances and the unpredictable interactions will determine what is interesting and important to be understood, and who should participate in the co-construction. All of the actors, values, and peculiarities of the environment are allowed to shape the character of the research design and process" (Rodwell, 1998: 56).

According to Groenewald (2004), one's epistemological position comes from a set of beliefs or paradigm. Firstly, my epistemological position largely derives from the perspectives of the activist participants expressed in the interviews and the literature.

Secondly, the participants' perspectives on social justice and change shape the process of inquiry and its description. The themes that emerge from the data construct the theory.

The inquiry is a co-construction of the inquirer, participants and literature. Rodwell describes co-construction in the following way: "in relational conversation, the dialogic and dialectical process by which research participants, together with the inquirer, create a reality and share an understanding of it" (1998: 254). The inquiry explores and describes the perceptions of activists about their experiences of facilitating change, what keeps them involved in activist work, what they think a just society might look like, and what needs to be done to realize their vision as well as their values, philosophy, and perceptions. This final point is emphasized because it reveals what social work's direction could be.

4.6.1. Starter Questions

Morris (2006: 212) instructs that researchers who do constructivist studies theoretically start with no pre-determined questions as they engage participants in the formulation of the questions for the inquiry. On the other hand, preliminary questions can be formulated to stimulate and guide discussion. According to Rodwell (1998), the inquirer develops foreshadowed questions to suggest hunches about what she/he may perceive as wrong or missing and what the problem is according to the inquirers' perception. "Therefore, foreshadowed questions about the concepts to be investigated grow out of the inquirer's context and perceptions" (Rodwell, 1998: 118). The questions, however, take on new shapes as the inquiry evolves with the participants. The conversational interviews provide a wide lens whereby the participants are enabled to stretch the perceptions that the inquirer began with. Questions "take shape based on what is important to all those who are participating in the inquiry" and further "they must remain fluid in order to allow the process to emerge" (Rodwell, 1998: 119).

Initially I offered questions to stimulate thoughts about participants' views on the direction of the inquiry. These questions were offered as starter questions in keeping with the theme, assumptions and design of the inquiry. As I engaged others to become part of this endeavor by asking them to be either interviewed or to submit their responses in writing, they were all given copies of the proposal which included the questions. With the

participants' agreement, interviews were conducted as conversation in order to preserve the context of the participant's narrations using the questions as a focus. This facilitated the telling of unique stories by the participants rather than me determining where emphasis is placed. The participant who chose to respond in writing was free to shape the direction of his responses and chose to shape his writing by using the questions below:

1. What are activists' lived experiences of building alternatives?

2. What were the influences that inspired individuals to become activists?

3. How do activists maintain commitment to activism?

4. What obstacles get in the way of successfully meeting activists' goals for sustainable change?

5. What do activists imagine an inclusive and just society might look like?

6. How can we make what you imagine a reality? What needs to be done?

4.6.2. Literature Exploration

Creswell (1994: 31) says that literature can be used in a qualitative inquiry to compare and contrast themes that emerge from an inquiry. Such a method is generally referred to as the literature control. In a later edition of Creswell's book, he says that the literature "may also include conceptual articles or thought pieces that provide frameworks for thinking about topics" (Creswell, 2009: 29). Rather than the 'truth', themes that emerge fill in gaps in our understanding and meaning of what is needed to facilitate social justice.

The inquiry diverges from Creswell's conception of a literature control. In order to be true to the intent of privileging participants' meaning, the literature is used to build and examine themes and to orientate the reader. The literature is mainly used to explore ideas further rather than as a literature control. The literature is not "control"; it is a way of verifying or validating what the participants are saying.

4.6.3. Engaging Participants-Sampling

According to Potts and Brown (in Brown & Strega, 2005: 269) sampling in constructivist and anti-oppressive research is done for very different reasons than it is in positivist research. Rather than using a sampling strategy for representatives or validity,

anti-oppressive research is "done more for community building, empowerment, and a better understanding." In addition, they add, "sampling in anti-oppressive research is seldom random." In some types of research, the way samples are chosen is for the richness of information (Crabtree & Miller, 1999: 34), as in this inquiry. "Sampling is a power laden decision and seen as one of many political acts in research. In this, ideally, an outsider researcher is never the sole source of invitations to participate. Ideally, it is a community of participants/insider researchers, who do the inviting/including." Anti-oppressive research aims to share power. Steeves (2000: 50 in Cohen) cautions that "one of the tenets of hermeneutic phenomenological research is to see informants not in terms of groups of individual characteristics that can be seen as variables but as people who offer a picture of what it is like to be themselves as they make sense of an important experience."

Time and again the voices of politicians, policy makers and those in positions of power (academics and social workers for instance) are privileged. Their privilege has sustained the status quo as reflected in the writing of history and the views often represented in research. Therefore, it is important to clarify the criterion for individuals that joined me in the inquiry. I engaged individuals who have a vision of another possible world and are more engaged in processes of resistance than in political reform. In other words, individuals who look for structural anti-oppressive change in line with a vision of a horizontal politic helped to construct the inquiry. In one way or another, these activists stated that their ultimate desire is to work for change that will make the world better for everyone by improving the context in which change happens. They are people who have challenged oppressive systems of power in pursuit of a just society and in activist forms of resistance. Carniol (2005) states that social movements and activists create alternative knowledge and practices that are highly relevant to social work (2005: 148). Activists are the people who work for change on the front lines. They contribute to building a framework that would lead to other possibilities. They are willing to explore and go for second order structural change. The inquiry uses the following definitions to describe activism, activist and advocacy.

- "Activism: A doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action especially in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue.

- Activist: noun of activism" (Merrian-Webster Dictionary, retrieved May 13, 2012).
- "Advocate: one that pleads the cause of another; specifically: one that pleads the cause before a tribunal of judicial court" (Merrian-Webster Dictionary, retrieved May 13, 2012).

The terms advocate and activist, although they often overlap, are nevertheless distinct. An activist is someone who not only supports or promotes social causes but also challenges oppressive systems of power in pursuit of social justice. As a noun, advocate typically refers to someone who is an armchair activist and, as a verb, it is not broad enough to include direct action. An advocate often denotes someone who lobbies or works to reform current systems whereas an activist can denote protest, advocacy, and direct action. Solidarity movements are also more closely identified with activists than advocates.

I use the term activist in this inquiry as it is a more inclusive term that is commonly used by those who are involved in direct action and those who are closer to social justice and solidarity movements. The term advocate although important to social change is more commonly used in social work than by people at the grassroots. Philosophically, it can be argued that both terms can denote fighting in support of the people, however, they are used in different contexts.

The inquiry used purposive sampling that is explained by Berg (1998: 229) as follows: "when developing a purposive sample, researchers use special knowledge or expertise about some group to select subjects, who represent this population. In some instances, purposive samples are selected after field investigations of some group, in order to ensure that certain types of individuals or persons demonstrate certain attributes are included in the study." As I was looking for a paradigm outside of the familiar social work milieu, I chose to speak with people from outside the profession. As an insider, or someone who also is connected to activist groups, whenever possible I linked with individuals in activist circles who are known to each other. These networks of people tend to support each other and share comparable perspectives. As a person who already has links to social activists, I can approach possible participants with whom I have already established a degree of trust. In the spirit of constructivist anti-oppressive research and balancing power, I partner with participants and therefore do not separate

myself from them. This requires that I remain conscious of my interactions and the process throughout.

Initially I put the word out across networks to ask for suggestions of who to include. This allowed for input from a number of people. I asked reputable activists whom I should include. These individuals are often defined as gatekeepers, or people who have knowledge or power in particular contexts (Rodwell, 1998). "The gatekeeper nominates participants because of their position within the context, their particular viewpoint, or any other reason that makes sense, given the emerging focus of inquiry" (Rodwell, 1998: 67). Four of the participants that took part in this inquiry are well known because of their writing and involvement in alternative media. Reading some of the articles written by these four people enabled me to see if their perspectives included change that is structural and transformative. Participants were also asked what actions they have taken to challenge institutional arrangements and power structures. The criteria for selecting activists also included demonstrated concern for the environment over profit and a strong desire to change social arrangements that privilege dominating/privileged groups over subordinated groups. In the end, however, it came down to individual willingness to participate and those who fit the definition of radical social workers by espousing "a dramatic transformation of society, its institutions, and of social relationships." (Reisch & Andrews, 2002: 6) Unfortunately, just two women participated in this inquiry because of the difficulty in finding women who were willing to be interviewed. The reason given by a couple of the women I asked to participate was that they did not have the time. It is difficult to know what the reason was as most of the individuals who did participate have very busy lives. One clue was offered by another individual who was asked to participate. She said that her time was best spent in direct action, and research was not where she wanted to spend her time.

To keep the focus clearly on social activism and social justice free from other extraneous interferences and influences, some people were excluded as participants. Individuals were excluded under the following categories:

- anyone who is too young to give consent,
- anyone who presents as psychologically fragile, and
- anyone who is an official representative of a political party.

The activists, purposely chosen to participate, are concerned with social issues. Yet, the participants are not a homogenous group of people. There is diversity in the group of participants that takes into consideration the range of complexity inherent in the problems under investigation. Some of the participants are more traditional activists; one is a social worker and another person lives in an intentional community. This sub-group helped establish a baseline for the inquiry. Other participants were more radical in their perspectives, which expanded the range of possibilities and provided new information. "Sampling of the extreme or deviant case should be undertaken to search for the unusual, the troublesome, or the enlightening. In many cases, it is from the perspective of the outlier that new useful insights can be garnered" (Rodwell, 1998; 66).

Morris (2006) emphasizes that constructionist research is demanding and requires commitment from participants. Morris also provides the following conditions: All participants must:

- "make a commitment to work from a position of integrity.
- have minimal competence to communicate
- have a willingness to share power.
- a willingness to reconsider their perspectives
- have a willingness to reconsider their value positions.
- have a willingness to make the time and energy commitment needed in constructivist research" (Morris, 2006: 199-200).

The number of people interviewed was dependent on a balance between depth and richness of participants' stories and the discovery of repetitive themes.

4.6.4. Collecting and Processing Information

The proposal was shared with collaborators/participants for the purpose of soliciting their suggestions on the form and direction of the inquiry. Collaboration continued from the sharing and formation of the inquiry to the editing. Those who have been interviewed or who have written their responses to the inquiry's questions were invited to play a part in the final editing of their own words to help clarify the meanings they wish to share. After I had reviewed the transcripts for accuracy, I sent them back to participants and invited them to make any corrections, fill in any omissions and edit or clarify where they felt it was needed.

After participants read the proposal, agreed and signed the consent form and committed to participate, I either engaged them in providing a short descriptive introduction about themselves and their interest in activism or I wrote an introduction about them (see the introductions of participants in Chapter Seven). Reading other writings by the participants or writings about them, watching videos of them, whenever possible, and having the participants critique what I wrote in their introductions helped ensure accuracy. In the end, only one of the introductions was written by the participant herself while the rest were written by me and then each was read and approved by the person who was the subject of that introduction before it was included in this inquiry.

I interviewed participants independently and one person wrote his responses to the questions proposed by the inquiry. This facilitated the discovery of how their commitment to social change was shaped and their perspectives on the questions for the inquiry.

Next they were given the transcripts of their own interview. This provided them the opportunity to edit and elaborate on the initial interview. The editing took the form of clarification and/or further elaboration of ideas within what they had written or said. Participants were offered the option of writing their ideas rather than talking. They were encouraged to choose their preferred way to communicate their ideas. The choice to write responses acknowledges that people often live busy lives and being interviewed takes more time away from other pursuits. Writing also gives them more time to think about their answers.

After all the interviews were completed, participants were asked to read each other's interviews with everyone's consent. This would have enabled them to elaborate on points of agreement or difference if they wanted to. In the end, all participants agreed that all their responses needed to stand alone. No one wanted to hold out their own view as 'the truth'. They felt that this allowed them to be open to the possibility of influence and growth. Therefore, they declined to comment on each other's interviews and writing.

Some of the topics in the literature review chapter were chosen because they are talked about in the interviews, including leverage points, the environment, indigenous paradigm, complexity theory and anarchism. The participants also provided the

guidelines for social workers which were taken from themes extracted from the interviews.

4.6.5. Coding the Interviews; Content Analysis

This section describes how the interviews are coded to enable themes to emerge. Berg (1998: 223) explains that to make information amenable to analysis it often needs to be condensed into "…a simple sentence, a string of words with a subject and a predicate" (1998: 231) in order for comparisons to be made.

Creswell (1994: 155) gives detailed procedures to extract themes from interviews; these were used as a guideline in this inquiry. Creswell defines coding as, "the process of organizing the material into chunks or segments of text in order to develop a general meaning of each segment" (2009: 227). The process of coding begins with accurately transcribing all interviews, then reading and re-reading the interviews to get an overall sense of the content (Creswell, 2009: 185). Only after the researcher has a general sense of what was said in the interviews is the researcher ready to begin coding the material. This inquiry organized segments of text by topics that emerged, starting with one interview at a time. Themes emerged from this process by cutting, pasting, and recording in a note book. In the inquiry the lessons learned from the themes were used to generate guidelines for social workers.

Corbin and Strauss tell us that coding begins with microanalysis, which they describe as: "the detailed line-by-line analysis necessary at the beginning of a study to generate initial categories (with their properties and dimensions) and to suggest relationships among categories; a combination of open and axel coding (1998: 57). This involved reading and listening to the recorded interviews over and over and then writing notes in the margins of the transcripts that identified topics.

Listening to the recorded interviews and reading them as a whole gave an overall sense of their content. Then paragraphs and sentences were dissected from the interviews according to the preliminary questions and were put into separate documents. Additional segments were also pulled from the interviews because they emerged as significant to participants. At first these segments were copied and pasted on the computer into their

respective documents. This was only a preliminary analysis because the interviews are rich in content and thus needed further careful study to allow themes to emerge.

Open coding described as, "the analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions discovered in the data" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 101), was the next step in the process. In the inquiry, themes were discovered by coding the interviews by categories. This entailed finding the statements that the participants made that emerged as similar and different: that is, what they agreed on and what they disagreed about. Themes were also found by examining what the participants felt passionate about and what motivated them to become activists.

In summary, the analysis was done by hand by arranging categories of themes together in clusters in a note book under broad topics. This sorting process was carried out with all the interviews. The topics were then coded by theme titles that allowed for extracting shorter sentences or phrases from the clusters of categories. Axel coding was then done to find the relationship between sub-categories (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 123). For example 'participants' views on the necessary elements to be able to facilitate change for social justice' emerged as a theme, and 'collective action' emerged as a sub-category. Selective coding helped reveal the key concepts or core ideas related to social justice, and these formed part of the theory presented as guidelines for social workers.

"Member checking" or validation was done after the thematic analysis. The participants were given the thesis and asked to review the themes. This provided them with an opportunity to critique the inquiry within the context of the overall thesis. All but one of the participants has confirmed that they received the document. One of the participants declined to comment because he makes it a rule not to impose his view on other peoples' ideas. The other participants have given their support and approval of the inquiry.

4.7. The Unique Contribution of the Inquiry

The inquiry draws its information from the interviews with the activists and literature. The focus of the thesis is found in the literature review and the activist voices. Their voices are strengthened by the contrast and confirmation of literature. The category of people I chose to interview was activists rather than social workers because

conceivably their experience is different than social workers and therefore their construction of the world may also be different. This choice considered that activists can be social workers but that social workers are not by definition activists. Social workers in Canada are tied to government regulation and policy in a way that activists usually are not, unless they are social workers. This is not to say that social workers were excluded from participating in the inquiry, but rather that they could have been included, as one person was, by being known to work for second order change.

The category of activists is more inclusive of those who work toward change at the grass-roots and is a way of thinking outside of the social work box in order to infuse new ideas into social work from outside of its existing paradigm. Freire writes about those who think they are the executors of transformation when he says, "they talk about the people, but they do not trust them; and trusting the people is the indispensable precondition for revolutionary change" (1970: 60). If we want to know about women we talk to women, if we want to understand poverty we talk to people, who are poor, if we seek to understand another culture we speak to those who live it everyday and so on. Therefore, if we want to understand activists, social justice and social change, we talk to those who live it.

The participants' interviews provided the environment of the inquiry, within which literature was set, themes emerged, providing new ideas and perspectives. I inquired as to what led the participants to become activists, what keeps them working toward social justice, the obstacles along the way, what needs to be done to help make their vision a reality and whatever else they think is important to know.

The inquiry will add to the existing body of knowledge that social workers can use to pursue social justice. The inquiry is intended to shed light on how social workers can better facilitate social justice using the aspects or themes that emerge as a way to do this. It will contribute to understanding and point to steps for change. Engaging with and listening to activists provides social workers and others with an opportunity to question their awareness and engage in self-reflection. In addition, partnering with participants and seeking congruence between process and objectives can challenge the class bias of academia.

Since the inquiry asks unique questions and will be done in a way that will also bring forward the advantages, pit-falls and possible limitations of attempting anti-oppressive methods, the process will be helpful for those who may choose to take this approach in the future. It was difficult to predict the outcome of the inquiry since the philosophical underpinnings of the design require that I remain open to possibilities. To maintain consistency between the design and goals of the inquiry, it could not be done any other way.

4.8. Ethical Considerations

Morris (2006: 287) defines the ethics of research as, "specific research practices that reduce the potential for abuse of research participants and adhere to established codes for ethical research and the protection of research participants." To remain faithful to this ideal, I followed the ethical standards set by the University of South Africa. Alpaslan provides guidelines for ethics in social work research that include informed consent, anonymity/confidentiality, and the management of information (2008: 1- 2).

Rodwell (1998) says that, because constructivist inquiry is co-constructed with participants, the researcher needs to pay attention to ethical considerations throughout the process. As context and practices have a recursive influence on each other, ethical practice will be determined by the context of the inquiry (Fook, 2002). "These power and political consequences in the midst of a recognition of no 'real' truth, just relative truth, will have ethical consequences. The nature of a constructivist inquiry where nothing is ever certain, will naturally focus on the ethics involved in the multilevel roles and relationships in the context of the inquiry in order to monitor research developments" (Rodwell, 1998: 220). A process that has such a high level of complexity requires that the researcher maintain a conscious awareness about ethical practice throughout the process.

Further to this Morris speaks about ethical issues particular to constructivist research. A specific political concern is "a consciousness that power must be shared if the approach is to work." The other concern is the "threats to anonymity and confidentiality created by such open data sharing process" (2006: 260). The first concern was addressed through the design and method of the inquiry. The second concern was addressed by

having participants sign a consent form allowing other participants to read their interviews.

Written consent to participate in the inquiry as well as to read each other's interviews was obtained from individual participants (see Appendix B). In addition, partners in this endeavour had the opportunity to examine the proposal before consenting to participate. Participants were made aware of risk by reading the proposal and by their ongoing participation in the development of the inquiry. Furthermore, reading the proposal and having the opportunity to edit their own interviews and writing afforded participants an opportunity to determine what information could be included that could identify them.

They were also told they could choose to use a pseudonym to conceal their identity. Pseudonyms and the elimination of identifying information, as far as possible, were offered to help protect the participants. Despite all the opportunities given to conceal the identity of participants, none of them chose to use a pseudonym or to eliminate information that could identify them. It is also noted that because the participants are activists the nature of this type of work often puts them in the public eye regardless. Furthermore, for some of the participants, being recognized helps them to share their ideas. Being identified as a public figure is often part and parcel of being an activist.

Participant's input into the design of the inquiry and editing their own interviews contributed to sharing power. They were informed about the extent of the commitment and told that they are free to withdraw at any time. Concerns of risk were revisited throughout the process to guard against unforeseen circumstances that could arise. In addition, participants were not drawn from a vulnerable population. As an experienced therapist I would have been able to debrief with participants and would have also been able to direct participants to other resources if it was deemed necessary.

It should be noted that, because the inquiry was collaborative, participants' vulnerability was minimal. The collaboration allowed participants to determine and influence the way the inquiry was conducted. Therefore, participants were able to manage their involvement and reduce any potential risk.

Recordings of the interviews will be stored on my home computer on a Digital Voice Editor. They will be protected with a password so no one but me can access them. Following completion and approval of the dissertation, the recordings will be erased.

4.9. Authenticity and Credibility of Inquiry

Positivistic research rigor is designed to account for the 'truth' in research. Measures traditionally used to judge rigor in positivist research, such as trustworthiness and transferability, do not fit a constructivist paradigm (Gergen, 1999, Rodwell, 1998). According to Brown and Strega (2005), the measure of how well the researcher did in accomplishing objectives in anti-oppressive research is measured by how closely the researcher adhered to their research principles. "The intentions of doing interpretive research is to give those who read the research a feel for others' social reality by revealing or illuminating the meanings, values, interpretive systems, and rules of living they apply" (Brown & Strega, 2005: 206). Rodwell (1998) states that establishing rigor in constructivist research is challenging because of the evolving nature of the process and because of the unique nature of every project. Research rigor, according to Rodwell (1998), is a contested area which calls for alternative forms of rigor that will be unique for each endeavor. Rodwell informs us the 'authenticity' is an apt measure of rigor in constructivist research as it judges the process taken in a research project rather than the product produced. "Authenticity captures the value pluralism, multiple perspectives, and qualitative change focus of constructivist inquiry. It attests to the interactive results of the research process, not the product" (Rodwell, 1998: 97).

Gergen (1999) sees value in measuring the credibility of research through dialogue. Each reader of the inquiry will come to their reading with ideas and experiences that form the perspectives they approach their reading with. Another way of putting this is to say that the inquiry is in dialogue with the reader. What is more, the credibility and authenticity of an inquiry, I believe, could be more effectively measured by their potential impact on social work. As Gergen (1999: 58) indicates, "I would like to see the presentation of truth and objectivity abandoned, and a greater emphasis placed on dialogue as opposed to the traditional attempt by scholars to secure 'the last and only word.' Most important, I would like to see more discussion on the values and potentials

of such research on grounds other than 'establishing the truth.' We must ask questions of the kind inspired by Foucault's work: What happens when the scientific ways of interpreting the world are set loose in the society? Who gains, who loses, and how do we wish to build our future together?" Gergen urges that greater emphasis be placed on the measure of prefigurative possibilities in research.

Credibility is a measure of research rigor that belongs to a positivist paradigm. "Credibility attests to the process and product accuracy in understanding the depth and scope of the issues under study" (Rodwell, 1998: 98). Credibility attests to the 'truth' value of research and dimensions of credibility can be used in constructivist research. For example, does the researcher have sufficient background to understand the topic under inquiry and can what emerges in the inquiry be triangulated with other sources and perspectives?

My personal credibility and reliability for undertaking the inquiry comes from the trust the participants demonstrated toward me. This also speaks to the credibility of the participants as they are known and respected in activist circles. In part, this can be attributed to my involvement and the participants' involvement in activist circles. There is mutual trust and respect that is gained from knowing we may have different perspectives but share the same interest in social justice. Credibility also comes from using a sampling method that enables the selection of participants who have sufficient knowledge and experience to speak about the topic under inquiry. My personal credibility parallels that of the participants and my social work education and experience has also given me knowledge and experience to question social justice. In addition, credibility is gained by the supervision received by my promoter and by doing member checks with the participants. The participants' feedback during the process of inquiry and their reactions to the present thesis project are important in this regard.

"Triangulation occurs when one data source is compared to another" (Rodwell, 1998: 98). Triangulation addresses both the credibility of the research project and its dependability (Rodwell, 1998). Triangulation is achieved in the inquiry by comparing the perspectives of the participants to each other and to the literature, in a process of cross-checking information, methods, and interpretation. In comparing perspectives and ideas,

triangulation helps to distill the themes that emerged from the interviews and to validate the theory that is grounded in the themes and in the literature.

The themes from the interviews add credibility and dependability in their own right. The themes as shared perspectives gain credibility because of the intersection of ideas and perceptions. Not only do the themes that emerged from the interviews reinforce the individual perceptions of participants but they are also supported by literature. Derived within a constructivist inquiry framework, the themes work to validate the interviews and reveal the relational meaning inherent in them to build knowledge. In turn, the inquiry is intended to inform social work and therefore needs to not only produce ideas but also develop guidelines and recommendations that are relevant. The inquiry can be used to reflect and build opportunities for dialogue and direct action.

The data analysis followed a dependable process. The dependability is evident in the units that were distilled from the interviews. The themes and sub-themes that emerged reflect the authenticity of the process. They are faithful to the meaning attributed by the participants. The findings link to the interviews. Fairness, according to Rodwell (1998), is a measure of authenticity (1998). Fairness is in the act of representing all view points of the participants in the themes and, as such, it requires that power is shared (Rodwell, 1998). The inquiry used rich interviews to preserve the context of the participants' experience. As the inquirer, I encouraged the participants to talk and elaborate on topics that are important to them. In addition, although I often sought clarification during the interviews, I kept my responses short. I avoided judgments about the views of participants and I avoided imposing my own opinion. I believe the reader will have a good sense of all the participants' perspectives after reading the inquiry.

Even though there can be different constructions that emerge from the same data, the important point is that the resultant constructions from the raw data follow a certain pattern of logic that is demonstrable (Rodwell, 1998). It is also important that all the participants' voices are heard and the researcher presents a product that dependably reflects the participants' meaning.

Although the inquiry cannot be generalized, it is transferable. Rodwell describes transferability as follows: "transferability allows for the possibility that information created and lessons learned in one context can have meaning and usefulness in another."

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(1998: 101). Transferability is the measure of the usefulness that the inquiry holds. Authenticity speaks to the potential of research to be used for betterment. Rodwell (1998) describes this as the operationalizing of social justice. Authenticity is a very significant feature of constructivist and other forms of participant action research. Learning or, in other words, the educative authenticity of constructivist inquiry is an important measure of the success of constructivist inquiry (Rodwell, 1998). Above all, what Rodwell (1998) terms 'catalytic authenticity' or the enabling of research to evoke action is primary. Catalytic authenticity is the potential for change that an enquiry can stimulate. This dimension is not always realized or known at the end of a research endeavour and it is dependent on how others may or may not carry the lessons learned forward. Nevertheless, the measure is in the potential to bring possibilities forward. This dimension is the strength of the inquiry as reflected in the anti-oppressive process used, the themes, guidelines, and recommendations that hold the possibility of future consideration and action.

4.10. Dissemination of Inquiry

The inquiry report will be presented in the form of a thesis. The final report will be disseminated to research partners/participants. An article will also be written and submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal with the consent of the participants.

4.11. Conclusion

The premise of the inquiry is anti-oppressive social work practice, namely, structural social work directed toward social justice. The inquiry uses qualitative research methods to fit with the premise, to capture the richness of the interviews with social activists, and to allow the process and the design of the inquiry to reflect the relational aspects that are consistent with a constructivist philosophy that shares power. To accomplish this, exploratory and constructivist-phenomenological methodology is used. This particular research process and methodology reflect the complexity of lived experience. Grounded theory is typically produced through this process. The chapter also covered ethical consideration, the dissemination of the inquiry and its authenticity and credibility.

CHAPTER FIVE

LITERATURE REVIEW: FACILITATING CHANGE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

5. Introduction

This chapter outlines some social movements and their efforts to facilitate social justice in section one. In the past, numerous social movements and the social work profession have helped to create encouraging adjustments but failed at substantive transformation of social structures that are the root cause of oppression. For instance redistributing resources, while keeping the power structure in place, has not eradicated poverty and women earning the right to vote left patriarchy alive and well. The first part of Chapter Five will highlight key North American social movements. This includes Gandhi and India's struggle for independence and the Green Belt Movement because both are not only well known in North America, they are, as well, influential here. The second section of the chapter explores obstacles to change, discusses ideas about making change, and looks at paradigms of change including second order change, complexity, and collaborative change.

In 1999, Wallerstein wrote that the world system is in a period of history where change is extremely meaningful because we have reached a point in history where the world system will not return to equilibrium. The world is leaning toward democratization, but there are no guarantees that this will come about. According to Wallerstein, "The world-system has reached a point of crises and therefore will see drastic structural change, an explosion or an implosion, that will end with the constitution of some new kind of historical system" (Wallerstein, 1999: 46). Wallerstein believes that the future cannot be predicted in a linear way because human social systems are extremely complex. It is up to us to leverage the change in the direction we want to go.

> "We cannot know what this would look like in structural terms, but we can lay the out the criteria on the basis of which we would call a historical system substantively rational. It is a system that is largely egalitarian and largely democratic. Far from seeing any conflict between these two objectives, I would argue that they are intrinsically linked to each other. A historical system cannot be egalitarian if it is not democratic, because an undemocratic system is one that distributes power unequally, and this

means that it will also distribute all other things unequally. And it cannot be democratic if it is not egalitarian; since an inegalitarian system means that some have more material means than others and therefore inevitably will have more political power" (Wallerstein, 1999: 3).

Uncertainty gives us an opportunity to be creative and work for a future that we make together.

5.1. Section One: Some Well Known Social Movements and Change

If the ways used to make social change are unpacked, what is revealed is a plethora of means and strategies. It is common for people, individually or in groups, to lobby the government or write letters to those in power to solicit change. Other ideas include   trade unions, revolution, reform, transformation, civil rights, imagined communities, propaganda, protest, education, building coalitions and affinity groups (Kaufman 2003); building democratic politics and democratic spaces where the poor and marginalized are included (Coelho & Cornwall, 2007, Piven, 2006); boycotts, strikes, self help (Piven & Cloward, 1979); mutual aid and reading protest literature (Denham & C.A.S.A. collective, 2008, Zinn, 2007); direct action (Graeber, 2009); armed struggle (Churchill, 1998, Anderson 1997, Gelderloos, 2007); designing alternative forums, such as the World Social Forums (Sen & Waterman Eds, 2008, Carniol, 2005); the arts (Antliff, 2007); and support and study groups (Gil, 1998).   However, the diversity of strategies makes it difficult to determine the most effective means of facilitating social justice.

There is plenty of talk and adjustments made, but the changes are generally short-lived and hit and miss. Countless social movements and activists throughout history have made some lasting change, yet they have not been successful in changing the context in which injustices take place. Until recently, activists have usually approached change in a fragmented way by addressing issues as though they are distinct and separate. In what follows, the social justice movement, green belt movement, anarchism, and a North American indigenous world view are highlighted to show how social movements have and can link social issues together.

According to Wallerstein, the study of social change has been the study of "deviations from equalibria" (1999: 122). Much of what is seen as social change is social

reform. If social conditions are not right, the system will bounce back. When social conditions are far enough from equilibrium, it takes less to tip the balance. Historical systems, such as the one of the present day, do not last forever. "They have beginnings, a long development, and finally, as they move far from equilibrium and reach points of bifurcation, a demise" (Wallerstein, 1999: 1). During these times in history it takes less effort to tip the balance. Therefore, much of the following discussion about social change really speaks to reform. It is in the last part of the discussion about the global justice movement and the occupy movement that we actually address movements that just may upset the balance enough to bring social conditions far enough away from the maintenance of the current system to be able to create something new.

Looking at change often brings forward an array of complex questions. We can measure the success or failure of social movements through many different lenses. Short-term success in social progress has its value. Sometimes it benefits the shape of future gains, building anew within the shell of the old, but sometimes these gains carry complications that add difficulties. When short-term change does not reflect desired long-term change, there is a risk of either creating a benign effect only to reinforce the status quo or pushing structural change in a direction that causes further oppression.

5.1.1. Gandhi and Civil Disobedience

Let us consider Gandhi's peaceful civil disobedience which helped to achieve independence from British rule for India. Gandhi was born in British India in 1869, the son of a high official and his fourth wife. He was greatly influenced by his mother, who was a devout Jain[15]. Gandhi was educated in London, England, as a lawyer. He was influential in the South African civil rights movement from 1893 until 1914, but he is most remembered for his use of non-violent resistance to gain independence for India. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, or Mahatma Gandhi as he is commonly called, has inspired many activists with his non-violent civil disobedience, his determination, and his personal integrity (Fischer, 1954). Along the way to helping gain India's independence from Britain, Gandhi worked to lessen poverty, eradicate untouchability, and increase

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[15] Jainism is a religion from Indian. Basically Jains believe that harmlessness and renunciation are required to liberate the soul. Therefore, they practise non-violence.

women's rights. He also attempted to foster amicable relations between Hindu and Muslim religious factions in India (Fischer, 1954). Although he was sympathetic to Jewish people, Gandhi opposed the plan for Zionist imperialism in Palestine (Fischer, 1954).

Gandhi went to jail for his actions and beliefs. He lived a simple life, was a vegetarian, often fasted, and in later years shaved his head and wore a loin cloth made of home-spun cloth. He lived like the less well-off because he believed that this helped him to understand them better.

Gandhi's relationship with Tolstoy, with whom he exchanged letters sharing ideas about passive resistance, was very influential (Fischer, 1954). Gandhi wanted to see self-sufficient, locally ruled communities. He believed that people could rule themselves and develop their own economies. For this reason he organized the spinning-wheel movement. The spinning of cloth promoted self reliance. Local people no longer needed to depend on the British to supply materials (Fischer, 1954). "A self-governing, self-reliant village, trading chiefly with nearby self-sufficient villages and importing a minimum of complicated appliances, was Gandhi's recipe for democracy in Asia. The more these small geographic units achieved by co-operative effort at the bottom, the less room there would be for dictatorship from above and afar. He preferred them to the hot dirty, herring-barrel cities of India with their factory slums" (Fischer, 1954: 87).

Gelderloos (2007) argues that India would not have gained independence without taking up arms if the British were not fighting wars in other places; two world wars and the Palestine conflict from 1945 to 1948. Gelderloos (2007) also reminds us that history and change are rather complex and often defy simple characterizations. He points to examples that show that India's independence movement was not always peaceful and that Gandhi became a prominent figure mostly because of the attention he received from the British press. Further, Gelderloos (2007) describes in detail how the British hand-picked their successors, made India dependent on military aid, and finally, managed to change the colonial rule to neo-colonial rule, "or domination by means other than territorial conquest" (Prashad, 2007: 10). "In many ways the poverty of its people has deepened and the exploitation has become more efficient. Independence from colonial rule has given India more autonomy in a few areas, and it has certainly allowed a handful

of Indians to sit in the seats of power, but the exploitation and the commoditization of the commons and of culture have deepened" (Gelderloos, 2007: 9).

Gandhi, it can be argued, led a successful social movement in some respects, but the power on the other side was so commanding that the outcome was as good as could be realistically expected. The governance changed in India but not the structure of inequality.

> "Whether the Indian struggle was won because of *satyagraha*, or despite *satyagraha*, is something we can long debate. What is clear is that the independence of India in 1947 became a prime symbolic event for the world-system. It symbolized both the triumph of a major liberation movement situated in the world's largest colony and the implicit guarantee that the decolonization of the rest of the world was politically inevitable. But it symbolized also that national liberation, when it came, arrived in a form less than, and other than, that which the movement had sought. India was partitioned. Terrible Hindu-Muslim massacres followed in the wake of independence. And Gandhi was assassinated by a so-called Hindu extremist" (Wallerstein, 1999: 21).

Poverty and the caste system, hallmarks of inequality, were not eradicated in India with their independence. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) reports that women are still the most disadvantaged people in India and that "poverty is deepest among scheduled castes and tribes in the rural areas." In summary, the IFAD tells us, that "[a]bout two thirds of India's more than 1 billion people live in rural areas, and almost 170 million of them are poor" (2008: 1) and further "for more than 21 per cent of them, poverty is a chronic condition" (2008: 2). Gandhi's role in effectively using peaceful civil disobedience to change conditions cannot be denied. However, the examination of the independence of India raises many questions about how we decide if a movement is successful and if peaceful protest itself is enough.

One cannot help speculate, that if Gandhi's vision of self- reliant, self-governed villages would have been realized that India would be more democratic. If India had retained its traditional locally-organized, land-based economy, rather than becoming a global market economy, it would be a very different place. It is difficult to know if Gandhi's biggest fight was national independence or local transformation. Perhaps if he had lived longer, he might have guided India to true democracy. On the other hand, at

that time in history, perhaps the people of India could not yet see the repercussions of the choices before them.

According to Wallerstein (1999), liberal nationalism became the culture of the nineteenth century. The promise of technological progress, social reform, and strong national identity effectively tamed those who might have perceived other alternatives, including Asia. "The liberal via media prevailed politically. Its beliefs became the geoculture of the world-system. It established the forms of the state structures in the dominant states of the world-system and the model toward which other states were, indeed still are, required to aspire. Most consequentially of all, liberalism tamed both conservatism and radicalism, transforming them (at least between 1848 and 1968) from ideological alternatives into minor variants, avatars, of liberalism" (Wallerstein, 1999: 147).

When change is undertaken, the short-term effects need to be measured and evaluated against long-term costs. The foregoing discussion demonstrates that short-term gains can have unforeseen consequences and that even long-term change efforts need to be sensitive to the context and how social stability is impacted.

5.1.2. Change and the Risk of Fragmentation

Let us take a look at changes closer to my home in North America. The 1960s heralded changes that altered the lives of people. Activists began to organize protests in the 1960s that brought an end to the Vietnam War in 1975. During this same time in history, people in the civil rights movement demonstrated against racial segregation and won many changes like equality in law for racilized minorities, and the women's movement began a process of consciousness-raising that continues to this day (Piven, 2006, Zinn, 1980). The changes were particularly notable in terms of the status of women and racial minority rights.

The woman's movement in North America is instructive. It demonstrates the strength gained from women working together for a common cause, the risk of marginalizing others and the limitations of reform movements. Today, the life of women in North America is far different than their grandmothers was because of the women's movement. This is not to say that conditions for all women everywhere are significantly

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better. Despite documented improvements in policy and laws, particularly in the West, women still by and large have lower incomes, less education, and less health care. As well, they do more tedious work for longer hours and have a lower status than men (Isbister, 2001: 22).

When looking for ways to make change, one needs to be aware of the repercussions. The context and dynamics of people's life situations can often have unintended consequences despite the best of intentions. *OneWorld South Asia*, a website for people and groups working for human rights and sustainable development (www.oneworld.net: 10/27/2010), provides reports and information on how power and privilege can be exercised on many fronts. A recent article on OneWorld highlights a study by the University of California-Berkeley that looked at employment status and violence in marital relationships in Bangalore, India. According to the article, the researchers found that fifty-seven percent of the women in the study had experienced violence prior to the study and this number increased when the men had problems with unemployment and when the women found "meaningful and fair employment." The study also found that "women who were unemployed at the time of one interview but began employment by the next interview a year later had an 80% higher chance of experiencing domestic violence than did women who remained unemployed. What this demonstrates is that gender norms (patriarchy) can come into conflict with social change when it intersects with economic norms (class). This study may appear to apply only to women who supposedly have not had the benefits from women's rights as North American women. However, violence against women, class, and patriarchy are still very much alive in many parts of the northern hemisphere.

Even within First Nations communities in Canada, men are more apt to be in positions of power today, reflecting the larger male-dominated society. For instance, in Canada the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) has nine chiefs who represent the provinces (provincial chiefs) and only one of them is a woman (AFN, 2011, retrieved July 13, 2011). The 2011 Canadian federal election saw a record number of women sent to parliament. A total of seventy-six women, representing twenty-five percent of the members of parliament, were elected. Fourty of these women MPs are from the NDP party (Fitzpatrick, CBC News, May 3, 2011). "The country has also been declining in

international rankings of gender parity over the past few years according to the World Economic Forum. In 2006 it placed 14th out of 115 countries in the Forum's 'gender-gap index'; by 2009, it was in 25th place" (Horn, Foster & Yalnizyan, 2010: 3).

In North America, women still do not enjoy the same benefits as men do. This is compounded by circumstances where gender intersects with other forms of oppression, such as race and class (Mullaly, 2005). Codifying civil rights into law does not automatically guarantee that legislative and policy changes would change the hegemonic ways of life.

Patriarchy is not unique to Canada or India. Context can determine how forms of oppression manifest in different environments. What remains the same, however, is that inequality is a form of cultural violence that can lead to physical violence. For example, according to Wilkinson and Pickett (2009), young men in their late teen years and early twenties have the highest rate of violence in the United States. Perpetrators and victims are most likely to be young men who live at a lower socio-economic level. The reason given by the author is that young men tend to react to shame and humiliation that threatens their status. Violence is seen as a way to either maintain or change the status quo. Wilkinson and Pickett (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009: 135) link violence to inequality, particularly in cases of homicide and assault. Accordingly, violence is used, by privileged groups, to maintain their privilege by keeping people in their place. Violence can also be horizontal. The oppressed fight among themselves to gain status because they identify with those who are privileged (Freire, 1970). Horizontal violence is also encouraged by the dominant class to, divide and conquer, and thus maintain privilege (Mullaly, 2005). "Such material inequality, moreover, is linked not only to health inequalities but also, as Wilkinson shows in his *The Impact of Inequality*, to levels of emotional health, violence, and the quality of social relations between people, including levels of trust" (Ferguson, 2008: 33).

Women, and some male supporters, got together and shared individual experiences to discover what they have in common and to find the roots of oppression. "This was the path of group 'identity', which, as we know, has found support within women's groups, within groups based on race or ethnicity, within groups based on sexuality, and indeed within an expanding number of other groups" (Wallerstein, 1999:

115). This is what Wallerstein calls "cultural nationalism". Identity groups used their citizenship as a way to increase group identity and consciousness. For example women talked together about their common experiences as women in the context of their national culture. The problem becomes, however, that these groups did not make the connection between their concerns and the concerns of other groups. Inevitably people are left out of the very groups they should be part of. For example, women of colour were left out of the feminist movement (Wallerstein, 1999).

> "In short I am arguing that the entire discussion about integration and marginalization has led to a cul-de-sac, out of which there is no exit. Better not to enter it and instead to begin to conceive how we can go beyond the concept of citizen. Of course, this means going beyond the structures of our modern world-system. But, since I believe that our modern world-system is in a terminal crises… we should perhaps at least consider the kind of historical system we wish to construct and whether it would be possible to dispense with the concept of citizen; and if so, to replace it with what?" (Wallerstein, 1999: 117)

One of the central problems that social activists encountered during the 1960s was how they should organize (Graeber, 2009). Women in activist circles were sexualized and pushed to the margins. "Militant nationalist movements are of course notorious for providing platforms for the vigorous reassertion of certain types of masculine authority" (Graeber, 2009: 233). Due to their exclusion and marginalization within activist groups women revolted and organized themselves. Women organized small consciousness-raising circles. These groups did provide a new way of organizing, yet within them women found they struggled with internal issues. Problems developed when some women pushed for top-down styles of organizing and some women took control of the groups resulting in the marginalization of other women, such as women of colour and gay women (Graeber, 2009).

Fragmentation often results when people work for social justice. The result is that there is a lessening of oppression for some, often at others expense. Despite some positive changes people still continue to struggle for justice. All forms of suffering and injustice run rampant all over the world. Lobbyists, lawyers and policy makers have worked for the rights of women but the reforms they enacted did not address oppression at a fundamental level.

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The new left, mostly during the 1960s and 1970s, which was mainly campus movements, did call for direct democracy, but they saw themselves as more advocates than as one of the many. The left movement at that time was limited by being the dominant white male and seeing themselves as organizers. Later Black Power movements based on group identity of being black, such as the Black Panthers, told the white movements to stop their alliances with them and organize from their own communities (Graeber, 2009). Black and white groups, who were both male dominate, turned to a variety of direct actions. "For now, though, the key point is that none of these groups combined their interests to direct action with an emphasis on decentralized decision-making; to the contrary; whether because the focus turned on the one hand to charismatic figures who were at least potential media stars, or to the kind of cell-like, military structure able to carry out guerilla-style attacks, the impulse was in the other direction" (Graeber, 2009: 231).

Wallerstein (1999) writes about the destruction of liberal consensus after 1968 that marks a turn in the historical system. "At first, radical/socialism sought to revive itself in various guises: as the multiple, short-lived Maoisms of the early 1970's and as the so-called New Left movements (Greens, identity movements, radical feminism, and others) that have been longer lived but that have not entirely shed the image of being avatars of the pre-1968 liberalism" (Wallerstein, 1999: 43).

There have been many reforms made that have advanced the status of minority groups, but they have not addressed the overarching issue of oppression. Direct action and consensus decision making were hard won results of fledgling social movements. Graeber (2009) gives a brief history of direct action and democracy. Although it should be noted that Native Americans and Quakers traditionally had systems of group process that seeks the consent of the group. Back in the 1960's the left (Wallerstein, 1999: 89) either did not know about this or were not interested. In Graeber's (2009) history on direct action he states that the first move toward these principles was the labour movement, as it has always had a strong tradition of direct action.

Many of the issues of fragmentation of cause and exclusion were resolved later in the anti-nuclear movement of the 1970's as it organized many diverse groups of people around the linked common causes of nuclear disarmament, and anti-nuclear energy. The

antinuclear movement took inspiration from activists groups that used consensus decision making (Graeber, 2009). People in this movement began to learn the process of consensus decision making. "The antinuclear movement was also the first to make its basic organizational unit the affinity group – a kind of minimal unit of organization first developed by anarchists in early twentieth-century Spain and Latin America – and spokescouncils" (Graeber, 2009: 235). A number of groups, especially since the emergence of the Global Justice Movement, have continued to carry on the tradition of direct action and consensus decision making.

5.1.3. From Reformist to Revolutionary Change

Any historical system, like feudalism that was replaced by capitalism, is subject to collapse. However, as long as that system continues to operate by the same rules, any changes made only define the shape of the same system. Changes that seek to reform the system do not change the system. Revolutionary change, therefore, is anti-systemic (Wallerstein, 1999). "As the system moves further and further from equilibrium, the fluctuations become even wilder, and eventually a bifurcation occurs" (Wallerstein, 1999: 130). Wallerstein said that the world-system is in transformation because the capitalist system is in crises and given time will collapse in 1999. His words seem even more pertinent in 2012, as I write this. Many other writers echo these sentiments, including Mcbay, Keith and Jensen (2011) and Zizek (2011). "[T]he global capitalist system is approaching an apocalyptic zero-point. Its 'four riders of the apocalypse' are comprised by the ecological crisis, the consequences of the biogenetic revolution, imbalances within the system itself (problems with intellectual property; forthcoming struggles over raw materials, food and water), and the explosive growth of social divisions and exclusions" (Zizek, 2011: x).

Individual reformist changes make a difference in the lives of oppressed people, for instance women have more legal rights. However, so long as the structures of systems and domination stay the same, they will reproduce the hegemony inherent in them. Justice demands a transformation of power (Carniol, 2005) through structural changes.

In the context of the inquiry, reform can be described as an attempt to modify or find solutions within existing structures. Reform is a liberal construction that keeps

power in place but adjusts things within existing structures in an effort to improve social conditions. Revolutionary or radical change is transformation aimed at the root cause of domination by challenging the structures that uphold oppression in order to create new constructions. An example that illustrates the difference between reformist and revolutionary change can be found in bell hooks'[16] (2000: 5) book *Feminism is for Everybody*. In the book she describes where feminist politics stands today. She says that feminism is not just about women wanting to be equal to men (reformist); it is more about bringing an end to sexism and patriarchy (revolutionary). Further hooks (2000) says that when most women, especially white women, gained economic power because of the women's movement, they abandoned revolutionary change and in effect colluded with patriarchy. This in turn left classism and racism intact within the women's movement. Women who are privileged because they are attached to the dominant society gain additional privilege at the expense of women oppressed by class, race, and so on. In the end, true liberty has not taken place because when only some privileged ones have power this signals that systemic oppression is still operating (hooks, 2000).

5.1.4. North American Mainstream Environmental Movement and Beyond

In North America change usually happens at the level of reform that does little to challenge power relations. Canada does have environmental policies in place and has been active in creating legislation to protect the environment. However, because there is a professed need to balance environmental priorities with economic ones, the value of the environment usually takes a back seat.

The environmental movement is big in North America, therefore, it provides an apt example of changes that can happen at the level of modification. To a large extent the environmental movement's focal point is individual consumption: that is, use less, recycle and live simply. It tends to leave out power dynamics and the production piece of the environmental picture. "The relentless ability of contemporary capitalism to commodify dissent and sell it back to dissenters is surely one explanation for the elevation of consumer over citizen" (Maniates, 2002: 51). Environmentalism in North

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[16] As a note of clarification concerning the absence of capital letters in bell hooks, is that she never uses capital letters in her name, therefore, references referring to her typically are written in the way seen in this inquiry.

America is often reduced to the modification of individual consumption practices and such efforts in modification distract it from the larger power dynamics of capitalism and the environmental destruction caused by industry.

5.1.4.1. Mainstream Environmental Priorities

Ecology is the biggest problems we all face today according to Wallerstein, (1999) and Mcbay et. al (2011). The marketing of energy efficient light-bulbs and simple life styles, which in themselves are at least better than no alternatives, does nothing to change the thinking that sees everything as a commodity. The problem is that energy-efficient products have a production cycle that still uses an abundance of resources. Buying them not only contributes to unsustainable production but to the power dynamics inherent in the corporate government alliance. Since we feel good about actually doing something in the right direction, we are often distracted from the bigger picture. We collaborate with our oppressors because they have advertised and sold our own wishes back to us. Voluntary simple living is not the same as someone's involuntary simplicity because it does not address privilege and the power that made this so. Besides this is an individualistic rather than a collective effort.

Social work has not been exempt from having a limited view about the environment. Past theories of social work have situated individuals in a very limited social environment, which generally only includes the social environment. "Human health and welfare are bound up with environmental health and welfare. Environments are not merely lifeless backdrops for human activity, any more than people are merely temporary actors in an ongoing natural system. We are entwined with the natural world in a continuing process of co-creation" (Zapt, 2009: 190).

Thinking ecologically is only just developing in the social work literature according to Zapt (2009) who says that "Human development cannot be separated from stewardship of the earth. In short, we are our surroundings. People as place" (Zapt, 2009: 190). Zapt (2009) proposes that social work adopt the metaphor of people as place so we can talk about living well in place on all levels. Social work needs to examine its current assumptions so it can develop a new lens to see self as part of local environments that are part of the complex systems.

5.1.4.2. Beyond Individual Consumption to Collective Action

The following section looks at efforts of social activists to change the tide of environmental destruction. Several contemporary movements are highlighted to demonstrate how environmental concerns are linked to other forms of oppression on an international level. This section is brief because it leads to the next section about the global justice movement, which deals with environmental issues and links to other issues such as economics.

5.1.4.3. The Environment and Peace

Being environmentally conscious is much more than reusing and recycling. It is intimately tied to democracy and cooperation. Amster (2009) argues that attention needs to be placed on the environment because of the interconnection between it and peace. Peace studies have an interdisciplinary focus encompassing disciplines concerned with human issues. Realizing that environmental degradation is a common threat can promote peace and cooperation. Modern war causes environmental destruction that in turn causes shortages of goods such as oil, water, and other resources. So it follows that environmental waste and destruction is both a cause and a consequence of political instability (Amster, 2009: 243). War is wasteful of human lives and the environment. Sustainability in this sense, according to Amster (2009), means everyone would have access to basic goods. "Digging a little deeper, the impetus toward sustainability suggests that social systems are only viable in a long-term sense when they promote just and peaceful relations with ourselves, each other, and the biosphere itself. As such, sustainability may be taken to equate with personal wellbeing plus social justice plus a healthy environment" (Amster, 2009: 246).

Amster provides several examples of people coming together to build sustainable communities. For example, Dignity Village was built by homeless people in an Oregon city. They collectively pooled their resources to build green housing, plant gardens, and share water. After Hurricane Katrina, community organizers helped reclaim green zones and provided skilled labour as they addressed housing and health issues. Also between North and South Vietnam, people built a natural habitat for wildlife (Amster, 2009). This

demonstrates that people are inclined to mutual aid and can collaborate to discoverer alternatives.

<u>5.1.5. The Green Belt Movement</u>

The Green Belt Movement provides another illustrative example of an environmental initiative that links issues of class, gender and ecology together. Wangari Maathai (2004) writes about the beginnings of this movement when she taught at the University of Nairobi and was a member of the National Council of Women of Kenya. She found that in Kenya problems and hardship experienced by women are made worse by environmental destruction. Women need to work long, hard hours to provide for their family. "I came to understand that their problems were symptoms of a poorly managed environment leading to a lack of clean drinking water, an insufficient food supply and poor health" (Maathai, 2004:1). The movement was started with only a few women planting trees. It then expanded to include many more women planting trees and the development of tree nurseries where women came to make an income. The movement has also motivated women to be politically engaged. From its beginnings as a grass-roots initiative, the Green Belt movement has become international.

Although the context is very different for women in Kenya than for women in North America, we all depend upon the soil to grow food and to obtain safe drinking water. Unlike their counterparts in Kenya, however, women in Canada use electricity and oil and gas to do their daily chores. A Canadian woman generally does not have to collect firewood and can drive to a grocery store to buy food. In many ways we in the West are disconnected from the importance that trees have in our lives and have become dependent on outside sources for survival. "That is, many people want to enjoy both more trees and more material goods for themselves, and a lot of them simply segregate the two demands in their minds" (Wallerstein, 1999: 79). We are also fortunate in Canada that until very recently deforestation has not impacted the country to a significant degree. So although the context is different, the importance of the environment is the same. The Green Belt Movement has spread internationally because people know the importance of trees and joining with others is a way to show solidarity.

The Green Belt Movement has educated, empowered, inspired and given women in Kenya the courage to act on their convictions. They boast many accomplishments. The women have, for example, gained skills and awareness about the role trees play in the environment and their place and power in the political picture. "Along with tree-planting skills, the Green Belt Movement trained communities in human rights, democratic governance and conflict resolution" (Maathai, 2004: 1). Planting trees has taught women to run the nurseries that have created jobs for them. In turn this has empowered women to demand better management of natural resources (Maathai, 2004). The women have also been instrumental in demanding an end to the undemocratic regime in their country. In 2002 Kenya held a multi-party democratic election. Women of the Green Belt Movement have been scorned, jailed and beaten for their participation in support of multi-party elections (Maathai, 2004). Yet through it all they support one another, act on their passion and are very courageous. Maathai (2004, 2011) says the work of reclaiming and healing the environment must continue as part of the effort to stop conflict in the world. "Despite the successes, this work is far from complete. Conflicts are waged over resources such as land, forests, minerals, oil and water. As the earth's resources continue to be depleted through poor management and rapacious exploitation, conflicts will flare more often, and be more difficult to contain" (2004: 2). Further on, Maathai wonders (2011) if the protests that have spread through northern Africa and the Middle East have a chance of spreading to sub-Saharan Africa.

According to Maathai (2011), context determines the possibility and direction in which grass-root action takes place. "At first glance, the conditions appear ripe. Many sub-Saharan Africans also struggle daily with the consequences of poor governance, stagnating economics and dehumanizing poverty, and rampant violations of human rights" (Maathai, 2011: 1). Yet, as she explains, in northern Africa and the Middle East people have a bigger sense of solidarity because they have a regional identity and a common language in which to share information and news. In sub-Saharan Africa, according to Maathai (2011), because people are divided along ethnic or tribal lines, it is easier for the government to hang on to their power by playing on existing ethnic rivalries and differences and a large part of Africa media is controlled by the state so sharing information is difficult.. At the same time, however, social media is creeping into even

isolated corners of the world allowing people to share information instantaneously. This sharing may also promote bonds between seemingly divided peoples.

The military and the police in sub-Saharan Africa play an unpredictable role. In Egypt, for example, the military were ordinary people who refused to fire on protesters. In contrast, the military in sub-Saharan Africa is expected to have more loyalty to the person in power than to the nation. The soldiers may often be from the same ethnic group as the person in the state house (Maathai, 2011). Through the military, those in power intimidate and cause fear in the local population. As has happened in the past people can be beaten, jailed and mowed down. People have very good reasons to be worried about being put under duress, and losing their jobs and their property. Those in power want to stay in power, so they often shut down opposition by any means that they can get away with (Maathai, 2011: 2).

Maathai (2011) expresses the hope that all Africans may someday have a say by voting at the ballot box. Context counts, but what stands out in many situations is that it takes courage to make a stand. Courage is often underestimated. It is difficult to say exactly how the women in the Green Belt Movement became courageous. It seems clear that by coming together they not only began to learn about issues but also were able to be strong. Before anything can happen there is courage and before courage there is passion and solidarity.

5.1.6. Indigenous Communal Life-ways as Alternative Paradigm

Although many Indigenous people of the Americas have been assimilated into the dominant, white, male Eurocentric culture norms (had their minds and hearts colonized) prevalent in the colonies, their traditional collectivist life-ways are not dead. While the rules of 'the game' were changed for indigenous peoples, their traditions and way of life stand in contrast to the dominant paradigm. White North Americans think that their way of life is natural and forget that what they think of as 'normal' is a product of the social-cultural context where they grew up. So it follows that looking at other cultures is often enlightening because other ways of life presents new possibilities. Looking at cultures different than our own and exploring history provides examples of different ways to live and be in the world.

The IFSW (2013), acknowledges the historical hegemony of Western cultures concerning Indigenous people(s):

"Part of the legacy of colonialism is that Western theories and knowledges have been exclusively valorised, and indigenous knowledges have been devalued, discounted, and hegemonised by Western theories and knowledge. The proposed definition attempts to halt and reverse that process by acknowledging that indigenous peoples in each region, country or area carry their own values, ways of knowing, ways of transmitting their knowledges, and have made invaluable contributions to science. Social work seeks to redress historic Western scientific colonialism and hegemony by listening to and learning from indigenous peoples around the world. In this way social work knowledges will be co-created and informed by indigenous peoples, and more appropriately practiced not only in local environments but also internationally. Drawing on the work of the United Nations, the IFSW defines indigenous peoples as follows:

- They live within (or maintain attachments to) geographically distinct ancestral territories.
- They tend to maintain distinct social, economic and political institutions within their territories.
- They typically aspire to remain distinct culturally, geographically and institutionally, rather than assimilate fully into national society.
- They self-identify as indigenous or tribal."

Mckenzie and Morrissette (2003) in *Multicultural Social Work in Canada* write that "the genesis of an Aboriginal world view emerged from a close relationship with the environment" (259). Everything is part of the circle of life and we humans are part of this. Johnson H. (2007), a northern Cree from La Ronge, Saskatchewan, is a Harvard-educated lawyer who uses a dog team to work on his family's traditional trap line. He explains that when white settlers colonized Canada they brought with them a world view that they attempted to impose upon the indigenous peoples. Assimilation was and continues to be the name of the game. The original peoples signed treaties with England, nation to nation, that the original peoples perceived as negotiated between cousins. The colonizers, however, perceived the settlement of the Americas as conquest. The settler society wanted to 'civilize' the Indians by imposing their religion and world view on them. As Johnson H. tells us, indigenous people have their own stories of genesis, where the earth is seen as Mother, which formed the natural law that governed life. "This relationship between our Creator, our Mother, all other life forms, and ourselves forms the basis of all that we know to be true" (Johnson H., 2007: 16). Johnson H. adds that the concept of ecology is helpful in understanding this world view.

I live on Cree territory and am most familiar with this culture so I will underline some of the Cree traditional ways of life as an example of an alternative paradigm. Historically and traditionally, everyone has a role to play in the community in Cree culture. Women and men have equal power and an equal say in the community (Anderson, 2011). Women are considered to be the life fire of a tribe and symbolically are seen as sitting in the middle of the sacred circle or community (Anderson, 2011). Everything happens in the sacred circle of life. In indigenous culture, it is accepted that all life is sacred: people, plants, animals, water, earth and air. Responsibility for the land, water, air and animals is learned from an early age (Anderson, 2011).

In Cree communities and many other indigenous communities in Canada, decisions are made and healing for self and between people is done in a circle. For example, I have sat in a healing circle (this was not a restorative justice circle) where everyone gets to talk. When the circle is called, for the purpose of making a decision, people come together and talk until consensus is reached. In the circle, after prayers and smudging with sweetgrass for thanks and purification is done (to help one set positive intentions towards others), a stone or feather is passed around. The person sitting in the east will begin the discussion. This person will say as much as they desire to say and then they pass the stone or feather to the next person who then may speak, and so it goes around the circle. People do not interrupt or offer advice unless their advice is requested. If someone wishes to respond to something someone has said, they ask permission first. Generally people resolve issues by listening and reflecting on what they hear. The process is very respectful and it enables everyone to have an equal voice. Those who happen to be more aggressive or loud do not prevent quieter, softer people from speaking. Professionals and authority figures do not have more power. All power is with one another.

5.1.6.1. Alternative Culture Challenges Western Hegemony

Writers, such as Bookchin (2005), point to pre-literate cultures to demonstrate how cultural context shapes our perspectives and how ecological destruction corresponds to the building of hierarchical structures in human societies. Looking at other cultures provides a contrast to the dominant Western worldview, which is instructive.

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Tribal societies were composed of small, decentralized groups of people which afforded them a decision-making model that was democratic (Brodley, 2008). Indigenous peoples developed land-based cultures due to their awareness of their reliance on the natural environment. According to Bodley (2008), these were domestic-scale societies that "emphasized the welfare of individuals and households" and were "often small- scale societies culturally organized around the basic principles of self-reliance, autonomy, kinship, social justice and family that made the tribal world so successful" (2008: 16). Brodley (2008) later illustrates that everyone in these societies enjoyed and had equal access to the necessities of life such as food, clothes and shelter. Indigenous societies across Canada, North America and the world had their own distinctive features that were adapted in harmony to the natural environment. What they shared in common, however, was that the needs of the members were collectively met and that society was land-based (Brodley, 2008). That is until the colonizers who held a hegemonic view of the world and considered the 'Indians' to be in need of civilizing entered the picture.

In Canada, for example, European settlers had little understanding of the culture of the peoples who lived on the land they were claiming for their own. For instance, there were aspects of the plains Cree culture that bothered European settlers (Hildebrandt, 1994: 13), such as the concept of time, the lack of a concept of private property and the desire not to hoard wealth.

The cultural view of time held by the Cree was one that followed the rhythms of nature rather than a prescribed work schedule. This lifestyle afforded the Cree more leisure time because their dependence on the rhythms of nature meant that certain activities were done in particular seasons. For example, during hunting season the tribe would gather and everyone would have a role to play in harvesting meat, such as killing the animal, skinning, making pemmican and preparing hides. Nothing was wasted; for instance, hides were used for clothing and for constructing tepees. Before an animal was killed the hunters would honour the animal by prayer and apologize for their sacrifice. In the summer, adult animals were hunted and berries and other foods were gathered. The fall was time for games and visiting neighbours. Winter brought the season of storytelling and reflection that included the passing on of oral history. Stockpiling resources was

unnecessary because the Cree lived from what nature provided seasonally (Hildebrandt, 1994).

The European settlers viewed the Cree as lazy because they supposed the Cree had a lack of industry and work ethic (Hildebrandt, 1994). The Cree had a sense of freedom because they did not have nine-to-five jobs and their security did not depend on individual ownership. The disregard for private property and ownership of land contrasted greatly with the European concept of accumulation. For the Cree there was a sense of pride in being able to share. Water, food and any of the resources available to the community members were also free to anyone who found themselves in a Cree community. According to Coulthand there is a difference between 'indigenous place-based and Western time-orientated understandings of the world (2010: 79). Indigenous understanding is one of the interdependence of all life; "place is a way of knowing, experiencing, and relating with the world" (Coulthard, 2010: 79).

Horizontalism and a strong sense of community are inherent in small-scale societies. Also living simply allows more time to do what one wants to do.

5.1.6.2. Wellness as Balance

In the indigenous world view, injustice and personal problems are seen as resulting from deviations from the law of the sacred circle of nature/creators law. When there is balance between the four elements - spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical - life is balanced and therefore harmonious, healthy and happy. The juxtaposition of the circle with the community, the environment and social relationships is difficult to describe and understand from a Euro/American-centric perspective.

It is a culture that is defined by the community and institutional arrangements like those in dominant North American culture are seen as alien to Indigenous life ways. When one relies upon these foreign institutional arrangements, such as the justice system or the medical model of health care, it is perceived as a sign of personal and social disequilibrium. Bureaucracy and hierarchical structures and relations are incongruent with the sense of equality and inclusiveness that Cree people have traditionally upheld for one another. "Although this place-based ethics has been worn by decades of colonial displacement, for many it still serves as the radical imaginary guiding our visions of a just

political and economic relationship with non-indigenous people and communities based on principles of reciprocity and mutual obligation" (Coulthard, 2010: 81).

5.1.6.3. Example of the Ethos of Some Indigenous Peoples

The ethos of indigenous people is so vastly different from the ethos of domination, mistrust, elitism, harshness, and destruction that it can be viewed as the opposite to it. This is not to romanticize indigenous cultures but to point out that their value system is very different than Western culture. For example, Alvarado (2010) views solidarity as a desirable value but points out that it is different to the ethic of reciprocity often found in communal societies.

1. "Solidarity is a unidirectional relation, a one-way street. It is about giving without expecting to receive, wanting to support without wanting or demanding support in return, an act of kindness without knowing for whom. On the other hand, reciprocity is a two-way relationship. It is giving in order to receive, knowing that society morally sanctions an unequal restitution of goods. In other words, person A must receive from person B exactly what he or she gave, at the moment it is needed, or there will be consequences.
2. Solidarity is always selective. One can only be in solidarity with one person in a family, not with all, just as one cannot be in solidarity with all the organizations in a city or country. In contrast, reciprocity must be rigorously inclusive of all members of the community. It is unthinkable that it could be selective.
3. Solidarity is temporary. It should not be permanent, since its reason d'être is mainly to support someone in difficult moments, but almost never for life, as that would become a somewhat perverted relationship. On the other hand, reciprocity is obligated to be permanent" (Alvarado, 2010: 373).

As further explained by McKenzie and Morrissette (2003: 260) the Indigenous world view does not segment nor put certain kinds of knowledge into hierarchies as this cultural view embraces holism and the complexity of life.

There is a resurgence of indigenous communal resistance today particularly in Mexico and South America based on comunalidad or communal life-ways.

"Comunalidad is a way of understanding life as being permeated with spirituality, symbolism, and a greater integration with nature. It is one way of understanding that human beings are not the center, but simply a part of this great natural world. It is here that we can distinguish the enormous

difference between Western[17] and indigenous thought. Who is at the center – only one, or all? The individual, or everyone? The market makes everyone into a product, a thing and with that nature is commodified" (Luna, 2010: 93-94).

It is in the sense of community that the hegemony of the Western individualistic life-way finds an antidote. In communal cultures everyone in their 'we-ness', the community, is responsible for the welfare of the community and for every individual in that community. Therefore, this form of social structure renders social workers redundant.

5.1.6.4. Disparity Between Canadian Social Work and First Nations

McKenzie and Morrissette explain that even though social work uses an ecological model that is not wholly inconsistent with holism this model only encompasses the relationships between individuals and their immediate economic and social environment. "In addition, the emphasis on specialization and their related separation between methods of intervention, contradict the basic tenets of holism as expressed within an aboriginal world view" (2003: 260). Zapt (2009) adds that Aboriginal social work has provided social work with a more holistic integrated view of the world.

> "Aboriginal social work, built on traditional knowledge, offers a world view that integrates landscape, community, spirit, and self. Life is a process of finding and expressing one's place in the cosmos, in the natural world we all belong. Traditional knowledge brings together the sacred and daily life, with a strong emphasis on the land and concepts of place. Links between place and the world view are to be found everywhere in people (our geopsyches) and in the environment (spiritual landscapes). Active stewardship and responsibility to the land, and to our common "Mother Earth" are paramount" (Zapt, 2009: 181-182).

On the other hand, although Aboriginal schools of social work have embraced a perspective that honours indigenous life ways, they are imbedded in the larger society. In Canada all schools of social work operate as government structures, with Aboriginal

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[17] "Our use of the 'Western' refers to hegemonic values, beliefs, and policies which undergird global neoliberal capitalism. While these developed first in Europe and the United States, they now pervade elite classes and power structures worldwide" (Meyer & Maldonado, 2010: 10).

schools coming under the auspices of provincial Canadian universities. For example, the 'First Nation's University[18]' has been re-integrated as part of the University of Regina because it never really was independent or autonomous.

Here it is worth noting that the Canadian social work code of ethics (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2005) does not reflect the ecological indigenous world view of Canada's first peoples, despite Indigenous social workers being under the act. The Canadian code states: "Social workers promote social development and environmental management in the interests of all people" (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2005). The concept of environmental management does not fit a world view that sees all life as interdependent. A more fitting phrase than 'management' for an Indigenous world view might be care for, for example.

5.1.7. The Global Justice Movement

The Global Justice Movement (GJM) is sometimes referred to as the movement of movements because it is like a net that gathers diverse groups and individuals together in the common cause of struggling to facilitate social and environmental justice (Ferguson & Lavalette, 2005, Porta, 2007). It is global and gives a voice to millions of people who have never had a public voice (Porta, 2007). The GJM challenges neo-liberalism, promotes democracy from the bottom up and spreads the word that 'another world is possible' (Porta, 2007, Lacey, 2007). The movement also works to build awareness through education in social forums and counter summits. The Global Justice Movement is an example of a multi-level attempt at change because it takes in a diversity of issues and groups.

The movement's origins can be traced back to the Mexican Zapatistas movement and from there to groups that made connections between themselves and their particular struggles. Internet use contributed to the formation of these connections (Graeber, 2009, Lacey, 2007, Highleyman, 2002). Porta (2007) says the GJM developed by groups networking and making linkages between their particular struggles. In the GJM people found common cause and offered each other mutual aid (Porta, 2007).

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[18] The F.N.U. in Saskatchewan was the only Aboriginal University in Canada.

"Only gradually did intense international mobilization – in counter-summits, Global Days of Action, European Marches against Unemployment, Intergalactic Meetings of the Zapatistas, and World Social Forums – start to build awareness of and interest in the emergence of a new cycle of protest. In subsequent years, hundreds of thousands marched against the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank meetings in Washington and Prague in 2000 and 2001 and against the European Union (EU) summits in Amsterdam in 1997, Nice in 2000, and Gothenburg in 2001. They protested the world economic forum in yearly demonstrations in Davos, the G8 summit in Genoa in 2001, and (following the call issued by the first European Social Forum) the Iraq war in hundreds of cities on February 15, 2003" (Porta, 2007: 1).

Currently the anti-globalization movement (Global Justice Movement) is one of the most active and universal movements. "The global justice movement is the largest movement in existence today, bringing tens of thousands of activists into the streets worldwide since the turn of the millennium" (Highleyman, 2002: 1). For example, in 1999 in Seattle, in a protest against a meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO), about fifty or sixty thousand people gathered and stopped the meeting. This was the first of the large summit demonstrations, followed two years later by mass protests in Quebec City, Canada, where the Summit of the Americas was opposed ((Ferguson & Lavalette, 2005, Starhawk, 2002: 15, Lundy 2004: 6).

The Seattle demonstrations stimulated further actions, protests, and the World Social Forums and inspired many people to take direct actions (Ferguson, 2008). "New coalitions were being formed, and new ideologies and tactics were being forged. Alternative institutions sprang up, from collectivists of street medics to Indy/Media centers that pioneered a whole new approach to journalism" (Starhawk, 2002: 1). Civil society, labour, women, old and young, militants, pagans, artists, puppeteers, and cheerleaders have been part of the movement (Highleyman, 2002).

There have been conflicts within the GJM around tactics of property violence and peaceful protest that have received a lot of media attention. Although the smashing of windows of businesses, such as McDonalds and Monsanto, that are in violation of labour and international relations has garnered a lot of media attention, the protests have largely been peaceful. Some of the main tactics have been blockades and lockdowns aimed at disrupting financial institution (neo-liberalism) meetings through direct action. Much of

the protesting has been done in an atmosphere of fun as manifested in dancing and plays (Heyleyman, 2002) and reclaiming the streets for theatre. On the other hand, the smashing of windows and burning of police cars, primarily by the Blackblock, has been argued to be an effective contribution to the use of a variety of tactics that could bring attention to protest (Graeber, 2009).

Many activists are media savvy and have used alternative and mainstream media to their advantage. However, the mainstream media has often put a spin on the protests which tends to take attention away from important issues by highlighting any violence that takes place. Such tactics by the mainstream media became a catalyst for the creation of the Indy-Media movement. Activists can now use the internet to spread information among themselves instantly without the spin of mainstream media (Graeber, 2009). Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, are now popular venues where activists from around the world share information. For example, videos, articles, and information about protests, occupations, and police brutality are instantly shared with networks of people. The camera has also become an important tool for documenting events as they happen and instances of police brutality.

The GJM is structured on principles of participatory democracy through affinity groups and spokes councils. There is no need for leaders. "Spokes councils typically operate using a consensus-based process, which borrows heavily from feminist and anarchist principles" (Heyleyman, 2002: 8). This is horizontal democracy in practice where individuals and groups use their unique skills for the benefit of all. Direct horizontal decision-making provides the infrastructure of organization during protests and it has also been carried back by groups and individuals to use in other actions and organizations (Graeber, 2009). The process is both democratic and transparent. The people decide on what is to be done and therefore know what is happening.

The GJM links protest to education and spreading information. Principally through counter summits and the internet, networks strive to construct alternative knowledge and skills (Porta, 2007). Knowledge building about issues, tactics, and acquiring skills is a central focus. For example, people have learned skills about direct action, first aid, legal issues, jail solidarity and banner-hanging. This is also part of building a supportive infrastructure that includes volunteer medics, lawyers, and people

that distribute food (Graeber, 2009). The sharing of information and the links between knowledge and action are highly valued and shared at protests in collectives or affinity groups and over the internet.

Activists pushed hard against the system and the system has resisted. Lundy (2004: 6) says that these protests also generated large security operations. For instance in Canada, the Summit of the Americas saw the biggest security operation in peace-time records. The 2010 Olympics in Canada saw video monitoring, police checkpoints, no-fly zones, and restrictions on signs of protest and protest pens or designated areas called free speech zones and cost Canadian taxpayers over a billion dollars for security (Shaw & Westergard-Thorpe, 2009: 23) "As B.C.[19] faces a poverty and housing crises, efforts to forcibly remove visible homelessness from Vancouver and broken promises of social housing clash with the Olympic claims of social sustainability" (Shaw & Westergard-Thorpe, 2009: 23). Restrictions on protests violate point number 2(d) freedom of association, of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (The Constitution Act, 1982). However, as anyone living in North America knows, since the attack on the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001 civil liberties have been eroded (Ferguson & Lavalette, 2005). Even in peaceful protest, resistance can be expected.

Despite the gains made by activist groups in terms of developing decentralized horizontal ways to make change, it has not changed the hearts and minds of those elites that hold onto power. There is comfort in the stability of the status quo. The Global Justice Movement does, however, 'think outside the box' of the kinds of protests we became accustomed to in the past and extends their life outside of particular events such as the Seattle protest (Ferguson & Lavalette, 2005). The passion and emotion that people feel about changing the world is expressed in study groups and by social media. Also, as Ferguson (2008) has stated, social workers have historically been radicalized by contact with social movements. The Global justice Movement has the potential to radicalize social work and challenge neo-liberalism (Ferguson, 2008).

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[19] B.C. refers to British Columbia which is the province furthest west in Canada. Vancouver is a city in British Columbia.

5.1.8. Occupy Everything

Near the end of writing this thesis, the Occupy movement sprang up. The Occupy movement follows on the heels of the Global Justice movement. It followed the Arab Spring and continues to coincide with labour protests, the Montreal students' strike and uprisings all over the world: Spain, Mexico, Greece, Canada, Portugal, the United States, and the UK to name only a few countries.

> "The occupy movement, originally initiated by a call from Adbusters to 'Occupy Wall Street,' was inspired by several international protests, most notably, the Arab Spring protests. Thousands answered the call and arrived in Zuccotti Park, at the heart of New York City's financial district, to protest the damaging influence of corporations on politics as well as social and economic inequality. Hundreds stayed every night for two months and created an encampment in the park, a model that was adopted by people all over the country as the movement spread to well over 500 cities" (Occupy Together on-line, retrieved September 18, 2012).

Writing from an American[20] perspective Wallerstein says that, "the Occupy Wall Street movement – for now it is a movement – is the most important political happening in the United States since the uprisings in 1968, whose direct descendant or continuation it is" (2011: 1). Occupy has been criticized for not having a clear, coherent set of demands. Initially the movement was characterized by average people who identified as the 99% because they represent most people who struggle to make a living. They came to protest against government bailout of Wall Street banks, which are headed by the wealthiest 1% of American people. Rather than demands on the system however, Occupy has developed into a movement that is diverse in its demands, linking a diversity of struggles and groups. "The Occupy movement has no official leaders. Anyone can be involved in the process and pick up the flag to address issues they face in their community. We do not believe in placing the power of the movement in the hands of the few, but rather empowering everyone to be involved and share responsibility together" (Occupy Together, on-line, retrieved September 18, 2012). Occupy employs direct action in developing alternatives and a process that models what is possible. The Occupy

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[20] When 'American' is referred to in Canada it means the United States. If one were referring to Canada they would say Canadian perspective for example. Mexican perspective or South American perspective would also be used to distinguish from American from the United States. Or one could say the Americas, using the plural, which would be a more inclusive term.

movement supports a number of issues, including a living wage for all. Occupy works against, student debt, health care and illegal foreclosures. In 2012, after hurricane Sandy devastated parts of the US eastern coast, Occupiers spearheaded and organized extensive relief efforts. Most recently Occupiers have begun raising money to buy the debt of people who have suffered from economic austerity. (Occupy Together 2012, retrieved September 18, 2012).

Wallerstein (2011) believes that Occupy is creating a new culture. It has stretched the parameters of dissent and gone beyond single issues or single group demands. Occupy is international and includes a diversity of people and issues. People have made the links between issues and come together for a common cause (Wallerstein, 2011).

5.1.9. Anarchism Today

During the last ten years or so, anarchism has grown into a global movement. Uri Gordon's study of contemporary anarchism argues that in the past ten years or so new life has been breathed into anarchism globally (Gordon, 2005). Anarchism has developed into a cultural movement that covers a wide range of issues and uses a wide range of what Gordon calls "political action frames" (2005: 57). These action frames include writing, speaking, and performance arts. Anarchists work to build horizontally from below, privileging the voices of marginalized people often acting in solidarity with other groups such as immigrants, workers, political prisoners, environmentalists, and indigenous movements. As would be expected, anarchists are more inclined to support groups that work from the bottom rather than support bureaucratic organizations.

After protesters shut down the WTO conference in Seattle, there has been increased scholarly and activist interest in anarchism, including theoretical development of the left and expressly anarchist critiques (Amster et. al., 2009: 1). Info-shops, networks, collectives and affinity groups have been set up around the world. Anarchist projects such as Food Not Bombs have also developed (Amster et. al. (2009: 4-5) "Anarchism has become a respected field of study within academia" (Amster 2009: 5). In addition Juris (2009: 213) critiques the anti-globalization in Barcelona to pose the question as to why anarchism has re-emerged in Europe and particularly Barcelona with its anti-anarchist legacy.

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Milstein describes anarchism as a philosophy that "stands for the absence of both domination (mastery or control over another) and hierarchy (ranked power relations of dominance and subordination)" (2010: 13). It is obvious that in today's world there are only small pockets of people and organizations that operate horizontally, and there is no prescription for what a future anarchist model of governance might look like because for some to spell it out without others would be authoritarian and hence a contradiction to the principles of anarchism. According to Chomsky (2005), the burden of proof to justify if and when domination is necessary is on authority. For example, if a small child runs into traffic you are justified in grabbing their arm and preventing them from being hit by a car.

According to Graeber (2009) anarchism is not meant as a theory of static 'truth'. It can be a critique and a process of coming to agreement. "Anarchism is not an attempt to put a certain sort of theoretical vision into practice, but is instead a constant mutual exchange between inspirational visions, anti-authoritarian attitudes, and egalitarian practices" (Graeber, 2009: 221– 222). Chomsky believes it can best be described as participatory democracy.

5.1.9.1. Anarchism as a Model of Egalitarianism

Anarchism is much misunderstood and maligned in mainstream popular culture. This has come about in no small part because of misuse of the term by the media and as a backlash from those in power. Anarchism has little to do with either violence or chaos. The culture of anarchism today can be understood as visioning and acting in accordance with the society we want to see in the future. The focus that anarchism places on possibilities and what can be done also makes anarchism prefigurative.

As mentioned in the Key Concepts section of Chapter One, the philosophical base of anarchy is horizontalism. Amster (2009: 1) describes anarchism as "ostensibly centered on consensus models of decision-making and what is sometimes referred to as 'direct democracy'. To have 'no master' while respecting the virtues of diversity, anarchists maintain that everyone should be treated with respect, allowed autonomy, and accorded a voice in all decisions that affect them."

Davis (introduction to Davis & Kinna, 2009: 1) argues that, as anarchists believe another world is possible, they often focus on what can be done. Contemporary anarchism's most distinct feature is, "the generalization of the target of anarchist resistance from the state and capitalism to all forms of domination in society" (Gordon, 2009: 262). Therefore because anarchism resists all forms of domination and links the intersectionality of competing issues in the radical community it is anti-oppressive (Gordon, 2009: 262). Because anarchism is anti-domination, it includes opposition to all forms of oppression (Gordon, 2009). A new anarchist movement has emerged in response to globalization that not only addresses classism, as has been popular in many past theories such as Marxism, but also challenges other forms of oppression[21] (Amster, et. al, 2009, Graeber, 2009),

If a thread in a purely historically perspective is followed, it can be seen that indigenous societies were societies that were not ruled by state authority. In many North American tribal societies there was equality which was lost in the process of colonization (Bodley, 2008). Understandably, people who lived in tribal societies took this as a given and didn't call themselves anarchists. These ways of living can challenge our hegemonic perceptions, looking backwards as well as forwards to find alternatives.

5.1.9.2. Anarchism and Syndicalism

In Schmidt and van der Walt's (2009) view, anarchism can be traced to 1869 and its roots in anarcho-syndicalism: "The earliest expressions of anarcho-syndicalist structure and methods were formulated in the International Workingmen's Association of First International, particularly in the Jura federation. The First International, however, split between two main tendencies within the organization over the question of political, parliamentary action; the libertarian wing represented by Mikhail Bakunin and the statist wing represented by Karl Marx" (New World Encyclopedia, on-line, retrieved November 12, 2012). "Syndicalisme is a French word meaning trade unionism" (New World Encyclopedia, on-line, retrieved November 12, 2012). Syndicalists represent the more radical roots of the labour movement known for direct action, solidarity among workers

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[21] Anarchism allies itself with feminism, environmentalism, anti-racism and such an alliance reflects anti-oppressive social work practice.

and worker-run industry. The Wobblies[22] were part of the syndicalism movement and were greatly influenced by anarchist values.

Schmidt and van der Walt's (2009) see anarcho-syndicalism as international and going beyond opposing the state. In their view, anarchism is tied to unionism and the workers' movement. "The most important stand in anarchism has, we argue, always been syndicalism: the view that unions - built through daily struggles, a radically democratic practice, and popular education - are crucial levers of revolution, and can even serve as the nucleus of a free socialist order" (2009: 7). According to Schmidt and van der Walt (2009), equality and democracy happen in the context of freedom and individuality that cannot come about in a state context. Capitalism and landlordism are seen as the base of exploitation. "To end the situation it is necessary to engage in class struggle and revolution, creating a free socialist society based on common ownership, self-management, democratic planning from below, and production for need not profit" (2009: 6).

Chomsky outlines how he sees the political being constituted in such a society.

"Beginning with the two modes of immediate organization and control, namely organization and control in the workplace and in the community, one can imagine a network of workers councils, and at a higher level, representation across the factories, or across branches of industry, or across crafts, and on to general assemblies of workers counsels that can be regional and national and national and international in character. And from another point of view one can project a system of governance that involves local assemblies –again federated regionally, dealing with regional issues, crossing crafts, industries, trades and so on, and again at the level of the nation or beyond, through federations and so on" (Chomsky, 1976: 137).

This form of arrangement calls for a great deal of organization. Chomsky (2005) notes that although organization from the bottom is associated with small scale societies, constituting political arrangements from the bottom would be most efficient and a good fit for post-industrial societies.

According to Chomsky (2005), the best example of worker-run governance was during the Spanish Civil War between 1936 and 1939. During this time, workers organized themselves and ran the economy and the distribution of goods.

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[22] International Workers of the World (IWW).

<u>5.1.9.3. Anarchism in Action</u>

Today, anarchism can be defined as a social movement (Day, 2005, Graeber, 2009). "Social movements, then, can be thought of as organized yet informal social entities that are engaged in extra-institutional conflict that is orientated towards a goal. These goals can be either aimed at a specific and narrow policy or be more broadly aimed at cultural change" (Christiansen, 2009: 2). There are a number of organizations, such as Food not Bombs, Act Up, the Global Justice Movement, and so on that comes under the anarchist umbrella (Graeber, 2009).

The anarchist movement seen today is built from its original classical concepts, such as mutual aid, autonomy, social justice, as well as critiques on private property, capitalism, education and the state. Gordon states, "the task for anarchists, then, is not to introduce a new society but to realize it as much as possible in the present tense" (2005: 126). this requires freedom of action. According to Sartwell, "anarchism is, indeed, the only political theory that rests itself entirely on the value of freedom" (2008: 7). Liberty can be seen in everyday actions that facilitate processes of inquiry and decision-making. For instance, affinity groups encourage everyone to have a say in the matters that affect them and employ consensus decision-making.

Affinity groups have sprung up that act on a local level and connect with the larger movement globally. For instance, at the G8 summit protests, a variety of actions were organized and carried out by anarchists through affinity groups. Membership is not formal as anarchists do not operate through conventional political channels. Gordon (2005) outlines three characteristic features of anarchism: struggling against domination, direct action, and pre-figurative or open-ended politics.

Constructing alternatives to domination on individual and organizational levels are acts of resistance. Resistance is also seen in decentralization of power and confronting institutions that practice domination. Anarchism values autonomy and thus acts as a network of autonomous struggles that incorporate mutual aid and solidarity (Gordon, 2005: 100).

May relates that the civil rights movement and the Zapatista in Mexico are examples of resisting the police order because of the equality of those doing the resisting. "However, what characterizes a political movement as democratic is not the demands it

makes but the presuppositions out of which it arises" (May 2009: 16). In other words, democracy happens in the process by which we work toward equality.

Direct action which is typically thought of as confrontation as seen in, Greenpeace's recent occupation at the Tar Sands in Fort MacMurray in northern Alberta, is expanded to include "propaganda by deed" (Gordon, 2005: 105). This is when one takes social change into one's own hands without appealing to or asking an external institution for acknowledgement or to amend the situation. Propaganda by deed is also about conducting actions and personal relationships in non-hierarchical ways, challenging domination and constructing alternative institutions. The Occupy movement's relief effort in New York City after Hurricane Sandy is an example of direct action.

Anarchists engage in direct action rather than civil disobedience because they are not orientated towards the authorities. This is "do it-your-self politics" from below where people act to be the change according to Gordon (2005). Change is needed now so that there is a model in place for the future, to replace state and hierarchical organization (Ward, 2011). If no alternative is available after a revolution, the void that could just as easily be filled by fascism as anarchism. What is done in everyday lives helps build strategic arrangements. "One cannot build a revolutionary movement along such lines and expect that they will not emerge as a decisive conditioning factor for the entire project of social transformation. The moment one focuses merely on the seizure of state power, and maintains authoritarian organization for that purpose while leaving the construction of a free society for 'after the revolution', the road has already been closed" (Gordon, 2005: 113).

Pre-figurative politics is largely about living and constructing the society we want to build in the here and now, in our social relations and concepts of politics (Gordon, 2005: 104). As Derrick (see Appendix A, Article Two) pointed out however, first we have to deal with the psychopathology of our power dynamics. Kropotkin also says that governments need to be abolished before we can realize social justice.

> "That the governments existing at present ought to be abolished, so that liberty, equality, and fraternity should no longer be empty words but become living realities, and that all forms of government as yet tried have only been so many forms of oppression and ought to be replaced by a new form of grouping, will be agreed by all who have a brain and a temperament ever so little revolutionary" (Kropotkin, 1880: 7).

Combining both sentiments speaks to both keeping the spirit of egalitarianism alive in the present and recognizing that current structural power dynamics allow domination. Propaganda by the deed, in anarchist terms, is about challenging hierarchical relations.

Having a vision for the future is not about having rigid plans already mapped out. Imagining a future in an anarchist context is about working towards a just society where there is a shared meaning about the features of that society. Do-it-yourself democracy is experimentally joining "revolutionary process to desired results" (Gordon: 2005: 112). Further Gordon (2005: 113) elaborates on how this could be achieved including non-hierarchical organizing, collectively run grassroots projects from below and self-liberation. Revolution needs to be an ongoing relational **process**.

Gordon (2005) points out that politics need to be open-ended because we can never be sure that we know all the intricacies and forms of domination. Understanding and awareness are often only partial. As individuals working to practice different ways of being in the world, one often comes up against their own socialization that took form in a hierarchical society. Therefore, we are often forced to reflect and self correct as we practice new ways of doing things, especially in uncharted territory. The future is better served when change and visioning are seen as organic processes that are open to debate and reassessment.

Whether or not we view anarchism as practical or possible it nevertheless acts as a critique of current systems of government and a standard of freedom and egalitarianism. The standards upheld by anarchism are revolutionary rather than reformist. Therefore, anarchism stands as a critique and a possible way forward to sustainable social justice.

5.2. Section Two: Theories and Aspects of Change

The section above illustrated and discussed various social paradigms and movements which include a strong focus on facilitating social justice. This section looks at change itself and underlines ideas about how change happens. Change is inevitable; where there is life there is change. When we talk about social change, what is not inevitable is how change happens or the course change takes. When history is examined,

it reveals that there have been significant events that moved peoples toward or away from social justice. Theory about change is reflected on to gain a better understanding of possible paths toward social justice. By looking at thoughts about change, this dialogue is intended to spark the radical imagination in the spirit of opening possibilities for future exchanges of ideas.

5.2.1. Nazi Ethos as an Example of Moving Away From Justice

The holocaust is an example of injustice, inequality, exclusion and domination. Nazism's authoritarianism, sexism, racism, elitism, exclusion, and cruelty speak against social justice. The genocide of Jewish people, however ugly in its telling, is an experience the world remembers and most people know about. For this reason, Nazism is used as an example of forces working against social justice.

In a 1986 study, Lifton looked at the psychology of doctors that worked as part of the SS in Nazi Germany (Lifton, 1986: xii). His study both condemns the evil done and looks for hope, hope that may be gained by a better understanding of how people who were not innately sadists or sociopaths can do appalling things to other human beings.

The ideology of Nazi Germany was one where some people saw themselves as a superior race that had the right to dominate their enemies. Jews were constructed as the objectified Other or enemy of Germany from an ideology that regarded some people as less than human. The state, in an attempt to further its goals, prohibited protest and worked to exclude opposing positions or alternative views (Lifton, 1986).

The Regime did not tolerate dissent nor did it uphold the right to protest or encourage dialogue. Lifton (1986) writes about how the state infiltrated the universities promoting those professors who were in line with state doctrine, firing others, and even beheading a group of student protesters. The Nazi regime used the intellectual authority of doctors to justify and legitimize killing in the name of medicine and science (Lifton, 1986: 44). It was very dangerous to oppose the state and the state used a number of methods to silence dissents from propaganda to death. The Nazi regime is an extreme example of repression and domination.

Gilbert explains that when a person's different identity roles are in conflict, one can conceivably regard oneself as a loving person and still go off to work at a

concentration camp (2005: 56). Lifton further enlightens the reader about how the Nazi doctors allowed themselves to became involved in killing, forced sterilizations, selection of those to be killed, and so on through a destructive process of psychological 'doubling': "the division of the self into two functioning wholes, so that a part-self acts as an entire self. An Auschwitz doctor could, through doubling, not only kill and contribute to killing but organize silently, on behalf of that evil project, an entire self-structure (or self-process) encompassing virtually all aspects of his behavior" (Lifton, 1986: 418).

According to Lifton (1986) through doubling an individual loses their integrity, autonomy and their moral compass. The context the doctors were in set the tone for what went on inside the self and in turn what that 'self' did. The environment of Auschwitz normalized killing as the 'the final solution' to the Jewish problem. Racism and its accompanying ethos of domination, where the elite had all the privileges, normalized the environment so that killing and genocide were legitimized. Lifton calls the normalizing environment of the SS a community within a community (1986: 435). In the SS community at Auschwitz, which included the doctors who carried out murder, with its ethos of cleansing the Nordic race thereby 'healing the world', doctors were isolated from their contemporaries thus solidifying the community of Nazi doctors (1986: 434). They were like a gang with tribal loyalties that excludes those that they see as not belonging and a threat to their identity. The Jews, as the 'other' were demonized as in Jewish vermin. "A group can become the organizing process through which strategies inside individuals become orchestrated and related between individuals" (Gilbert, 2005: 60). Social isolation shuts off other views and limits ideas to the group one associates with.

There was also pride in overcoming the ordeal of killing that was considered heroic. To be a man entailed hardness (Lifton, 1986: 436) and was part of the men's numbing of their feelings to what went on in concentration camps. "Numbing was fostered not only by this knowledge and culpability but by the admired principle of 'the new spirit of German coldness" (Lifton, 1986: 443). Lifton explains some of the ways that these Nazi doctors constructed meaning from the context that formed the double self. For example meaning was constructed out of the routines that ran Auschwitz (1986: 459), being a biological soldier, blaming the victims and medical accomplishments (459–462). Ultimately meaning was constructed to fend off the fear of death by a hardhearted male

ethos: "The Auschwitz self medicalized this overall Nazi male ideal and thereby gave it further claim to ultimate power and symbolic immortality. In this combination, the Auschwitz self made especially clear how far anti-empathic male power can be mobilized to fend off every form of death anxiety, including that associated with fear of homosexuality and of women, and with the erosion of one's ideology and ethos" (1986: 462).

Hitler was known to play people off against each other by threatening their sense of belonging and identity. Notably this caused Hitler's generals to compete for approval and acceptance (Lifton (1986). The tone was one of competition as opposed to cooperation. Competition works to divide and conquer and gives away power to whatever or whomever at the expense of personal power.

An authoritarian regime such as Nazism demonstrates that power over others leads to domination and repression. Repression is needed by such a system to control people so that they will act against what they feel is right, if they are lucky enough to feel at all. Repression is also meant to put down dissent of those who disagree. A gang mentality gave the Nazis a sense of belonging with each other and at the same time isolated them from others (Lifton, 1986). They were oppressive, racist, sexist and homophobic, because to carry out their evil scheme they needed compliance. Anyone who did not conform to their ideology needed to be kept in their place. Getting rid of dissenters and putting down protest was important to Nazis control. Painting others as inferior and wrong was intended to contrast with their claim of superiority and rightness (Lifton, 1986). The hegemony of such a system divides people against each other and separates the self from itself. Consequently holism and integrity are destroyed. The perpetrators lost the important connection between their physical, mental and social interdependence with others (Lifton, 1986). They also lost the feelings and emotions that are the human signal system that could have provided them with a warning that things are not right.

When power from above is oppressive, it discourages critical thinking and takes away one's right to disagree. The masses are forced to drop their ability to collectively organize and build. Taking away the right to disagree diminishes our awareness of the world because access to knowledge is limited and people feel unsafe sharing ideas and

information. A prescribed lens colours our view of the world and so it follows that our vision of alternatives becomes narrow. A broad lens that includes others is needed so that we can see problems differently. Domination and its twin, complicity, establish authority and conformity and limit creative options.

5.2.2. Domination and Complicity

The Nazi ethos is an extreme example that provides a warning, a red light, to stop and consider how change can move toward or away from social justice. Any indication of inequality, exclusion, authoritarianism, sexism, racism, elitism, exclusion, and cruelty contrasts with social justice. The domestication of people, the benefit of some at the expense of others, and our own blind obedience are risk factors for oppression (Freire, 1970). Authoritarianism and complicity strangle actions to facilitate social justice.

Domination in all its forms ("controlled, coerced, exploited, humiliated, discriminated against, etc") is something to negate and struggle against (Gordon, 2005: 98). "The term domination thus remains inclusive of forms of oppression, exclusion and control by those subject to them, at countless individual and collective sites of resistance" (Gordon, 2005: 99). In May's view (2009: 11-17), the philosophers Foucault and Ranciere have informed conceptions of domination and resistance. May tells us that domination is a term inclusive of all forms of oppression, whereas Marx's use of the term exploitation is an economic definition that refers only to the economic sphere of workers.

Oppressors, whether individuals or states, will use tactics of domination ranging from manipulation to violence to protect their own interest and maintain the status quo. However, domination, which is a form of power takes many forms. May (2009: 12) notes that Foucault informs anarchist thought on power: "power can operate in more subtle ways than A making B do what A wants; and can create things that were not there before" (May 2009: 12). Therefore oppression can take place without an oppressor. "Since power is not simply a matter of what A does to B, but can be a matter of who A is made to be by the practices in which she is engaged, then it is possible that A can be oppressed without there being a B that actually does the oppressing" (May 2009: 12). For instance, women are oppressed because they have become women, as defined by the dominant culture in which women occupy an oppressed position. May (2009) also relates

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that Foucault's ideas make use of the term domination both in a political and moral sense. Moral because there can be relationships of power that can be good by creating us to be good.

Gilbert stated that "Many of our crimes are crimes of obedience" (2005: 57). How many times have we done what is expected or followed others ideas when we didn't feel it was the right thing to do? Loss of identity, belonging, self-image, fear of criticism and shame, personal security and well-being as well as risks to ourselves or to those we love can keep us from helping and speaking out. Many people die for their beliefs, but many more remain silent and obedient. Newman asks why do we obey and poses the problem of voluntary servitude. "The essential lesson here is that the power cannot rely on coercion, but in reality rests on our power. Our active acquiescence to power at the same time constitutes this power" (Newman, 2010: 32). Our leaders, political or otherwise, can coordinate hate, war and other forms of injustice because of our submissiveness, using propaganda, violence, and other forms of manipulation to buy compliance. They also buy compliance through advertising and manipulation to the point that their stance is blindly accepted. People do not always question or think critically about issues; authority figures are perceived to know best (Freire, 1970).

Freire (1970) writes about the fear of freedom that is formed when the oppressed internalize the dominant culture's hegemony. According to Freire this creates "a culture of silence." Furthermore, there is a spectrum of violence that is initiated by those who dominate the oppressed in the services of the status quo. The oppressed have internalized the domination of the privileged and fear greater repression. This attaches them to the direction of their oppressors (Freire, 1970).

> "However, the oppressed, who have adapted to the structure of domination in which they are immersed, and have become resigned to it, are inhibited from waging the struggle for freedom so long as they feel incapable of running the risks it requires. Moreover, their struggle for freedom threatens not only the oppressor, but also their own oppressed comrades who are fearful of still greater repression. When they discover within themselves the yearning to be free, they perceive that this yearning can be transformed into reality only when the same yearning is aroused in their comrades. But while dominated by the fear of freedom they refuse to appeal to others, or to listen to the appeals of others, even to the appeals of their own conscience. They prefer gregariousness to authentic comradeship; they prefer the security of conformity with their state of

unfreedom to the creative communion produced by freedom and even the very pursuit of freedom" (Freire, 1970: 47- 48).

We are complicit with the forces that work to dominate us against our own liberation. We measure ourselves against the roles that the oppressors define for us (Freire, 1970). We identify with the oppressor because we want to share their power. "Radical political projects, for instance, have to contend with the ambiguities of human desire, with irrational social behavior, with violent and aggressive drives, and even with unconscious desires for authority and domination" (Newman, 2010: 40). We need, according to Newman (2010), to behave differently in our relationships to power and to each other. "Rather, we must transcend this binary of obedience/transgression. Anarchism is more than a transgression, but a learning to live beyond the law and the state through the invention of new spaces and practices for freedom and autonomy which will be, by their nature, somewhat fragile and experimental" (Newman, 2010: 45).

Lifton (1986: 464) explains that people in professions can be susceptible to doubling of their professional selves. An example he uses is a chaplain in the military who develops a 'military self' that counsels soldiers who hate war so they are able to go back and fight once more. The professional self adopts the ethos of the bureaucracy and therefore manipulates the clients into adjustment to the system (Lifton, 1986). Another example would be social workers who ally themselves with the bureaucracies they work under rather than service users. Another way of saying this is that the professional works to domesticate the client (Freire, 1970). The professional does not dialogue 'with' the client because there is no true empathy. The client is blamed for the problem and the context becomes invisible. This paradigm is in stark contrast to other models that avoid domestication and dominance.

Oppression and privilege intersect. People can be oppressed in some ways and privileged in other ways along economic, gender, ability, and sexual orientation lines and so on (Mullaly, 2007). Gilbert also points out that when care and concern is segregated or limited to only some people instead of all, strange anomalies of mind can take shape. An example he gives is the contradiction of Hitler who was a vegetarian and at the same time enacted genocide. "Hitler was a vegetarian, and at the time he was ordering the gassing of

the Jews he gave a dictate that lobsters should be given a painless death" (Gilbert, 2005: 40).

We all suffer from contradictions. We say we work for social justice and yet some are excluded from our care and concern. Often compassion is lacking for those we see as different or undeserving.

The left has willingly signed on to a social contract with capitalism via the state in hope and faith that everyone will eventually experience better living conditions. The liberals offered reform and the Old Left made the trade-off in hope of stability. Governments professed to represent 'the people' and according to Wallerstein (1999) "offered a three-pronged program of reforms: suffrage, the beginnings of a welfare state, and a politically integrating, racist nationalism" (1999: 69).

> "They came to see that the antisystemic movements actually served in a perverse way the interests of the system. Mobilizing the masses meant channeling the masses, and state power for the leaders had very conservatizing effects. Furthermore, once such movements were in power, they moved themselves against the impetuous demands of their followers, and tended to do so with as much, even more, severity than their predecessors. Furthermore, the sedative of hope was even more efficacious when the peddler was a certified revolutionary leader. If the future was theirs, the popular masses reasoned that they could afford to wait a while, especially if they had a 'progressive' state. Their children, at least, would inherit the earth" (Wallerstein, 1999: 71).

Some aspects of this form of domination through complicity began to break down in 1968 however when the children of the 'people', who relied on hope, became disillusioned with empty promises. In addition, the corporate agenda has become a priority and has eroded the stability that the state once offered. The market now disciplines the state. "A social decision to retain social welfare is irresponsible, but a social decision to save banks is not" (Wallerstein, 1999: 73).

Overcoming oppression requires becoming aware of ourselves, our belief systems, values and the systems that reinforce domination. When another's freedom is blocked, we also block our own freedom by being complicit with powers that seek to maintain the status quos. The status quo leaves power unchallenged and therefore keeps the oppressed subjugated while others gain privileges. We fear for our own freedom

when pushing the envelope too far because of fear of the disapproval of others. Anti-oppressive social work requires that we overcome our fear of freedom.

5.2.3. Why First Order Change Does Not Work in Second Order Contexts

First order change is described by Fraser and Solovey (2007) as change that does not change the system. First order change could be quite sufficient when dealing with short-term, immediate difficulties such as distributing food to the poor and hungry, but it will not change the system because it does not address the systemic cause of poverty and hunger. Moreover, using first order change to change systems often only exasperates and causes problems to recycle. Second order change, on the other hand, changes the fundamental structure of the system (Fraser & Solovey, 2007).

One of the common mistakes we make according to Watzlawick, Weakland and Fisch (1974), is using the same old solutions over and over again and expecting different outcomes. What happens in these situations is that the cure becomes worse than the disease. "In real life, although some human problems may contribute at a steady level of severity, many difficulties do not stay the same for long, but tend to increase and escalate if no solution or a wrong solution is attempted - and especially if *more* of a wrong solution is applied. When this happens, the situation may remain structurally similar or identical, but in the intensity of the difficulty and of the suffering entailed increases" (Watzlawick, et al, 1974: 32). An example of this is the war on drugs. The war on drugs was implemented by the United States to regulate the abuse of drugs. The original problem is that people who abuse drugs often cause damage to themselves, their family, and their community. The traditional response to this problem has been to hire more police and criminalize more people. By making the eradication of drug use a criminal priority, funds are diverted away from mental health and community services, more youth get criminal records which limit their chances of finding employment, and people who commit crimes to get money and drugs become major contributors to criminal activities through gangs and organized crimes. First order change, used over and over again on a second order problem, has not only made the problem worse, it has caused additional problems. Applying first order change to second order problems, as the forgoing

illustrates, not only confuses one's priorities but also lead to the recycling of problems as they have never actually been addressed.

When solutions do not fit problems, a vicious cycle is created. "Failed solutions, it bears emphasizing, will be repeated until interrupted" (Fraser & Solovey, 2007). The same solutions are often applied over and over again because the foundational premise remains unchanged. What this amounts to is thinking inside the box when we really need is to think outside the box. When solutions fail it is often due to the employment of first order change on second order problems. Such failed solutions are basically attempted modification within a system without addressing the structure or parameters of the system. It is important to understand that second order change entails premises that are quite different from that of first order change.

The use of coercion and control is often a sign that first order change is being used to make second order problems go away (Fraser & Solovey, 2007). Coercion and control are not only examples of domination and oppression but they are also a signal telling us that the way we are dealing with a problem is not working. "Each failed solution pattern has something in common; each involves efforts at coercing change. In effect, symptomatic behavior is maintained by efforts to make it go away" and "coerced change can be self-generated, imposed on others, or both. However, the effect is to restrict freedom, which results in rebellion against self or others and further symptom generation" (Fraser & Solovey, 2007: 273). The high degree of coercion witnessed in the world today, from child abuse to war, roughly corresponds to the degree in which misguided efforts are spent at finding solutions. Verification of first order change being applied to second order problems is evident in the so called 'resistant client' often seen in the everyday practice of social work. It seems obvious that more effort does not necessarily generate a better outcome. However, there is an exception to the rule. When there has been no effort or too little effort to change, more pressure to act may be needed (Fraser & Solovey, 2007). In this case, the question that needs to be asked is by whom and to whom can pressure be justifiably directed.

Another mistake we make is denying that problems exist or simplifying the problems. When this happens, it is typically accompanied by attacks on those who point out the existence of problems. Denial and attack go hand in hand according to

Watzlawick, et al (1974). Often a problem is dismissed or denied when people are urged to follow the 'party line' in a way similar to upholding one's family myths. Over the years we follow the rules that direct us to avoid risking attack and to preserve the stability we know, but fail to question the hegemony of those rules over us. Denial often results in inaction. When actions are not taken, predictably, the cycle goes on (Fraser & Solovey, 2007: 35).

Over-simplifying a problem can, paradoxically, intensify that problem. For example, social workers often advocate for policies on homelessness that tend to simplify a rather complex problem. Even if more money is allocated for new housing, the demand for increased profit will likely continue to drive up the cost of rents and of buying a house to a point where housing is inaccessible to the unemployed and other poor people. As the structure of the problem is ignored, the problem itself intensifies over time.

Another problem pointed out by Watzlawick, et al (1974) is seeing solutions where they do not exist - the utopian syndrome. Extremism often results from thinking one knows 'the truth' or has 'the answer' and uses such beliefs to dictate actions and to brush off other possible options. This form of extreme utopianism can be seen in authoritarian fundamentalist movements. Nazism with its authoritarianism and utopian form of fundamentalism comes to mind. Another concern with utopianism is that it can cause people to put off addressing their problems today because they are waiting for a great wonderful utopia tomorrow. Utopian thinking could also get people into serious trouble in the future when people get what they want but expect there will be no more problems. This leaves out the process and the evolving nature of change. It is somewhat like the person with a romantic fantasy who gets married and expects to live happily ever after or the activist who helped to overthrow a dictator and expects everything would be fine. In the instance of the 'happy ever after' belief of marriage, the person forgets that problems need to be worked on and people need to adapt to change together. Similarly, seeing solutions where they do not exist is why overthrowing governments can just as easily lead to dictatorship as democracy. In both examples, there is no structure or process in place to maintain a desired outcome. Neither seems to recognize that life is an evolving process that requires constant effort to work through various problems and conflicts that one is bound to encounter. Watzlawick, et al (1974) adds that when life

does not turn out in ways that reflect one's utopian ideal or falls short of perfection this failure tends to become someone else's problem. Someone or something that does not conform to the perceived utopia is blamed for the imperfection. The opposite can also be true as one can operate under the premise that something is always wrong. In both cases the problem lies in not questioning the underlying assumptions. Problems are projected on to something other than the reality of what is. When things do not work out according to the premise, people become disheartened and give up. There is a significant affinity between utopia and totalitarianism that may not seem obvious. Inherent in utopia is the idea that things should be a certain way or should fit into a predefined mold. Hence, if utopia were ever achieved it would be tantamount to setting up a 'final solution' that is purported to eradicate all problems but in reality could only lead to totalitarianism (Watzlawick, et al , 1974). No one wins the game of perfection.

Utopian-solutions should not be confused with idealism or with a vision for the future. The difference is that utopianism often sidesteps important immediate process and can be authoritarian whereas the second considers the process as part of the ideal or vision. One is directed 'at' others while the other is done 'with' others. Visioning future possibilities must therefore include a process that is congruent with the desired future.

According to Watzlawick, et al (1974), paradox can result when first order change is inappropriately applied where second order change is needed. Paradox is essentially a mistake in logic that causes an impasse. An example provided by Fraser and Solovey (2007) is getting a child to do his homework. Often a parent wishes that the child not only would comply with the direction but also would want to do the homework on his own. Regardless of the parental wishes, the reality is we can get children to do homework, but we usually cannot make them like it. In this example, the behavioral change is first order change while the attitudinal change involves second order change. Mixing the two together is what creates the paradox. "Dictatorships almost inevitably impose similar paradoxes. They are not content with mere compliance with common-sense laws… they want to change people's thoughts, values, and outlooks" (Watzlawick, et al 1974: 67). In a dictatorship, resistance is not tolerated. One not only has to be complicit or compliant but also has to believe what one is told to believe. Furthermore, this paradox as manifested in contemporary political systems is one of degree because even under less

oppressive governments one is still pressured to conform. For example, pressuring others to conform to what we think is good for them creates a contradiction. We want someone's freedom from oppression and yet we, by dictating what is best for someone else, have become the oppressor.

5.2.4. Second Order Change

Effective second order change is directed at changing systems and structures that are the root cause of problems. Second order change requires an alternative worldview to that of first order change. For second order change to happen, we need to think outside the box. Premises need to be reframed (Watzlawick, et al, 1974: 67). Second order change is contextual, relational and needs to be flexible. It is not prescriptive but rather is process orientated in response to the complexity of the system that generates the problems.

Fraser and Solovey suggest that when first order change does not solve a problem, adopting an opposite strategy usually works. For example, to address a problem whose existence has been denied, instead of ignoring it, the problem needs to be first acknowledged, confronted, and acted on (2007: 272). The problems typically dealt with by social workers hold many examples of solutions that have not worked and yet have been tried over and over again. Such examples in social work practice include 'systems tinkering', forming alliance with the government rather than the people we serve, and changing policies rather than changing the systems.

5.2.5. Background: The Cybernetics of Complexity

The theory of complexity, which is rooted in cybernetics, is the science of interconnected whole systems that moves away from the fragmentation of specialization. It argues for a multi-disciplinary focus, making links in context, and finding patterns among distinct units (Bateson, 2002). Cybernetics is interested in regulation, stability and balance in systems (Lucus, 1999). For example, a system such as a family will seek homeostasis which aims to achieve a balance between stability and change. So cybernetics seeks to determine and treat the family as a whole system that can regulate and become stable. Social change likewise needs stability in systems.

The idea of complexity makes it important to be open to new ideas and approaches. From a cybernetic perspective, every perception one holds is a construction based on multiple views and our habits of punctuation. We can construct new perceptions by integrating other different perceptions (Keeney, 1983: 154). Keeney (1983) sees life as interacting systems in contexts where relating happens in complex ways. Change is coordinated between relating people in an environment. People want stability so they try to maintain equilibrium. Solutions evolve as people seek alternatives together in the context of existing situations and environments. "Change happens in interacting complexity". He further adds "The limits of individual health are controlled by the health of individuals' immediate contexts – their families. Families, in turn, must help maintain the health of the bio-sociocultural contexts that embody them. And so on, recursively, until we can conceive of a healthy planet" (Keeney, 1983: 138). People often want both change and stability. The two are not mutually exclusive as meaningful change should incorporate stability and change. Change, at bottom, is about changing patterns rather than things.

System thinking requires an attention to the whole rather than the parts. Obviously systems are complex and as such they generally are not compatible with a simple reductionist approach. Cybernetics[23], as noted by Keeney (1983) above, is largely concerned with self-contained and self-regulatory systems. The behavior of complex systems however can be random and unpredictable. Cybernetics, therefore, generally deals with predictable systems whereas complexity theory often departs from being deterministic to deal with systems that are more complex. "The majority of systems treated by cybernetics are deterministic. This means that the next state of the system is fully specified by the combination of the system inputs, its current states and the transformations or changes allowed – we can use a look-up table to determine the result. This is a Newtonian way of operation and the one most familiar in science and technology generally" (Lucus, 1999: 1).

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[23] The study of control or homeostasis within a system, typically using combinations of feedback loops. This can be within machines or living structures. First order cybernetics relates to closed systems, second order includes the observer perspective and third order looks to how these co-evolve.

Cybernetics incorporates various theoretical constructs, such as feedback[24], casual loops, homeostasis, in a holistic manner to describe and explain different systems. Closed systems refer to nuclear systems such as families, corporations, governments and so on. Open systems often include many different systems and are concerned with the connections between them, their interactions as well as new properties that emerge from the interactions.

Homeostatic cycles explain that people seek stability with change (Keeney, 1983). "A homeostatic cycle is a cycle that maintains constancy of relation among interactants through fluctuations of their behavior. 'The more things change, the more they stay the same' refers to both sides of a cybernetic complementary. Fluctuations, changes, and differences of events among component parts, maintain the sameness or stability of their recursive organization" (Keeney, 1983: 119). People want and need to keep balance between their stability and desired change. The more things move away from equilibrium the easier it is to change to a new system. Homeostatic cycles explain why when people struggle and make change in areas that are important to them, they soon give up the fight and revert to their comfort zone.

According to Beers, for a system to be 'viable', it needs to contain the systems that create it (1985: 13). As a system, social work is largely produced by and for people in need. Therefore, it is logical and necessary to contain people within that system. Governments also contain other systems but they give some more priority than others. For example, when corporations are seen as more important than grass-roots people by governments, variety and diversity valuable to their capability is lost. People are what democracy contains therefore people must be the reference point that maintains democracy. "Only variety can contain variety" (Beers, 1985: 26) so it follows that de-centralization of functions and local input are crucial to social equality.

5.2.6. Complexity

Johnson N. defines the science of complexity as follows: "the study of the phenomena which emerge from a collection of interacting objects – and a crowd is a

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[24] A linking of the output of a system back to the input. Traditionally this can be negative, tending to return the system to a wanted state, or positive tending to diverge from that state. Life employs both methods (Calresco, 2007, on-line).

perfect example of such an emergent phenomenon, since it is a phenomenon which emerges from a collection of interacting people" (2007: 3-4). Beers (1985) explains that the amount of variety a system has is a measure of its complexity. Variety can be reduced by constraints that decrease information, thus, loss in variety could reduce freedom (Lucus, 1999). According to Lucus, all systems operate in more or less the same way but some systems are stochastic and dependent on probability rather than determination. We can regulate complex stochastic systems through knowledge but we cannot control them

> "Contextual approaches recognize that systems do not exist in isolation, but are defined only in conjunction with other systems (including that of the observer). This co-evolutionary nature of multiple systems brings us to an ecosystem viewpoint and allows us to understand the irregular changes over time that characterize such systems. This viewpoint is not emphasized in the assumptions of our conventional sciences, which are based on static snapshots of what are non-static systems. In complex systems solutions are always compromises, there is no single answer. What we must do instead is to compare alternative answers or options in state space, using a plurality of techniques, with a view to identifying the most fit, the global optimum in the context of interest" (Lucas, 2005: 7).

Living systems have a high degree of complexity. In view of this, we need to make the links or find the correlations between parts of a system in our search for possibilities (Lucus, 1999: 4). Since the world is so very complex, theories can only provide partial analysis or snap-shots of problems. Therefore, dynamic theory is a better fit than static theory for making change in a complex world as it involves process and action. For theory to be dynamic, it needs to generate from and be grounded in interacting relationships. "All the variations have useful, accurate insights – but they are all also partial" (Isbister, 2001: 58).

> "Society can be thought of as a ball of tangled string: there is no consistent pattern to it, no way of adequately describing its twists and meanderings. Nevertheless one tries. One way of trying is to cut a cross section through the ball with a sharp knife and then attempt to describe the surface and to describe it with words, but it is easier than the impossible task of analyzing the whole ball of string. Even if one could adequately describe the flat, cut surface, however, the problem remains that different people will choose to cut the ball at any number of different angles. They will discover different patterns and will come up with different explanations. All the explanations are 'true,' but they are also partial and therefore in a way untrue, because they do not comprehend the full complexity of the ball of string" (Isbister, 2001: 58).

Complexity theory recognizes that we construct reality within sets of contexts (Wallerstein, 1999). It posits that every one of us is part of a whole, which also includes the environment. Humans and nature, science and culture are all incorporated within the total context (Wallerstein, 1999). We should remind ourselves that we do not exist in isolation but in relationship. "We are embedded creatures whose every action impinges upon our environment and who are in turn both influenced and **dependant** upon what happens around us" (Lucus, 2006: 11). We are not disparate and disconnected, nor do we stand alone from each other and the world. For instance, if we spend our energy trying to control a child's behavior, we may miss the family system and the wider social context that recursively determines her behavior. This does not mean that we ignore her behaviour but that the priority should be the family and the broader social context.

Wallerstein (1999) tells us that the 'arrow of time' is central in complex systems. We all grow old, fluctuations are everywhere; everything moves in the same direction through time. Systems change and move away from equilibrium. Changes and new paths are normal and inevitable.

> "Why is truth complex? Because reality is complex. And reality is complex for one essential reason: the arrow of time. Everything affects everything, and as time goes on, what is everything expands inexorably. In a sense, nothing is eliminated, although much fades or becomes blurred. The universe proceeds – it has a life – in its orderly disorder or its disorderly order. There are of course endless provisional orderly patterns, self-established, holding things together, creating seeming coherence. But none is perfect, because of course perfect order is death, and in any case enduring order has never existed. Perfect order is what we may mean by God, which is by definition beyond the known universe. So the atoms, the galaxies, and the biota pursue their paths, their evolution if you will, until the internal contradictions of their structures move them further and further away from whatever temporary equilibria they enjoy. These evolving structures repeatedly reach points at which their equilibria can no longer be restored, at points of bifurcation, and then new paths are found, new orders established, but we can never know in advance what these new orders will be" (Wallerstein, 1999: 213).

Moving away from reductionism to complexity involves moving away from searching for answers to engaging in complex questions. Rather than reducing effects and ideas into discrete parts (fragmentation), we should look for context, patterns, and

relationship in and between. Complexity theory connects the dots between issues, the world and us; it is relational and contextual. Moving forward demands that 'we' construct what we want to see in the future by coming together to generate questions. The only way that we can come to more complete understanding is by coming together with our pieces of the puzzle to form a more whole picture.

5.2.7. Leverage Points

In Dave's interview (Appendix A, Article Five), he spoke about Donella Meadows' essay *Leverage Points: places to intervene in the system* (1999) and recommended it as valuable contribution to the inquiry. For this reason and because it fits with complexity theory and I found the article insightful, it is presented here as a way of reflecting on how to most effectively make changes in complex systems. In the article, Meadows examines ways to make changes in the system by describing leverage points. Leverage points are simply "places within a complex system…where a small shift in one thing can produce big changes in everything" (Meadows: 1999: 1). In the article, Meadows outlines twelve leverage points going from least effective to most effective. I will outline the least effective leverage points as described by Meadows. Then I will skip forward to leverage points that Meadows sees as the most effective as they are the most informative and more congruent with the views of the participants.

5.7.1. The Least Effective Leverage Points

The leverage point that Meadows considers as least effective is "constraints, parameters, numbers (such as subsidies, taxes, and standards)" (1999: 3). Parameters are only leverage points if they affect other leverage points. Changing parameters are systems tinkering because they are inflows and outflows of existing systems. Parameters are basically first order change. Tax dollars and voting are parameters. For example, I may want my tax dollars to go to increases in welfare, but the government uses taxes to provide incentives to big business. Voting is the same. If you vote for one person instead of another, it doesn't change the system. According to Meadows, parameters can be important in the short term to those who are directly affected. "After decades of the

strictest air pollution standards in the world, Los Angeles air is less dirty, but it isn't clean. Spending more on police doesn't make crime go away" (Meadows, 1999: 6).

Here we pass on to leverage point eight because this is where the information and control parts of the system start. The eighth point is "the strength of negative feedback loops, relative to the impacts they are trying to correct against" (Meadows, 1999: 9). Meadows uses the example of a thermostat to explain this point. The purpose of a thermostat is to control the temperature; its goal is represented as the setting of the thermostat. The thermostat detects when the temperature fluctuates from the setting (goal) and causes a response in the furnace. This is a negative feedback loop as it is designed to self regulate. At this leverage point, for instance, people can respond to governments by voting them in or out of office. However, at this level of change, other things can erode the system. For example, advertising could sway voters' opinions. Meadows also says that markets and democracy erode each other because markets bias the flow of information because of self interests. Negative feedback loops, such as protecting whistleblowers, strengthens the ability of a system to improve its ability to self correct.

The next leverage point is number seven, "the gain around driving positive feedback loops" (Meadows, 1999: 11). A positive feedback loop, unlike a negative loop, is self reinforcing. Meadows uses the following example to illustrate positive feedback loops: "the more babies are born, the more people grow up to have babies. The more money you have in the bank, the more interest you earn, the more money you have in the bank" and so on (Meadows, 1999: 11). Positive feedback loops need checks or they will destroy themselves. For example, the number of people born is checked by death rates. Chaos can also happen when there are not enough negative feedback loops to curb the rate of change.

Another example of a positive feedback loop Meadow uses is 'success to the successful' loops. Here Meadows tells us that anti-poverty groups are negative feedback loops that try to weaken the positive 'success to the successful' loop. What it comes down to is that it is more effective to regulate the rich than to curb poverty. Rather than advocating more for the poor, it would be better to regulate the rich to give more. "Rich people collect interest; poor people pay it. Rich people pay accountants and lean on

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politicians to reduce their taxes; poor people can't. Rich people give their kids inheritances and good education; poor kids lose out. Anti-poverty programs are weak negative loops that try to counter these strong positive ones. It would be much more effective to weaken the positive loops" (Meadows, 1999: 12). This is not to say that anti-poverty groups cannot also work to counter this strong positive feedback loop. Anti-poverty groups can also deliver information to the system so that others know what is going on.

Leverage point six is related to "the structure of information flows" (1999: 12). This deals with what happens when people see and are aware of what is going on because they have information. This is a new loop and causes people to behave differently. This leverage point includes having information that changes perspectives, whether from books, education or experience. Writers, artists and teachers may help move the flows of information. Change is hampered when we don't get information and when the information we get is inaccurate or incomplete. This underscores the importance of providing complete and accurate information. As an example, the informed masses could directly tell the government where they want their taxes spent. Thus, a direct and accurate flow of information to the masses has the potential for making significant change, but spin doctors could dam the flow.

Activists challenge the powers that be and are deeply invested in knowing and sharing information. Alternative forms of media are now very prevalent because people are interested in getting direct and accurate information. The internet has the potential to strengthen this leverage point.

5.7.2. The Most Effective Leverage Points

The following leverage points are what Meadows considers to be the most effective. These points reflect second order change efforts that address systems change.

Leverage point number five is "the rules of the system" (Meadows: 1999: 13). Whoever controls the rules has the power. "The rules of the system define its scope, its boundaries, its degree of freedom" (Meadows, 1999: 13). We are surrounded by rules, some positive like love your neighbor and some oppressive

such as men should rule the household. Meadows says "If you want to understand the deepest malfunctions of a system, pay attention to the rules, and to who has power over them" (1999: 14).

Needless to say activists become rule breakers when they live their lives according to their own rules and create alternatives in their everyday lives. Changes that came about in the 1960s as a result of the civil rights movement demonstrated that sometimes enough people breaking the rules can change the whole culture. History also tells us that when this happens there is opposition and backlash because it moves people out of their comfort zone. According to Meadows (1999), the closer we get to leverage points that make the most impact, the more resistance there will be.

The fourth leverage point that Meadows notes is "the power to add, change, evolve, or self-organize system structure" and she adds that, "the most stunning thing living systems and social systems can do is to change themselves utterly by creating whole new structures and behaviors" (1999: 14). This is what activists and social workers who work at a structural level and people who live their lives differently from the current system are attempting to do. According to Meadows, any system that cannot change is doomed. Therefore, if the system is taken as a given without critical analysis, we play into our own demise. The ability to create new structures and behaviours, to self-organize and create different cultures, is what enables other lower level changes in the system. For example, "the power to add, change, evolve, or self-organize system structure" allows the writing of new rules that govern who gets to write those rules. Direct action means being able to create new structures and behaviors on different terms.

The third leverage point that Meadows speaks to is "the goals of the system." "The goal of a system is a leverage point superior to the self-organizing ability of a system" (1999: 16). It is very difficult to create new structures and behaviors because the powers that be have goals that are often in opposition to those who have little power in the system. Those with the power to fulfill their goals write the rules and everything down the list, "will be twisted to conform to that goal" (Meadows, 1999: 16). Goals are different than rules because they describe what the

point of the game is. For example, Meadows asks what the goal of the corporation game is. It appears that their goal is to make money but to truly understand the goal one needs to further question what the point of making money is. According to Meadows, the goal of the corporation is to engulf everything so as to stay in the game (Meadows: 1999: 17).

So what is the goal of activism? It might appear that the point of the activist game is revolution, but what is the point of revolution or making change for that matter? It is about: a world without poverty, land-based societies, direct democracy, and a healthy environment that are all features of egalitarianism; in other words, facilitating social justice.

Therefore, as emphasized so many times in the inquiry, we need to come together to define common goals and to decide the best way to reach them. To develop and attain a goal demands a vision and a new paradigm. For example, if social work defines the rule of the social work game as social justice and is clear about what the goal of that is, we can work toward a common cause. As a high level leverage point, however, the resistance against this is powerful, especially because, at least in North America, social workers appear to be of the same mindset as the system they work for. As social workers, we have been socialized or acculturated by the same system and it is this system that also provides privileges for us as professionals within it.

The second leverage point is "the mindset or paradigm out of which the system arises" (Meadows, 1999: 17). "The shared idea in the minds of society, the great big unstated assumptions – unstated because unnecessary to state; everyone already knows them – constitute that society's paradigm, or deepest set of beliefs about how the world works" (Meadows, 1999: 17). For instance, the mindset of a capitalist system is based on continual growth. The idea and the mindset of growth and individualism in North America, as has been illustrated, have put corporations' goals above the environment and the well-being of people with dire consequences. A paradigm shift that made the environment and the global community a priority would truly be revolutionary. Meadow says a change in paradigm can transform a

system. Conceivably, changing our American/euro-centric, individualistic mindset would be a far-reaching paradigm shift.

Changing the paradigm out of which the system arises is a process, which is why we keep sharing ideas and need to have connections that bring people together. In the following quote Meadows' shares her thoughts about how to change a paradigm:

> "In a nutshell, you keep pointing at the anomalies and failures in the old paradigm, you keep speaking louder and with assurance from the new one, you insert people with the new paradigm in places of public visibility and power. You don't waste time with reactionaries; rather you work with active change agents and with the vast middle ground of people who are open-minded" (Meadows. 1999: 18).

A lesson can be taken here about working with the middle ground to change the mindset of the system. People who are not totally entrenched in the current system but are not sure of where they stand may be more open minded and ready to change than those who are more invested in the status quo. Working with and consulting with people who are not among the converted helps to build a movement and gain fresh perspectives. Moreover, working with active change agents, your allies and other people working to change the system keeps up the momentum while providing a social network. We need others not only to form a critical mass but to keep ourselves engaged in the fight. Other people keep us going and their success makes ours worthwhile. Paradigms fluctuate and change. By being open-minded and willing to exchange ideas with others, new ideas can move us forward. Social workers and the profession of social work could more effectively facilitate social justice by changing the paradigm of working on and for people to one of working with people as part of an 'us'.

The last and, according to Meadows, the most important leverage point is "the power to transcend paradigms" (1999: 19). By this she means:

> "to keep oneself unattached to the arena of paradigms, to stay flexible, to realize that *no* paradigm is 'true', that every one, including the one that sweetly shapes your own worldview, is a tremendously limited understanding of an immense and amazing universe that is far beyond human comprehension. It is to 'get' at a gut level the paradigm that are paradigms, and to see that that itself is a paradigm, and to regard that

whole realization as devastatingly funny. It is to let go into Not Knowing,
into what the Buddhists call enlightenment" (Meadows, 1999: 19).

We never have all the answers. Facilitating social justice therefore involves the input of many voices so that ideas can recursively circulate and evolve. An attitude of uncertainty, of not knowing all the answers, allows new and important questions to emerge. So it follows that it is important to have an open mind and heart.

5.2.8. Compassion as the Foundational Lens of Social Justice

Values and principles are fundamental to facilitating social justice. Exclusion, greed, meanness, power-over others, domination, and oppression are not the seeds that grow social justice. Rather inclusion, generosity, kindness, power-with and equality demonstrate what social justice could look like in the everyday. Compassion transforms everyday action and moves the focus of action toward the best interests and care of others. In the everyday life of a social worker, compassion is demonstrated when service is given in the best interests of service users. Compassion can move social workers to think critically about their role and how and what they can contribute. Therefore, compassion is highlighted as an overarching foundational value from which other principles may evolve.

Compassion is an antidote to greed, cruelty, and the culturally conditioned response to seek happiness through consuming goods and competition. "In this way we can learn to un-learn the self-seeking egotism that we cling to, on which we imagine our happiness depends, and in which, in fact, our unhappiness, concentrated power, and the torture of the world, are rooted. It is then that we can start to choose, rather than force ourselves, to seek happiness in generating kind thoughts and actions for others rather than fleeting pleasures for ourselves" (Edwards, 2001: 172).

In the face of injustice people often do put the welfare of others first, even at the risk of danger to themselves. Most people feel the distress and suffering of others. People have risked their own lives to save others. "Why people will act this way is complex, related to: familiarity with those persecuted, personality, self-identities, beliefs and values, and seeing others as 'like-self'; there may be anticipation of guilt if one does not

help" (Gilbert, 2005: 48). It is more probable that our actions will be compassionate when we see others as like us and we truly value and believe in equality and social justice.

According to Edwards (2001), intelligence does not provide the motivation behind the desire to lessen the suffering of others. The differences between those who are aware of injustice, resist oppression, and recognize the reasons to use power over others and those that are complicit are the degree in which one feels the suffering of others. Compassion is a great motivating force. "What seems clear is that our capacity for critical thinking, for seeing through the illusions that hide the world's horrors, is to a large degree determined by the extent of our compassion" (Edwards, 2001: 134). Compassion breaks through mindless conformity to seek answers and motivates one in the face of great odds and uncertainty to be persistent in making changes for the benefit of others.

According to Gilbert, people can be motivated to care by a threat to their safety, such as a concern for the environment. "A caring and nurturing mentality can even become a lens by which we approach and construe ecological issues" (Gilbert, 2005: 40). Keeney (1983: 155) also writes about the lens through which we see the world[25]. A compassionate lens contrasts sharply to a lens of cruelty, authoritarianism, and injustice. Authentic acts of caring can be done to relieve the suffering of others. Counterfeit acts of caring can be done to manipulate others or as shows we put on to achieve a desired outcome, such as getting someone to like you or making oneself look good. Working toward social justice requires authentic motive and intention (Gilbert, 2005). This requires that we strive to convey as much as possible what we genuinely feel.

Gilbert (2005: 42) also points to empathy as a requirement for caring and compassionate relationships and notes that empathetic abilities can also serve other purposes. As social workers, our education has likely emphasized being in tune with clients' feelings and concerns to convey authentic caring. On the other hand, empathetic resonance in the hands of a sociopath can be used against those who share their thoughts and feelings. Someone who wanted to hurt or intimidate (cruelty) could use threats against something one cared about to achieve this (Gilbert, 2005). So it follows that when

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[25] Lenses are frames of reference that we see the world through and determine our ideological reference points.

people let themselves be vulnerable authentic caring and warmth opens space for exploration.

Social safety underpins compassion. When people feel safe in their relationships, "they are more creative in their problem-solving, more integrative in their thinking and more prosocial" (Gilbert, 2005: 22). Providing an environment of 'safeness' signals to others that their views are respected and honoured. Therefore, our compassion can contribute to our own and other's motivation and ability to act. Accordingly, it is not just that one feels compassionate enough to act but also that one builds relationship through compassion. In other words, compassion contributes to both solidarity and autonomy. Compassion, like love, not only needs to be felt, it needs to be transmitted through caring and warmth. Compassion requires intent and calls for the education of future generations. "Because we are capable of simulations that can be future-directed, we can anticipate future needs of self and others. Motives to care, with sympathy for others suffering, mean we can work for the betterment of others in the future (even those not yet born) – to seek to create a better life. We can try to create social contexts that privilege the maturation of compassionate phenotypes`` (Gilbert, 2005: 44). Compassion is often associated with being passive and soft. To the contrary, compassion requires courageous acts. Compassion is other-orientated and calls for complex actions that are contextual and thus determined by unique situations.

Gergen (2009) writes about first and second order morality. First order morality is essentially the concept of right and wrong or good and evil. First order morality decontextualizes people from the environment and is individualistic. The duality of first order morality places right and wrong into a box of reward and punishment. In addition, an individual is often caught in a paradox when they try to do things the right way. One may be forced to choose the lesser of two evils or sacrifice some other sense of morality to not compromise something else they think they should not do. For example, if I lived in Nazi Germany, I might lie to protect someone. Second order morality, in contrast, is contextual and relational.

> "*Second-order morality, that is, collaborative activity that restores the possibility of generating first-order morality.* Second-order morality rests not on a logic of discrete units, but of relationship. From this standpoint there are no acts of evil in themselves, for the meaning of all action is

derived from relationship. Holding single individuals responsible for untoward actions not only represents a failure to confront the relational conditions from which the act has emerged, but results in alienation and retaliation. In the case of second-order morality, individual responsibility is replaced by *relational responsibility*[26], a collaborative responsibility for sustaining the potentials of coordinated action. To be responsible to relationships is, above all, to sustain the process of co-creating meaning. In relational responsibility we avoid the narcissism implicit in ethical calls for 'care of the self.' We also avoid the self/other split resulting from the imperative to 'care for the other.' In being responsible for relationships we step outside the individualist traditions; care for the relationship becomes primary" (Gergen, 2009 364).

The antidote to hate and inhumanity is the discovery of our we-ness. The farther we put someone or some living entity outside the circle of 'us', the more we devalue them. Extending feelings of empathy and compassion that we generally have for our family and loved ones to the world prevents domination, cruelty, and apathy. Generally we protect and work to make the lives of those we love better. "There is a Zen saying, *Nothing left out*. Nothing left out of your awareness, nothing left out of your practice, nothing left out of your heart.   As the circle shrinks, the question naturally arises: What is left out? It could be people on the other side of the world with a different religion, or people next door whose politics you don't like. Or relatives who are difficult, or old friends who hurt you. It could be anyone you regard as less than you or a means to your ends" (Hanson & Mendius, 2009: 131-132).

It seems as if the journey toward social justice begins with me, you and us together; it is relational. I can start by feeling. I can feel all those feelings inside that signal to me what needs to change, including myself. I can also let my heart be broken by being open to the suffering, sadness, and grief in the world. And I can hear about your feelings and you mine and together we go deeper to explore what is to be done. This is compassion in action. And this is what I have learned from the individuals I interviewed. My heart is broken 'open' and this brings to me the anticipation that just maybe we can begin to overcome injustice. In the book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Freire (1970) writes about generative themes, things that people feel strongly about. In addition he says that love is the foundation of dialogue. Freire (1970) stresses that feelings, desires, and love

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[26] Italics is original.

begin a process of *conscientizacao*[27]. Compassion is the foundation that gives social justice stability and the lens from which we can begin to see a better world.

5.2.9. Change Necessitates Participation

The road to social justice begins with people together (we) learning, understanding, breaking our complicity with the hegemony that has been part of life. Social change and action starts with people coming together. We create actions out of the possibilities that come from awareness and knowledge about the world. The early women's movement demonstrated that by moving away from top-down movements, conscious awareness is built by sharing stories and experience. In recent times the Global Justice Movement has also shown that people can direct action by embracing diversity, coming together to share knowledge and build skills. The participatory decision-making processes used in these movements reflect the unity in diversity that is needed to address complex situations (Ferguson & Lavalette, 2005). The degree of complexity in a system requires a diversity of tactics, causes and people. The important thing is to connect the dots. When people who are focused on a higher purpose come together, it is easier to leave individual egos behind and work from a frame of equality.

The degree of complexity in the social world today requires that facilitating social justice match the variety needed. Moving away from top-down systems to more horizontal processes takes in more variety and diversity and therefore is a better fit for a socially complex world. Horizontal processes require the input of more people and more diversity among them; unity in diversity. Collaborative processes build capacity for social change and help to empower people to take action. Collaboration is process-driven so can provide a model for the future. Oppenneer (2011) argues that the modernization paradigm is changing. Further, Oppenneer (2011) points out that there is a move to a participatory paradigm in community development. "The table below illustrates some of the key differences between the earlier modernization paradigm and the emerging paradigm of participation.

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[27] ``The term conscientizacao refers to learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality``(Freire, 1970: 35, Preface, footnote)

Table 4: Comparison between Modernization and Participatory Paradigms

	Modernization	Participation
Key concepts	Underdevelopment due to economic, political, geographic, and individual inadequacies; Existence of a single standard (as articulated by experts)	Underdevelopment due to lack of access to economic, political, and cultural resources, as well as lack of power and control on the part of the people; Diversity of standards
Agency	Expert, benefactor, non-participant recipient	Collaborator, facilitator, participant, advocate for individuals and communities, activist
Communication structure	Linear, top-down (vertical), monologic, transmission of information	Non-linear, participatory (horizontal), dialogic, used for assessment and knowledge sharing
Model orientation	Output-oriented, with the outputs defined at the outset	Process-oriented, with the outcome determined by and through the process
Trademarks	Prevention of underdevelopment, remedy by experts, blame the victim, individual adjustment to a dominant norm, use of mass media to disseminate standardized messages and entertainment, prescriptive and persuasive messages	Active social support systems, social networks, participation of all actors, empower community narratives, facilitate critical awareness, communication used to strengthen interpersonal relationships

(adapted from Malkote, 352, and Mefalopulos, 59, Oppenneer, on-line, retrieved November 22, 2011 at www.ethnosproject.org)

People get along better when they talk to one another. Dialogue in the spirit and context of equality can also have the intention of revolutionary change. Freire viewed dialogue between equals that is problem posing rather than the depositing of facts into peoples' heads as the path to revolutionary change. Freire (1970) also sees critical reflection as action.

> "The pedagogy of the oppressed, as a humanist and libertarian pedagogy, has two distinct stages. In the first, the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation. In the second stage, in which the reality of oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation. In both stages, it is always through action in depth that the culture of domination is culturally confronted. In the first stage this confrontation occurs through the change in the way the oppressed perceive the world of oppression; in the second stage, through the expulsion of the

myths created and developed in the old order, which like spectres haunt the new structure emerging from the revolutionary transformation" (Freire, 1970: 54-55).

To be in solidarity with people and give up the certainty about reality requires openness to the possibility of surprise and to learning. "Solidarity requires that one enter into the situation of those with whom one is in solidarity; it is a radical posture" (Freire 1970: 49). Too often social workers are more aligned with their employers and government policy and regulations than with the people they should be in solidarity with. We are the 'experts' with the answers so we move in that "circle of certainty" (Freire, 1972: 39) where the door is closed on radical change. Social work, at least in North America, is stuck in a system of reform that preserves the status quo. "Almost always the metropolitan society induces these reformist solutions in response to the demands of the historical process, as a new way of preserving its hegemony. It is as if the metropolitan society were saying 'Let us carry out reforms before the people carry out a revolution" (Freire, 1970: 162).

Rogers, like Freire, believed in democratic education. Education begins with the experience of individuals and problem-posing questions (Whitmore & Wilson, 2005). Freirean models of social change can be described as horizontal dialogue between equals. "Any pedagogy that calls itself Freirean has to acknowledge the key principle that our current knowledge is contingent on particular historical times and political forces" (Giroux, 2010: 5). Freire promotes contextual critical analysis that enables people to see personal problems as social issues. In this way, people can begin to see themselves as actors. Praxis is central to Freire's pedagogy where community dialogue leads to collective action (Whitmore & Wilson, 2005).

Participatory processes come from individual, group, and social values. And these values change by the sharing of ideas and knowledges that participatory processes offer. The following diagram, taken from the University of Toronto's faculty website, reflects the recursive aspects of social change that parallel a Freirean dialogical model.

Chart 1: The Social Change Model
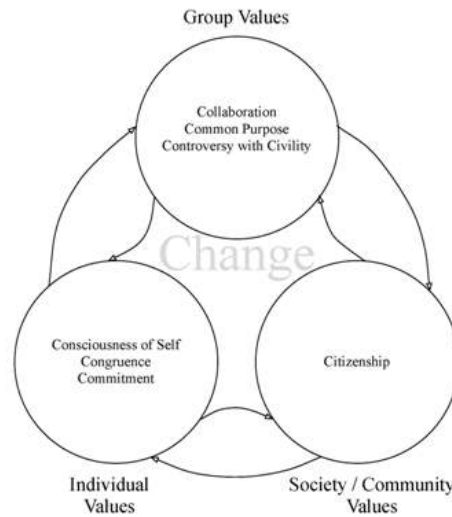
Figueroa, Kincaid, Rani and Lewis (2002) partnered with others to write a working paper that started with Freirean ideas to develop ideas for communicating for social change; "a process of public and private dialogue through which people define who they are, what they want and how they can get it" (members of the meetings, 1999 in Figueroa et. Al., 2002: ii). They came to a consensus about the key components of the model as follows:

- "Sustainability of social change is more likely if the individuals and communities most affected *own* the process and content of communication.
- Communication for social change should be empowering, horizontal (verses top-down), give a voice to the previously unheard members of the community, and be biased toward local content and ownership.
- Communities should be the agents of their own change.
- Emphasis should shift from persuasion and the transmission of information from outside technical experts to dialogue debate and negotiation on issues that resonate with members of the community.
- Emphasis on outcomes should go beyond individual behavior to social norms, policies, culture and the supporting environment" (Figueroa et. Al., 2002: ii).

Freire promoted radical democracy and believed that the personal is political. Freire also believed that the political is very personal and he occupied "the often difficult space between existing politics and the as-yet-possible" (Giroux, 2010: 4) Freire reminds us to avoid being doctrinaire. Working toward social justice is a dialogical process that must include the voices of all and particularly the voices of those who have been most disenfranchised (Whitmore & Wilson, 2005).

5.3. Conclusion

This section has looked at some examples of social change movements and theories of social change. The lessons taken from this exploration are many and include:

- The need to see change as an open-ended and evolving process.
- The process of change needs to be collective in decision-making and action.
- Transformation is about the transformation of power and must be cognizant of context.
- Change requires courage, passion, solidarity, reciprocity and the identification that there is a common cause.
- Create alternatives so that possibilities are available.
- Change requires the development of critical consciousness,
- Second order problems require systems level change,
- In order to make changes at the structural level, one must discover the roots of the problem.

The above speak to positive lessons one can take from social movements and theories. On the other hand things are not always as they seem. There is a difference in power relations between the 1960s and what people are faced with today. Activists wanted change in the '60s but the change they generally wanted was not that far off from the structure of power. Activist groups had more power to influence governments in the '60s because governments were tied closer to national interests than to international corporate interests, and nations were much more interested in the social welfare of citizens. Back then we had nations and countries; today we have economies (Dobbin, 2011). This is neo-colonialism where economic power rules over people to keep them in

their place. Economies are interested in the buying power of consumers not their social welfare. Money trumps justice. Governments have the power of money and law (Dobbin, 2010). Governments write the rules. "[P]ower is entrenched, protected and ruthless, and it will not be denied easily that which it has accumulated over the decades" (Dobbin, 2011, 2). Activists today see the current system as unfixable; they are asking for something new. Although they do not have a prescription for the future or a utopian vision of that future, they do have processes from which to explore and discover.

CHAPTER SIX

SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

6. Introduction

I have reflected on the theoretical positions found in social work and how assumptions shape practice. Policy, hierarchical work environments, and unequal power relations, both within social work practice and in the broader social environment, have also been discussed. Given that social work more often than not takes place within contexts where service users are disadvantaged by not having power, this section will highlight some theories of social justice, with a particular emphasis on a critique of Rawls theory of social justice, critique the human rights perspective and discuss charity and social work.

Many progressive social workers in Canada feel abandoned by their professional associations and unsupported in their work (Mackinnon, 2009)[28]. The Canadian social work code of ethics, unlike the American code, is an example of where progressive social workers feel unsupported as the American code's use of the action word "pursue" with regard to social justice gives them a clearer directive.

While Canada's 2005 social work code of ethics has been criticized for weakening the social justice mandate of the profession (Mullaly, 2007: 51), it, and other social work codes of ethics, continue to include social justice aims. The increasing body of critical social work literature supports a more activist role for social workers and social work academics. I argue that a profession that professes a mandate of social justice is uniquely situated to take action and that social workers can be a leading voice on social justice issues (Mackinnon, 2009: 523).

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[28] Social workers are often divided by government policy. In Saskatchewan, for example, social workers who work for social services are not registered with the social work association. For instance, the government changes the title of social workers who work in family services from social worker to child protection worker. Social workers who work in income security are financial security workers. Social workers who do clinical social work in mental health are required to belong to the association and are called social workers. Social workers in parts of the system are discouraged from belonging to the social work association. They are, therefore, not bound by the social work code of ethics.

6.1. Comparing Some Contemporary Theories of Social Justice

In this section I will highlight several different theories of social justice in order to make the point that there is more than one perspective or meaning in describing social justice. Theorizing social justice is a contested area and should not be taken at face value. Descriptions of social justice need to be argued within social work. I will briefly describe utilitarianism and liberal meanings of social justice and then discuss Rawls' (1971) theory of social justice and other feminist, cultural, and anti-oppressive accounts.

6.1.1. Utilitarianism

Social work usually follows a utilitarian, the highest benefit for the majority, form of social justice (Solas, 2008: 126). The assumption of the utilitarian perspective is "morality consists in weighing costs and benefits, and simply wants a fuller reckoning of the social consequences" (Sandel, 2009: 33). In other words "the highest principle of morality is to maximize happiness, the overall balance of pleasure over pain" (Sandel, 2009: 34). "Utilitarianism puts morality on the straightforward basis of promoting social welfare; the greatest good for the greatest number. But it is vulnerable to the charge that it would permit the violation of the rights of some if overall social welfare were thereby maximized" (Mills, 1997: 55).

Utilitarian approaches can undermine the rights of oppressed groups as it is an individualistic concept that suggests that some have more utility than others. Gergen (1999) argues against the individualism of utilitarian concepts, because he sees self as an expression of relationships. "Here one discounts doing things for their intrinsic worth; rather, actions are only rational if they are instrumental to achieving self-gratification of some kind" (Gergen, 1999: 119). For example, in this view, an educated working person has more utility than a poor unemployed person. So it follows that the educated working person could, for example, be given tax incentives, while programs such as 'work for welfare' could be implemented to keep the poor person out of the sight of the better off. This increases the happiness of those who are seen to have more utility - the already better off. The suffering of others may be reduced but not to the extent that it will affect the happiness of those who are deemed more useful (Sandel, 2009).

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One of the fundamental challenges to this cost benefit meaning of social justice is that true morality needs to include things beyond consequences of particular actions such as respect, human rights, and obligations. Unless we believe that being respectful, complying with human rights, and fulfilling duties will also maximize our well-being, we have no reason to do what may be the right thing to do according to Sandel (2009). Further Oko (2008) warns that a utilitarian approach risks upholding the concerns of the majority and ignoring the needs of minorities. For example, I recently attended a meeting on poverty reduction. One of the main topics discussed at this meeting was the lack of affordable housing in the community. It was suggested that if we wanted to get government and industry "on board" we would need to speak "their language" of cost benefit analysis. This meant that we would need to present the cost to society of such things as prisons, health care and welfare. When utilitarianism concepts of social justice are invoked, this cost benefit analysis lacks a moral ground for doing the right thing and leaves out the rights of those who are oppressed. For example, our moral obligation to provide for people that do not have enough to eat and a place to live and people's right to expect to share in the benefits of society are missed in utilitarian arguments. The argument set out by utilitarianism, despite the intention of the group to have an initiative that includes people who live in poverty, did not consider their basic rights. Even if all people are counted as equally deserving of happiness, as Sandel (2009: 41) tells us, the principle of the highest good for the greatest number does not take into account differences between people nor the structure of society (Sandel, 2009).

Speaking from the perspective of the Australian social work code of ethics, Solas (2008) argues that social work should not embrace a utilitarian form of justice as it does nothing to change the social structures that are responsible for inequality. A utilitarian concept of social justice leaves intact the assumption that privileges for some at the expense of others needs not be questioned. When we assume, and fail to question, a system that privileges some people and oppresses others, we are not challenging domination.

Similar to, *The Canadian Code of Ethics* (2005), Rawl's (1971) theory of justice, as discussed below, also takes the existing structure of society as a given. These conceptions of social justice do not question the context in which injustice happens. Fair

and equitable access assumes that power is static. It speaks of reducing barriers rather than the actual elimination of barriers. *The Canadian Code of Ethics* (2005), does not address the structural causes of injustice. It does not seek to address the root causes of oppression.

6.1.2. Critique of Rawls' Theory of Justice

'*A Theory of Justice*' by John Rawls is regarded as one of the most important theories of justice and is frequently referred to in discussions about social justice. Written in 1971, it is still considered contemporary. It is a morally based theory of distributive justice that has often been contrasted with other theories (e.g. Okin, 1989, Cohen, 2008, Sandel, 2009, Gil, 1998, Mills, 1997).

Rawls begins his theory of social justice by stating that social justice concerns itself with the function of the structures of society, "the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation" (Rawls, 1971: 7). Rawls describes social institutions in the following way. "By major institutions I understand the political constitution and the principle economic and social arrangements. Thus the legal protection of freedom of thought and liberty of conscience, competitive markets, private property in the means of production, and the monogamous family are examples of major social institutions" (Rawls, 1971: 7).

Rawls goes further than utilitarianism by including rights in the discussion of justice and extending the discourse beyond individualistic forms of justice to the social. Although Rawls looks to structural change, he nevertheless maintains a liberal conception that keeps the institutions of society intact although functioning more toward the benefit of citizens and does not challenge the institutions themselves.

6.1.2.1. Rawls' Original Position

Rawls' theory is concerned with assessing the distributive function of assets of society and basic rights and duties from what he terms the "original position". In the "original position," free and rational persons decide the terms of social justice. "Men (sic) are to decide in advance how they are to regulate their claim against one another and

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what is to be the foundation charter of their society" (Rawls, 1971: 11). Rawls has formulated an imaginary way to use procedural justice as a way that men can come to a fair conception of justice. The original position is taken from a hypothetical veil of ignorance to determine what would be fair. For Rawls, the "veil of ignorance" is when a group of rational men have their perception of justice wiped clean, except for the general knowledge of human nature, economics and society. In other words, what would they think is just if these biases were to be removed? From this supposed position no one knows their own natural abilities, psychology, culture, society and resources nor do they have a preconceived concept of what is good. "In essence the slate is wiped clean save for the fact that society is subject to the circumstances of injustice and general facts about human society" (Rawls, 1971: 137). Behind the "veil of ignorance" no one would know what position they would end up in; healthy, poor, smart and so on. In this way reasonable men can contract to perform institutional roles in a fair way.

In the quote below, Rawls describes the "veil of ignorance" as restrictions against prejudice that could influence men when they decide what is fair and just.

> "Thus it seems reasonable and generally acceptable that no one should be advantaged or disadvantaged by natural fortune or social circumstances of one's own case. We should insure further that particular inclinations and aspirations, and persons' conceptions of their good do not affect the principles adopted. The aim is to rule out those principles that it would be rational to propose for acceptance, however little the chance of success, only if one knew certain things that are irrelevant from the standpoint of justice. For example, if a man knew that he was wealthy, he might find it rational to advance the principle that various taxes for welfare measures be counted as unjust: if he knew that he was poor, he would most likely propose the contrary principle. To represent the desired restrictions one imagines a situation in which everyone is deprived of this sort of information. One excludes the knowledge of those contingencies which sets men at odds and allows them to be guided by their prejudices. In this manner the veil of ignorance is arrived at in a natural way" (Rawls, 1971, 18 – 19).

Rawls assumes he is in a position to say what reasonable men would determine if the conditions he spells out behind the veil of ignorance were put in place. Although this is an interesting thought experiment, what reasonable men behind the veil of ignorance would determine as just is still hypothetical.

6.1.2.2. Criticism of Rawls Original Position

Okin (1989) argues that as society is gender structured, Rawls' neglect of addressing gender inequality implies that gender inequality is acceptable. Further, Rawls gender-neutral language and his use of terms such as 'heads of household', the monogamous family, fathers and sons reveals a decided gender bias. Mills (1997) agrees, saying that Rawls theory, relying as it does on Western political theory, not only excludes women but also people who are not white. Rawls, according to Mills, has presented a "thought experiment" (1997: 19) that prescribes white standards that do not explain the historical foundation of the white racist contract. Mills (1997) believes that not including the historical roots of oppression enables Rawls to make assumptions based on white male norms.

According to Okin (1989), Rawls is unquestionably conventional as he uses the monogamous family as a model. He does not recognize different family structures nor acknowledge that there may be different rights and duties between family members. When he writes about heads of households he speaks in gender-neutral terms that make 'female headed households' invisible. He ignores the difference between the domestic and public (Okin, 1989: 280), failing to recognize that there may be different levels of liberty and power between men and women in both domestic and public spheres.

Rawls further presumes that moral development can be represented by males. He does not recognize that the women's moral development may be different from men's because of their different experiences and because women have primary responsibility for raising children (Okin, 1989: 292). Moreover, Rawls' disregard for the standpoint[29] or the perspective of those who are oppressed demonstrates how he makes oppression invisible (Okin, 1989).

When we consider women's standpoints in gendered societies, their experience puts some of Rawls assumptions in question. Rawls ignores the contributions and perspectives of women and people with cultural perspectives and values that are different than his. He suffers from a Western/male hegemonic perspective. "For example, the

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[29] Mills also writes about the standpoint of most white male political philosophy. "What is involved here, then, is a 'racial' version of standpoint theory, a perspectival cognitive advantage that is grounded in the phenomenological experience of the disjuncture between official (white) reality and actual (nonwhite) experience, the 'double-consciousness' of which W.E.B. Du Bois spoke" (Mills, 1997: 109).

discussion of rational plans of life and primary goods might be focused more on relationships and less exclusively on the complex activities that he values most highly, if it were to take account of, rather than to take for granted, the traditionally more female contributions to human life" (Okin, 1989: 293). Denying the reality of the history and lives of the oppressed is equivalent to adopting the standpoint of white males by default. Van den Bergh (1995: xxvii in Schriver, 2004) defines standpoints as: truths or knowledges created through awareness of reality gleaned from particular social locations. The concept of standpoint assumes that all people see the world from the place in which they are situated socio-culturally. What is considered to be real depends on one's standpoint and is grounded in experiences related to one's position within the socio-cultural topography.

Rawls does not necessarily take an individualistic perspective. His perspective is applicable to actual people because those people behind the veil of ignorance must think for and consider the collective welfare of everybody (Okin, 1989). In other words 'reasonable men' behind an imaginary veil of ignorance, who supposedly do not know their own position in society, must think about the good of all, because they do not know if they are disadvantaged in some way. "To do this requires, at the very least, both strong empathy and preparedness to listen carefully to the very different points of view of others" (Okin, 1989: 287). Okin, like Rawls, suggests that qualities of fairness are correlated with the degree to which societies practice equality within families. On the other hand, Rawls justifies the basic structures of society as known in the euro/American tradition. He sees the family as inherently just and therefore a nurturing environment where children can develop morals. Most families, however, are still based on hierarchy and domination where parents have unequal roles that they model in daily life. In addition, Rawls' theory implies North American-style nuclear families that tend to be cut off from extended family and disconnected from the community. Further Okin (1989) says that unless the family is "connected by a continuum of just associations to the larger communities within which people are supposed to develop fellow feelings for each other, how will they grow up with the capacity for enlarged sympathies such as are clearly required for the practice" (Okin, 1989: 286)? Unlike Rawls, Okin locates justice within the larger context that includes ever broader circles of relationship.

It is interesting to note that the men behind Rawls' 'veil of ignorance' seem familiar. A group of men (and women; take women and stir) that represent 'the people' resembles American liberalism. This argues for a hierarchical structure: "In other words, dominant-subordinate relations tend to be maintained and reproduced rather than reduced or eliminated under a liberal representative democracy" (Mullaly, 2002: 112). In essence the process Rawls creates produces an elite group of men that represent everyone, differing markedly from processes of participatory democracy.

6.1.2.3. Liberty and Justice as a Social Contract According to Rawls

Rawls' notion of liberty is derived from contract theory. Contract theory assumes that for individuals to have certain protections and rights they agree to give up other rights to government in exchange for order.

> "The term social contract describes a broad class of philosophical theories whose subject is the implied agreements by which people form states and maintain social order. In laymen's terms this means that the people made a trade-off, giving up some rights to a government and in return benefiting from greater social order. Social contract theory provides the rationale behind the historically important notion that legitimate state authority must be derived from the consent of the governed" (New World Encyclopedia, retrieved May 12, 2012).

In order for principles of social justice to be termed a social contract they must be accepted and agreed on by some group of people. An example of a social contract is social work's contract to be fair and just in the practice of social work. Rawls uses contract theory to say that we have obligations in social institutions and duties as citizens to be fair. "Justice and fairness is an example of what I have called a contract theory" (Rawls, 1971: 16). Rawls assumes that fairness constitutes those principles of justice that rational men would come up with behind the veil of ignorance. In Rawls' view, fairness assures that the structure of society is just. "A conception of social justice, then, is to be regarded as providing in the first instance a standard whereby the distributive aspects of the basic structure of society are to be assessed" (Rawls, 1971: 9). In his principle of justice, he argues that the gains of those with the most advantage must benefit those at the bottom. Rawls says that if we start from the original hypothetical contract position two fundamental principles of social justice could be derived.

"First: each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others.
Second: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all" (Rawls, 1971: 60).

6.1.2.4. Criticism of Rawls Contract Theory and Conception of Liberty

Wallerstein (1999) describes contracts as liberalism's individualistic construction. "The liberal metaphor is that the world consists of a multitude of independent individuals who have somehow, at some time, entered into an accord (social contract) to establish common ties for the common good" (1999: 91). Liberal accords are limited to people who are deemed 'competent.' Competent, adult white men for example, can therefore be removed from the restraints of the accord, according to Wallerstein (1999). Social contracts work to keep the less than competent, as defined by the state (eg: women, children, people of colour, immigrants, the insane), excluded from the benefits of social contracts. According to Wallerstein (1999), social contracts legitimize the reforms of the welfare state and therefore have distracted the left from changing the system. The left is caught up in making changes to policy, reformist adjustments, that legitimize the current historical system.

According to Mills (1997) contract theory, or a social agreement, is used by Rawls to obtain justice from the institutions of white society. "Justice as fairness is an example of what I have called a contract theory… In particular, the content of the relevant agreement is not to enter a given society or to adopt a given form of government, but to accept certain moral principles" (Rawls, 1971: 16). Mills contends that Rawls sees through a white male lens. "The social contract, whether in its original or in its contemporary version, constitutes a powerful set of lenses for looking at society and the government. But in its obfuscation of the ugly realities of group power and domination, it is, if unsupplemented, a profoundly misleading account of the way the modern world actually is and came to be" (Mills, 1997: 3). Rawls fails to mention that many people are not currently a willing part of social contracts. For example, indigenous people in Canada were forced by colonialism to be part of the British and French social contract. According to Mills (1997) the social contract used by Rawls is typical of Western contract theory, because it excludes people who are not white and their perspectives. The perspectives of

people from the Third and Fourth world countries and other oppressed people are left out. Forced colonization is not considered. People have not always consented to be governed and governments have not always included everyone in social contracts. It is therefore a racial contract according to Mills (1997). Rawls argues for the Western structure of society and in doing so leaves out perspectives that do not fit, such as indigenous forms of governance. Consequently white North American contract theory also works to exclude alternative ways of thinking that may be valuable in the development of theories of social justice.

Cohen (2011) contends that Rawls confuses principles of justice with rules of regulation. Obtaining fairness from institutions that are not themselves fair confuses justice with other principles. Therefore, to propose a veil of ignorance that pre-supposes existing structures is self contradictory (Cohen, 2011).

As Rawls takes the perspective of reasonable men, he fails to include the relational dynamics between reasonable men and anyone who he does not consider a reasonable man. Not challenging power dynamics leaves the structures that support oppression, such as patriarchy and racism, in place. Such a position, therefore, prompts Okin (1989) to ask 'liberty for whom'.

Similarly Carabini (2007) argues that Rawls leaves out inequality between states and confines his argument to social units that exclude interaction between structures. For example, a social contract between Canadians leaves out the inequality between Canadians and people who live in poor counties. A Canadian company therefore, can abide by a Canadian social contract and at the same time exploit people in Haiti by using them as a source of cheap labour. Rawls also argues himself away from distribution being an advantage for everyone. "In other words, the only system that would satisfy both of Rawls's principles is a system that makes moot who is least advantaged, since the same arrangements that benefit the less advantaged will simultaneously benefit the more advantaged" (Carabini, 2007: 2). Indeed, why would not the most advantaged also give advantage to those who are in the middle until everyone was equally advantaged eliminating both opulence and poverty?

6.1.2.5. Rawls Difference Principle

Rawls' second principle of liberty is the concept of the difference principle. This principle is used to argue that inequality is necessary to motivate individuals to perform certain roles in society. Inequality is justified by Rawls when the fortunes of the most well off benefit the least well off. Rawls first principle of justice is liberty, which takes priority over the second principle; the difference principle of social justice. The first principle, according to Rawls is:

> "The basic liberties of citizens are, roughly speaking, political liberty (the right to vote and to be eligible for public office) together with freedom of speech and assembly; liberty of conscience and freedom of thought; freedom of the person along with the right to hold (personal) property; and freedom from arbitrary arrest and seizure as defined by the concept of the rule of law. These liberties are all required to be equal by the first principle, since citizens of a just society are to have the same basic rights" (1971: 61).

Rawls (1971) says that inequality is justified as long as everyone benefits. For example, some people can be rich as long as this also benefits those at the bottom income level and if the arrangement is compatible with what could be considered a fair distribution of income through taxation. Sandel describes the difference principle as follows:

> "Suppose that by permitting certain inequalities, such as higher pay for doctors than for bus drivers, we could improve the situation of those who have the least—by increasing access to health care for the poor. Allowing for this possibility, we would adopt what Rawls calls "the difference principle": only those social and economic inequalities are permitted that work to the benefit of the least advantaged members of society" (2009: 151-152).

Rawls (1971) notes that the difference principle is compatible with the principle of 'fraternity.' As an example, he says that no one in a family would want something for themselves unless the other members of the family also gain from it (Rawls, 1971: 105). "The difference principle, however, does seem to correspond to a natural meaning of fraternity: namely, to the idea of not wanting to have greater advantages unless this is to the benefit of others who are less well off" (Rawls, 1971: 105). Rawls assumes that people would not want greater advantages if others do not also gain some compensation.

The second principle also indicates that all offices are open to all. Anyone can run for office or train for a certain career if they possess the required talents. However, society rewards people with certain skills which the society values. To the extent that there can be incentives for people with certain skills to develop and use those skills, inequality is deemed necessary. In other words, if someone is a hockey player and society values hockey, this justifies hockey players making a lot more money than school teachers. The difference principle is intended as a way to reward effort not talent as Rawls (1971) explicitly rejects the idea that people should be rewarded for inherited talents. One must put effort into things that society finds valuable. Effort is rewarded to motivate people.

In addition, Rawls (1971) makes the argument that there is a need to uphold and sustain just institutions and save for future generations largely based on the original position. Under the veil of ignorance, Rawls asserts that every man would have the same sense of cooperation "as fathers, say, care for their sons" (1971: 288). Additionally even though the current generation would not benefit from saving, they would save for a future generation because they would provide for future generations, as they would for their own descendants. "Thus imagining themselves to be fathers, say, they are to ascertain how much they should set aside for their sons by noting what they would believe themselves entitled to claim of their father" (Rawls, 1971: 289).

Rawls writes that when the two principles of social justice are considered it is not necessarily essential for the least favored to contribute to invest in future generations (1971: 292), although the least favored in society could benefit from this as well according to the difference principle. The saving is an investment for the future benefit of society rather than for particular individuals.

6.1.2.6. Criticism of the Difference Principle

When reading Rawls (1971), the sexist tone he uses is immediately troubling. One could forgive his gendered use of language considering the book was written over thirty years ago, but it is difficult to overlook that woman and other disadvantaged groups were invisible in Rawls' work. Rawls writes about fair equality of opportunity but again does not question whether the structure of society or its institutions are themselves fair or

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oppressive. Okin (1989) says that Rawls assumes that the monogamous family is just. He does not question the violence that can happen in families, including the need to protect children (Okin. 1989: 281). According to Okin (1989), Rawls assumes that everyone is in the paid labour force and has equal access to equality of opportunity. He does not consider that some people may be dependent on others and some may have more power. He does not account for why people are the way they are and the power of society to shape conceptions of the self. According to Okin, Rawls' theory would be stronger if he considered the power dynamics in society (1989: 293). For example, an affluent family can provide their child with more opportunities than a poor family can. If both the child, one with opportunities and the one without opportunities, have the potential to be great hockey players, the one with the resources to buy hockey equipment, lessons and pay for coaches is more likely to play professionally. The child from the poor family could beat the odds and still end up playing professional hockey, but the child from the poor family would have to overcome barriers that the other child would not.

Carabini (2008) says that Rawls misses causality when he says people should not be compensated just because they have a natural talent. For example, Wayne Gretsky has a natural athletic advantage, which most of us do not possess. Carabini (2008) argues that, because people enjoy watching a naturally talented person, they get more pleasure than they paid for the price of a ticket. In other words, Wayne does not earn money from playing hockey; he earns money from us buying tickets to see him play. Therefore, free markets are better, according to Carabini (2008), because people with special talents benefit society by raising overall well-being.

Rawls also assumes that some people need incentives in order to fulfill roles in society. For example, doctors need to be paid better than others or no one would bother to get a medical degree. This fails to take into consideration that people often do things for many reasons beyond financial incentives and that not all jobs are high paying because of the value society puts on them (Cohen, 2008). If we look at hockey players, for example, we can see that even though people love to watch hockey, the very high salaries of professional hockey players has much to do with advertising and the promotion of goods. Also, historically, people in female-identified occupations, like teachers and social workers, typically are paid less. Educational achievement does not necessarily account

for the rewards one might receive. In any event, it is difficult to determine what occupations society values the most and what professions should therefore be paid more so that people are motivated to do those jobs.

Carabini (2008), as a founder of a precious metals trading company, supports the capitalist system. He says Rawls' difference principle is misguided because inequality is neither justified nor unjustified. Inequality is natural to the human condition (Carabini 2008). Caribini (2008) further states that inequality should be embraced because it motivates people to do great things. Carabini (2007) also argues that the only systems that dispute inequality are horizontal.

In contrast, Cohen argues that liberty entails an expressing of social justice in the everyday world by individuals. "[D]istributive justice does not tolerate the deep inequality, driven by the provision of economic incentives to well-placed people, that John Rawls and his followers think that a just society displays" (Cohen, 2008: 2). Moreover, Cohen disagrees with Rawls by pointing out that Rawls confuses justice with other concepts like social regulation. For Cohen (2008), justice is about equality. Contrary to Rawls' contract theory, Cohen conceives of justice at a relational personal level. Justice is not contingent upon acts of government. Further, Cohen argues that the system that exists in North America, with its tax system, already supports Rawls difference principle because it justifies extreme wealth as contributing to those with least advantage. "Thus, in a country with state medical provision, the inequality of treatment that comes from allocating a portion of hospital resources to high-fee paying patients who get superior care benefits the badly off when some of the revenue is used to raise throughout the service. The unequal medical provision helps poor people, but against the background of a prior income inequality (which no doubt itself reflects further structural inequality and inegalitarian attitude) that is not, within this argument, itself been shown to benefit them" (Cohen, 2008: 33).

6.1.3. Further Thoughts Describing Social Justice

Unlike Rawls' view that centers justice on wealth, freedom and social goods, Startwell also includes power as well as the elimination of domination. In Startwell's

(2008) view, justice is about freedom and equality of power and encapsulates more of an anti-oppressive critique.

> "We ought to consider powers, along with wealth and freedoms, as social goods and as objects of distribution in a Rawlsian-style scheme of justice. Rawls does not explicitly do this, but it is a hard idea to avoid, once it occurs to you, since power is intimately connected with the other social goods, and since the pursuit of power appears to be a feature of rational contractors: it is the kind of thing one would seek to assure oneself of in an original position. If so, the contractors in the original position find themselves in a quandary. To guarantee the minimum acceptable equality of freedom and wealth, they must constitute an extremely effective and dramatic hierarchy of powers. Indeed, there has never been a general asymmetry of human power that can possibly match that which the state deploys by definition. The distributive schemes Rawls calls for can only be achieved by state power, that is, by the monopoly of violence. We might say, roughly, depending on what you mean by *power*, that this entails handing all of it to some folks while stripping it from others entirely. Obviously, this presents a standing threat to the just distribution of all other goods. But if power itself is construed as a basic social good, then Rawls position is flatly contradictory, because the original contractors cannot guarantee a minimum decent portion of the other social goods to themselves without rendering themselves subject to an abject disempowerment" (Startwell, 2008: 83).

Novak argues that theories of justice are ideologically neutral.

> "It is as open to people on the left as on the right or in the center. Its field of activity may be literary, scientific, religious, political, economic, cultural, athletic, and so on, across the whole spectrum of human social activities. The virtue of social justice allows for people of good will to reach different—even opposing—practical judgments about the material content of the common good (ends) and how to get there (means). Such differences are the stuff of politics" (2000: 2).

According to Novak (2000), justice, in its real meaning, has two principles that make it social. The first principle is the skills of civil society and the second principle is that of free self-governing citizens giving back with others in ways that aim at the good of all. Social justice, "primarily involves the good of others." In Novak's description, social justice depends on people coming together, without recourse to legal structures or other forms of domination, to provide for all.

> "First, the skills it requires are those of inspiring, working with, and organizing others to accomplish together a work of justice. These are the

elementary skills of civil society, through which free citizens exercise self–government by doing for themselves (that is, without turning to government) what needs to be done. Citizens who take part commonly explain their efforts as attempts to "give back" for all that they have received from the free society, or to meet the obligations of free citizens to think and act for themselves. The fact that this activity is carried out *with others* is one reason for designating it as a specific type of justice; it requires a broader range of social skills than do acts of individual   justice. The second characteristic of "social justice rightly understood" is that it aims at the good of the city, not at the good of one agent only. Citizens may band together, as in pioneer days, to put up a school or build a bridge. They may get together in the modern city to hold a bake sale for some charitable cause, to repair a playground, to clean up the environment, or for a million other purposes that their social imaginations might lead them to. Hence the second sense in which this habit of justice is "social": its object, as well as its form, primarily involves the good of others" (Novak, 2000: 2).

Novak's sense of social justice is not about contracts or procedures. Social justice is not regulated from above. Social justice is a virtue and is about participation and association with others. Further, in contrast to Rawls concept of justice as fairness, Wallerstein (1999) says that if we are to create a new historical system based on democracy it must be egalitarian. You cannot have one without the other. Democracy is an egalitarian process and outcome. Gergen (2006) also reminds us that meaning is located in relationship and that meaning and movement happen in the coordination of actions in context.

"As constructionist ideas suggest, rather than asking about ultimate truth, the important questions concern the implications for our lives *together*. How does a given set of ideas contribute to human well-being; who do they advantage and disadvantage; do they lead to more freedom or domination; do they sustain the planet or destroy it; and so on. These are obviously questions of value, but all the better. As we speak together about the world so do we create our futures. If so, what futures do we wish for the world?" (Gergen, 2011, December)

Constuctionism takes a pragmatic view; the value of the choices we make are determined by their consequences. What consequences can be expected if justice is perceived as fairness as contrasted with justice seen as the lack of oppression and domination? Social justice, in this sense is beyond descriptions. Social justice is to be found in democratic processes.

Reflecting on conceptions of social justice helps to uncover veiled assumptions. The contested descriptions of social justice provide fertile ground for social work to argue and make clear what it means in practice. Innovative fresh discussions are needed in social work literature, among social workers and within the profession itself to develop a social work formulation of social justice that social workers can work toward together with others.

6.2. A Discussion about Rights

No discussion or paper about social work would be complete without a discussion about human rights. Indeed, from the local to international levels of social work, human rights are very much a part of social work. Two international social work organizations, *The International Association of Schools of Social Work* and *The International Federation of Social Workers*, have formal consultative status with the United Nations (Dominelli, 2010: 10). Social workers promote knowing and using human rights legislation to advocate on behalf of service users (Dominelli, 2010, Lundy, 2004). Human rights discourse is not unique to social work. Governments, lawyers and other professions use rights discourse to argue for the equal, respectful and the dignified treatment of people, especially the poor and marginalized. "The poorer people are, the more they need secure rights. To enjoy their rights, they need to know what they are and how to claim them" (Chambers, 1993: 118). Rights are intended to protect people from abuse to their civil liberties.

It is not news to social workers that human rights have become a central focus of practice. What may be news, however, is that not everyone agrees that this approach is always effective or appropriate. It has also been argued that the rights discourse is limited in its ability to address the cause of social problems. The intent of outlining some critiques of rights discourse is not to unilaterally argue against this rhetoric but to promote critical discussion about the profession of social work's taken-for-granted, blanket endorsement of 'human rights discourse'.

6.2.1. The Nature of Rights

The *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (2005, substantive revision 2010, retrieved July 18, 2011) describes rights as: "entitlements (not) to perform certain actions, or (not) to be in certain states; or entitlements that others (not) perform certain actions or (not) be in certain states." Rights speak to what actions are permissible and to what actions and institutions are deemed as just. Rights direct a morality of what should or what is needed to eliminate discrimination.

Natural rights are moral rights that humans have because of the nature of being human. Natural rights evolve from cultural roots of the common wisdom of societies. Traditional cultures, for example, were held together by traditions and customs that prescribed how people treated one another so that they could sustain relationships. For example, indigenous peoples in the Americas historically did not have individual land rights. They had territories that the tribe held in common. They lived within ancestral living landscapes. Ancestral land**s** encompass the cosmology and the entire living environment relationally in complex systems. "Indigenous territory 'belongs' to no one individual, as with free hold, who independently controls it. Rather, territory belongs to everyone; decisions over process affecting multiple inhabitants would have to be debated by all" (Sawyer, 1996: 364).

The rights that are enshrined in legal documents are liberties that give privileges. A privilege is something one 'can' do but is not compelled to do. I have the privilege of being allowed to have money in the bank. Liberties provide freedoms. I am free to vote, travel where I want, protest and decide where I will work.

Rights can also hold claims. I claim the right to be paid for the work I do and not to be abused. Rights can also denote power as in the right to tell employees what to do and the right of slave owners to order the lives of slaves. Governments also have a right of power to enact laws, have a police force and to regulate a justice system. They can change laws and constitutions that regulate society. In a political state, citizens may also have immunities that regulate and limit the power of the state. For example, in Canada, citizens do not have to belong to any church or religion. Canadians are free to practice any religion. Some rights, such as the right not to be abused or discriminated against, can be described as negative rights and other rights can be described as positive, such as the

right to an adequate income and the right to liberty (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 2005, retrieved July 18, 2011). Rights are often described as utilitarian. In other words rights are worthwhile because society values their function.

6.2.2. Prescribed Human Rights

Some rights are designated the rights of humans. These rights are prescribed by the United Nations in legislation and by countries in charters. "The most obvious way in which human rights exist is as norms of national and international law created by enactment and judicial decisions" (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2005, retrieved July 18, 2011). They are intended to protect people from abuse, provide freedom, and obtain morality from political bodies.

Social work has adopted the rights language as a way to promote social justice from governments; from national governments to the international court. Human rights are seen as a tool to protect the rights of the oppressed and to promote fairness. Individuals and social workers can appeal to governments and international tribunals using human rights to argue cases of human rights abuses. The language of human rights has become central to social work arguments for social justice as can be seen in the manual, *Human Rights and Social Work* (1994), published in Geneva by the Centre for Human Rights and endorsed by international social work organizations. In today's current, normative context, human rights are powerful leverage tools to push for fairness and reforms. Social workers can use human rights to pursue and pressure governments to act in more moral and just ways.

6.2.3. A Critique of Rights Discourse

The rights discourse has been criticized for its individualistic and reformist orientation. Putting rights into practice and coming to resolutions by using rights-based solutions is often difficult and time consuming. On the other hand it has been argued that, although formal human rights may not change things structurally, they do have a valuable role because they can bring people together to challenge injustice and shame offenders into defensive positions. From a liberal perspective (reformist), people have equal opportunity and the state can redistribute income through the tax system. "No attention is

given to the source or cause of the maldistribution in the first place, only to its consequences" (Mullaly, 2007: 96). Rights fall into this perspective as they presume a fair playing field where everyone can get ahead; "unequal rewards go to those with unequal skills and efforts" (Mullaly, 2007: 96). As distinct from the redistribution of income, rights do not have to be taken from some to give to others.. Rights are protected by legislation, but the root causes of oppression and domination are seen as neutral. Rights are part of what Rawls (1971) refers to as a social contract, where individuals give up certain privileges to gain certain protections from the state. Therefore, the state may decide that under certain conditions that the state determines, that rights can be suspended (Dominelli, 2010). An example of this was seen in the discussion about the GJM (Shaw & Westergard-Thorpe, 2009) and the Nazi regime. In these examples, the right to protest was taken away from people and dissent was squashed (Lifton, 1986).

Rhode (1991) argues that rights have a resonance in North American culture and have become part of established discourse. Rights were part of the consciousness-raising of the women's movement, bringing women together in a class struggle (Schneider, 1991), and women have benefitted collectively by using individual rights discourse to connect to each other in a collective selfhood (Rhode, 1991: 342-343). The women's movement demonstrates that, despite rights being from a liberal perspective and not being contextual, they can promote concrete objectives and social mobilization (Rhode, 1991).

Sen (2009) observes that naming human rights abuses is valuable as it shames those who abuse others' rights and allows for the public discussion of ethical arguments. Where disagreements about ethical issues were once suppressed, people now have a way to talk about them. He believes that this is valuable even when challenges are put against oppressive regimes.

> "The force of the claim for a human right would indeed be seriously undermined if it were possible to show that it is unlikely to survive open public scrutiny. However, contrary to a commonly offered reason for skepticism and rejection of the idea of human rights, the case for it cannot be discarded simply by pointing to the fact – a much-invoked fact – that in repressive regimes across the globe, which do not allow open public discussions, or do not permit free access to information about the world outside the country, many of these human rights do not acquire serious public standing. The fact that monitoring of violations of human rights and

the procedure of 'naming and shaming' can be so effective (at least, in putting the violators on the defensive) is some indication of the reach of public reasoning when information becomes available and ethical arguments are allowed rather than suppressed. Uncurbed critical scrutiny is essential for dismissal as well as for justification" (Sen, 2009: 387).

On the other hand, Massoud's (2011) study in Sudan demonstrated that in war-ravaged countries human rights education can have dangerous consequences, especially for the poorest of the poor. Sudan has a history of war and unrest and is one of the poorest countries in the world. In poor counties, such as Sudan, human rights education and legal interventions has been a big part of international development; mainly from agencies of the United Nations (Massoud, 2011: 12). According to Massoud, (2011) in this context the poor do not receive the benefits they need, such as food, while local elites receive jobs working for international organizations such as the United Nations, thus widening the social and economic gap between the very poor and the local elite. Human rights education is designed to teach people to settle disputes non-violently using the court system. In the study by Massoud (2011), it was found that, overall, the people who attended the human rights workshops did not intend to use what they learned to mobilize action partly because of the high level of security and surveillance experienced under an authoritarian regime and the corruption in the society. People living in this environment were constantly at risk of arrest. Moreover, in a country with so many diverse religions and languages where different groups have been at war with each other, it is extremely difficult for poor people who have been displaced by war to come together to join in a common cause. This may explain why an authoritarian regime would not be threatened by human rights education. "The idea of human rights creates an illusion of hope among those that live under an authoritarian regime that, through rights in litigation, each individual can liberate him- or herself from oppression" (Massoud, 2011: 24). Implementing rights depends on political contexts and institutions that encourage claims against offenders. Further, the language of rights has little practical value when used against governments. Under an authoritarian regime, "the government will not be shamed into protecting human rights" (Massoud, 2011: 25) and there can be serious ramifications for soliciting rights from governments as they legitimize their power.

In contrast, in countries with representatively elected governments, such as Canada and the United States, nation-building typically include a process of establishing rights for citizens. However, even within countries where human rights have considerable standing, there are inconsistencies. For example, in 1929 England's Privy Council voted that women were persons[30] and consequently women in Canada were allowed to vote and hold public office. The women's vote was not granted in every province at the same time nor did it apply to all women, however. For example, the Inuit were only granted the right to vote in 1950 and the Indian people who lived on reserves were granted the right to vote in federal elections in 1960. Canada passed the *Canadian Bill of Rights* in 1960 and in 1982 the New Constitutional Act that included the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (The Constitution Act, 1982, Canadahistory, Timeline, on-line). Human rights in Canada have not always included everyone; historically, human rights were only enjoyed by white males. The implementation of Rights are vulnerable to the values and beliefs of the dominate culture.

A critique of rights language is timely in Canada. As of 2011, for the first time in Canada's history, First Nations people are given power under *The Human Rights Act* to use the Constitution to bring complaints against their own chiefs and councils (CTV News, The Canadian Press, 6/20/2011). This has been met with controversy, however, due to the status of First Nations in Canada as independent nations. First Nations peoples negotiated treaties with Canada as free nations. Therefore, they are distinct from Canada. On the other hand, *The Indian Act* historically has excluded rights for women. So now both women and men have the ability to bring complaints against chiefs and councils. The existing chiefs and councils were established under *The Indian Act* and historically were shaped to enforce the domination of men over indigenous communities. The Charter may also force chiefs and councils to be more accountable to reserve communities.

In the United States, the issue of rights has been no less controversial. July 4, 1776, is held as an auspicious day in the United States because on this day *The Declaration of Independence* was proclaimed. What is often forgotten is that this declaration excluded black slaves, Indians, and women. In addition, only men who owned land could vote (Zinn, 1980). Women were overlooked because they were

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[30] Canada was still a colony of Britain so was ruled by the vote.

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inconsequential; Indians were seen as savages; and black people were considered the private property of men who owned land. It is interesting to note that during the 1800s slaves escaped to Canada through what is commonly termed the 'underground railway' because Canada did not have a system of slavery.

Despite the emphasis put on rights and freedoms by wealthy, democratic nations such as the US and Canada, there are still people who are unemployed, hungry, homeless and discriminated against. In Canada, the conditions, particularly for people living on reserves, have gotten worse. Drinking water poses a "significant risk", housing is deteriorating, and educational standards are lower than they are compared to the rest of Canada's population (Kirkey, Postmedia News, June 9, 2011). Western societies only recognize individuals and states. Therefore in western states, like Canada and the United States, it is easy to see why individual rights are recognized at the expense of indigenous nations and social units. "Worldwide, imperialists and colonizers have been unable – or perhaps unwilling even if able – to observe how people live, not as individuals, but as members of a clan, tribe or nation and to respect them as such" (Kneen, 2009: 86).

Rights come from a liberal perspective that aims to change society by changing laws. However, rights have limitations and they lack creative potential. For example, establishing that women have equal rights does not guarantee women everyday equality (hooks, 2000). When members of an oppressed group are defined as equal, in terms of sameness, this ignores the fact that they usually have more disadvantages in their lives. Oppression remains in the cultures and consciousness of people (Freire, 1970). "A decade's experience with state equal rights amendments reveals no necessary correlation between the standard of constitutional protection provided by legal tribunals and the results received" (Rhode, 1991: 341). Reducing people to their sameness, without regard for the barriers that some face due to being oppressed, disregards the hoops many people have to jump through to have their rights acknowledged.

Human rights are top down and cause dependency on a white, middle-class legal system ("white middle-class male judiciary"). Many people do not have the money or resources to pursue human rights claims (Rhode, 1991: 341). "[P]eople may have certain rights but be unable to exercise them because of particular constraints based on class, gender, race, and so on" (Mullaly, 2007: 257). Judicial remedies are based on a

framework of neutrality that presumes that women and men start from a place of equality, ignoring social differences in power (the same can be said about other oppressed groups). "Abstract rights will authorize the male experience of the world. The liberal view that law is society's text, its rational mind, expresses this in a normative mode; the traditional left view that the state, and with it the law, is superstructural or epiphenomenal expresses it in an empirical mode" (Mackinnon, 1991: 195).

Because rights are granted by an authority and do not ensure adequate social services such as food, water, and housing (social rights), they have little practical value for people in need of help (Kneen, 2009). Judicial bodies transform human necessity to legal claims that eliminate the responsibility to care for each other (Kneen, 2009). Some rights, like the right to save seeds, were traditionally an ordinary part of how societies ensured their 'right' not only to food but to satisfactory nutrition and survival. The language of rights is associated with colonization in that power is assigned to authority through individualistic language.

> "Responsibility has to do with social relations. It is primarily a social and ethical practice, not a judicial concept. The replacement of responsibilities by rights has, however, served the wealthy and powerful well by providing an appearance of moral principle – right to life, right to food, right to land – while obscuring the lack of concrete action to address the subject of the rights claim, thus leaving intact the structures of power. A person, organization or state can campaign hard to get a particular right recognized in an international statement – including one from the United Nations – without anyone having to actually do anything to implement it. Indeed, rights are usually pursued precisely because the state is violating the substance of the rights claimed" (Kneen, 2009, 2–3).

The rich countries of the North have not substantially helped the poor in the other parts of the world despite making claims for equality and for human rights. The same structures can both distribute rights and be guilty of human rights abuses. Commercial and diplomatic relationships can dictate how or if human rights are pursued. As long as the institutions that are the source of abuse have the power to regulate rights, change toward justice will be uncertain. Human rights challenge the abusive actions of offenders, but they do not change the existing structures that allow violations to go on. For example, Isbister (2001) illustrates this point by telling us that on December 10 (Human Rights Day in the United States), 1984, the United States hosted victims of human rights abuses

that were unfriendly to the United States and excluded people from countries that they had friendly relations with. The United States and other countries such as Canada have also undermined human rights legislation by failing to sign and ratify many human rights treaties (Isbister, 2001: 213).

The most severe abuses of human rights are not caused by civilian or elected governments but by military regimes or armies in times of war or occupation (Isbister, 2001). Clearly, it is easier and less risky to challenge individual offenders and democratically elected governments with human rights violations than it is to take military regimes or armies to task. Yet under any type of governance, other government priorities may get in the way of human rights. For example, the Reagan administration (1981-1989) made asserting America's strength against Soviet influence a greater priority than human rights. Propaganda dictated that rights violations by countries in alliance with American objectives were ignored while countries allied with the Soviets were publicized (Isbister, 2001: 215).

National interests trump interests of rights in foreign policy. As US foreign policy dominates the globe, the Third World (the poor) suffers from being excluded from the priorities of the most economically powerful. "The rich countries could have joined with them in their struggles, but for the most part, they turned a blind eye" (Isbister, 2001: 224).

6.2.4. Postscript

The discourse of rights can be a powerful tool. Natural rights, like treating others fairly and humanely are understood by most people and can be called upon to challenge offenders. Rights are meant to protect everyone, especially the most vulnerable and those who can not speak for themselves.

Rights are culturally bound, however, and change over time. For example, in some cultures women have fewer rights than men and in other cultures women's rights have changed over time. Women in the Americas do have their rights enshrined in constitution and law. Slavery was once accepted in the United States but is seen as deplorable today. In Canada the language of rights has become common among the general population. Due to rights being legislated in Canada, people have legal recourse

when rights are violated. People who live in countries that have democratically elected governments can also argue on behalf of those living under less favorable regimes. Social work can argue that no one can afford to turn a blind eye.

Rights are liberal and dependent on the good will of governments. Even in Canada and the United States, rights have been eroded since 9/11 for so-called security reasons. In Canada, the right to strike has been almost legislated away and access to remedies to violations is less than it once was due to the closure of independent Human Rights offices. Human rights have the potential to challenge oppression, but they are vulnerable to fluctuations in social and political environments. As top-down remedies, rights are liberal in orientation. They do not change the structure of oppression or the source of violations. Human rights laws do not ensure a favourable environment or even the basics of survival that would make it possible for all people to access remedies.

Gergen (2009) says that, although it is admirable to strive for a universal ethic, rights fall short of achieving what they are intended for. Further, he adds that when a country or group of people is targeted for human rights violations, this causes distance between them and others. "The divisive potential of abstract goods is intensified by the fact that they do not tell us when and how they can be applied. One cannot unambiguously derive concrete action from an abstract virtue or human right. There is nothing about the value of justice, equality, compassion, or freedom that demands any particular form of action. And thus the action condemned in the name of an abstract value may also be used to defend the same value" (Gergen, 2009: 361). In effect, society applies first order solutions, like incarceration and sanctions, to address second order problems, while at the same time these so-called remedies cause bigger rifts between people and cultures.

Liberal social workers, using human rights for legal leverage, risk using first order change with second order problems. Radical social work on the other hand seeks ways to change the system that caused the problem. As Gergen (2009) emphasizes, only through collaborative action can we have a vision of what is a satisfying and ethical life.

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6.3. Beyond Paternalism and False Generosity toward Solidarity

The settlement house movement was one example of a moment in time when social work practice was more community-based. In the days of the settlement house movement, before social work became a profession tied to the state, social workers relied on mutual aid. People in communities came together to help each other and social workers worked with the people (Knight, 2005, Reisch & Andrews, 2002). This changed after the Second World War as social workers increasingly tied themselves to government policies and procedures. In the recent past, the disconnect between social workers and service users has increased because of the economic allegiance of governments to a corporate agenda under neo-liberalism (Ferguson, Lavalette & Whitmore 2005, Ward, 2011). Universal social programs have been eroded and social workers often blindly implement policies that merely regulate service users. "The socialist ideal was rewritten as a world in which everyone was entitled to everything, but where nobody except the providers had any actual say about anything. We have been learning for years, in the anti-welfare backlash, what a very vulnerable utopia that was" (Ward, 2011: 273). Social work happens, more often than not, in an environment of top-down, unequal power relations where social workers' dependency on government jobs has become a form of work-for–welfare employment vulnerable to the vision of management and political bureaucracy.

The existence of a radical stream in social work has been debated since social work became a profession (Specht & Courtney, 1994). Despite the radical social workers that Specht and Courtney (1994) write about, it is also clear that social work historically had more of an authoritarian stream. This was made evident when Canadian social workers removed indigenous children from their homes and put them into residential schools. Today social workers generally regulate the poor under programs and policies that were formed in the context of neo-liberal policies that serve the interests of an economy that favors the rich (Ferguson, Lavalette & Whitmore 2005). Social assistance is an example of social workers regulating and controlling people. The monitoring of service users is the principle function of social workers. They decide who deserves a very substandard income and control those who receive social assistance. Service users are required to continually jump through hoops to defend themselves against the distrust

inherent in the system. Service users are stigmatized and assumed guilty of cheating the system until they can prove themselves innocent.

According to Lundy (2004), poor people are often forced to rely on charity. This fact has not changed in the history of social work in Canada where social work began as a charity effort. In Canada's early days as a nation state, capitalist industrialization and mass immigration brought widespread poverty. Charity was seen as a way to prevent revolution and better the lives of the under-class (Lundy, 2004: 22). From social work's beginnings, when middle and upper-class women provided charity, aligning with professional elites has helped to establish social work as a legitimate profession. "It also engaged in establishing 'university-based education with increasingly selective entry into the field, active professional associations to promote social work standards and to gain exclusive control over the right to practice, the development of individualistic, technological, 'scientific' methodology that would be consistent with dominant social values" (Lundy, 2004: 22).

Social work practice in Canada by and large remains charity. Social workers generally work to help, relieve and improve the situations of those in need. However, there are other alternative approaches. Beyond the clinical domain, Rogers[31] came to see his work as political because it addressed power and control: "the locus of decision making power" (Rogers 1978: 4). "In sum it is the process of gaining power, control, decision-making. It is the process of the highly complex interactions and effects of these elements as they exist in relationships between persons, between a person and a group, or between groups" (Rogers, 1978: 5). What is often forgotten about Rogers's legacy is that he believed that groups can function, and function better, without hierarchy and domination.

Self-determination and a strength-based perspective are used in therapeutic contexts but rarely in a structural context. In their manuscript on community practice, Schenck, Louw and Nel outline principles from Rogers's client-centered therapy, that they use as a foundation in their book, as follows:

- "The motivation for therapy as a desire for change.

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[31] Cain (2010) also writes about criticism of person-centered therapy. "The person-centered approach has been criticized for reflecting Rogers's and many Americans' values of independence, individualism, and self-determination" (2010: 141).

- The role of the therapist as a facilitator and the importance of self-determination of the people. Facilitation is primarily a function of the belief of the therapist in the community's own capacity and his/her genuine appreciation of the community.
- The process of therapy is a process of working with the people and facilitating self-discovery.
- Therapeutic outcome is a community who takes responsibility for its own problems, and grows in the process of making the changes." (Walker in Schenck, Louw & Nel, 2010: preface, xi)

Rogers, like Freire, is process-orientated and provides intriguing conclusions about the similarities between Freire's work and his own[32]. Carl Rogers and Paulo Freire approach change from a base of respect, compassion and trust for people. Their approaches steer away from authoritarianism and domination. Rogers believed that individuals are self-actualizing and Freire said that without faith in people in horizontal relationships, "dialogue is a farce which inevitably degenerates into paternalistic manipulation" (1970: 91). Here we find support for trusting people to be self determined (Whitmore & Wilson, 2005). Approaching change from this position is not only opposed to domination, it opens the door to collective decision-making and acting for a common cause. When we trust people to come together to collectively decide on actions the door opens to new possibilities. Trust provides the 'safeness' needed for people to grow and to be set free from conformity and complicity.

Historically there have been models of social work practice that provide alternatives to the common model of charity. Dominelli (2010) provides one example of mutual aid and collective action. "Other options that contrasted strongly with the stigmatizing provisions inherent in the charitable model of helping people during hard times began to emerge during the Victorian era. British working-class people sought community-based alternatives to charity. These relied on collective action, often expressed through the craft guilds and the trade union movement, and introduced the idea of contributing towards group provision to help during times of individual and family hardship" (Dominelli, 2010: 19).

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[32] Interestingly Rogers and Freire's work intersect. In Rogers' book *Personal Power* (1978), there is a chapter on Freire. Rogers wrote that he is 'astonished' to find that he and Freire share so much of the same perspective despite the differences in their background. Rogers gives an example of a group of health care professionals who invite 'consumers' into a meeting to share ideas as examples of facilitating sharing power in a Freire kind of way (1978: 110 – 112).

More participatory influences can move social work further away from its paternalism. Freire (1970) explains that liberation comes by the awareness and struggle of the oppressed, not by chance and only the oppressed can liberate themselves from oppression. In doing so, the oppressed liberate the oppressor from the inherent contradiction between their role as oppressors and their personal liberty.

Freire (1970) explains how charity and false generosity dehumanize and domesticate the oppressed and shows that false generosity works to help the oppressor lessen their own guilt. It does not liberate a group from their oppression. For example, when I 'do' social work 'to' you or 'for' you, I am 'helping' you to conform to what I think is best for you. Charity is false generosity precisely because it only ameliorates suffering and does nothing to liberate people from oppression. False generosity is first order change in situations that require second order change.

> "Any attempt to "soften" the power of the oppressor in deference to the weakness of the oppressed almost always manifests itself in the form of false generosity; indeed, the attempt never goes beyond this. In order to have the continued opportunity to express their "generosity," the oppressors must perpetuate injustice as well. An unjust social order is the permanent fount of this "generosity," which is nourished by death, despair, and poverty. That is why the dispensers of false generosity become desperate at the slightest threat to its source. True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity. False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the "rejects of life," to extend their trembling hands. True generosity lies in striving so that these hands—whether of individuals or entire peoples—need be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world" (Freire, 1970: 44).

False generosity is charity that reinforces the roles of the receiver and of the giver. For example, a wealthy person can donate money to people who live in poverty, but this does not erase the fact that one person is wealthy while others are poor. This increases the dependency of the poor and therefore dehumanizes them as receivers of false generosity. True generosity according to Freire (1970) erases the conditions that make charity viable. In other words, charity is false generosity because if there is justice, there is no need for charity at all.

Dependency works to domesticate people according to Freire (1970). For example, before colonization indigenous people in Canada lived a life that was in harmony with nature. When white people came to settle on the land they wanted to 'help' the indigenous people by 'civilizing' them. The Europeans worked to Christianize the indigenous people, for their own good. When the culture of the indigenous peoples was distorted, they relied on the white culture in which they were never really allowed to fully participate. They were assimilated and domesticated.

Social work actions often come from the perspective of the oppressor due to the unequal power between the social worker and the clients. True liberation comes when the oppressed become aware of their oppression, divorce themselves from the acceptance of this oppression, reflect and struggle for freedom. The role for social workers is therefore one of standing in solidarity 'with' the oppressed. As social workers we need to acknowledge the suffering of others and stand with them, rather than work to 'improve' the situation of the oppressed. According to Freire (1970), we need subjectivity and objectivity. We become aware of the conditions of world with its oppression objectively and engage with others in their subjective reality. By means of the recognition of our mutual need for liberation, there is solidarity. So it follows that in solidarity the divide between the oppressor and the oppressed disappears.

6.4. Conclusion

Although human rights are important tools for social work, they are nevertheless top down solutions and limited in their use due to the unpredictability of political structures and because they do not address systems change. At the same time the discourse of human rights, if used mindfully, can provide powerful short-term solutions in the face of injustice. The nature of rights should be about our shared humanity and the recognition of our interdependency. Facilitating change toward social justice therefore requires more than liberal notions of formal human rights. The transformation of social structures and making the types of changes that can last for the benefit of future generations goes beyond making changes to laws and policies. Changes in policy do not change social structures because these types of changes are made within the very same structure in which they were formed in the first place. Any system that is based on domination can

not eradicate oppression. Getting sidetracked or co-opted is less possible when one stays focused on long-term solutions. A radical stream within social work could help to upturn the status quo. In order to facilitate social justice, we must ask ourselves a very important question. Do we work to liberate or domesticate people? Do we facilitate social justice as in our code of ethics?

CHAPTER SEVEN

THEMES FROM THE INTERVIEWS THAT INFORM THE INQUIRY

7. Introduction

In this chapter the results are explained and the participants are introduced. This chapter presents the themes that emerged from the interviews and further clarifies them with literature.

7.1. Introduction of the Participants

The following introduces the seven people who were interviewed for the thesis. These introductions have been reviewed and accepted by the participants. Joys, one of the participants, chose to write her own introduction. Some of the introductions include poems or quotes. The reason the poems or quotes are included is to give the reader a sense of the person. For example, the quote from the song '*Democracy*' was mentioned by Mildred in her interview and the poem '*Why am I an Anarchist*', at the beginning of Norman's interview, was written by him. It also needs to be noted that the participants chose to use their own names. They declined the offer to use pseudonyms. I hope the reader will enjoy getting to know these people as much as I did.

7.1.1. Introducing Neil

The first time I came across the name Neil Balan was while reading a review of the book *In Defense of Lost Causes* by Slavoj Zizek in Upping the Anti (Oct, 2008) a Canadian journal of political theory and social action. Although one reads and relates to common reference points deployed by the author (rather than the author himself), I had the sense that the writer was articulate and likely a very thoughtful person. I discovered this was an accurate perception once I had the opportunity to interview Neil.

Neil gives the impression of being thoughtful, articulate, and a genuine pleasant guy. He lives in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan with his partner and young son. After working with street-involved youth in Toronto, Neil has worked with *Quint Economic Development Corporation*, a Saskatoon community-based organization, where he acted

as a frontline worker and harm-reduction[33] advocate for young men in the inner-city. More recently, Neil has focused his attention on his ongoing doctoral dissertation in the critical humanities, which explores the organization of political violence and what he calls "the human turn in military affairs." Rather than advancing orthodox arguments about the "militarization of society" common in cultural studies, Neil is interested in how formations, technologies, and practices in non-military and civilian ways of life travel into military practices. He believes this movement is indicative of the ongoing de-politicization of politics itself in neoliberal-capitalist societies.

Trying to better link his work inside and outside the neoliberal university, Neil places value on pedagogy and teaching and on inventing vocabularies and repertoires that undermine and replace still-dominant neoliberal fables and fantasies. He believes this is especially pertinent in Saskatchewan, where the promise of aggressive resource extraction, new forms of primitive accumulation and private interest, and nuclear power generation are foregrounded as viable solutions for security and stability. He believes these promises both obscure and rely on quiet but ongoing forms of systemic and symbolic violence. Defending the public provision of locally-based social services, working with resurgent indigenous communities, and undermining the hegemony of a distinctly white-settler mentality through teaching and writing are important starting points for Neil.

7.1.2. Introducing Derrick

"At some point, sooner or later - and by now rather much sooner than later – the collapse *will* be the big one, and this culture and its unspeakable destructiveness will no longer have such power to destroy. At that point, we - all of us who identify with and who have aligned ourselves with the real, physical world, and all of us who are part of the real, physical world, save those of this culture who pretend this culture is more important than life on this planet - can begin, ourselves, to rest and recover. Until then, it is not time to rest, not time to hold back, not time to not fight back with all of who and what we are, not time to not give everything we have to this struggle against this culture that destroys everyone, everything, and everywhere. Until this culture collapses – until we align with the natural

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[33] Harm reduction refers to interventions to diminish harm from drug use, prostitution or other social problems. For example, harm reduction may aim to keep service users in treatment even when abstinence is not achieved to help the individual function better in their life, reduce the incidence of HIV infection (as in needle exchange programs) and lessen associated crime.

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world to help bring it down, to help make this collapse, or the next one, or the one after that, the final collapse of this culture – it is time to hold on tight in our hearts to what and whom we love, and to push as hard as we can against this culture's relentless omnicide, and then to push harder than we ever thought we could, and then harder, and harder still. Until this culture collapses it is time to push against and past our own fears and other self-imposed limitations, to push again, to push harder, and to push harder still, and to fight, to fight for our own lives and more importantly the lives of those we love, for the life of the land and air and water and soil and trees and fish and birds and frogs and slugs and salamanders and all others who give us life. Until this culture collapses it is time to fight, and to fight harder than we ever thought we could, and then harder, and harder still, and to not give up, but to keep holding tight to what and whom we love, to keep pushing, to keep fighting. Because someday, sooner or later – and by now, rather much sooner than later – we're going to win" (Jensen & Mcbay, 2009: 401).

As the quote above attests, Derrick is passionate and holds the conviction that we have to do everything we can to save the natural world and the land base by bringing the current culture down. He is an adamant opponent of Western civilization and is critical of an industrial capitalist culture that he sees as destructive to life. Derrick is an uncompromising critic of the existing culture because it is not only unsustainable but destructive and oppressive. He makes the links, especially in *A Language Older than Words* (2000), between the abusive way humans often act toward each other, individually and as a society, and the way nature is exploited. He is definite that we don't have time to wait for government interventions, that won't happen anyway, or for the mobilization of a mass movement.

Although Derrick supports a wide range of efforts made by others such as living with less close to the land and alternative communities this is not what he advocates for. A theme that runs through much of his writing is that these endeavors are a step in the right direction but they are not enough. For example, one may live off the grid and have a totally sustainable life-style but as long as industry continues to destroy the earth we are not going to make it.

Derrick is a very popular author and lecturer among activists. His travel schedule, book sales and the number of hits that come up when his name is searched on the internet attest to this. He has written thirteen books and made several videos, not to mention appearances on YouTube. He has also written many articles, and has been written about

and interviewed a number of times. He is an acclaimed author juxtaposed with social activist. Derrick's writing style is first person and conversational, which makes his work easy to relate to. One to one or with a group he is especially approachable and supportive of others efforts. I would say most people would find him to be a likeable guy. On the other hand, especially since he is so public, he has his critics. Some people, particularly those who benefit from hanging on to the status-quo, seem to find what he has to say threatening. Nevertheless Derrick has not let himself be silenced.

Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derrick_Jensen retrieved May 20, 2009) lists the following awards and acclamations that pay tribute to Derrick's work:

- 2008: Grand Prize winner, Eric Hoffer Book Award for Thought to Exist in the Wild, Derrick Jensen, Photographs by Karen Tweedy-Holms.
- 2006: Named "Person of the Year" by Press Action for the publication of Endgame.
- 2003: The Culture of Make Believe was one of two finalists for the J. Anthony Lukas Book Prize.
- 2000: Hackensack, NJ, Record declared A Language Older Than Words its best book of the year.
- 2000: Language was nominated for Quality Paperback Book Club's New Vision Award.
- 1998: Second Prize in the category of small budget non-profit advertisements, as determined by the Inland Northwest Ad Federation, for the first ad in the "National Forests: Your land, your choice" series.
- 1995: Critics' Choice for one of America's ten best nature books of 1995, for Listening to the Land: Conversations About Nature, Culture, and Eros.

In Derrick's book, *What We Leave Behind* (2009: 192) he asks two questions: would the world be better off had you never been born and is the world better off because you were born. Derrick's writing is both challenging and thought-provoking. Further on he also says, "[p]ersonal change doesn't equal social change. It's not a significant threat to those in power, nor to the system itself" (2009: 257). One could ask what ecology has to do with social justice. Derrick clearly shows how they are associated through his writing. For example, he gives the illustration of Nikes attempts toward sustainability, wherein they use the word social equality to describe their policies. He gives many examples of how this is untrue, such as how Nike workers in other countries have been beaten, and how Tiger Woods is paid $100 million over five years to endorse the product while those who work for Nike in Thailand make three and four dollars per day.

Undoubtedly Derrick provides the evidence that confirms the connection between ecological and social justice.

7.1.3. Introducing Joys

The introduction below was written by Joys:

A brush with cancer a few years ago became a wake-up call to focus on getting priorities straight: outrage and despair and cynicism feel heroic, but do little to create the world of harmony and peace and beauty we long for our children – and ourselves. It starts to become clear that what really needs attention is the nurturing of a compassionate heart and a strong sense of connection and community with all living things. Anything short of that will only deepen the separation and alienation and conflict that are at the root of the crises we are faced with on this Earth. To do this, it is necessary to slow down and simplify. As Stan Rowe so beautifully puts it:

> "How foolish to laud a work-ethic that keeps people nose-to-the-grindstone, busy making and doing far beyond their needs. Here is a monumental mistake. We ought to do less, simply because much of so-called "productive labour" is destructive: it consumes resources, encourages over-population, creates garbage and weakens the Earth-source. Wealth is much more a problem than poverty. By working less we could free up time for the more worthy task of self-harmonizing with the surrounding reality."
> (In *Earth Alive: Essays on Ecology,* Rowe S. 2006: 52).

So it feels important to get the home-place systems operating efficiently and smoothly: the garden, the solar system, the wood and water supplies, the composting toilet, the social connections here on the land and in the surrounding community - cultivating the joys of making music, sharing food and labour with friends and neighbours. And it feels equally important to make time for nurturing the soul with long walks in the forest, silent inner journeying and studying the works of the wise teachers, past and present. It seems to me that with such a foundation will come the capacity to advocate for a positive future for all, based on the lived experience.

To paraphrase Gandhi: We must become the change we seek.

"Democracy"

"It's coming through a hole in the air,
from those nights in Tiananmen Square.
It's coming from the feel
that this ain't exactly real,
or it's real, but it ain't exactly there.
From the wars against disorder,
from the sirens night and day,
from the fires of the homeless,
from the ashes of the gay:
Democracy is coming to the U.S.A.
It's coming through a crack in the wall;
on a visionary flood of alcohol;
from the staggering account
of the Sermon on the Mount
which I don't pretend to understand at all.
It's coming from the silence
on the dock of the bay,
from the brave, the bold, the battered
heart of Chevrolet:
Democracy is coming to the U.S.A."
(Leonard Cohen, The Future 1992)

The name Mildred hasn't become a household word in Saskatchewan yet, but if you live here and are either a Social Worker or a person living in poverty you have probably heard of her. Mildred has labored to elevate the effects of poverty for many years. What's more, since 1982, the twenty years before her so-called retirement, she has worked for free. Social Work has never been just a job for Mildred. Social Work doesn't pay her bills, hasn't given her a holiday or provided other amenities such as a pension.

Mildred was a founding member of *Equal Justice for all*; an advocacy group for people living in poverty and their allies. This is a group of volunteers who advocate for individuals dealing with welfare and other social policy claims. Mildred's knowledge and education was always an asset to the group, yet she worked 'with' others there, never above them. With this group, she worked to safeguard the intent of legal government polices, for social reform, and especially to alleviate the causes and effects of poverty.

Work was and is never ending for Mildred due to social assistance being persistently below what people can reasonably live on and controlled by a miserly means test.

Similarly in the 1980's Mildred and her class of Community Development Social Work students helped found the Hand-E Workers Cooperative. The cooperative advocated for worker owned employment for disabled workers. This group ran for five years despite lack of community support and funding. She was also the worker representative, the person voted by workers to be on the board, in 1968-77 of the Saskatoon Community Clinic. Moreover, Mildred has taught Social Work classes and supervised 35 students in their practicum placements.

Further she was also the representative for the Saskatoon Union of Unemployed Workers when they helped found the Saskatoon Food Bank. Mildred was kicked off this board because she voted against people being screened to use the Food Bank. She argued for poor people being treated with dignity. As she can tell you, using the Food Bank is a degrading experience in itself. Needing to pass a means test is just another humiliation for those who need food to feed their family. Regardless Mildred was told she had a conflict of interest and could no longer be on the Food Bank board.

Mildred is an inspiration and mentor for many aspirant social workers and those long past graduation. I was in one of Mildred's classes' way back when. I remember the class well, which is a vote for her teaching ability. More than this though, Mildred was the person who encouraged my writing and gave me confidence to get out there and just 'do it.'[34]

In 1995, Mildred received the Community Development YWCA Woman of the Year Award. In 1996, she was the first among six to be awarded the Saskatchewan volunteer medal the first year the award was given.   In 2003, she received 'A Rebel with a Cause' award from the Elizabeth Fry Society. As well in 2003, Mildred spread the myth that she was retiring. No one believes her because she continues to be involved in the community in many ways. Beyond this Mildred has unwaveringly been an advocate for those living in poverty. Mildred always allies herself with the disadvantaged in spite of opposition from those in power. Those who know her say she is a very caring, giving and

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[34] As I stated in Chapter One, when I wrote about my motivation for undertaking this inquiry, Mildred has been an inspiration for me.

compassionate person. At the same time though, they know not to interfere with Mildred where principles of justice are concerned.

7.1.5. Introducing Dave

> "You never change things by fighting the existing reality.
> To change something, build a new model that makes the
> existing model obsolete".

> -Buckminster Fuller (in Pollard, 2008: vii)

The quote above puts Dave's philosophy in plain words. On his blog (www.howtosavetheworld.ca) and in his book *Finding the Sweet Spot* (2008) he talks about creating 'bottom-up' alternatives to the current system. Dave expects that the current system will not be able to be sustaining; we are on a collision course with un-sustainability. Moreover he explains that it is doubtful that time used struggling to make change in the current system will be productive. Therefore, time is better spent building new models or alternatives to the current hierarchical system that will be useful after civilization or for post- civilization. Furthermore, he says we all have a responsibility to create alternatives and to live our lives in a way that serves the common good.

When I started out on this adventure I by no means thought I would be interviewing a man who is trained as a chartered accountant and that came from a white middle-class family. On his blog and in his book he brings together how one can create meaningful work that they enjoy doing, build community and work for the common good. Dave goes beyond broad general philosophical statements as he researches and writes about the how to of building sustainable alternatives; from business models to alternative communities. Dave writes about how we can give our own lives meaning and connect this meaning to our actions to the cultural and collective.

Dave has always loved to read and he appears to have an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. His early experiences of being socially awkward stimulated his love of books, and his questioning seeking mind. His early education also contributed to his dissatisfaction with the way people are educated.

In the late 1970's and for the next two decades Dave made a living in the usual way. He worked as a professional with entrepreneurs, which he loved, and then became

the chief knowledge officer for a large company. Dave then tested the waters in a consulting firm and found that it didn't give him the personal satisfaction he desired nor did it fit his ideals.

Dave suffered from depression until he found passion and meaning in his work. Fortunately, he found his writing, and his renewed interest in the environment brought him joy. Now he could finally link his love of working with entrepreneurs with other pleasures and interests. By way of hardship and heartache Dave changed his life; he changed his diet, began to exercise, created meaningful work for himself and published a book. Dave found his sweet spot. Thus began the happiest and most meaningful part of his life.

Dave has an uncanny way of de-compartmentalizing ideas and conventional understandings. He is no reductionist! His interests and writing build bigger pictures out of what at first glance appears to be unrelated. He encourages and proposes creative ideas that give insight to what could be an unpromising future.

7.1.6. Introducing Stewart

StarWoman, from the Wesakeychak story about the making of Turtle Island, carved out of a lovely black granite I found here in the Kootenays.
-Stewart

"For uncounted millennia before the beginning of the colonial period there was a Turtle Island; that is where my creative work springs up from. I work under the direction of the

Rock Spirit. She/He sets the course, provides the raw materials, inspires through dreams and visions, energizes and enlightens through ceremony. Sitting in the darkness of a sweatlodge, face to face with the glowing red-warm rocks fresh from the fire.....now that's my idea of a good time" (Stewart, http://www.stonesculpture.ca/).

Stewart was born at Saddle Lake Indian Reserve # 125 in north-eastern Alberta. Raised on and off reserve, as a young man he discover that living and being connected to the land was tied to his predisposition to live a life in harmony with his beliefs. Stewart is accomplished in organic market gardening, straw-bale house building and is a self taught internationally acclaimed stone sculptor. His work speaks to his connection with Mother-earth, his Cree heritage and to Great Mystery. Stewart has a strong connection to Cree spirituality and a keen understanding of history. A couple of years ago Stewart climbed upon the roof of the Blue Quill's community college near Saddle Lake and cut down the cross. Blue Quills is housed in what was once a Catholic residential school (in Canada the residential school system was run as a partnership between the federal government and the church as a way 'to civilize the Indians').

Currently Stewart lives and works on Lower Kootenay Band reserve lands near Creston British Columbia. Over the years Stewart has written many articles for alternative publications such as The Dominion, Straight Goods, Briarpatch, Parkland Post (Parkland Institute's little paper), Seven Oaks, the Canadian Studies program at the University of Silesia in Poland and had a re-print on Rabble.ca. There were also over 600 pages on his Indigenius.biz blog, now defunct... Many of these articles deal with the effect of the *Indian Act* and the hidden costs to Indigenous peoples of making deals with the mining and energy sector. With his writing he tackles racism, patriarchy, imperialism and capitalism. Stewart not only has too many talents to try to squeeze into this introduction I also know him to be a gracious and kind host.

<u>7.1.7. Introducing Norman</u>

"WHY AM I AN ANARCHIST?

Because old age pensioners eat dog food
Because single moms on welfare cry
Because politicians steal our future
Because women can't walk the streets safely
Because I want to breathe clean air

Because Hope, Freedom & Dignity are never on special at Wal-Mart
Because Capitalism is a scam

WHY AM I AN ANARCHIST?

Because I'm tired of supermarket ripoffs
Because Truth, Peace & Justice are almost extinct
Because TV & newspapers lie
Because kids go to school hungry
Because I feel unsafe around cops
Because America's President leaves me no choice

WHY AM I AN ANARCHIST?

Because no one will wash the rain
Because rabbits and groundhogs are getting armed
Because two headed chickens protest, and no one listens
Because 20 minutes of sunshine can now kill
Because rent is no longer affordable
Because poetry & butterflies demand equal time

WHY AM I AN ANARCHIST?

Because banks rob people-and it's not a crime
Because I want to banish all cars from the City
Because they build prisons, but close hospitals & schools
Because neither the Sun, the Moon or the Stars are for sale
Because corporate greed destroys lakes, rivers & forests
Because I am not afraid to dream
Because I refuse to remain silent

WHY AM I AN ANARCHIST?

Because it's time to shut down McDonald's
Because I have friends who can't afford to visit the dentist
Because one homeless family is too much
Because the State blames & attacks the poor, but rewards its friends
Because no two-faced, lying politician ever has to wait for the bus
Because I want social revolution, now."

- Nawrocki (2003:14)

Norman likes to drink beer and vodka[35]. To say that Norman is versatile and delightful would be an understatement. The *Montréal Gazette* said of Norman that he is "[o]ne of the most fascinating, if not most refreshing folks on the cityscape". Although a short introduction is inadequate to capture Norman's exploits and accomplishments I will attempt to share some highlights.

Norman's life of activism started when he was living in Vancouver and only fourteen years old. During a time in history known for its counter-culture he was one of the editors of the international anarchist news journal, *Open Road*. In 1981 Norman moved to Montréal where he became part of Rhythm Activism. Rhythm Activism began as a traveling two-some that has been referred to as 'the Smothers Brothers from hell'. Norman has been involved in community organizing and is still performing solo with an assortment of activist educational groups that include experimental anarchist cabaret music, comedy and theater. He has also taught kindergarten and university classes, signed a recording contract, written books of prose and poetry, performed as a movie extra and dressed as a 7 foot penis. Norman has been arrested twice. The first time was for taking part in a demonstration in support of immigrant women, a second time was for playing the kazoo during a Montréal housing demonstration. The focus of all of these things, including dressing as a 7 foot penis has been social change. For example, Norman has worked for antipoverty groups, tenant's rights, protested the gulf war, performed in support of the Mohawks during the Oka crises and the Zapatista in Mexico and been active in teaching positive sexuality that supports women. Did I mention Norman plays the violin?

7.2. Introduction to Themes Found in the Interviews

The interviews are the heart of the inquiry and are offered to social workers as ideas about alternatives for facilitating change and social justice. The participants in this inquiry were chosen because of their focus on change for social justice at a structural level, similar to structural social work. In structural social work, the "focus of change is mainly on the structures of society and not solely on the individual" (Mullaly, 2007: 211).

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[35] I know this because I have visited his on-line biography at (www.nothingness.org/music/rhythm/en/html/bio.html).

The focus of structural social work is anti-oppression. What the participants imagined an inclusive and just society might look like coincides with the social work value of facilitating social justice. Creating a vision of what social justice would be like is not intended to be utopian or prescriptive, but rather framed as a collaborative process.

In the interviews the participants did not draw a blueprint of the future, but pointed out important possibilities to consider. What we believe about the current political system and the state of the world is significant. Whether or not we believe that the world is in crisis and whether people will voluntarily change also determines what one may choose to do (Derrick, Appendix A, Article, Two).

The following section describes themes taken from the interviews with the participants. The purpose of the themes is to highlight the ideas that can be useful to social work to facilitate social justice. Four main themes were distilled from the interviews that cover a wide range of issues related to social justice.

Each theme has sub-texts that provide details and raise issues related to the primary theme. The table below shows the themes and the sub-themes:

Table 5: Themes and Sub-themes that Emerged from the Interviews

Themes	Sub-themes
Theme 1: The aspects that motivates the participants to work for change and social justice	Sub-theme 1.1- Circumstances and modeling Sub-theme 1.2 - Intellectual opportunities Sub-theme 1.3 - Becoming aware of differences Sub-theme 1.4 - Becoming aware of the world to see injustice Sub-theme 1.5 - Becoming aware is a process
Theme 2: Participants' views on the necessary elements to be able to facilitate change for social justice	Facilitating change for social justice requires: Sub-theme 2.1- Being curious Sub-theme 2.2 - Facilitating a process Sub-theme 2.3 - Critical thinking Sub-theme 2.4 - Collective action Sub-theme 2.5 - Working locally Sub-theme 2.6 - Taking sides / deciding which side you are on Sub-theme 2.7 - Motivation, love, care and compassion Sub-theme 2.8 - Not to be silenced Sub-theme 2.9 - Taking responsibility Sub-theme 2.10 - Paradigm change
Theme 3: Participants' views on the elements which block change for social justice	Sub-theme 3.1 – Being caught up in the system prevents seeing injustice Sub-theme 3.2 – Not taking responsibility for change Sub-theme 3.3 – Mythology and belief systems are barriers to change and social justice Sub-theme 3.4 – Collusion with and submission to injustice Sub-theme 3.5 – Lack of motivation, vision and belief that change is possible Sub-theme 3.6 – Power and domination Sub-theme 3.7 – Not working together Sub-theme 3.8 – Not thinking critically and not planning long-term
Theme 4: Participants' views on the values and principles underlying facilitating change for social justice	Sub-theme 4.1 – Trust and solidarity Sub-theme 4.2 – Mutual aid Sub-theme 4.3 – Egalitarianism Sub-theme 4.4 – Participatory, democratic ways of working

An introduction will be presented for each of the themes. The participants' quotes are in italics and the themes and sub-themes are contextualized by literature. The literature is used to compare and contrast the themes.

Theme 1: The Aspects that Motivate the Participants to Work for Change and Social Justice.

One of the subjects explored with the participants was the experiences that lead them to become social activists. It is important to reflect on the participants' experiences because the meaning that came from their experience motivated them to work for social justice. The strong feelings that motivated them in turn also shaped their strong feelings about injustice in the world and showed the way for them to explore and learn about the context in which their experiences came about. In other words they began to 'read the world' (Freire, 1970) and feel responsible for helping to make it more just. Their sense of responsibility was born from their compassion.

Participants created meaning from the examples and modeling of beliefs displayed by family and by the pain of loss they experienced. This further led the participants to question the context surrounding their experiences that facilitated a growing awareness of the impact the social environment has on the personal. The participants began with their own lived experience and used it to become cognizant of the world.

Sub-theme 1.1- Circumstances and Modeling

The participants shared the following aspects which influence them to become activists

for social justice:

"[s]ome of the early activists and my great uncle was the first president of the first farmer's union. ... So there was something in the genes, I think, that makes it not possible to not be active fighting for justice. But it was a combination of beliefs as well, you know, like thinking of Jesus as a socialist."

"I had that Social Gospel interpretation of my faith over individual prayer."

"My family's self-declared personal bankruptcy."

"the loss of our house and holdings, my father's successive heart attack and cancer, and my parents' eventual divorce. An early lesson in my young teen years that capitalism and its affiliated ways of life chews up and spits out."

"……my work with street-involved communities and at-risk youth in Toronto (and to a lesser extent, in Saskatoon) was very much a defining experience. Learning from and working with creative, intelligent, and savvy people who live through poverty, mental health conditions, and debilitating addictions and have to operate with a kind of

circularity in the face of ongoing precarity and vulnerability has had a formative effect. So, a kind of ongoing epiphanic encounter in some senses."

".......contributing in a miniscule way to Upping the Anti. I've learned immensely in my discussions with people in and around the journal."

"The organizing around the Iraq War, Concordia's 'activist community', and my colleagues in the Master's in Media Studies - all were significant. I suspect that this was a key period to becoming 'switched on'."

"We did go to an international Conference of Disabled Activists in Vancouver and that was really exciting to hear and see people from different countries that had organized things. For instance, some have grown into 'fair trade' co-ops, but the speakers were so good and it helped me to come back and help 'Equal Justice For All' organize a conference of people in poverty."

"I was introduced at an early age to all these thinkers. Later in high school, fortunately, like in the eleventh grade there was one English teacher who was an old school socialist but he had libertarian, anarchist tendencies and he introduced me to Tolstoy, Kropotkin and more thinkers. I think what really coloured my view, what influenced my view of the world was a combination of the readings with the reality I lived in and the travels to the other side of the city and trying to make sense of the discrepancy between the impoverished east side and the spoiled west side, and then realizing that something was radically, radically wrong and needed to be changed."

As Teske (1997:51) explains in his study of American political activists, a personal crisis was the foremost reason that people became political activists. The participants' experience in helping others contributed to their development of understanding. Being involved with others active in the struggle for justice also facilitated an evolving awareness. Some people become activists and others do not because of the deep feelings one experiences in regard to injustice that can lead to conscious awareness. As Routledge (2009) explains, emotions are tied to initiating actions and being an activist. "We become politically active because we feel something profoundly – such as injustice or ecological destruction. This emotion triggers changes I use to engage in politics. It is our ability to transform our feelings about the world into actions that inspires us to participate in political action" (Routledge, 2009: 87). Activists, by the very nature of being activists, are caring and therefore willing to put themselves aside to advocate for radical change. Teske (1997), in his study *Political activists in*

America, found that activists become involved for three main reasons: 1) personal crises that led to awareness, 2) moral discovery or external shock of the need to make changes in an unjust situation, and 3) a life-long commitment. Activists are not so much idealistic but have an advanced level of moral reasoning (Teske, 1997: 79).

Freire also provides an example of a person who also became an activist because of his life experience. In the Forward to the 30th edition of *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Shaull elaborates on how living in a culture of silence and lethargy led Freire to eventually write *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed.*

> "Born in 1921 in Recife, the center of one of the most extreme situations of poverty and underdevelopment in the Third World, he was soon forced to experience that reality directly. As the economic crises in 1929 in the United States began to affect Brazil, the precarious stability of Freire's middle-class family gave way and he found himself sharing the plight of the 'wretched of the earth.' This had a profound influence on his life as he came to know the gnawing pangs of hunger and fell behind in school because of the listlessness it produced; it also led him to make a vow, at age eleven, to dedicate his life to the struggle against hunger, so that other children would not have to know the agony he was then experiencing" (Forward 30th anniversary edition of Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 1970: 30).

Freire's experience of hunger due to the poverty his family experienced while he was growing up awakened an awareness of the contrast between those who are privileged and those who are oppressed. Here he found the connections between individual experience and political context (Macedo, 2003 introduction to the 30th anniversary edition of Pedagogy of the Oppressed).

Sub-theme 1.2 -Intellectual Opportunities

The participants discussed their education and teaching experience as influences that facilitated the learning about social issues:

"…..my 'lived experience' comes back to chances and opportunities to teach, to subject the common and hegemonic/naturalized vocabularies we use to scrutiny. This means, in effect, refusing to renormalize the interests and the (quiet) symbolic and systemic forms of violence in our everyday lives."

"My ongoing intellectual training."

"I guess from an early age my reading led me to anarchism, books about anarchism and from an early age I decided I was an anarchist. Age fourteen or whatever, I started to write essays in high school about why I'm an anarchist."

"My expanding awareness was being stimulated by involvement in a dialogue circle formed primarily of extended family members united by common interests in Indigenous languages and ceremonies. This was my group of co-learners in the informal cultural mentorship program mentioned earlier; we simply added on a study of anti-colonial literature, and began discussing our findings during ceremonial gatherings. Unwittingly we began to develop a praxis, employing our new knowledge within the Saddle Lake First Nation setting, and then adjusting our knowledge based on actual results of trial applications. The adjustment would be tried, and the new results calibrated."

"I was introduced at an early age to all these thinkers. Later in high school, fortunately, like in the eleventh grade there was one English teacher who was an old school socialist but he had libertarian, anarchist tendencies and he introduced me to Tolstoy, Kropotkin and more thinkers. I think what really coloured my view, what influenced my view of the world was a combination of the readings with the reality I lived in and the travels to the other side of the city and trying to make sense of the discrepancy between the impoverished east side and the spoiled west side, and then realizing that something was radically, radically wrong and needed to be changed."

As the participants illustrate above, intellectual opportunities may often appear to be individual pursuits, but education requires others. For instance, even the act of reading a book requires a writer and a reader, plus all the experiences that both bring to the writing and reading. "Although there is an individual dimension in the process of knowledge, this dimension is not sufficient to explain all the process of knowledge. We need each other to discover. Discovery is a social process, and dialogue is the cement of this process" (Gadotti, 1994: 29). Personal experience, study, and dialogical interactions with others expand and enhance awareness and understanding.

One issue that presents when discussing education from this North American context is that formal education is an often taken for granted privilege. Education is an opportunity that is often only afforded to those with advantage, 'the oppressor class', to use a Freirean term. The privilege of having an education should not be at the expense of others not having the same opportunity or used to dominate. "Any situation in which some individuals prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence. The means used are not important; to alienate human beings from their own

decision-making is to change them into objects" (Freire, 1970: 85). Freire (1970) says that true education requires political power because education can be used for subjugation or emancipation. If we are working for social justice, the political power of education must be used in the service of freeing the oppressed from oppression and domination (Freire, 1970). Giving others 'the truth' is indoctrination, while in contrast, exploring questions with others is democratic. "To that end, it enables teachers and students to become Subjects of the educational process by overcoming authoritarianism and an alienating intellectualism; it also enables people to overcome their false perception of reality" (Freire, 1970: 86). Education can confront the power of domination. Education is the first step toward understanding injustice.

Sub-theme 1.3 - Becoming Aware of Differences

Becoming aware of differences facilitated seeing injustices in the world motivated some participants to become activists:

"[o]f course the differences, oh my God, they had these beautiful fields to play on and we had to play in the grass and the dirt and gouge our knees, and get all bloody and these kids come home with grass stains on their pants. So it was these little things that added up and made me realize that this is a class society and things had to change."

"Anyway, it's only when our high school rugby team would visit the west side of the city and play rugby games over there that I actually got a sense of, my god, the differences are greater than I thought and that's what contributed to my critical thinking about the world. At the same time I was influenced by world news events and questions of social justice. Poverty in the city became more and more obvious to me as I was growing up and trying to explain why is it that people live in the street, why is it that people go hungry, why is it that people go homeless.

The same participant continues:

……..We went to a high school and we had to practice on a field, that was a gravel field and then we went to play against other teams on the west side of the city and the grass was so deep, so lush we didn't know how to run on it and we just kept falling."

"those images were of native peoples and their way of being on the land and it just absolutely blew me away to see the change that had happened in that hundred years…
And you could really see from those images, the very powerful connections that they had with the land, and the harmonious connection they had with the land. Yes, I think that was really profound."

Difference was created in interaction with others for the following participant:

"Learning from and working with creative, intelligent, and savvy people who live through poverty, mental health conditions, and debilitating addictions and have to operate with a kind of circularity in the face of ongoing precarity and vulnerability has had a formative effect. So, a kind of ongoing epiphanic encounter in some senses. Working amid other structures, which treated my clients like dirt, was a challenge."

The contrast between how people live reflects the inequality between the haves and the have-nots. It has been effectively argued that the wider the economic gap between people in a society, the more dysfunctional that society is. Conversely, the greater the equality is within a society, the stronger it is. Egalitarian societies have fewer social problems and people are happier (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). Policies that break the links between individual problems and social realities and individualize social problems increase problems. "The only thing that many of these policies do have in common is that they often seem to be based on the belief that the poor need to be taught to be more sensible. The glaringly obvious fact that these problems have common roots in inequality and relative deprivation disappears from view" (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009: 234).

Pointing to injustice also poses the possibility to critically examine its opposite. Social justice therefore could be seen as having the features opposite to injustice. "Using contrasts enables us to identify alternative perspectives. Perceiving alternatives introduces possibilities for change" (Fisher, 1991: 105). As stated in Chapter One, sometimes social justice is described as more of a dis-value. In other words, it is defined in terms of what it is not (Gil, 1998, Gordon, 2005). "I consider the fundamental theme of our epoch to be that of domination- which implies its opposite, the theme of liberation, as the objective to be achieved" (Freire, 1970: 103). Social justice is not oppression, exploitation, domination, or inequality.

In the quotes above the participant demonstrates the difference between the ways some people live from others that point to injustice. As Sen (2009) argues, justice can be measured by how close or far the gaps are between justice and injustice. Further, Sen (2009) believes that this calls on us to question what it means to be human. Freire, in the letters he wrote to his niece Chistina while he was in exile, explains that his experience in

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poverty and hunger while growing up caused him to compare his situation with others (1996: 13). His early experiences in life are the roots of Freire's radicalization. Freire and Chistina influenced each other through the sharing of ideas and experience in the letters. In the above quotes, we can see that even in one's own city there is often a large canyon that divides and highlights differences between what people have that signals injustice. According to Keeney (1983) new "information" lies within differences. "In general, every perception we are aware of is constructed from multiple views of the world. In order to see any pattern different models of the pattern must be drawn" (Keeney, 1983: 154). For example, the difference in conditions between people who live in mansions and those who live in a slum exposes the gap between rich and poor. If we all lived in mansions or in a slum, this difference would not be evident. So it follows that when we come together to share different perspectives our differences enhance our ability to form a broader picture from which to make change.

According to Gergen (2009), we become through relationships. We develop meaning in life by participating in the groups where we have relationships and the larger society we live in. "As we participate, so do we create the value of various activities and outcomes – or not. Depending on the relationships, we would joyously work 12 hours a day, or blow ourselves apart with a bomb" (Gergen, 2009: 313). People become activist and refuse to comply with injustice when they know about the world and can bring together knowledge and experience to take action. There is coordination between relationships, knowledge and experience. Past relationships inform the value of activism. This carries the responsibility to make our relationships life-affirming and to contribute to affirming the experience of others.

Sub-theme 1.4 - Becoming Aware of the World to See Injustice- the Process of "Conscientisation"

The participants confirm the importance of becoming aware of the world and context as critical for being motivated to make changes:

"Were my first fifty years on planet earth examples of lived experiences of building alternatives? Can they be classified as such if no consciousness of the larger forces at work exists in the individual?"

"I became an activist when I realized that most of what we do as citizens is ineffective. This took a lot of study of how the world really works (not how the media presents it) and a lot of critical thinking."

"Well, I was fortunate at the time, a fourteen year old kid going through the library shelves and I stumbled on the anthology and other anarchist writings"

"I've been involved too long so I can't pretend. I know too much about what is happening and how things work. I can't not know that and so you just do what you can."

"We did go to an international Conference of Disabled Activists in Vancouver and that was really exciting to hear and see people from different countries that had organized things. For instance, some have grown into 'fair trade' co-ops, but the speakers were so good and it helped me to come back and help Equal Justice For All organize a conference of people in poverty."

Becoming aware of the world is required to facilitate social justice. Knowing about the world's injustice not only motivates people to become activists, it is a prerequisite for action. Becoming aware of the world enables us to act appropriately to actual circumstances. Knowing about the world requires a lot of research and questioning about the source of our knowledge.

When the dominant culture constructs one's consciousness as unworthy, it creates a psychological 'buying into' of the definition determined by the dominant culture. When we do not trust our own perceptions we blindly accept the views presented to us by others, such as the main-stream media and the elite. When we fail to question what we are told, we fail to think critically. This keeps the oppressed in their place. The oppressor needs the oppressed to be stuck in oppression so that their power is not at risk. Freire (1970: 47) talks about the oppressed internalizing the oppressor and therefore being afraid of freedom. In addition, the fear of violence and greater repression keeps people in the place defined by the dominant culture (Mullally, 2007). We come to perceive the life-ways that we grow up in as "objective reality, to be taken for granted as valid and permanent – a force demanding submission and resisting challenge" (Gil, 1998: 41-42). Taken for granted, unquestioned perceptions are barriers to critical thinking and awareness. What we do not see or understand we cannot change. Therefore, the more we know and understand about the world, the more we can make change for social justice.

To overcome oppression, Freire tells us that "people must first critically recognize its causes" (1970: 47). When one becomes radicalized (discovers the root causes of domination), one is then able to go beyond reform and amelioration to understand that true anti-oppression challenges the structures of oppression; it is revolutionary rather than reformist.

> "There can be a blind acceptance of the status quo when one is not aware of the larger forces that are at work in themselves and the world. As long as the people and in particular the oppressed remain unaware of the causes of their condition they fatalistically 'accept' their exploitation. Further, they are apt to react in a passive and alienated manner when confronted with the necessity to struggle for their freedom and self-affirmation" (Freire, 1970: 64).

Facilitating social justice does not imply that we as social workers address the injustice on behalf of the people, but the awareness starts with the people as the participants stated. Change starts with questioning what we consider as 'objective reality' and only then can we evict the dominate culture from our consciousness and begin the process of building alternatives together.

Sub-theme 1.5- Becoming Aware is a Process

The participants then further explained their own process of becoming aware and confirm that becoming aware is a process:

"Still in a state of basic unconsciousness, I was unaware of the rising level of conflict with, and resistance to Canada's Indian Act-defined Indian Policy..... A blind spot, my Creeness, was coming into focus for the first time in my life. A period of creative exchange followed, an interactive process between performing such menial tasks as literally carrying water and chopping wood in a ceremonial context, and performing the tasks required to produce public exhibitions of new sculptural work depicting my reactions to the cultural teachings and experiences I was now immersed in."

"I can see that you do turn people and you can make people stop and think and actually recognize okay well maybe there is something else beyond the perpetual insecurity that our markets bring us and the sort of social instability that we've learned to live with, where its every individual for themselves and any kind of collective action is viewed now as some terroristic thing."

"If we give up on that false hope, that there will be a voluntary transformation, what does that mean we do?"

Freire (1970) explains that through dialogue people begin to awaken to affirm 'themselves' and discover and understand their contexts and desire for freedom. Gil (1998) states that the purpose of dialogue is for liberation – not indoctrination.

> "*Facilitating critical consciousness through dialogue*:   An appropriate medium for radical social work practice, regardless of function, level, and setting, is an emancipatory dialogue process. Such a process involves a sensitive exploration of problems, as experienced and perceived by people; supportive measures designed to ameliorate these problems; and help with unraveling links between the perceived problems and their societal roots and dynamics (Freire, 1970)…Dialogical process must never deteriorate into indoctrination, for its ultimate aim is to facilitate emergence of critical consciousness through sensitive, supportive, liberating, non-authoritarian, and non-hierarchic relationships" (Gil, 1998: 106).

The development of awareness often brings conflict between the internalized norms of society and one's awakening consciousness. Keeney (1983) says that as the context in which life is lived changes, so do we. We accept the context we live in until our context alters and changes our perceptions. Speaking about the intellectual ground of education, Luna (2010: 97) wrote, "[w]e must find in the experience of our peoples the lessons necessary not to be afraid to construct new epistemological notions that will lead us to transcend even ourselves." For example, one of the participants shared how changing the lens in which the world is seen through Cree ceremony and culture was a recursive process that included interaction with others and the world. For this participant, embracing his traditional culture enabled him to discover the context of his personal, and the community's problems. The lens changed. No one's state of learning is ever complete.

There is no state of absolute awareness; one is always becoming more aware because this process is dependent on the foundation of knowledge and experience that the past provides (Fook, 2002). "Indeed in contrast to other animals who are unfinished, but not historical, people know themselves to be unfinished; they are aware of their incompletion. In this incompletion and this awareness lie the very roots of education as an exclusively human manifestation. The unfinished character of human beings and the transformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity"

(Freire, 1970: 84). Change for social justice therefore necessitates that the focus of becoming be directed toward the construction of social justice.

Theme 2: Participants Views on the Necessary Elements to Be Able to Facilitate Change for Social Justice

In this section, the participants bring forward elements that they see as necessary for change toward social justice. Facilitating change for social justice requires the following.

Sub-theme 2.1 – Being Curious

The participants talked about curiosity as a motivating force for finding out about the world. Curiosity denotes a personal interest and concern about the way the world is:

"As a child, I guess, I was always interested in ideas and literature and the arts and the more reading I did, the more questions I had about why is the world the way it is."

"I am certainly an ideologue, trained in the Foucaultian arts of power relations…"

What we are curious about matters because our interests help to determine what we will spend our time on. Curiosity about making the world a better place is different than other self-absorbed interests, such as fashion or making money. Curiosity about social justice, in contrast, is other-directed and signals a sense of compassion. Attention is naturally focused on what one is curious about. Children are inherently curious about the world and this learning can continue in adults if not obstructed (Illich, 1970). Therefore, curiosity needs to be encouraged and cultivated.

Sub-theme 2.2 – Facilitating a Process

The participants spoke about getting people together to work on issues and projects:

"Right from the beginning I think, I've seen where when you believe in people's ability to be the teachers, that it's like Paulo Freire said, people don't need to be filled with our teaching, they need to share their teaching with us, so it's a two way street."

" A period of creative exchange followed, an interactive process between performing such menial tasks as literally carrying water and chopping wood in a ceremonial context, and performing the tasks required to produce public exhibitions of new sculptural work depicting my reactions to the cultural teachings and experiences I was now immersed in."

"I think for the activist side of things there has to be a better union between the thinkers and the doers. Thinking is doing sometimes and the thinkers need to do their duty as well, with the doers."

"Getting people together locally and getting them excited about some of these ideas and trying to move the discussion out of the same choir bound group who nod and say yeh we get it, we're on."

"It's going to start with the people beside you and around you as opposed to starting with global interconnectivity of activists and resistors who want to work from the margins."

"Start with something you care about and that you enjoy doing and put the word out and find partners who's interests and purpose in life is consistent with your own and who have the complementary gifts and skills that will allow communities to operate where you don't have chores that nobody wants to do. So that's my ideal of this."

*"The people won and that's the only thing that could stop that and it did. I think that the same thing, the only thing that's going to stop this is **enough people standing up and saying no.**"*

"If we give up on that false hope, that there will be a voluntary transformation, what does that mean we do?"

People can come together in many ways. Facilitating change for social justice presupposes that when people come together they have a purpose. For people to organize effectively, they need a process so that actions can happen. When we picture collective action, the mass protests at the G8 summits and the Egyptian uprising often come to mind. What is left out of the snippets of life that the average person gets in the form of television news is the context of what is happening. Every story has a broader context, a history, and a desired outcome. The Egyptian people did not wake up one morning and decide to remove Mubarak from office. There is a history of struggle (Rose, 2012).

Collective action needs to have a process that includes critical thinking in order to appreciate the historical and political context. There is a political context that increased the gap between rich and poor. In the West, we hear about the youth movement but not so much about the workers' movement that pre-dated and continues to collectively challenge oppression in Egypt and elsewhere (el-Hamalawy, 2011, Hanieh, 2008).

Joining with others in their struggles, being part of social movements, and opposing injustice are important actions to consider for facilitating social justice. Engagement with others can expand social work's paradigm through forms of sharing beyond the university. Social work ideas, from inside the choir, would be stretched by exposure to social movements. According to Gil, for social workers to come together with the people, they need to step away from the role of working 'for' the people. "Radical social workers need to transcend technical/professional approaches, fragmented by fields of service, and concerned mainly with relieving symptoms and facilitating coping under prevailing social conditions" (Gil, 1998: 105).

We also gain by having our privilege and power challenged. When social work is people-centered, it is less authoritarian. For example, *Community Practice* (Schenck, Louw & Nel, 2010), is a book that outlines a model of social change for an African context based on a participatory, people-centered change process.

The paradigm of *Community Practice* is one that flows from a trust in people to be self-determining and to take collective action. Although the philosophical foundation of this work is not new to North America, collective action is rarely seen in the everyday practice of ordinary social workers in Canada. The summary presented by the authors on the "characteristics of a people-centered change process" is instructive for moving toward social justice. "Knowledge of the process is like a compass that helps one find one's direction. It is not a map or a path that you have to follow. One has to make one's own path as one goes along" (Schenck, Louw & Nel, 2010: 113). In brief, the summary contains the following main points:

> "The process is strengths and potential based
> The process belongs to the community
> The process is dialogical and responsive
> The process is an evolving one
> The process consists of cycles of action-reflection-planning
> The process is collective action…"
> (Schenck, Louw & Nel, 2010: 111 - 113).

Action is process-driven for two central reasons. First, because this is a community process, the community must have a process that is theirs; and, second, the process accepts complexity where solutions evolve with the process and cycles of action-reflection-planning. In addition, as the above process is strengths and potential-based, it

can better develop capacities collectively and build alternatives. People develop their awareness and capacity by sharing knowledge and skills. In contrast to a strictly problem-focused process, strength and potential-based processes direct energy toward building rather than confronting problems. According to Freire (1970), action follows theory. As social workers we are not to be the initiators of actions. This belongs to 'the people'. "Instead of following predetermined plans, leaders and people, mutually identified, together create the guidelines of their action" (Freire, 1970: 181). We do not tackle injustices on behalf of people but with them. Therefore, change for social justice is facilitated rather than imposed.

Sub-theme 2.3 – Critical Thinking

The participants show that critical thinking facilitates social justice:

"I quietly contemplated trying to live in a world where 40% of the time you had no name for a current reality."

*"The best way to bring about change in the system is to change the way people think about the problem... One of the tenets of complexity theory is that your understanding of the solutions to a problem and the problem itself and your understanding of the problem itself **co-evolves as you explore it but to some extent if you're really looking at the problem** properly by the time you have finished your exploration, your understanding of the problem has probably completely changed."*

*"Whereas if we are open and we really pay attention and look we might very well find that **by changing the way in which we think about or look at that problem we will come to understand that the problem is fundamentally very different than what it actually appears to be**."*

"This environment of exchange, within the broader context of the shift in global consciousness mentioned above, surely seen at Oka, and emerging in many places around the world, became the crucible in which my activist me was forming."

"I can see that you do turn people and you can make people stop and think and actually recognize okay well maybe there is something else beyond the perpetual insecurity that our markets bring us and the sort of social instability that we've learned to live with, where it's every individual for themselves and any kind of collective action is viewed now as some terroristic thing. Heaven forbid you want to collectivize your resources and do something socially together."

According to Freire (1970) "naming the world", as the first participant spoke about, is an act of co-creation. Dialogue to name the world must happen between those who also want to 'name the world' because others will deny not only one's reality but also one's right to speak. Dialogical action requires cooperation and trust. "The dialogical theory of action does not involve a Subject, who dominates by virtue of conquest, and a dominated object. Instead, there are Subjects who meet to name the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1970: 167).

Constructionism sees knowledge as a product of process and language. "As proposed, what we take to be knowledge of the world grows from relationship, and is embedded not within individual minds but within interpretive or communal traditions. In effect, there is a way in which constructionalist dialogues celebrate relationship as opposed to the individual, connection over isolation, and communion over antagonism" (Gergen, 1999: 22). It is difficult to understand the concept of relational-being when one's language has few words to describe it and so many words to describe the individual self (Gergen, 1999).

Kincheloe (2005) recommends that we develop a consciousness about and of complexity. "Understanding the importance of the web of reality and its larger connection to the importance of context leads critical constructivists to a consciousness of complexity. A consciousness of complexity involves gaining an understanding of the complexity of the world. Such a consciousness appreciates the fact that:

- Things-in-the-world often involve far more than what one notices at first glance.
- Things that appear isolated and fixed are parts of larger, ever-changing processes.
- The way one perceives an object may change dramatically when one encounters it in another context.
- Knowledge of the world is always shaped by the position of the knowledge producer.
- Ignoring relationships that connect ostensibly dissimilar objects may provide us with a distorted view of them.
- Windows into revolutionary new understandings may be opened by exploring the contradictions and asymmetries of the social, physical, psychological and educational spheres.
- Profound insights may be gained by attending to the experiences of those who have suffered as a result of a particular social arrangement or institutional organization" (Kincheloe, 2005: 30 – 31).

The participants noted that a shift in collective consciousness, which begins with reflection, is important for change. It is recognized that there will not be a voluntary transformation as most people are seduced by the hegemony of the dominant culture. Freire said that the oppressed are submerged in the reality of the oppressor (1970: 45) because they are socialized into the dominant culture. It is therefore critical to facilitate the process of conscientisation or becoming aware of the context of injustice in one's life. By giving up the false hope that someone or something will do it for us and taking the responsibility to act for ourselves. We need to stop defining our terms by what we are told because not defining our own terms serves the interests of those with power. There is optimism when, as Freire says, we discover that we are the 'hosts' of the oppressor and can then begin the process of conscientisation and liberation (1970: 48).

As backlash is inevitable, it is difficult to do things that have the potential to make change toward social justice (Meadows, 1999); however, together people can come up with alternatives by realizing there are possibilities beyond those taken for granted. Discovering our we-ness (Gilbert, 2005, Hanson & Mendius, 2009) can lead to the "as-yet-possible" (Giroux, 2010: 4). Freire confirms that critical thinking, awareness and change are created through dialogue, which is a process not a method:

> "Liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferals of information. It is a learning situation in which the cognizable object (far from being the end of the cognitive act) intermediates the cognitive actors-teacher on the one hand and students on the other. Accordingly, the practice of problem-posing education entails at the outset that the teacher-student contradiction be resolved. Dialogical relations – indispensable to the capacity of cognitive actors to cooperate in perceiving the same cognizable object – are otherwise impossible" (Freire, 1970: 79-80).

Dialogue happens in relationship. In contrast to the banking system of education that predetermines what 'the student' must learn, when those engaged in the act of dialogue come together to explore ideas this enhances critical thinking. According to Gergen (2006), cooperative change requires reflexivity that goes beyond reflecting our own ideas and statements. To transcend our own understandings we need a variety of inputs. "In our view, reflexivity establishes the need for deliberating on a given construction of the world from multiple, diverging standpoints" (Gergen, 2006: 183).

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Further, Gergen (2006) states that this is an ethical stance because it does not silence others and others are trusted and encouraged to enter the discourse. Reflexivity encourages creativity, sensitivity to others, and facilitates possibilities.

Sub-theme 2.4 - Collective Action

The participants highlight the importance of collective action:

"At the micro scale, individuals can not (yet) effectively join together to make common cause. Ironically, the folks who champion the rights of the individual over the rights of society make that claim stick by taking collective action, while those who claim that the society has rights over and beyond the individuals who make up that society fail to make their claim stick because they **can't take collective action."**

"Again, if we look back at history and we look at large social movements where those kinds of situations actually had to be dealt with. We look at for example, the general strike in Winnipeg in 1919, well fortunately they had all these trade unions that already were organized and were able to take care of food distribution and like all the basics, water, running public transit. So, I'm imagining that they were better prepared than we are. They knew more, they were much more aware of their surroundings and how things worked than we are. We, I think today, we tend to take a …. we are so lazy about these things that we wouldn't know what the hell to do. We don't know where our food comes from, we don't know how the water works, so many vital parts of society are computerized and automated, its people pushing buttons to make it all happen, and so we have to do a lot of research to figure out how to make it work. None the less, I do believe that we are intelligent beings and I've seen   people in situations where "What do we do now?" The people sit down and they just figure it out. Whether they stumble their way forward, or out of the dark and into the light, they can do that, I truly believe that."

"Clearly the solution to this dilemma lies in developing our human capacity to communicate globally with each other, directly, and to gradually negotiate our way towards acceptable global organizational systems. There has been discussion for some time now about collective action."

"Getting people together locally and getting them excited about some of these ideas and trying to move the discussion out of the same choir bound group who nod and say yeh we get it, we're on."

"I think as activists we've divided up our turfs into feminist work or disability work and antipoverty work. We divide ourselves by imposing guilt on those we see not listening instead of seeing that we are in the same boat. So if anything I think good community development work would give us all that kind of interconnectedness and would make a stronger movement."

"to put people who need to be relatively close to their place of work and the intentional community which is the very idealistic but hard to realize concept of identifying and bringing together groups of people who have this shared purpose. What I discovered in studying intentional communities."

"influence, and educating; make information available to as broad a number of people as possible about like a true cost analysis of what is being proposed and what our other options are as a way of mobilizing more of the citizenry because I think that's the only way change is going to happen."

"You don't want an encroachment but at the same time we want to make sure we're working together. That's important."

Only when we take action together can we have a process that is egalitarian! Participants spoke about examples from history where people got together and made significant changes and they overwhelmingly supported this for today. Obstacles to actually working together against domination and toward social justice also became obvious in the inquiry, especially through the writing about dialogical process (Freire, 1970), constructionism (Gergen, 2006) and anarchism (Gordon, 2009). Despite obstacles, there are ways to overcome resistance. Change begins through education and the development of critical thinking. The circumstances of the world require that we get together along a continuum from problem-posing, to critical awareness development, to taking collective action.

We all have a role to play in working toward social justice. First people need to get together and learn the world. Awareness and knowledge are needed to conceptualize problems effectively so that collective actions go toward what is actually desired. The participants point out how difficult bringing people together successfully can be. In one of the interviews, it was noted that a shift in collective consciousness may be the only option left. Bringing about a voluntary transformation is indeed next to impossible as long as most people are seduced by the hegemony of the dominant culture. Freire said that the oppressed are submerged in the reality of the oppressor (1970: 45) because they are socialized into the dominant culture that teaches them their place. By giving up the false hope that someone or something will do it for us and taking the responsibility to act for ourselves, we can stop defining our terms by what we are told. Not defining our own terms serves the interests of those with power. This is the hope of no hope when as Freire

says we discover that we are the 'hosts' of the oppressor and can then begin the process of liberation (1970: 48). Therefore it follows that the process of liberation must begin with the oppressed recognizing that they are oppressed and then liberating themselves. Only when there are no longer people who are oppressed can the oppressors also be liberated from their role (Freire, 1970).

> "*Gaining insight into personal oppression*: Radical social workers would need to explore whether, in the prevailing social realities, they too may be unable to actualize their innate potential…. Furthermore, they may conclude that they would have to transcend prevailing formal divisions between themselves and the people they serve, divisions reflective of conventional concepts of professionalism and expertise, according to which education, competence and skills entitle people to privilege, authority and higher social status" (Gil, 1998: 107).

If social workers saw themselves as more social activists than employees, this would put them in a position where they could challenge systems of power. Social work, with its mandate of social justice and its background in critical theory, should be pursuing a society without domination and oppression (Mackinnon, 2009: 513). "I believe that the time is right for social workers and in particular social work intellectuals, to critically examine the current status of social workers in the public domain and to look at how social work as a unique discipline can claim a more activist role, engaging in the public domain on matters of social concern thereby strengthening the political link" (Mackinnon, 2009: 514). In brief, Mackinnon (2009) suggests three strategies to move social work academics toward social engagement (for an example see Dudziak, 2005). Mackinnon first puts forward pedagogical engagement as a strategy for becoming more publicly engaged. The strategy includes widening the public audience by writing in newspapers and periodicals as "activist research at the community level" (building dialogue is a Freirean way of dialoguing 'with' to build praxis) (2009: 520), and "For activist academics reflection follows action and leads to further action" (Mackinnon, 2009: 521). Secondly, Mackinnon suggests the employment of "[c]ritcal social theory and a renewal of public engagement" with other social workers and those working on the front lines for social change (2009: 522). And finally she proposes that we work to build "solidarity among social work academics and front-line workers – hope for the future" (Mackinnon, 2009: 523).

Collective action helps to create choices in how and what we can do (Ferguson & Lavalette, 2005). Activist social workers have much to contribute to circles of activists. They can join actions and contribute to a dialogue about investigating alternative institutional structures and projects (Dudziak, 2005). Working with people rather than for people is more democratic and therefore more congruent with social justice. Thus social workers can begin to discuss making the work we do and the organizations we work for less authoritarian (Carnoil, 2005).   Building alternative organizations in a non-authoritarian way and changing institutional structures to be egalitarian would match the philosophical base of the profession. We need to look at the places where social work happens and redesign them with those who have the most personal investment in how this is done. Social work needs to design services with the variety and diversity required by the complexity that is inherent in the system. This has the potential to lessen the control function of social work and facilitate working 'with' others from a position of potential and strength (Carnoil, 2005). Social work practice can be more horizontal in relationships with service users, professional organizations, and work environments by using principles of collective action and participatory democracy (also see Freire 1970, Schenck, Louw & Nel, 2010, Whitmore, & Wilson, 2005)

Sub-theme 2.5 - Working Locally

The participants overwhelmingly endorse working locally:

"Do we need people to invest their time and energy and their money into local projects? Certainly."

"In my imaginings, a bitter tease at the moment, it's easy for me to see a global human society made of myriad diverse individual human beings each embedded in their own local environment, while simultaneously conscious of the actions of the global collective they make."

"I think it would look like a place where we can have local economies. We could have things like local markets that are not necessarily mutually inclusive with any kind of capitalist system, again drains money out of spaces and places within which we live, where we can access the resources we need, locally where we have local markets and representation."

"I want to replace the system and 10,000 different cultures to replace each one of its own watersheds. For me to talk about how to live, and for me to tell you how to live would be absurd when it snows here, once per year and it lasts for maybe six seconds."

"I think going back to local organizing, trying to organize the people around you locally. Fighting for change from the ground up and finding some way to remove that bulwark and try to work past that bulwark."

The participants talk about organizing locally so that everyone has a voice in decisions and everyone benefits equally. They also talk about local markets, economies, and organizing locally from the ground up.. This proposes self-sufficiency and autonomous community building. Land-based community action and development that is in harmony with the natural environment where people live was brought forward in the interviews. Land-based local endeavours fit with both cultural sensitivity and an indigenous world lens. Land and endeavouring locally is tied not only to the anti-colonial/imperialist struggle in the Americas, it links to environmental sustainability and to participatory democracy.

According to Carnoil (2005: 153), when social workers work on the local level, this enables alternative forms of more democratic service; that is, service directed by people themselves. The community organizing skills of social workers at the local level, including strengthening alternative social services, social action, and challenging oppression, would strengthen the struggle toward social justice.

Sub-theme 2.6 - Taking Sides, Deciding Which Side You Are On

Working for social justice and change is not a neutral process as the participants explain:

"That's the question people need to be asking themselves is; if whomever it is that you love, if they could take on human manifestation, what would they do and to act in alliance with them, we need to make peace with them and we need to be on their side, and we need to choose sides."

"The only measure by which we will be judged by the people who come after us is the health of the land."

"start with something you care about and that you enjoy doing and put the word out and find partners who's interests and purpose in life is consistent with your own and who

have the complementary gifts and skills that will allow communities to operate where you don't have chores that nobody wants to do. So that's my ideal of this."

The above quotes raise the question that we all need to ask. Whose side are we on? Where do we align ourselves: with the people, issues and the environment or the bureaucratic institutions that perpetrate unequal power arrangements? Do we feel strongly enough about social justice? This is an important question because people devote their energy to what they care about. Social workers can choose either to work to make people conform (domesticate) or to work for liberation. "*Rejecting political neutrality and affirming politics of social justice and human liberation*: Radical practice ought to contribute openly and consciously to political struggles for social justice and human liberation" (Gil, 1998: 104).

To be part of liberation, we must side with the oppressed. According to Freire, there is no neutral place to stand. Freire cautions that even when we do side with the oppressed we often bring our prejudices and distrust of the oppressed with us.

> "Accordingly, these adherents to the people's cause constantly run the risk of falling into a type of generosity as malefic as that of the oppressors. The generosity of the oppressors is nourished by an unjust order, which must be maintained in order to justify that generosity. Our converts, on the other hand, truly desire to transform the unjust order, but because of their background they believe that they must be the executors of the transformation. They talk about the people, but they do not trust them; and trusting the people is the indispensable precondition for revolutionary change" (Freire, 1970: 60).

Change for social justice requires that we need to take the side of what we care about and we need to trust those we stand with. We need to stand on the side of a just order that reflects social justice.

Sub-theme *2.7- Motivation, Love, Care and Compassion*

The participants speak about the need for love, care and respect

"It's how we interact with each other"

"We don't care how much you know about us, we want to know how much you care about us."

"The first frogs of the year started singing last night and I'm looking out the window at these beautiful redwood trees and I am in love and when you're in love you act to defend your beloved and also it's the right thing to do. I can throw out any cliché you want, whether it's the right thing to do or I'd rather die on my feet than live on my knees. It's a joy to not be a slave. It's wonderful. For me, a lot of it is I want to be able to look salmon in the eye and not be ashamed. I want to be able to look directly at a redwood tree and not be ashamed. If there's anything that happens after we die I want to be able to look at the people that come after and not be ashamed and to be proud. I don't give a shit what a lot of people think about my work, but I do care very deeply about what the salmon thinks about it, I care very deeply what the trees think about it, and I care very deeply about what humans that come after will think about it. I want for them to be proud of me. The only measure by which we will be judged by the people who come after us is the health of the land. They're not going to care whether we wrote really good books, or whether we tried really hard as activists. What they're going to care about is whether they can breathe the air and drink the water. That's the bottom line and that's why I keep doing it. Another reason I keep doing it is because we're going to win because dominant culture cannot fight nature and win and ultimately we are going to win."

"…….those images were of native peoples and their way of being on the land and it just absolutely blew me away to see the change that had happened in that hundred years…
And you could really see from those images, the very powerful connections that they had with the land, and the harmonious connection they had with the land. Yes, I think that was really profound."

An appreciation and love of the beauty of the world can motivate us because we want to protect what we love. The emotions generated by our strong feelings can generate a diverse array of actions. Examples of this are the creation of art, writing, and defending what we care about in many different ways. What makes us human is the experience of emotion, not only in reaction to the present moment but in memory and in relationship. The participants demonstrate their strong feelings about injustice and about the beauty and wonder of the world. Rogers proposes that emotions motivate behaviour: "emotion accompanies and in general facilitates such goal-directed behaviour, the kind of emotion being related to the seeking versus the consummatory aspects of the behaviour, and the intensity of the emotion being related to the perceived significance of the behaviour for the maintenance and enhancement of the organism" (Rogers, 1951: 492-493). The motivation to make change is dependent on the intense feelings a person has about injustices. For example, compassion motivates activists to work for social justice. Their sense of justice can be seen as holistic because it also includes nature and how humans,

as a part of the world, impact the world and are subsequently affected by these impacts (Gilbert, 2005). Strong feelings such as love, compassion, anger, and sadness are catalysts to change.

The above describes deep feelings of love and caring. We protect and want good for what we love and care about. Gilbert (2005) explains that caring is the basis of survival. Without the ability to care for the young, animals, including humans, would not survive. Expanding love and caring to include all is therefore fundamental to social justice.

Facilitating social justice can be driven by emotions of frustration that stem from caring, love and compassion.

"This issue is really getting people up off their butts and saying hey we've got to stand up here because we're being steam rolled."

"At the micro scale, individuals cannot (yet) effectively join together to make common cause. Ironically, the folks who champion the rights of the individual over the rights of society make that claim stick by taking collective action, while those who claim that the society has rights over and beyond the individuals who make up that society fail to make their claim stick because they **can't take collective action."**

"I think as activists we've divided up our turfs into feminist work or disability work and antipoverty work. We divide ourselves by imposing guilt on those we see not listening instead of seeing that we are in the same boat. So if anything I think good community development work would give us all that kind of interconnectedness and would make a stronger movement."

Freire says that people act when they feel strongly about things. Frustration about the way things are motivates change towards social justice. Love, faith in people and hope must be the foundation of dialogue that does not dominate (Freire, 1974: 89). Similarly, social workers will act once they feel strongly.

Sub-theme 2.8 - Not To Be Silenced

The following quotes remind us that the struggle involves speaking one's truth, even to people who have power:

"I've engaged in a struggle with the global power elite operating here on my traditional territories in their nation state guise."

"That monopoly, that the CMA, the Canadian Medical Association, the monopoly (read power) they have on health care and all the Medicare dollars go to that form of allopathic medicine and very little of it goes to any other alternatives, that really needs to change."

*"The quiet civil war speaks to the **network of social hierarchies**, the network of dominant social power relations. It's quiet only because I don't think here, at this time, right now we don't think about war as something that's waged internally we're sort of a post-political society."*

"There was no mention of the fact that if we, in our communities come up with a sustainable way to live here, then and those in power find resources that they want on our land they'll kill us and take the resources."

The above sub-theme speaks to the importance of naming oppression and domination. Naming the forces and powers that oppress provides a focus and direction for mobilizing energy to dismantle oppressive systems. "To exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new naming. Human beings are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection" (Freire, 1970: 88).

We need to recognize the systemic roots of problems (Jensen & Mcbay, 2009); otherwise we are fighting windmills. Our fight would be equally futile if we blame individuals for the problems. For example, we blame poor individuals for their situations rather than name the systemic conditions that widen the gaps between the privileged and the oppressed (Mullaly, 2007). Moving toward social justice requires a belief in egalitarianism and a willingness to listen to others. We cannot have true dialogue if some people are silenced. To silence someone is domination.

Sub-theme 2.9 - Taking Responsibility

The participants make it clear that change requires that the people take responsibility for change:

"If we give up on that false hope, that there will be a voluntary transformation, what does that mean we do?"

"Rather, it feels now, when I look at it, where my tendency to go is to start looking at how can we create what we want and putting energy into creating what we want rather than fighting something that has no interest and not even any mandate to listen to what we're saying."

"We need to think about risks. It's a sort of discourse that's taken away from us and we think that it's a dominant way of looking at the world.
I think sometimes strategically and tactically maybe that's what's needed because otherwise we're just waiting, we're waiting for someone else to do something and it doesn't seem to be happening."

"I think essentially its work that has three qualities, it's responsible."

Most of the participants were sensitive to the fact that context is unique to each individual situation. Therefore, context determines what needs to be done. Critical consciousness enables the forming of links between social injustice and individual struggles. Change toward social justice is relational, so it includes others in decision-making (Amster, 2009). As Gordon (2005) explains, we need to take responsibility here and now by creating alternatives.

The responsibility for change requires that we act in a way that goes beyond resistance. In other words, we do not spend all of our energy just reacting to injustice, rather we take responsibility to make changes. For example, we can spend our energy writing letters to politicians asking for change (reaction) or we can mobilize acts with the people around us (respond). This could also mean beginning with our own institutional arrangements by changing the who, what, where and how in social work to reflect social justice. Creating what we want is a truly revolutionary idea that could transform social work into a model of social justice. Gil (1998) writes about the multi-dimensional aspects of social work practice and how radical social workers can begin to infuse practice with principles of social justice. The participants state that we must take responsibility to create what we want, find direction and take risks, and name injustice. 'We' take responsibility for the change we want to see. Be the change.

Jensen speaks about hope as giving up responsibility or agency. "When we stop hoping for external assistance, when we stop hoping that the awful situation we're in will

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somehow resolve itself, when we stop hoping the situation will somehow not get worse, then we are finally free - truly free – to honestly start working to resolve it. I would say that when hope dies, action begins" (Jensen, 2008: 2). Further, Jensen (2008) writes about how people hang on to hope because they are afraid to feel despair. This is a form of denial about the hopelessness of changing situations found in people who are resistant to change. There is both despair and passion in our desire to seek a better life.

Sub-theme 2.10 - Paradigm Change

The participants highlight that we need to change the way we think and explore problems:

"The best way to bring about change in the system is to change the way people think about the problem... One of the tenets of complexity theory is that your understanding of the solutions to a problem and the problem itself and your understanding of the problem itself **co-evolves as you explore it but to some extent if you're really looking at the problem** *properly by the time you have finished your exploration, your understanding of the problem has probably completely changed."*

"Whereas if we are open and we really pay attention and look we might very well find that **by changing the way in which we think about or look at that problem we will come to understand that the problem is fundamentally very different than what it actually appears to be***."*

"This environment of exchange, within the broader context of the shift in global consciousness mentioned above, surely seen at Oka, and emerging in many places around the world, became the crucible in which my activist me was forming."

Thinking about problems differently is the essence of critical awareness and conscious change toward social justice. Meadows confirm this point as she explains that changing "the mindset or paradigm out of which the system arises" (Meadows, 1999: 17) is the most effective way to make change. Second order change, moving to new understanding and making change at the level of the system, is a requirement of paradigm change (Fraser & Solovey, 2007: 14). Paradigm change requires thinking differently. If we want to change the paradigm away from injustice, first we must think critically about the world and become aware of the issues and their context. Thinking critically and awareness underpin all movement toward social justice. "It would take a vision of a

different way of living, a vision clear enough, powerful enough, appealing enough, to keep them going…But to be a believable vision, it would have to start coming into effect at once… We would have to see changes right away in ways of thinking, in human relations, in control of institutions …" (Zinn, 1974: 355 – 357).

Theme 3: Participants' Views on the Elements Which Blocks Change for Social Justice
In this section the participants talk about the things that obstruct change.

Sub-theme 3.1 - Being Caught Up in the System Prevents Seeing Injustice

The participants speak to being caught in the system they want to change:

"There's no real long term planning, whether in our dominant institutions or maybe even locally in our communities because we're just so fraught with dealing with the ups and downs."

"I came to an understanding of how driven I was and how angry I was, incredibly outraged and the amount of rage I was carrying about all of that and I came to see that this was very counterproductive to my existence."

"So, again – cue self-reflection: I was a kind of poverty pimp and had my own bourgeois/academic senses stripped all the while knowing that having the luxury (and the cover provided to pad my own fall from grace) was further confirmation of my own status and privilege."

As illustrated in the chapter on social work and social justice, social workers are often co-opted by bureaucratic systems that depend on policies and routines that take power away from the people (Hudson, 2009, Carnoil, 2005). Social workers, not unlike others, are under stress at work and afraid because of the precarious nature of their employment (Mackinnon, 2009, Hudson, 2009, Carnoil, 2005). They are often involved in reforms but find it difficult to work for structural change and are tied to government policies that direct social workers to work in the interest of the corporate sector (Gil, 1998). Social workers are often engaged in damage control at the expense of long-term solutions toward social justice. Social work is trapped in what Meadows (1999: 3) describes as the least effective leverage point to make change, namely system tinkering. Social work tries to change government policies toward fair distribution of tax and funding, but such efforts often leave structural inequality in place.

Change is constant; nevertheless, people often do not sense changes when they are happening because they are preoccupied with everyday concerns (Smith, 1999). "If men (sic) are unable to perceive critically the themes of their time, and thus to intervene in reality, they are carried along in the wake of change" (Freire, 1974: 6). A new politics of truth needs to be constituted: "the problem is not changing people's consciousness – or what's in their heads – but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth" (Foucault, 1972: 133). Social work education will be limited and confined to the past until it has changed the structure of the production of 'truth' and its ability to think outside of its own box. Critical thinking will remain embedded in the old paradigm as long as social work is still embedded in hierarchical institutional management. Freire (1974) reminds us that we need not be merely carried along in the wake of change. Social workers and academics must become aware of how they are involved in the production of truth. The education of social workers does not need to be confined to the classroom (Dudziak, 2005). If social work is to be concerned with the social in social justice, it must recognize where it is embedded in complex systems.

Sub-theme 3.2 - Not Taking Responsibility for Change

The participants indicated that the development of critical thinking places a responsibility on us to not only raise awareness but also to engage with others beyond our own circle of connections. When we fail to take responsibility for change we are complicit with the status-quo:

"I think that's another problem I think a lot of people who are doing activism or pursuing the politics of resistance, we preach to the choir and we end up being free from constraints. We're like neo-libertarians. We're free from any constraints to act. There's nothing put on us. We just sort of are the ethical consciousness of the system that we despise and that's really it because the goods are serviced for us and we're complicit with it."

Social workers often "preach to the choir" because they don't engage with the public. Social workers are not as accountable to service users as they could be because their involvement is often determined by institutional barriers and the inequality between themselves, service users and management (Hudson, 2009, Carnoil, 2005). When people

are unaware of the power dynamics which influence them, they are complicit by default. When we are not aware of the world around us, how can we be responsible for facilitating social justice? Being free of responsibility is comfortable because it is much easier to go along with the status quo. Going along with the dominant culture means we do not have to act or challenge domination and oppressive power. Freire (1970) states that people do not take responsibility because they fear freedom. People fear freedom because they have internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines. When the oppressed are submerged in their oppression they do not see the system that perpetrates their oppression. They are vulnerable to blaming themselves for their own oppression. "Freedom would require them to eject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility" (Freire, 1970: 47)

When we don't take responsibility to change, there are consequences. Unaddressed problems grow and are often made worse (Fraser & Solovey, 2007). Freire (1974) tells us that every action we make implies a supposition.

Sub-theme 3.3 – Mythology and Belief Systems are Barriers to Change and Social Justice

The participants talk about historical mythology as barriers to change for social justice:

"I suspect this has less to do with any actual capacity and more with overdrawn historical mythologies and secretly-desired assurances that nominal and analytic acts of defiance free from commitments to some kind of practical and pragmatic act that may expose one to risk. Again, political neo-libertarianism free from any kind of responsibility; or at worst, a reliable recourse to citing the nebulous social-symbolic containers of neoliberal capitalism and its liberal democratic discontents as snuffing out possible avenues."

"What they all have in common is that they take industrial civilization as a given, industrial capitalism as a given and the earth is that which must conform to industrial capitalism as opposed to taking the earth as a given and forcing the culture to conform to the land and that's insane, it's absolutely insane."

Freire (1970) explains that we are conditioned by the myths of the existing order. In North America, history has generally been written from the perspective of the dominant class. For example, when I attended elementary and high school, I learned about the 'discovery' of Canada by European settlers. Indigenous peoples were invisible

and inconsequential until they began to write their own history and take control of their own education (Meyer & Alvarado, 2010). Traditionally, the writing of history has excluded the history of ordinary and oppressed people. Zinn's (1980) book, *The People's History of the United State*s, is an example of writing the social historical perspective from the perspective of the grassroots. Zinn and other authors have given ordinary people a place in history, in particular, the oppressed and marginalized. Other histories of the oppressed have begun to be written and other perspectives have been shared through alternative media. Freire (1970) stresses that mythologizing the world is deception that works to increase passivity and make the oppressed spectators rather than actors.

> "It is accomplished by the oppressors' depositing myths indispensable to the preservation of the status quo: for example, the myth that the oppressive order is a 'free society; the myth that all persons are free to work where they wish, that if they don't like their boss they can leave him and look for another job; the myth that this order respects human rights and is therefore worthy of esteem; the myth that anyone who is industrious can become an entrepreneur – worse yet that the street vendor is as much an entrepreneur as the owner of a large factory; the myth of the universal right of education, when of all the Brazilian children who enter primary school only a tiny fraction ever reach the university; the myth of equality of all individuals, when the question: "Do you know who you're talking to?" is still current among us; the myth of the heroism of the oppressor classes as defenders of 'Western Christian civilization' against 'materialist barbarism' ; the myth of the charity and generosity of the elites, when what they really do as a class is to foster selective 'good deeds' …." (1970: 139 - 140).

Freire's list of myths continues on, yet the myths written above are enough to highlight the often unconscious, often taken for granted ideologies that work for the benefit of a few at the expense of the many. The certainty that one has 'the answer' closes the door on process and co-creation. "The radical, committed to human liberation, does not become the prisoner of a 'circle of certainty' within which reality is also imprisoned. On the contrary the more radical the person is, the more fully he or she enters into reality so that, knowing it better, he or she can better transform it" (Freire, 1970: 39). Rather than having the 'truth', Freire implores us to question. Dialogue begins with problem-posing questions.

Sub-theme 3.4- Collusion with and Submission to Injustice

The participants talk about the false hope that the current system will make changes for the benefit of the people and that we are complicit in this:

"I think it's a lot of people stapling their expectations to this sort of progressive change that's going to take place that maybe doesn't. I think a lot of it is this sort of dominant hegemonic approach to matters, like the market will take care of you."

"Pretty much ya we really give it grounds. The whole operation that we despise is able to say well it listens and it's going to integrate your comments and that's what people call the day of the demographic paradox. We'll integrate all of that needy resistance that you have and look the system will rebound and work and I think that's where the catch is. Well, so you've integrated and now what? We're no farther along. We've still got the same liberal democracy underwritten by aggressive global capitalist relations."

"Centuries of exposure to the notion of race create invisible internal psychological boundaries… Folks whose consciousnesses have been intentionally constructed, as much as possible, by a human grouping, a power elite who benefit directly from the formation of such consciousnesses."

"…clearly articulate what we accommodate, why we should refuse, and how to get beyond simply resisting. Quiet complicity is the problem, as is the well-intentioned posing of alternatives that often turns into an exercise that is merely consequential."

"Rather, it feels now, when I look at it, where my tendency to go is to start looking at how can we create what we want and putting energy into creating what we want rather than fighting something that has no interest and not even any mandate to listen to what we're saying."

".…what I came to see there were processes that were basically designed to use up the time and energy of people like myself to neutralize our energies. I think it's sort of what it was   because how they set them up was that they were operated on consensus but they had government and industry at the table."

As stated earlier in the inquiry, social workers, at least in North America, work mainly on an individual level under a hierarchy of power (Specht & Courtney, 1994, Murdach, 2008). One's theoretical base can cause one either to become complicit in oppressive practice or to work toward social justice because theory shapes practice (Freire, 1974). An example given is social workers' role in moving indigenous children from their homes into residential schools as in the '60s scoop (Sinclair et al, 2009). Social workers may also be co-opted by the system they work in and never go beyond reform to

work with people for social justice. For many reasons, we get stuck working for institutions that serve the same system that needs to be changed. As Zinn (1974) says, we need a vision that guides us so we have something to work toward. Social work has a vision of social justice if we choose to embrace it.

Beyond submission lies direct action and the creation of alternatives. But first the people have to struggle. We too often internalize the oppressor, however. This can lead to horizontal violence and complicity with injustice.

> "But almost always, during the initial stage of the struggle, the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors, or 'sub-oppressors.' The very structure of their thought has been conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped. Their ideal is to be men; but for them, to be men is to be oppressors. This is their model of humanity. This phenomenon derives from the fact that the oppressed, at a certain moment of their existential experience, adopt an attitude of 'adhesion' to the oppressor. Under these circumstances they cannot 'consider' him sufficiently clearly to objectivize him – to discover him 'outside' themselves. This does not necessarily mean that the oppressed are unaware that they are downtrodden. But their perception of themselves as oppressed is impaired by their submersion in the reality of oppression. At this level, their perception of themselves as opposites of the oppressor does not yet signify engagement in a struggle to overcome the contradiction; the one pole aspires not to liberation, but to identification with the opposite pole" (Freire, 1970: 45).

Social workers are complicit with the status quo when they side with unjust policies and when they remain neutral. When the status quo is blindly accepted, this can lead to a demand that others need to adapt. "Hence, neutrality in itself is a political act, for it transforms practice into a subtle tool for supporting the status quo, while preventing it from becoming a tool for challenging it. Political support for the status quo rather than neutrality is also implicit in the view of many social workers, that people's problems are mainly due to individual shortcomings, as well as in practice approaches based on this view, which support adaptation to prevailing social realities" (Gil, 1998: 105). There is also our 'quiet complicity' when we fail to speak out about injustice or regulate the poor through government polices that only provide inadequate welfare. "Many of our crimes are crimes of obedience" (Gilbert, 2005: 57). When we 'regulate', we take a neutral position on the side of power elites rather than 'with' people. Freire (1970) and Newman

(2010) talked about how we have internalized the oppressor. We measure ourselves against the roles the oppressor defines for us and therefore remain complicit against our own liberation (Freire, 1970, Newman, 2010). As hooks (2000) tells us, when only some people have liberty and not others, it signals that oppression is intact.

In the September 2012 communique #3, an Occupy publication, relying on ourselves is highlighted. Further, it speaks about how institutions fight back by using our own fantasies and desires. We cling to the myth that our institutions are the allies of the people.

> "Politicians thanked us for raising the issue of inequality and massive social fraud, and then asked us to turn it over to them to ignore. The police reaffirmed that respect for their authority has become the supreme civic value, to which minor concerns like free speech must be subordinated. The mainstream media initially glamorized the movement, and was even able to use it for ad campaigns, but they ultimately decided that the story of millions impoverished, crushed by debt, suffering for benefit of elites did not provide the appropriate redemptive arc" (Tidal, September, 2012, online, no author).

We don't get beyond resistance because we believe in a social contract that has the intention of the protection and freedom of the people, so when the intentions of institutions are not questioned we give our power away. We need to get together with people who share our concern for social justice to share ideas and build awareness.

Sub-theme 3.5 - Lack of Motivation, Vision and Belief that Change is Possible

The route to creating alternatives requires vision, motivation and a belief that creating change is doable. The participants shared how lack of motivation and vision are barriers to change and social justice:

"Maybe many are, in fact, lacking in motivation and are "really bad" activists? I wonder if that may be the conclusion of your study: ineffectual, self-indulgent, and self-righteous activism blocking the route to an alternative."

"Well, lack of information, lack of confidence, lack of vision, lack of experience, lack of ...people just don't believe that they can do that. People don't think it's possible."

The above quotes also highlight problems encountered on the route to creating alternatives. People feel hopeless and therefore lack motivation when they do not have a

picture of a better future. They feel helpless when they wait for change that does not come. Freire encourages activists to hope not despair. "Hopelessness is a form of silence, of denying the world and fleeing from it. The dehumanization resulting from an unjust order is not a cause for despair but for hope, leading to the incessant pursuit of the humanity denied by injustice. Hope, however, does not consist in crossing one's arms and waiting. As long as I fight, I am moved by hope; and if I fight with hope, then I can wait" (Freire, 1970: 91-92).

Sub-theme 3.6 - Power and Domination Work Against Social Justice

The participants discuss how those with power and privilege hang on to their power and stand in the way of facilitating social justice:

"Sort of that arrogant elitist, protectionist government policies."

"As mentioned previously, the only humans so far to actually achieve collective action in practice are those most fervently opposed to the socialist camp, the global ruling elite."

"…so what very often happens and has been happening since colonization is that there has been a fair amount of disregard, agreements that were made with the treaties and just disregard for human decency."

The issue of power and domination brings us full circle to what has already been written in this inquiry about injustice and oppression. Domination is the antithesis of social justice as cruelty is the antithesis of compassion. This also brings us back to the anti-oppressive premise of the inquiry and the theory base of the inquiry where the principles speak to equality. Those with power think it is their right to have more than others, even when others suffer (Freire, 1970). Violence is used to keep the oppressed in their place so that the privileged can keep their privilege (Mullaly, 2002). Those with power never free those who are dominated. The oppressed free themselves. When the oppressed are no longer oppressed there ceases to be oppressors and oppressed and therefore, the oppressors are also freed from their role in injustice (Freire, 1970).

Rogers (1978) talks about his work as political because he sees power embedded in decision-making in all relationships. Rogers' conceptualization of power bridges the

gap between the individual and the social in theory. Transforming power on the other hand incorporates action from the bottom-up. According to Rebick (2009), for example, during the 1970s in Canada, because of pressure from women's groups and youth, there were many social programs, such as day care for working parents and social housing. People, particularly the working poor, advocated for community-run agencies but, as soon as pressure was removed, the government programs were again delivered from bureaucratic top-down agencies. Social workers were as powerless as their clients to make changes. Although Rebick (2009: 172) says some good programs were put into place during this time, the situation has deteriorated because of the trend to privatize social programs and neo-liberalism. Industry and business interests appear to have more power to influence decisions that benefit their collective interest than do ordinary people or community groups and social workers (Ferguson, Lavalette & Whitmore 2005). Far too often, when programs and changes are made, they are made from the perspective of the dominant culture by making other world views invisible. So it follows from this discussion that we cannot rely on or wait for those in power to facilitate change for social justice. We must do it for ourselves.

Sub-theme 3.7 - Not Working Together

Participants talked about taking collective action that, most indicated, was not undertaken to the degree that would make a difference. Not working together prevents people from taking action:

"I think as activists we've divided up our turfs into feminist work or disability work and antipoverty work. We divide ourselves by imposing guilt on those we see not listening instead of seeing that we are in the same boat. So if anything I think good community development work would give us all that kind of interconnectedness and would make a stronger movement."

"The folks talking about the benefits of collective action are, to date, incapable of doing so. Collective action remains theoretical."

If we do not work together we cannot act together. We must also, decide which side we are on, so we can focus our energies to collectively struggle for social justice. According to Freire (1970), freedom requires that we fight on the side of the oppressed.

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Graeber (2009) gives the example of the Global Justice Movement where people took direct actions to collectively struggle against oppression. Poor people's movements, according to Piven and Cloward (1979), have made more progress taking collective action than they have by appealing to government and policymakers. Democracy is, by definition, collective and participatory. Collective action puts the theory of anti-oppression into practice.

When we come together with others we have strength in our numbers and we benefit by sharing ideas and knowleges that expand our own understanding. According to Gergen (2009), all thought is relational. All meaning comes from co-action (Gergen, 2009). If we fail to work together and support one another, we lose the power we could have had to create a better world. and we lose the potential for discovering creative solutions.

Sub-theme 3.8 - Not Thinking Critically and Not Planning Long Term

The participants state that not thinking critically and not making long-term plans is a barrier to change for social justice:

"I just think a lot of people don't think very critically about the longer term picture either. I think that's another thing. I think people are very attuned and adept at living in this sort of current crucial moment but in terms of long term changes and where we're going to be I don't think we have the capacity or the capability to do that very well. There's no long term planning. That's another thing. There's no real long term planning, whether in our dominant institutions or maybe even locally in our communities because we're just so fraught with dealing with the ups and downs."

"this work is just breaking my heart"

Dealing with the pain and suffering of others and the resistance encountered making change toward social justice can break your heart. It is tempting to give up the struggle in the midst of oppression and the pain and suffering it entails. Sometimes the work is overwhelming. When thoughts are directed at the obstacles blocking the road to social justice, it is easy to give up. Strong feelings can bring us to despair. Jensen one of the participants said in his book:

> "I was frightened, and lonely. Frightened of a future that looks dark, and darker with each passing species, and lonely because for every person

actively trying to shut down the timber industry, stop abuse, or otherwise bring about a sustainable and sane way of living, there are thousands who are helping along this not-so-slow train to oblivion. I began to cry" (Jensen, 2000: 75).

As stated above, social work needs to prefigure future possibilities (Gil, 1998) through long-term planning and support. "If we don't have ideas for how social life could be organized in the future, we obviously cannot embody the seeds of the future in the present. We also cannot develop effective strategies to get from the dominant institutions of the present to the revolutionary institutions of the future if we haven't outlined the defining features of future social institutions" (Korte & Kelly, 2008: 369). We are so preoccupied with everyday problems that long-term planning is left on the back burner. We are engaged in damage control at the expense of critical thinking and long-term planning.

Theme 4: Participants' Views on the Values and Principles Underlying Facilitating Change for Social Justice

Values and principles/philosophy that assist the work toward social justice are a significant part of what was discussed in the interviews. Values that the participants highlighted were: respect for people and nature, being non-judgmental, listening, self-reflection, inclusivity, openness to learning, assisting others to build capacity, belief in others, assisting others in their struggles, caring, a belief in equality, creating a sense of belonging, taking care of yourself by having fun, and the discovery of joy in life.

The values we hold in our everyday lives and our perspective of the overall picture are important. Who wants to join a social movement with grumpy, sad, and stuffy people? "If I can't dance, I don't want to be in your revolution" (quote attributed to Emma Goldman, but true source is unknown). Participants also made staements about not only doing things on a local level but doing this while being conscious of the global context. This speaks to seeing oneself and the community as part of the world. The examples below highlight values and principles that are needed to work toward social justice. As Gil points out," just as radical practice cannot be politically neutral, it also cannot be value-free, for social work practice either reflects and upholds the dominant values of society, or rejects and replaces them" (Gil, 1998: 105).

Sub-theme 4.1- Trust and Solidarity

According to the participants, change for social justice requires trust and solidarity:

"Right from the beginning I think, I've seen where when you believe in people's ability to be the teachers, that it's like Paulo Freire said, people don't need to be filled with our teaching, they need to share their teaching with us, so it's a two way street."

"After high school I started doing a lot of community work, working with tenant's rights groups and community neighbourhood groups that were fighting for improved neighbourhood services, community services, more parks for our neighbourhood, better transit facilities, social housing, you know, more representation at a municipal level for the part of the city was usually without a voice.
So, at an early age, after high school working with community groups I spent time trying to fight for tenant's rights, community rights and from there I got involved in trade union work cause of different jobs I worked at and then I ended up publishing, editing a community newspaper, and then through the newspaper I would advocate this or that and so it took me, my political involvement took a number of different forms and different levels and different spheres that I was moving in at that time and gradually, I guess, from there I finally met other anarchists and we worked together. We published the "Open Road", the international Anarchist News Journal. At the time it was the largest English language anarchist news journal in the world. We published thousands of copies and distributed them around the world. We would receive support from thousands and thousands of anarchists from around the world and that began to broaden my horizons even more. I was always working on a community level and on other levels using the written word, doing organizing work, support work where there was trade unions, or with community groups that was always present in my life."

According to Freire (1970), the oppressed have good reasons to distrust those in power. The other complicating factor however is that, because the oppressed often internalize the oppressor, they do not trust themselves. So it follows that when people do not trust themselves or others they remain dependent on the false hope that someone with power will fix the world for them. On the other hand, trust builds relationships and solidarity between people and dialogue builds trust.

There is no solidarity without trust. Yet if we do not trust others to come together to make change, we will continue to perpetrate a system of domination. "Founding itself upon love, humility, and faith, dialogue becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence. It would be a contradiction in terms if dialogue - loving, humble, and full of faith - did not produce this climate of mutual trust, which leads the dialoguers into ever closer partnership in the naming of the world" (Freire, 1970: 91). Freire affirms that solidarity comes from

knowing the world and fighting on the side of the oppressed. "Solidarity requires that one enter into the situation of those with whom one is solidary; it is a radical posture" (Freire, 1970: 49). Solidarity apposes the violence of preventing others from engaging in the process of inquiry.

Sub-theme 4.2 – Mutual Aid and Collaboration

The participants tell us that helping each other is required for change for social justice:

"start with something you care about and that you enjoy doing and put the word out and find partners who's interests and purpose in life is consistent with your own and who have the compeimentary gifts and skills that will allow communities to operate where you don't have chores that nobody wants to do. So that's my ideal of this."

"when our children were young there was the old log cabin that was on this place that we turned into what we called the Pelican Café and we ate together. We ate all of our evening meals together and so we bought like bags of rice and bags of beans and we grew gardens and we shared food together on a daily basis and bought things collectively. We still try car- pooling as much as we can and there is a small tree planting company that one of our members… and our kids, whatever, when our kids are around and aren't doing anything else and they come and take part in that. So that's a bit of a collective venture but it's a strong community we have. I feel very supported here."

In general, mutual aid is a value that builds relationships and helps people to meet needs. Mutual aid presupposes mutuality and cooperation. In hierarchical structures, aid becomes a form of 'giving' that is paternalistic. For example, social workers are in a position of authority and give to service users. "Mutual aid, in contrast, stresses reciprocal relations, regardless of whether the gift is equal in kind" (Milstein, 2010: 57). Mutual aid is generosity, kindness and compassion in action. Freire (1970) spoke about true generosity as mutuality. When there is no longer a giver and a receiver and we work for our mutual liberation, there is true generosity.

Milstein (2010) further states that mutual aid implies that we look for the root cause of problems and have a more holistic, cooperative perspective. "The ecological crisis is, in fact, a social crisis: humans believe they can dominate nonhuman nature because they believe it's natural to dominate other human beings. But mutual aid holds that humans, other animals, and plants all thrive best under forms of holistic cooperation - ecosystems. It suggests that people would be much more likely to live in harmony with

each other and the nonhuman world – to be ecological – in a nonhierarchical society" (Milstein, 2010: 58).

Sub-theme 4.3 - Egalitarianism

The participants declare that social justice requires more than an equality of sameness; it requires egalitarianism:

"In terms of opposing it or radical politics, I think that comes back to really trying to work with some sort of egalitarianism in mind, not just an equality which really is just a kind of equivalent, but really an egalitarian is about values, multiple constituencies."

"I want to replace the system and 10,000 different cultures to replace each one of its own watersheds. For me to talk about how to live, and for me to tell you how to live would be absurd when it snows here, once per year and it lasts for maybe six seconds."

*"(where the bureaucrats were not neutral relays but ideological vessels for the corporate university), to return to a funding model that refused a user-based model or a model where academic work and academic undertakings had to be little capitalizing machines with a potential for surplus value. All this is to say, returning to academic freedom, to the **socialization of postsecondary education** in universities and colleges, and to a model for access that is **egalitarian** rather than economic in outlook."*

*"the quiet civil war speaks to the **network of social hierarchies**, the network of dominant social power relations. It's quiet only because I don't think here, at this time, right now we don't think about war as something that's waged internally we're sort of a post-political society."*

"I think as activists we've divided up our turfs into feminist work or disability work and antipoverty work. We divide ourselves by imposing guilt on those we see not listening instead of seeing that we are in the same boat. So if anything I think good community development work would give us all that kind of interconnectedness and would make a stronger movement."

"At one time in the romanticized past, the group of Indigenous Peoples from whom I am a descendant used the globally common metaphor of the mother/child relationship, giving the ecosystem a name, mother earth, and establishing a familial relationship, a kinship-based relationship with the major ecosystem of our lovely little blue planet. This conception is so naively elegant that it lies on the horizon of cutting edge scientific research, as a mysterious something to blindly fumble for in the darkness of the present moment."

"I mean we've got a model. I think back to just even something like the Métis nation in Canada. They were very egalitarian communities. I think, in Saskatchewan there were egalitarian communities during its settlement and its early development. I mean they were certainly very strong poles entrenched in dominance, social, economic, and political power but I think with some of the First Nations who were responding to that. Some of the cultures coming over like the Finnish settlement of Saskatchewan I know were very much a red settlement, one that was premised on egalitarianism, one that was premised on trying to stay outside of that framework of dominance, power politics. I think looking to some of those examples which are around us today may help; the vestiges are still around us."

Egalitarianism is a theme that runs through the literature used in the inquiry. For example, Wallerstein (1999) was quoted as saying that if we are to create a new historical system based on democracy it must be egalitarian. Campbell (2003) and Dominelli (2002) also stated that working for an egalitarian future is a tenet of anti-oppressive social work. As stated below, Gil (1998) calls upon social workers to transform the practice of social work by prefiguring future egalitarian possibilities:

> "Radical social work would have to involve efforts to transform the style and quality of practice relations and administration in social services from vertical, authoritarian, non-egalitarian patterns toward horizontal, participatory-democratic, egalitarian ones, as far as this is possible in prevailing realities. Every space within existing settings, which radical practitioners can influence, could be transformed to reflect alternative possible human relations. In this way, elements of alternative realities, or prefigurations of future possibilities, could be created experimentally, within existing service organizations, by and for the providers and users of the services" (1998: 108).

Egalitarianism, the absence of domination, is a fundamental principle of anarchist thought (Milstein, 2010). Freire also says that the consciousness of the oppressor sees everything in terms of domination. Everything is seen in terms of money and profit. According to Freire (1970: 54), in both the first stage of liberation (know the world and commit to action) and the second stage (the transformation of oppression to liberation), one must confront the culture of domination. The liberation of the oppressed and oppressor together suggests a state of egalitarianism.

Sub-theme 4.4 - Participatory Democratic Ways of Working

The participants talk about ways of working that are democratic:

"as anarchists we believe it's important for everyone to have a role, an equally important role in deciding what happens in this world."

"So it's that kind of belief that you're working with, not for and that if you get it started it will carry on."

"Yet, returning to a more utilitarian and cooperative conception of viability is necessary. The utility here is like a sharing."

"They had something like two or three of those meetings, maybe three meetings. There was some really dynamic discussion going on there, a lot of interest and then it kind of morphed into an economic development committee. What happened there and their focus was mostly on tourism, eco tourism was the direction they were moving and so then the town of Big River kind of took on the task of trying to move themselves in that direction but I'm a little out of touch with where that went, that was very encouraging to see that maybe a little bit of the work we did back in the mid 90's did touch some people, they remembered the work we did and they did call us to come and do presentations to give them an idea of some direction."

The last quote is interesting because it talks about how a group can morph back to fit the status quo. It appears that although people did get together to discuss and plan, critical consciousness was missing. It appears as though the participants put the cart before the horse, they made decisions before learning about the issues. Therefore, the group was not able to go beyond prescribed ideology and do anything different. This suggests that perhaps the group process used may not have been democratic and points to the importance of participatory ways of sharing.

Learning from others collectively and helping to connect people speaks to democratic ways of working. Participatory ways of working means that everyone who is affected has a voice in the process of defining and decision-making. People can start with their closest allies in the analysis and decisionmaking. This is horizontal direct democracy where power is flipped in the interests of the most marginalized.

Freire (1970) said teachers need to be learners and students teachers. He argued for a radical democratic participatory learning process. "They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. In this process, arguments based on 'authority' are no longer valid; in order to function, authority must be on the side of freedom, not against it" (Freire, 1970: 80). Participatory democracy is about sharing power.

Affinity groups and spokes councils are two other examples of people using democratic, participatory decision-making processes Graeber, 2009). These forms of groups also enable the sharing of information that leads to building knowledge, building relationships and mutual aid. Anarchism uses consensus models to organize horizontally (Heyleyman, 2002). When people share their learning in a democratic process, it helps lessen the risk of being authoritarian and doctrinaire.

7.3. Conclusion

The themes distilled from the interviews with the participants highlight ideas about how to facilitate social justice. There are four main themes with sub-themes:

1. The aspects that motivate the participants to work for change and social justice.

- Circumstances and modeling
- Intellectual opportunities
- Becoming aware of differences
- Becoming aware of the world to see injustice
- Becoming aware is a process

2. The participants' views on the elements that are necessary in order to be able to facilitate change for social justice.

- Being curious
- Facilitating a process
- Critical thinking
- Collective action
- Working locally
- Taking sides/deciding which side you are on
- Motivation, love, care and compassion
- Not to be silenced
- Taking Responsibility
- Paradigm change

3. The participants' views on the elements which block change for social justice.

- Being caught up in the system prevents seeing injustice

- Not taking responsibility for change
- Mythology and belief systems are barriers to change and social justice
- Collusion with and submission to injustice
- Lack of motivation, vision and belief that change is possible

4. The participants' views on the values and principles underlying facilitating change for social justice.

- Trust and solidarity
- Mutual aid
- Egalitarianism
- Participatory, democratic ways of working

The ideas presented are taken from outside of the usual social work milieu because doing so had the potential to expand alternatives and possibilities. This chapter, along with the literature review, is used to formulate the recommendations and guidelines for social work in Chapter Eight.

CHAPTER EIGHT

LESSONS AND GUIDLINES FOR SOCIAL WORK TO FACILITATE SOCIAL JUSTICE

<u>8. Introduction</u>

When I first contemplated doing this inquiry, I did not know the many paths I would need to go down or what place I would arrive at. I have not completely satisfied my yearning to find direction, but I feel I have come closer to asking constructive questions. My journey starts with my desire to facilitate social justice and my frustration with being a social worker with a mandate to do so, but without encouragement or clear direction within the profession of social work. I began by attempting to figure out what social justice is and how to facilitate change that had the possibility of moving closer to it. Despite the *Canadian Code of Ethics'* (C.A.S.W. 2005) implying that social justice is related to fair distribution, I found the social justice part of the Code confusing and contradictory. I had an intuitive sense that the 2005 Canadian Code was missing something important. In comparing it to the America code of ethics, it becomes apparent that there is more than one way to define social justice and that this has implications for social work practice. For example, the American code goes further than the Canadian code in terms of embracing working 'with' people rather than 'for' people and uses the word 'pursue' to indicate action toward social justice. I have become more dissatisfied with the Canadian social work perspective of social justice, which is less than inspiring. I perceive the state of Canadian social work to be reformist in nature and lacking in commitment to 'pursue' or facilitate social justice. Beyond appealing for changes in redistribution of material resources, which is important in itself, there is not enough second order change. This study can be viewed as a critical study on Canadian social work

The history of social work in Canada demonstrates that ever since social work became a profession it has been tied to the state and therefore most change has not changed the system. Social workers carry out state policies that may or may not be just, as can be illustrated by the history of social work in Canada. Social work's history demonstrates that because the profession is a 'handmaiden of the state' it reflects the

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state's hierarchical structure. So it follows, in so much as social work is embedded in hierarchical structures, it reflects the dominant culture. To emphasis this point and the concept of the dis-value of domination and oppression that has been a significant theme throughout the inquiry, it is worthwhile repeating the following quote. *"Social work is a profession highly conditioned by institutional inequalities. The encounters between the client and the worker, the worker and the agency, and the agency and the state are all shaped within the context of unequal power relations" (Strier, 2006: 2).* As I stated in Chapter One, Strier (2006) *argues for social work to use an anti-oppressive stance in social work research to avoid reproducing inequality. Social work not only needs to avoid reproducing inequality but needs to work toward changing those institutional arrangements that caused the inequality in the first place. Typically the work done by social workers takes place within the context of unequal power* (italics mine). For this reason, I chose to interview activists rather than social workers in hopes of discovering alternative perceptions and possibilities to facilitate social justice. The paragraph below puts forward my rationale.

> Since the goals of activists are frequently prefigurative and wide-ranging there is potential in their ideas to broaden and even challenge the social work paradigm. This is why I interviewed activists. It is hoped that ideas presented in the thesis can have this effect. Activists included in this inquiry are those who work in the direction of a prefigurative egalitarian collective standard. They work toward ideals that may not be actualized yet. Activists endeavor to discover possibilities. For instance social activism that acts on transformation on structural levels is pre- figurative, as it imagines a world without oppression that is just, and structurally horizontal as opposed to top down. Going beyond the taken as given to the possible may open the door to the as yet not proposed.

The process undertaken in the inquiry evolved as the inquiry proceeded. It began with questions designed to stimulate discussion in a conversational interview format. Throughout the inquiry the direction taken was informed by the process as it evolved so that further questioning would be based on what the participants emphasized in their interviews. There are always questions within the questions that lead to what questions are yet to be revealed. The journey has not been easy. The inquiry has not followed a straight and narrow path from point A to B; it has not lent itself well to putting ideas in well-defined boxes in a linear way. Rather, the process has itself been recursive. The

main discovery, for me, has been the power of the process of constructing a narrative about the prefigurative possibilities with others. This entailed dynamic dialogue, aimed at being participatory, democratic in action and cognizant with today's complex world.

The aims and objectives of the inquiry were to:

- Explore and describe the experiences and perceptions of the participants' view of facilitating social justice

- Examine the literature to enable the broadening or stretching of perspectives for facilitating change for social justice.

- Explore and describe the participants' experiences and perceptions of the obstacles that they have faced when working for change and social justice and what has gotten in the way of making change.

- Develop themes from the interviews and guidelines for social work for facilitating change for social justice

- Analyze and critically reflect on if social work can really live up to the implications of facilitating social justice.

The objectives for the inquiry have been achieved. I was able to engage seven articulate and thoughtful people to share their knowledge and experiences. In the interviews, they shared their perceptions about change, facilitating social justice and provided ideas about what gets in the way of facilitating change for social justice. The review of literature assisted me to reflect and see difference between the many perspectives I encountered while writing the thesis. The participants and the literature provided the needed diversity that enabled the formulation of a set of guidelines for social workers. The principal question I ask is: how can social workers and the social work profession facilitate change for social justice? This question is answered in the preceding chapter that brought the themes from the interviews forward and in the following guidelines.

8.1. Guidelines for Social Workers

The themes derived from the interviews were used to develop and construct the guidelines for social work. The themes are highlighted with references to the literature.

There is a recursive interaction between themes, literature and the guidelines. The following is a list of the guidelines which emerged from the interview/inquiry:

- Start with others' experience and feelings
- Be not complicit and do not buy into hegemony
- Be prepared to have your heart broken
- Be a model of social justice; be the change
- Take responsibility to be a voice for social justice and challenge oppressive power,
- Create alternatives collectively, with the people
- Encourage critical thinking and conscious awareness; learn about the world
- Cultivate values to live by
- Develop alternatives locally, with the people
- Take collective action
- Work in solidarity with other groups who advance social justice
- Work from a frame of egalitarianism

The rationales of the preceding guidelines are further elaborated below. These guidelines evolved from the relationship between the participants and me as the inquirer and supported by the literature. "[W]hat we take to be true or rational (knowledge) is an outgrowth of communal relations. There is no truth beyond community. Further, the concept of the individual mind is deeply problematic, both intellectually and politically. If both truth and mind are placed in doubt, then so is the hierarchical structure of education –with certain classes determining what is true and rational for all others, and individual students are the unwitting victims" (Gergen, 1999: 180). Gergen (1999) reminds us that constructionism agrees with Freire (1970) in that knowledge is not deposited by the knower into the student's head. Knowledge is relational. This collaborative knowledge is also congruent with the concept of participatory democracy found in anarchism (Chomsky, 2005). Below I present wisdom from below, local wisdom informed by experience, knowledge and relationship, for social work.

8.1.1. Start with Others' Experience and Feelings; Focus on the People/Person

As was pointed out by one of the participants, it is important to work 'with' people rather than for people as we work to advance social justice. There is an old social work saying, 'nothing for me without me.' In Chapter Seven, the participants brought forward the recognition that change is a process and the importance of facilitating an

egalitarian process for change toward social justice. The social justice movement and the Occupy movement, as discussed in Chapter Five, also demonstrate process as a distinguishing feature of movements that make an impact. In addition, the processes implemented in the everyday actions of these movements reflect values that activists want to realize in the future. The idea that people act and feel compassion because they feel passionate about something is also brought forward in the inquiry.

Robert Chambers (1993) focuses strongly on the experiences of people, their perceptions, knowledge, and skills. Typically development and social work "has been seen as a process of growth stimulated by transfer of technology, a transfer in one direction, from rich and powerful to poor and weak, from first to last" (Chambers, 1993: 9). He calls for a reversal of this paradigm to one that is people-centered, focused on low technologies, centered in the land and the cultural base of the people, and where the last become first; women before men, children before adults, professionals as learners, poor people as teachers, and so on (Chambers, 1993: 10).   Although Chambers (1993: 13) comes from a background in rural development, he extends the concept of reversal from the individual to the international level.

The first guideline reminds social workers that people learn from their own experience and that change begins when one feels strongly about something (Freire, 1970). To connect with others, we really need to listen to what someone feels strongly about (Fernandez, 2009). Emotions are a catalyst for change and inspire us to take action (Routladge, 2009). People learn about the world in many different ways, such as study, reading, and observation. For example, the participants learned about the world by reading and going to university. It was, however, their already present and/or developing awareness, compassion, and passion that allowed them to feel and care about working against domination and oppression toward social justice. Action comes after feelings. Whether someone feels love, anger, frustration, and so on, strong feelings are a motivating force. When social workers work as one of the many, they drop the mantle of 'expert' and rely on the process of dialogue to make connections with others' feelings.

We need to hear other's feelings, experiences, and perceptions if we are to be effective. This implies that social workers need to earn the trust of people and have good relationships with people. "Founding itself upon love, humility, and faith, dialogue

becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence" (Freire, 1970: 91). This fits with constructivist tenet of meaning making (Fisher, 1991), appreciative inquiry, Carl Rogers' person-centered therapy, and Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed. When we really listen and empathize with another's feelings, this allows us to not only connect with them but also to open the door to working collaboratively to gain better understanding. (Gergen, 2009, Freire, 1970, Rogers 1978, Schenck, Louw & Nel, 2010). Shared curiosity can lead to further exploration, consultation, and collaboration because we put energy towards what we wonder about.

According to Freire (1970), knowing the world begins with feelings and experience. When people collaborate, together voicing their experiences and the strong feelings that accompany those experiences, generative themes are created that lead to understanding. If we follow Freire's process, then the social worker is like a teacher who takes off the hat of authority. But now teachers become students and students become teachers. Because of faith in others to find their own way forward, the 'banking system' of education where the teacher (professional) deposits knowledge into the student's head is abandoned (Freire, 1970). This is a process that is question-orientated, dialogical, and follows a horizontal paradigm. It is in opposition to a goal-driven, problem-centered, expert-led procedure. "In this process, arguments based on 'authority' are no longer valid; in order to function, authority must be on the side of freedom, not against it. Here, no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. People teach each other, mediated by the world, by the cognizable objects which in the banking education are 'owned' by the teacher" (Freire, 1970: 80). This horizontal process is reflected in various forms of appreciative inquiry, affinity groups, and the indigenous world view.

An example of starting where people start with their own experience and feelings can be drawn from clinical practice. The clinician who is quick to offer solutions after hearing the service user is not only disrespecting the other person's right to meaning and choice but does not facilitate deeper understanding (Cain, 2010, Rogers, 1959, 1961, 1977). Anyone can change their behavior in the short term. However, to make lasting change that will be incorporated in the self demands critical thinking, awareness,

emotional growth, all in the context of relationship. Perspectives and knowledge are recursive rather than A leading to B in a straight line.

> "The simplest expression of this position is: A does X in the context of B who does Y in the context of A, where A and B represent sets of conditions to each other *and* A and B act autonomously in respect to each other. Neither causes the other to act in a particular way. Each person's actions are a consequence of her construing context in relation to self and choices she makes in the context of the construing" (Fisher, 1991: 29).

According to Gergen (2009), we learn by bringing out what is already there from our experience. Past experience is the foundation for future learning. This is why we need others to develop critical thinking. Relationship is the vichecle for conversation, reading and communication. According to Gergen (2009), what we hold to be real and meaningful depends upon the well-being of our relationships. Knowledge is built from co-action in the process of building relationships. Building effective relationships and changing the focus from the individual to a relational perspective, according to Gergen (2009), is not only what inspires spirituality and ethics but moreover builds a just society. According to this chain of logic, for example, any attempts at punishment, retaliation and so on, as often seen in legal systems, will fail in the long term because these actions do not build relationships. And so it follows that these traditional forms of working for social justice are first order change efforts that do not fit the complexity of today's world.

Second order change requires change that penetrates below the surface and looks at the complexity of interacting systems. This changes the focus of social service delivery from one where problems are the focus to one where people are the focus (Schenck, Louw & Nel, 2010: 42, Chambers, 1993, Cain, 2010, Freire, 1970). This is the foundation tenet for facilitating social justice. Without the foundation whatever follows cannot stand. Therefore, social work's mission requires that social workers stand with 'the people'. Social work needs to have a clear and all-encompassing priority of social justice. In Canada, however, social work has not always been clear about whether social workers are aligned with the agencies we work for, government or the people we serve. If we are not aligned with the people, it is not possible to start with their feelings and experiences.

Implied here is the contention that working toward social justice must, from start to finish, be people centered and start with people's experiences and feelings. If we fail to

eliminate this incongruence between social work and the stated goal of social justice, all we are left with is rhetoric. Starting with other's experiences and feelings is a logical first step when we desire to work in solidarity with others. When we do not know the experience, feelings and desires of the people, we risk being complicit in injustice. Only by starting with others can we build relationships that facilitate social justice.

8.1.2. Be Not Complicit and Do Not Buy into Hegemony

Social workers need to refuse to let the dominant culture/group/authority/person construct their consciousness. When we accommodate oppression and domination, we become part of the oppression. We need to refuse to take things as given and we need to stop being complicit with the systems we want to change. The Nazi process of dehumanization of both the Jews and of the Nazis themselves illustrated how people can lose integrity and do dreadful things (Lifton 1986, Gilbert 2005). "Many of our crimes are crimes of obedience" (Gilbert 2005: 57). We cannot afford to set aside our caring and concern for some people (Gilbert, 2005).

Social workers need to be aware of how we encourage accommodation to injustice. For example, the structure of our institutions mirrors the dominance in society. The dominant culture uses violence and manipulation to buy our compliance (Freire, 1970). We fear for our own freedom. The dominant culture uses reform to pacify the population and domesticates us by our identification with it, by our submergence in it, by its seduction, and by the false hopes we are handed (Freire, 1970). It is just easier to stay in our comfort zones and not have to question.

In North America the 'I' of individualism is instrumental. Yet we need relationships to have a happy and meaningful life. "In sum, a first step toward bonding is the co-creation of shared realities, and the comfort, reliability, and trust that accompany them" (Gergen, 2009: 175). We bond with others because of the meanings we share. Therefore, relationships have the potential to both facilitate inclusion, harmony and creativity as well as alienation, animosity and destruction (Gergen, 2009). In our bonding with some groups, we can also exclude others. Group coherence can also lead to conformity. The more a group's coherence requires conformity, the bigger the risk of exclusion of some from within the group. Another risk is that the group can cause

divisions and alienate someone by suppressing relationships that are exterior to the group. The other way, according to Gergen (2009) that groups undermine what they value is by being rigid in their valuing. This does not allow people to question the group's assumptions and often leads to rebellion and resistance. Gergen writes about 'the tyranny of the truth.' The truth causes the stagnation of ideas and silences the voices of those who think otherwise. "The walls of tradition now become those of a prison" (Gergen, 2009: 189).

If we do not question, we risk sharing meaning with those who dominate and oppress. Consequently one needs to know well who or what one is bonding with. We can become 'enchanted' too easily and later discover that we have become involved with a cause we did not know the ramifications of or with people who do not support the best interests of others (Gergen, 2009). Further, Gergen (2009) states that dialogue across differences is how we can broaden our perspectives and break the complicity and hegemony of 'the truth.'

Western society has an opportunity to learn about other world views from indigenous people. The concept of comunalidad that sees the world and us integrated with nature, "who is the center – only one or all" (Luna, 2010), is an antidote to the individualistic western society that commodifies everything. Communal cultures reflect egalitarian ways of being that contrast sharply with western hierarchies of power relations. Learning from other cultures is an antidote to western individuality and materialism (Bookchin, 2005, Meyer, et al 2010).

Deleon and Ross (2010) suggest that we can resist domestication by teaching alternatives that open spaces for radical pedagogy. The incorporation of other world views and cultural perspectives challenges the supremacy of the dominant euro/amerocentric/capitalist world view that is especially prevalent in North America. For example, Deleon and Ross (2010) suggest that to study and deliberate the principles and history of anarchism is an antidote to the domestication of learners. "It is partly because of our failure to notice alternative possibilities that we continue to be seduced into the frozen reality surrounding the naturalist premise" (Cooperrider, Barrett & Srivastva, 1995: 188). This, of course, means that anarchism, indigenous world views and history are not put forward as prescriptions, but as examples of alternative paradigms that

challenge what has been taken for granted. Possibilities congruent with social justice must be found in collaboration with others.

> "Heavily involved in activist practices anarchist theory provides a framework in which to situate resistance both within and outside institutional realities. In social studies, this is especially relevant as history, sociology and civics allow for teachers to teach critically about society and history, injecting important questions about racism, sexism, classism, and other social ills. Critical pedagogy and its role in engendering critique and resistance has played a vital role in developing radical theory in education, but needs to be infused with anarchist notions of direct action and critiques of the state" (Deleon and Ross, 2010: 2).

Postmodernism suggests impermanence and plasticity, and emphasizes meaning and the context of human experience. We construct meaning and hence the world. People have agency. They are not bound to rules or to the past. Lessons can be learned from the past, but the future does not have to mirror or rely on the past. Change is inevitable and evolving. Life is never a finished project as change is an ongoing process. This is why change is in part directed by posing questions (Freire, 1970: 84). Freire (1970) emphasized questions so that one is never frozen by certainty and rigid belief.

Questioning the dominant hegemonic view prevents us from taking it as a given. Conformity closes the door to other possibilities and alternatives. To prevent ourselves from being complicit with oppression, we must question. We need to use our Radical imagination as by definition it goes from the root cause of problems to imagine possibilities. Radical imagination envisions possibilities for a just future. Innovative action that creates new forms rather than reacting to the old enables radical change.

8.1.3. Be Prepared to Have Your Heart Broken

When we open our eyes, we see the world and all its suffering. So we suffer too. When 'this work is just breaking my heart' or someone else's heart, what does this call on us to do? Social workers stand in witness for others; be there, be present in that moment. How we treat others in our everyday world needs to include how we treat and care for other social workers. If we are serious about working toward social justice, care and compassion must not only extend to other social workers it must extend in ever-

widening circles out to the world. We cannot prevent broken hearts by sticking our heads in the sand. Doing social work with eyes wide open in a caring way can break your heart.

8.1.4. Be a Model of Social Justice; Be the Change

If we want to see a world where people are happy and act for the common good, then we should model happy people having fun and acting for the common good. This is far more attractive to most people than being apathetic and unable to take pleasure in life. This suggests that care for others as one's self is essential to making the world a happier, better place. This means living by the values we hope to see in a just world in our everyday life. The social work profession and social workers need to model propaganda by the deed. Working toward social justice and being perceived as doing just that would go a long way towards making the image of social work a positive one. One of the participants expressed this as follows:

"No, it's got to happen on a daily level. You've got be conscious of it all the time in everything you do and the way we do things. It's how we interact with each other; it's stopping ourselves if some sort of authoritarian behaviour leaks out or manifests itself. Oops, wait a minute, I don't have to speak in this tone and I don't have to act in this way. I can do things differently therefore also, you set an example for other people. It's challenging other people who act otherwise that impede us from getting from A to Z in terms of a better world. For me it's ongoing every day."

'Be the change' is most often applied to individual social workers. Nevertheless, if the profession of **social** work is to have congruence between its values and practice, it needs to reflect this. We need to put the social back in social justice and be the social change. If we accept that social justice is anti-domination, facilitating change that leans toward egalitarianism and horizontalism corresponds to the change we want to see.

First, we need to recognize and name oppression so we can start breaking historical mythologies. The risk of challenging entrenched ideas and institutions takes confidence that can come from breaking away from our complicity with oppression. Risk involves acts of naming and deeds: theory and action. Therefore, we search out possibilities beyond the hegemony of the current paradigm. Social work takes place in a context of power and top-down policy, institutions and social relations. Social work must challenge the domination within the profession to be a model of social justice. Changing

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our own top-down institutional arrangements and challenging hierarchical structures in the larger context is congruent with social work's ethic of social justice. Progress toward community involvement and egalitarian ways of working requires taking risks to push against the very system that we work for and under. We take on the responsibility to challenge domination and oppression.

8.1.5. Take Responsibility to be a Voice for Social Justice and Challenge Oppressive Power

As the saying goes, 'fight where you stand'. This reflects back to what the activists in the inquiry do. It's Mildred working 'with' people living in poverty; Norman helping in the everyday to have the neighborhood's voice heard; Derrick writing books and speaking out to stimulate collective dialogue; Joys standing in solidarity with people at a blockade; Dave writing a blog to engage others about how to save the world; Stewart writing and making art that speaks to collective mystery, and Neil contributing to education and standing in solidarity with neighbourhood and university communities. And it is social workers speaking out about oppression and challenging exploitation and domination. It is social workers emulating social justice in the everyday and challenging oppressive power on every level with a focus on structural power relationships. Most importantly is affirming and co-creating with the voices of the people. Social works' responsibility is to collaborate in a way that amplifies the voices of the oppressed.

Social workers would challenge oppressive power on a structural level by joining forces with those who are oppressed. "Responsibility has to do with social relations. It is primarily a social and ethical practice, not a judicial concept" (Kneen, 2009: 2). We need to go beyond reform and take the responsibility to talk about changes that move society closer to social justice. In the complex world we live in, social workers would do well have their actions correspond with social justice by being part of movements that support social justice. As stated by the participants in the interviews and stated in the literature, we need to give up the false hope that someone somehow will change the world for us. Social workers with others need to take the responsibility to define things on our own terms and act for ourselves. We must not allow ourselves to be silenced.

8.1.6. Create Alternatives Collectively

Freire (1970) reminds us that liberation cannot happen by liberating others. According to Freire (1970), the oppressors never lead the charge of liberation. The Occupy movement has taught us that in the context of the world today the people must become liberated together, with others, because the issues that once put us in divided camps are all issues of domination. The oppressed and the oppressor both need to be liberated (Freire (1970). Supporting communities to be self-determined and lead their own struggles helps avoid the impulse to be dogmatic and authoritarian. For example, the inquiry drew on the voices of activists rather than social workers because activists' perspectives come from outside of the profession. Alternatives voices can expand social work discourse (Cooperrider, Barrett & Srivastva, 1995: 188). Autonomy and solidarity entail placing power in the hands of people. A holistic view of the world links social issues, people, and context together. In this manner consideration is given to the health of both the natural and social environment. Egalitarian principles also move away from the dominant way of looking at the world. Many voices equal many ideas and alternatives. Start with those who are most oppressed and collectively create alternatives with those who are most affected. This is a reversal of top-down arrangements where the elite decide.

To create collectively includes making learning and participation accessible. Examples of this are using multiple ways to share information that enhance access for people with different abilities or using common language rather than academic language. It also means collectively working with 'the part of no part' (Neil), those that live on the street or in slums who are often beyond the radar of the comfortable middle-class social worker. When we see ourselves as part of the whole it helps us push past our own elitism. After all, social justice is not an exclusive concern of social work. We are only a few of many. Justice belongs to the world.

8.1.7. Encourage Critical Thinking and Conscious Awareness; Learn About the World

Become aware of the process people take to become critically and intentionally aware. This has implications for the education of social workers and for how social

workers approach their work. Formulas and prescriptions fall short. As one of the participants explains:

> "The best way to bring about change in the system is to change the way people think about the problem… One of the tenets of complexity theory is that your understanding of the solutions to a problem and the problem itself and your understanding of the problem itself **co-evolves as you explore it but to some extent if you're really looking at the problem** properly by the time you have finished your exploration, your understanding of the problem has probably completely changed."

Critical thinking requires that we reflect on our own awareness collectively. "[T]he dialectical nature of this conception of consciousness thus leads to several important implications. The first is that consciousness is directly linked with action" (Deleon & Ross, 2010: 165), although this is not to say that all conscious acts are intended to advance social justice. "Consequently, the 'critical' in critical reflection is central because to look at something critically requires that we become aware of our context to see how external relations impinge upon our praxis—our thinking and acting— and considering whether such relations contribute to or liberate us from forms of oppression" (Deleon & Ross, 2010: 169). By questioning how we communicate and act toward others contributes to an awareness of how we contribute to liberation or to domestication. The construction of conscious awareness does not begin by holding rigid positions. Critical thinking starts with questions about the problem to be looked at (Freire, 2010).

Gergen (1993) writes about the ability of generative capacity to create theory and sees positivist-empiricist theory lacking. He describes generative capacity as "the capacity to challenge the guiding assumptions of the culture, to raise fundamental questions regarding contemporary social life, to foster reconsideration of that which is 'taken for granted' and thereby to furnish new alternatives for social action" (Gergen, 1993: 79). The scientific community's claim to neutrality, that does not exist, causes it to support the status quo and side with elites (Gergen, 1993). Constructivist premises alternatively can claim to side with the people, because co-construction uses multiple meanings to construct social change. As an example, where social work practice typically uses a problem-solving paradigm (identify problem/need, analyze cause, analyze solutions, treat problem), appreciative inquiry (AI) takes a positive constructivist

direction (appreciate what is best, envision what might be, dialogue about what should be) (Cooperrider & Whitney, 1998). As a collective process, appreciative inquiry is best used when it is possible to have everyone involved. If social work language is changed from a deficit, problem-orientated, interventions perspective to the language of relationship, it would necessitate dialogue with the people to construct useful alternatives. It would entail trusting people, compassion and a new language that incorporated relational flow and dialogical process (Freire, 1974, Gergen, 2006).

AI also proposes "we be the change" and the 'what if' in what might be. It is a horizontal way of making change that goes beyond problems and deficits. It looks for positive change to construct a better future (Cooperrider & Whitney, 1998). AI is conceptualized as having four dimensions: discovery, dream, design, destiny (Cooperrider, Barrett & Srivastva, 1995). It starts with mobilizing the whole system into the change process and posing questions: what is working well, what do you want to see, and what are the ideal possibilities. It is creative and strengthens affirmative relational qualities (Cooperrider, Barrett & Srivastva, 1995).

Encouraging critical thinking and conscious awareness requires more than a university education. Critical awareness must include process and action if it is to challenge hegemony. The more interlocking systems involved, the greater is the capacity to foster conscious awareness and mobilize for change for the benefit of everyone. As seen throughout the inquiry, dialogical processes are needed to facilitate becoming aware of the world (Gergen, 2009, Freire, 1970). "Dialogic practices that restore the flow of productive meaning are vitally needed. Similarly honored are practices that bring humans and their environment together into a mutually sustainable world. All such actions are realizations of second-order morality – a revitalizing of the relationship among relationships. All harbor sacred potential" (Gergen, 2009: 395).

When we become aware that much of what we do is not directed toward social justice, social work can begin to investigate possibilities. Learning about the world teaches us about oppression and ways of seeing and doing that may be different than what we take as given. Learning about the world means expanding the lens of social work to include context and make the links between social problems and possibilities. Therefore, social work education needs to include a more holistic perspective and an

exploration of what is happening in the world. As Deleon and Ross (2010) argue when speaking about needed reform for social education:

> "Therefore, I begin this chapter by arguing that we face two monumental crises, one environmental and one economic, that, because they are inescapably intertwined, must be confronted together. Moreover, crises that are specific to each, such as the environmental crises regarding food, energy, global warming, and political crises regarding global trade, and the rise of individualism and the decline of the common good, are also all intertwined in such a way that tackling any one issue necessarily leads to the others. Consequently, I suggest that because the crises requires that we rethink our relationship with the environment and with one another, we have no choice but to see our current crises as an opportunity, to develop a new understanding of nature and to transform our economic and political systems to reflect the need to provide for the common good" (2010: 139).

The education of social workers needs to include not only an understanding of how different forms of oppression intersect but also where these intersections are located in an environmental and political context (Mullaly, 2002). We have the opportunity to learn about the world every day and in so many ways. Nevertheless to utilize opportunity takes motivation and commitment to follow through. Learning about the world requires that we not merely digest what is fed to us. Again this requires us to question and question again. Social workers must investigate and critique what is legitimized by the dominant culture if they are to go beyond a domesticating discourse.

8.1.8. Cultivate Values to Live by

Theories and values are linked. We must be aware of the theories we use because they determine the values we bring to social work practice. As stated in Chapter One of the inquiry, the value of social justice is written into social work codes of ethics. Social justice, therefore, is the value that runs through the inquiry. It is primary and central to social work. In a state of social justice, we are all liberated from domination and oppression (Freire, 1970). Both anti-oppressive social work theory and constructionism contain values that facilitate social justice.

The interviews reveal that values direct and motivate the participants. Values and principles mentioned in the interviews include respect, not judging others, listening, and self-reflection, believing in others and in equality, and mutual support that includes

creating a sense of belonging, caring, and finding joy in life. The purpose of values is to clarify the consequence of different actions. For example, if we deal with others with compassionate-caring and loving-kindness, the consequence is different than that coming from an attitude of authoritarian-control. We also live by certain values because they give meaning to life. We feel strongly about the principles and ethics we live by and we have values which we feel passionately about.

Values such as white privilege, imperialism, and reductionist premises that exclude other ways of knowing need to be examined (Shiva, 2006, Schriver, 2004). Schriver (2004) admonishes that we need to examine alternative paradigms. This challenges social workers to be self-reflective. Examining from where and how values arise includes taking stock to see if we truly live and work from a foundation built on social justice. What is the goal of social justice and what are the consequences of how we express our values? On personal, cultural, and structural levels social workers need values and principles that fit with social justice so that our actions will reflect this. Social workers must be seen as having integrity if we are to be seen as credible (Mildred). Certainly the values found in progressive social work codes of ethics are values that all social workers need to bring to their everyday life. We are judged by what we do.

8.1.9. Develop Alternatives Locally (local wisdom)

Endeavoring locally was overwhelmingly endorsed by the participants in the inquiry. Developing local alternatives requires drawing on local wisdom. Joining with others in local communities has the potential to create alternatives that are sensitive to the context of local environments and cultures. Social workers could assist in the generation of local decentralized alternatives, such as social services and economies by creating alternatives 'with' people. This requires both believing in people (Freire, 1970) and working with people in your community on collective initiatives. This entails not having a prescription about what changes are needed but rather using a process that reflects principles of social justice. Authoritarian and dominating ways of working are not congruent with anti-oppressive social work practice. Principles such as egalitarianism and mutual aid reflect social justice. This points toward collectively developing alternative

ways and structures from which to do social work, such as social work programs that are locally based and directed by service users.

Most of the participants talked about local development, such as land-based communities, community development and intentional communities. Local wisdom means that those most connected to place (land) have the most to offer in terms of knowledge about ways to live on the land in a sustainable way. This principle can also be translated as building alternatives to the current social service agency system locally, together with the community. This requires awareness of local contexts and how the local interacts with larger contexts.

8.1.10. Take Collective Action

In order to develop alternatives locally we need to act collectively with networks of people. Working in solidarity with others encourages and motivates people to take action. Making actions collective adds strength to the actions taken. The more people involved, the greater variety of skills we can share. Actions that move past reform to direct actions are more risky than the usual appeal to authority. Working with others in a participatory democratic way rather than from a place of being the 'experts' is important. "The process consists of cycles of action – reflection – planning. The process is collective action …" (Schenck, Louw & Nel, 2010, 113).

The conception of networks includes not only our geographical location but also the community of women, gay people, the differently abled, race, anarchists, Marxists, poverty reduction activists and so on. Coalitions, affinity groups, and the grass-roots are examples of groups where collective action could be facilitated. We can network and build bridges that prevent turf wars by sharing resources and ideas. Developing good relationships with others is essential for collective action. Therefore, it follows that dialogical process is important to relationship building. Working in an egalitarian way 'with' people and affirming our strengths together builds relationships and enables collective action. It helps to narrow the gap between seemingly divergent social struggles when we realize that facilitating social justice means that all struggles that are anti-oppression/domination have as their goal an egalitarian society.

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<u>8.1.11. Work in Solidarity with Other Groups who Advance Social Justice</u>

Those of us who are privileged must be conscious of our privilege and not minimize the troubles of others or think we have the answers because we are social workers. Social workers can advance social justice by working in solidarity with other groups who also work to advance social justice. Being part of the whole helps to advance social justice because social justice is reflected in horizontal non-authoritarian process. This recognizes that people that live the life are the experts of their own oppression. They know their own experiences and life intimately. It may appear at first that social workers at times are not as directly invested in certain struggles as some people, but once the connections are made between the various forms of oppression, we will discover reasons to work together with the oppressed. When it is seen that all oppressions are linked, every struggle toward social justice becomes our own. Once oppression and domination are seen as the backdrop of struggles toward social justice, it is clear that all issues and struggles impact everyone. Social workers are part of the people and like everyone else they are affected by oppression and domination. Taking an active stand with others rather than social work's usual passive stand of asking government for hand-outs is a more effective way for people to empower themselves.

Social workers can more effectively promote social justice by working in solidarity with social activists. For instance, the social justice movement may be of interest to social workers who want to join others in their struggles as one of the many. There is strength in numbers. Coalitions and affinity groups that model solidarity and unity in diversity are also places where social workers can learn about social change. When we work in solidarity with others we are all learners. Solidarity and collective action can facilitate direct action toward building the new beside the old.

When involved in direct action, one no longer merely asks the government for recognition and begs for adjustments to the current system. Solidarity implies that we share the aims and goals of others working for social justice. In effect social work changes its alliance from the government to the people at the grassroots. When social workers work in solidarity with others they stop asking service users to adjust and accommodate injustice.

"Simply to demand equality is to place the bulk of political power in the hands of those who are the recipient of those demands. Correlatively, it is to place oneself in a position that is ultimately the passive one. To demand equality is to be a victim, even if an angry and organized one. Alternatively, to presuppose equality is to be active. It is to see oneself as primarily a peer of those who oppress another or who are beneficiaries of that oppression. And then, only secondarily, do demands arise. But they arise not out of a lack possessed by the oppressed that others are required to fulfill. Instead, they arise out of a recognition of one's own equality that one demands others stop inhibiting. It is strong rather than weak; active rather than passive" (May, 2009: 16).

Working in solidarity with others moves social work from being passive to having an active stance. We can no longer afford to stand by merely watching and reporting on injustice. We are part of the many and must act collectively.

8.1.12. Work from a Framework of Egalitarianism

Working from a framework of radical egalitarianism that challenges inequality, oppression, and domination provides a lens that helps us see what social justice would be like. This frame is a good starting point for social work because it challenges the deep-seated, taken for granted, control and regulation aspects of the profession.

As Sen (2009) argues, there are many perspectives and conceptions of social justice that share particular features.

"In arguing that the pursuit of a theory of justice has something to do with the kind of creatures we human beings are, it is not at all my contention that debates between theories of justice can be plausibly settled by going back to features of human nature, rather to note the fact that a number of different theories share some common presumptions about what it is like to be a human being. We could have been creatures incapable of sympathy, unmoved by the pain and humiliation of others, uncaring of freedom , and – no less significant -- unable to reason, argue, disagree and concur. The strong presence of these features in human lives does not tell us a great deal about which particular theory of justice should be chosen, but it does indicate that the general pursuit of justice might be hard to eradicate in human society, even though we can go about that pursuit in different ways" (2009: 415).

Campbell (2003) lists having a vision of an egalitarian future among the principles of anti-oppressive social work practice. Social work needs to challenge

inequality and oppression and reflect social justice in its structures and institutions. Mutual exchange, anti-authoritarian attitudes, and egalitarian practices are how we can start to work from a framework of egalitarianism in the here and now (Graeber, 2009). Continuing the discussion about social justice will help facilitate moving forward to be the change we want to see.

At the last, the inquiry seeks to change the language of vanguardism and use the language of refusal of domination, the language of egalitarianism. Rather than calling for better leadership it seeks initiators, and organizers. When one invites people to organize, the people will be the ones to decide. Spivak (September, 2012) points out that vanguardism cannot be the basis of a just society because it leads to a society where a few will rule over others. Working toward social justice is not just about knowing the issues or about having a lot of information. "It is a question of educating in such a way that the institutions of democracy and justice for everyone, rather than just self-interest, become habitual: working for standards not necessarily motored by competition; not being rewarded for leadership; not encouraging role models; one could go on" (Spivak, September, 2012). As the world changes, our language also changes and as language changes, the world changes too. Words frame the world and are important to sustaining relationships. "When we can alter the ways in which language is used, develop new forms of talking, or shift the context of usage, we sew the seeds of human change" (Gergen, 2006: 22).

8.2. Conclusion

The conclusion of the present inquiry is that ultimately there are no final conclusions, aside from the passion and commitment to further develop a way of understanding and taking actions together that serve social justice. In today's world, with its high degree of complexity and inter-dependence, it is not enough to be a passive follower or supporter. Change necessitates that activists collectively work toward social justice. It is my hope that the inquiry contributes valuable lessons for social workers to critically explore and build upon. The premise of egalitarianism calls into question the taken-for-granted frames of control and regulation and top-down structure arrangements. As part of the many, we need to have solidarity with those who also seek social justice.

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If we take the challenge to facilitate change for social justice, social workers are uniquely situated by being in a profession that endorses social justice. Social workers can be a catalyst for change. As one of the participants so eloquently stated:

"I think it's a distinguishing thing to be a social worker who can be seen to be doing what we say we believe in. That's what keeps me going. I like being a social worker. It's been a great privilege to be intimately involved in people's lives when they feel hurt and shame and anger and yet have had the courage to seek help. I know I should listen. I don't think good social workers can stop doing that".

On the road forward, social work must have congruence between social justice and practice. But first we must ask questions together in dialogue.

8.2.1. Recommendations

The guidelines outlined in this chapter are recommendations for social work practice. Nevertheless I wish to emphasize the following points as recommendations for facilitating social justice.

It is recommended that social work start locally to collectively raise the consciousness of social workers and others by using a dialogical process. This requires that social work practice become process driven so that our practice reflects anti-oppressive principles. This will entail a shift in paradigm that can come from finding a process that is relational, participatory and radically democratic. I recommend that social workers prefigure future possibilities in everyday educational institutions and work practice by adopting principles such as, trust for people, mutual aid, egalitarianism and, above all, participatory democratic ways of working at all levels of practice. New inquiries can evolve from dialogical process, where by working together, people can decide what questions they want to explore. Working locally with the people, recognizing the interconnection of all life, and therefore working from an ecological perspective that acknowledges the complexity of life would signal the change in paradigm from a profession aligned with the state to one that is 'with' the people.

I recommend that the social work profession take sides with the people who fight for social justice and with the future of the world. Currently social work practice does not facilitate social justice. However, it has the potential to change this by becoming more orientated towards the people and changing institutional arrangements. Transition is

difficult. Awareness and knowing the world are required if we want to have a choice about the changes we want to see.

> "The period of transition from one system to another is a period of great struggle, of great uncertainty, and of great questioning about the structures of knowledge. We need first of all to try to understand clearly what is going on. We need then to make our choices about the directions in which we want the world to go. And we must finally figure out how we can act in the present so that it is likely to go in the direction we prefer. We can think of these three tasks as the intellectual, the moral, and the political tasks. They are different, but they are closely interlinked. None of us can opt out of these tasks. If we claim to do so, we are merely making a hidden choice. The tasks before us are exceptionally difficult. But they offer us, individually and collectively, the possibility of creation, or at least of contributing to the creation of something that might fulfill better our collective possibilities" (Wallerstein, 2004: 90).

Overall I recommend that the profession of social work become a model of social justice, working on the side of liberation. For that reason, our work must be grounded in theories that support facilitating social justice. It is hoped that adopting principles of anti-oppressive social work will enable the profession of social work in Canada to revise the 2005 code of ethics to better reflect facilitating social justice.

I believe the world is in a period of transition. When I began the inquiry, the world was in struggle, but the struggles were disconnected and focused on distinct issues. When I look back on this short period in history however, the increase in the sheer number and intensity of struggles in the world is astonishing. 2000 saw the beginnings of the global social justice movement. This was followed by a number of interconnected struggles that include the Arab Spring, the Occupy movement and uprisings in many countries. As of today, the 'Idle No More' movement, started in Canada by indigenous peoples, has just begun. Ten years ago, such a happening would not have even been a seed in most people's consciousness. There is unprecedented solidarity and support between activists and movements. The profession of social work needs to make choices and act in the present to facilitate social justice. The future is uncertain. Nevertheless, whether we see a great transition in the world or we do not, the task for social work of facilitating social justice remains the same.

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Appendix A

The Interviews (See CD)

Appendix B

LETTERS OF CONSENT

Date:_____.

Dear_____,

I am a doctoral candidate at the University Of South Africa (UNISA). I am writing an inquiry aimed at a degree of a Doctor of Philosophy in the subject of Social Work. I am doing a qualitative inquiry, I have titled: <u>Social Activists' Perceptions About Sustainable Change.</u>

I want to document the stories and construct a discourse by individuals who work for social justice. These stories, as told by those who share their first hand experience, can inspire and educate deepening understanding and insight. Conceivably the shared experience of the participant/partners may help to stretch the concept of justice as defined in the field of social work.

For my dissertation, I have selected to attempt congruence between method, philosophy and subject. To begin with, participants have read my proposal and have been invited to collaborate in the direction of the inquiry. I welcome the input of participants throughout the process of the inquiry. It is my desire to make the process of this inquiry as democratic as possible within the boundaries as set by UNISA.

It is my plan to interview or collect the written responses of activists who emerge as having an understanding of sustainable structural change. I would like to conduct three interviews with you or have you respond to the questions in the inquiry. Interviews will be recorded. The interviews would be recorded and later transcribed by me into a written format. You will be given the opportunity to edit the transcripts for clarity and meaning. Participants will review the final transcript of other participants' interview to facilitate the construction of a shared collaboration. Should you agree to be interviewed; the following guidelines will guide your participation:

- You may withdraw from the inquiry at any time.
- You will determine whether or not a pseudonym will be used in place of your name.
- The recordings will be kept in a secure place until they are no longer needed. Then they will be destroyed.
- It is a requirement of UNISA that I will publish the inquiry. Therefore I ask your permission to allow your contribution to be published.

I would like to thank you for considering this request to be a participant/collaborator in the inquiry as outlined above. If you choose to participate please sign one copy of this form and return it to me.

Leora Harlingten

I understand the conditions of this study and wish to participate as described above.

NAME:_____SIGNATURE:_____

DATE:_____