

# Social Dialogue

Free Magazine of The International Association of Schools of Social Work

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Sept 17

## Populism & Social Work



Nationalist Populism  
and Social Work

The Challenge of  
Right Wing Populism for  
Social Work

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





# Social Dialogue Issue 17

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## Social Dialogue

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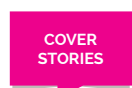
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**Editor in chief**  
Carolyn Noble

## From the Editor



Carolyn Noble

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

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

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

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

**Guest Editor**  
Janet Carter Anand

## From the Guest Editor



Janet Carter  
Anand

Populism has been an important topic in recent symposiums of a growing network of social work practitioners and academics that I am involved in called Building Networks and Frameworks for Global Social Work. The question as how to address the negative consequences of populism through education, research and practice demands attention and will be continue to be explored at our next symposium in Kochi, India. However you can read papers from past network symposiums in this journal edition.

Social workers across most western countries face new forces of conservatism. Neoliberalism with its emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness is surpassed by populist belief in simplistic solutions to complex global social problems. Populist leadership displays very little respect for economic justifications, scientific arguments, or human rights. It involves a way of thinking that legitimates the unpopular and in extreme cases a hatred of the other as an OK response to any perceived threat to one's privilege position or lifestyle. In this sense, populism has also rekindled east west and north south tensions.

Forced migration to Europe is a key focus for the expression of populist sentiment. Middle Eastern refugees in Europe are the scapegoats, even in the most progressive of European welfare states. The media tends to promote an image of people seeking asylum as burdens on the economy or security threats to society, fueling concerns as to new forms of sectarianism and radicalization. Yet social science research provides extensive evidence that such images are not based on evidence and that immigration contributes to the economic, social and cultural capital and development of recipient countries.

Therefore, the question for social workers is how to respond critically to growing populist beliefs reflected in society, social policy and welfare delivery. Solutions lie in the sharing and application of theories that increase our awareness of populism, the adoption of practice strategies promoting analytical practice, the application of evidenced based interventions and the importance of promoting global mindedness. This edition of Social Dialogue provides inspiring examples of how to go about this. 🌍





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## From the IASSW President's Desk

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

Dear Colleagues,

We are here with another exciting volume of Social Dialogue online magazine. The last quarter was marked by several significant activities of IASSW. I would like to highlight the initiatives relating to World Social Work Day.

The 2017 world Social Work Day has been celebrated in different part of the world with many initiatives focusing on the third pillar of the Global Agenda: Working toward environmental and community sustainability.

Social Work day in Geneva- IASSW and IFASW in collaboration with United Nations agencies, the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland – Social Work, Geneva (HETS) and UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNIRISD) have organized the “Social Work and Sustainability” conference with the participation of many representatives of UN agencies, academics and NGOS. This was held on March 21 and 22, 2017 at the prestigious Palais des Nations, Geneva.

The key note address was presented by Lena Dominelli (Durham University, UK and former IASSW President). Reflecting on “Green social work, environmental justice and the global agenda”, Lena Dominelli emphasized the human impact of climate change and environmental disasters and the roles that social work needs to play in prevention, mitigation and sustainable development.

The conclusions were prepared by the combined efforts from Rory Truell, Anne Lavanchy and myself underling some commitments and possible cooperation between IASSW, IFSW and UN Agencies:

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

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

The book can be download for free at : <http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2017/global-social-work-responds-to-HIV>

### Social Work Day at the UN Headquarters - New York

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

As IASSW President, I had the task to wrap up the discussion and provide concluding remarks.

The WSWD was attended by almost 400 people: professionals, students, teachers and the event was video recorded by the UN. <http://bit.ly/2t63cjs>

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

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

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

With warm regards,

*Annamaria Campanini*

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## Social work challenges and response

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

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

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

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



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



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### Introduction

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

### What is Populism?

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

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

The waves of populism not only in the



Asian region but globally is evident of the re-emergence of new type of global and regional dynamics of power, populism and politics. For example, in 2017 the British people voted in favor of the United Kingdom (UK) exiting from the European Union; the German Chancellor Angela Merkel in trying to gather the popular vote is calling for a partial ban on the burqa; the unexpected rise of Donald Trump to the US oval office; the fall of Italian leader Matteo Renzi; and the Modi wave of politics in India give some indication of the rising populism across the globe. Social work should take note of its development and assess its impact and, either globally, regionally or locally gathers a response as its impact on the citizens, the state and communities unfold.

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

While the rise of a populist movement is not new and has taken many forms over the last century its reemergence in the new millennia needs some attention. The question we are interested in is; What are the issues? What needs to be done? And What role can Asian social workers play in creating a response? The relationship between the (political) populism and social work has not been well investigated, and hence this edition of Social Dialogue focusing on this theme is not only apt but crucial to generate social work scholarship on this phenomenon.

## Asian Populism

The rise of populism under Ferdinand Marcos, Joseph E. Estrada Thaksin Shinawatra (who is currently in self exile) in Thailand, Pushpa Kamal Dahal (known as Prachanda) in Nepal, Dr Mahathir Mohamad who served as the Prime Minister of Malaysia from 1981-2003, and more recently Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India are considered by many as populists politicians from the Asia region. Rodrigo Duterte's war on drugs and killings as a populist agenda in the Philippines is another obvious example and the populist uprising that toppled South Korea's President Park Geun-hye, the first woman to be elected as the President and served from 2013 to 2017, who is now facing legal prosecution, may also fit in with current definitions.

The irony is many Asian populists who rise to power have used symbolic uses of violence. For example Prachanda in Nepal and Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines used extra judicial killings and human rights violations to display their power and to show the masses that enemies ( i.e the elite) are being

eliminated. In fact the assassinated may not be the real enemy of the public but for the populist politician, who does not want any opposition and dissent to grow these people are seen as easy targets. However, not all populist leaders use violence to gather popular support.

Let's also look at Malaysia's neighbor Indonesia, with the largest number of Muslim population. In the 2014 Indonesian Presidential elections, the down-to-earth former carpenter and Jakarta governor (popularly known as Jokowi), advanced a new form of technocratic populism that was inclusive, non-confrontational, and primarily focused on improving the quality of public service delivery. Jokowi unlike his rival candidate Prabowo (who used confrontational populism), rightly understood the mood and sentiments of Indonesian electorate who were tired and frustrated of 16 years of autocratic and oppressive regimes. Hence with a foresight, Jokowi applied pragmatic populism, promising rapid improvements in the workings of government the way it delivers its services. This strategy worked well for Jokowi instead of selling grand political visions which has been the norm in the Indonesian political battles. At the same time Jokowi being a non-confrontational politician allowed the powerful and elite to maintain their interests to a greater extent. This dual approach of technocratic approach coupled with specific populist style helped Jokowi not only to come to the power but to survive the presidency.

Modi in India and despite his Hindu Ultra nationalist image was able to convince the Indian voters who gave him ( and his BJP party) a huge victory in the 2014 elections. He was able to form his own government without coalition partners for the first time in 30 years. This is quite a significant change considering the history of Indian politics. Since the 1990s (until 2014) no single political party has won a majority in the national polls and has had to form the coalition government to assume power. Many of these coalitions did not survived the full term in office because of self-interest and inter and intra rivalry conflicts and slowed down government business which meant that they were slow to formulate people oriented policies resulting in the gradual degeneration of democratic rights of the citizens. Now with a full majority in the Parliament, it one sided and authoritative approach to governing, which is happening with the current Modi's majority rule.

If we compare Modi of India and Jokowi of Indonesia and their political ideologies and populist strategies, we see that these two men could not have been more different in background and politics but were successful by using similar populist political strategies to a garner support for the politics Their success in in mobilizing voters especially the masses (the poor) as their main constituency and by attacking the rich and elite demonizing them as collective enemy of the poor and the political class these populist leaders and t secured their rise high office in their own country. For example, both focused on the poor in their country and by using pro-poor images and their own (humble) background as a commoner they presented themselves

as understanding the common man's struggles. Both have used inclusive religious populism to win the votes. In addition to the rhetoric to offer corruption free governance, typically these two charismatic politicians have marketed themselves both as uncompromising defenders of the rights and interests of the common people and as the only true representatives and promoters of 'genuine democracy' (Betz, 2001).

Populist political leaders from the Asia and West seem to have similar values and strategies that are in direct contrast with social works values of respect for human life and protection of vulnerable people and support for democratic rule and redistributive welfare system of governance. For example, during Mr. Modi's visit to the USA during June 2017, President Trump did not comment publicly on the crackdown on civil society in India, or the threat posed to vulnerable groups under Modi's rule. Nor did he mention the populist hate campaign that has produced brutal mob killings of Muslims suspected of trading or consuming beef in selected Indian states. Similarly, Mr. Modi did not raise any alarm over the Trump administration's travel ban on people from several Muslim countries or police abuse in the USA. He is also did not mention or cite any remark about the hate fueled death attacks on Native and Black Americans and other minority groups (eg Muslims) under the Trump administration. In fact, the most obvious thing in common with these populist leaders is their support for each other use of violence and silencing dissent and their almost unqualified support for, or inciting incidents of, racism, misogyny, islamophobia, homophobia, transphobia, anti-Semitism, and anti-immigrant sentiments more than was obvious in the past decades. We argue then, from the examples above that populism and populists regimes can be fertile grounds for further spreading sentiments of separatism and exclusion politics and autocratic rule. As a result, more people are excluded from the democratic processes and their human rights are abused and violated. There is a clear role for social workers to respond to these regimes styles by using political social work models.

## Populism or Pluralism: What Role of Asian Social Work?

The 21st century is witnessing more of populist policy making, lead by a single muscular nationalist leader leading the way. The contradiction is that these autocratic tendencies to incite exclusion and division is antithetical to solving the growing poverty, inequality and rights violations to name a few that have helped these leaders capture power and political stardom in the first place. Political populists have managed to weaken even the established political parties and used societal fears of anti establishment, aggravating popular anxieties like that of globalization, and nuclear threats to name a few to launch their successful populist electoral campaigns and captured powerful political offices. The use of fear has been a powerful mobiliser the populist vote! This form of Asian populism may rise further and also reappear or spread across other countries in

the region. This is due to the general disillusionment and increasing poverty of the general public who are losing confidence in the State as the main provider of services and care taker of their lives. They rather believe in populist leaders and give their vote and democratic power over to them to rule.

Why should social workers be concerned about, understand and analyse populism? Is it because many Asian societies are still impoverished and are experiencing severe violations of human rights and minimum standards of living? In assuming more power and failing to tackle corruption and cronyism, these populist regimes are further weakening civil rights movements and increasing the economic hardship for the most disadvantaged in our communities leaving social workers puzzled and powerless in Asia (and probably in the west too!) as to how to respond. We know that social Work has to play a crucial role in ensuring human rights and well being in the region, but how? What skills do social workers acquire to work against populist agendas?

Asian social work can be a powerful catalyst to resist political populism by working towards a pluralistic society that can resist populist politics that are mainly based on divide and rule. Social workers should be involved in grassroots organizing and helping people-the masses to understand the party politics and politics of populist polices and form alternative polices to counteract this development. Hence there is a continued role for political social work in the region to empower people with information and policy knowledge so as to make right choices in electing peoples representatives who in turn are accountable, not only to their voter citizens but also to the entire population that includes refugees, migrant without papers and other disadvantage groups in the Asian Society.

To conclude, we argue that questions of cultural identity, values, religion, human rights, economic prosperity, poverty, ethnicity, citizenship and federalism are bound to dominate the political agenda for next few decades in Asia. Under these circumstances, the Asian social work has to play a proactive role to be in a position to carve out a larger niche in the Asian democracy and political market space. 🌐

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## Recognition as a moral yardstick against nationalistic social work practise



**Kati Turtiainen**, PhD, Senior Lecturer, University of Jyväskylä, Kokkola University Consortium Chydenius

### Introduction

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

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

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

### Why the theory of recognition as a source of ethical demands

Axel Honneth's (1995) theory of recognition focuses on a normative criteria of a good society where normative issues and interpersonal relations are interrelated. The recognition theory has three dimensions, which are the interpersonal relations of respect, esteem and care. Persons are justified to expect these relations or attitudes from each other in mutual relationships. Thus, in a social space of mutual respect, esteem and care, people can grow to be persons with healthy self-respect, self-esteem and self-confidence. In other words, these self-attitudes contribute to a person's ability for self-realisation. If a person cannot get recognition in a mutual relationship with others, their ability to govern

themselves may be harmed. (Ikäheimo, 2003: 125-140.) In social work, the relations of recognition can provide 'a prism through which social workers can "tune in" to ethical imperatives' (Houston, 2009: 1288). Besides, when people are treated as persons in social relations, it enables trust formation between service users and authorities (Turtiainen, 2012). In a good society, and especially in social work encounters, 'the social' cannot remain just bounded by the good will of the people as 'the social' can play a more fundamental role with normative claims (Niemi 2014). Next, I discuss the social work with asylum seekers and undocumented migrants in the theoretical frame of Honneth's relations of recognition.

### Respect

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

Social work with asylum seekers and undocumented migrants cannot use only national and popular sentiments to inform their practice with asylum seekers and refugees but must base their work on ethical principles informed by a human rights agenda as a framework beyond the dedicates of a particular nation state in which they work (e.g. Staub-Bernasconi, 2014). In practise, social workers must find a way to be co-authors with their clients in forming their practice responses by listening to them and helping them through advocacy to acquire citizen rights from which they are currently excluded. Sometimes working with human rights activists and undertaking direct political action could be one way of counteracting the national or nationalistic measures of evaluating who deserves citizenship and protection and what kind of rights and entitlements refugees can claim (e.g. Briskman, 2014). To make his happen social work practice should get the mandate from the people not having rights and if possible in combination with (global) civil society (Staub-Bernasconi, 2014: 31-32) act in solidarity to protect them and help them receive protection and safety.

### Care

Care as a relation of recognition concerns human beings being valued for their own sake. It means that people must be taken care of regardless of who or what kind of persons they are (Ikäheimo, 2003; Honneth, 1995.) Recognition of the needs of migrants, especially asylum seekers and refugees, is often considered



as instrumental for some other goals, usually economic such as skills shortage or need to cheap labour, not just persons deserving protection and good life in and of itself. I understand care as a relational concept has both private and public dimension.

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

## Social esteem

Social esteem as a relation of recognition has at least three dimensions. First, social esteem concerns personal accomplishments, such as goals, education and work, which need to be recognised in a community (Seglow, 2009: 68). Asylum seekers and especially undocumented migrants lack this kind of recognition in a society and they become easily abused by the employers. From the social work perspective, personal relations to asylum seekers are important in order identify the potentials and visions of persons and also to maintain hope and develop strengths and opportunities in a society.

Second, social esteem is a value that we give to each other in terms of our speciality, such as capabilities or achievements (Honneth, 1995; Ikkäheimo, 2003). In this sense, esteem can be a valuable contribution to the common good. Possibilities for contributing to a new society is vital in order to have agency in the new situation. For undocumented migrants, this goal is strongly dependent on what, if any, particular rights they have in a new society such acknowledgement of their ethnicity or religion (Ikkäheimo, 2003: 134). This is important as ethnicity may be a reason for persecution in the past and therefore getting back such rights may be vital for maintaining self-esteem in a new environment and help with their integration.

## Conclusions

Asylum seekers end up in nation states which often defend their sovereignty instead of protecting human lives and recognising people seeking refuge and protection as people who are in an extremely vulnerable life situation. As employees of the state with national agendas, which divide people for those who are worthy to get recognition in a new society and those who are unworthy and are then left without care, respect and social esteem social work can find itself in an ambiguous situation. While the concept of 'relations of the recognition' are not new in social work practice re-invigorating its contribution to work with refugees and asylum seekers may contribute to social work practice by providing the sensitivity required to evaluate the complexity of explicit opinions, views and implicit background attitudes that affect the way we encounter people (Niemi, 2014; Ikkäheimo, 2003: 137). This sensitivity is vital in order to avoid nationalistic and populist interpretation of social problems. 🌍

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



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## Introduction

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

"Integration" has become the hallmark of resettlement work in the U.S. and the U.K. without a concrete definition of what it means (Ager & Strang, 2004). According to the dictionary, integration is "free association of people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds" and "incorporation as equals into society or an organization of individuals of different groups." These definitions suggest that people in a group or society work together to allow for incorporation of new individuals. Integration requires a reference frame that specifies the norm of a society. However, this frame may mean that norms are not specified at first and how a frame is designed depends on those who have the social power to define it (Brokamp 2016). This reference



indicates that refugees coming to a new society must take a place within an extant framework for which they have no reference point. Sometimes this happens easily and without challenges because there are benevolent advocates from the established group, but in most cases there is a "struggle" because the established structures and understandings are those maintained by the group with existing privileges. With regard to access to a society, this means that the "new" must always measure themselves against the criteria of the "old."

"Inclusion," a term more recently used in Europe, radically alters this view by dispensing with a defined reference frame and taking a closer look at the society as a whole – and acknowledging all of its various kinds of diversity. The dictionary defines inclusion as "the action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure." This frame suggests that newly arriving individuals can become part of the whole, which is the reference framework. This framework refers to an ideal open society, which rejects dividing society into multiple closed spaces for which special access criteria apply. It is no longer necessary to look at why the





“newcomers” do not meet the existing access criteria, and what support they need in this regard, rather the structures for accessing the criteria themselves are questioned. This term and its understanding have radical consequences for systems such as a college/university, which is built around structural barriers for accessing the system (for Germany see KMK 2015).

## Country Frames

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

### Finland

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

It was no coincidence that at time of the so-called refugee crisis the Finns Party won the Finnish vote in the 2015 elections and joined the government coalition as the second-largest party in Parliament. The Finns Party actively propagates nationalistic sentiments as to the virtues of being a true Finn alongside anti-immigrant rhetoric. Finland has witnessed unprecedented protests and physical attacks against asylum seekers. The reasons for this crucial shift towards a more negative climate on immigration are many. The rise of social

media has offered an anonymous platform to express previously unpopular or politically incorrect ideas (Tanner 2016). Populist, xenophobic and nationalist sentiments have been fueled in part by an economic downturn in Finland. Asylum seekers and refugees, who receive well-publicized benefits and show poor levels of integration, often become the scapegoat for many domestic social ills.

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

### Germany

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

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

For Germany, one can conclude that refugee resettlement is still seen from the perspective of integration but the challenges of refugee migration in 2015-2016 opened society up to contemplating how newcomers could be incorporated in a more inclusive way. Recently, this development is challenged not only by populist actors like the right-winged AfD (Alternative für Deutschland) but also by politicians of the traditional parties who are using populist arguments to gain

support of conservative voters before the upcoming election in Germany in late September.

### United States

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

### Conclusions

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

In the context of refugee integration and national politics, it is difficult to separate out which elements of integration rhetoric reflect the nativist beliefs which political scientist Cas Mudde argues are the foundation of right-wing party families, and which elements of integration rhetoric reflect a populist ideology which pits a pure and homogenous people against a corrupt elite (Mudde 2007). Nationalist demands to integrate may reflect a space in which nativism and populism can seamlessly overlap. “Integration” thus might prove to be a way of conceiving of resettlement that is especially susceptible to manipulation in right-wing populist rhetoric. Finnish political demonization of refugee welfare benefits, German unwillingness to question structural barriers to access, and U.S. policies which place the burden of integration on refugee communities themselves all reflect obstacles to reframing the process of refugee resettlement through a lens of inclusion rather than integration. 🌍

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## Populism, migration and social work



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Renowned for being a type of politics whose main intent and purpose is claiming to represent the opinions and wishes of ordinary people (Hornby, 2010), populism is present in different nations and for a multiplicity of reasons. It has been in existence for quite some time although attention to its deleterious effects on migration is relatively recent and has often focused on the election of one controversial populist politician, Donald Trump of the United States, Brexit, and the European migration crisis that predominated the EU and its member states in 2015/16 (Wolf, 2017). For instance, increased migrant and refugee flows have resulted in anti-immigrant sentimentalities soaking mainstream politics in a number of countries with populist politics said to be on the rise in Europe, the Americas, and the Asia-Pacific. There can be no doubt though that there has been scholarly neglect in so far as the venomous effects of populism are concerned particularly in parts of Asia and Africa. What is even more worrisome is the peripheral role that social work continues to play in the field of migration. The prime motif of this treatise is to underscore that populism has serious negative ramifications on migration and that opportunities exist for the social work profession to influence both practice and education. A lot shall surely be depicted in the subsequent paragraphs.

### Understanding migration

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

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

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

Spiralling population growth, political instability, escalating ethnic conflicts, persistent economic deterioration, abject poverty, and environmental shocks were all factors in migration (Adepoju, 2008).

Refugees comprised a distinct group set apart in international frameworks, policies, and discourses and distinguished from those believed to have a choice in their migratory decisions. This distinction is problematic and the question of 'choice' and 'force' is a vexed issue. The binary between 'economic migrant' and 'refugee' continues to be challenged and is actually believed to be false. For example, it has been noted that assumptions of 'a dichotomy between voluntary, economic, and migrant, on the one hand, and forced, political, and refugee, on the other' (Holmes, 2013, p. 17) have not proved helpful in the study of the complex phenomenon of migration. The emergence of several divergent theories to explain migration has given rise to the need for an integrated framework to achieve its holistic understanding. Nonetheless, considering its prevalence

in public and official debates of displacement, it is important to consider how it manifests within migratory discourses.

### Global overview

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

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

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

### Preoccupation with negativity

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

### The European experience

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



(2017) was of the viewpoint that the 2015/16 migration crisis had demonstrated beyond any iota of doubt that the EU and its member states would be dealing with increased immigration in the future. Wolf further argued that the migration crisis would have two consequences in the Western world. She believed the crisis would lead to religious pluralisation and cultural heterogeneity and the rise of populism throughout Europe, with populist movements riding on people's social and economic insecurity in their attempt to advance right-wing politics.

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

### Sub-Saharan Africa

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

### Implications for the social work profession

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

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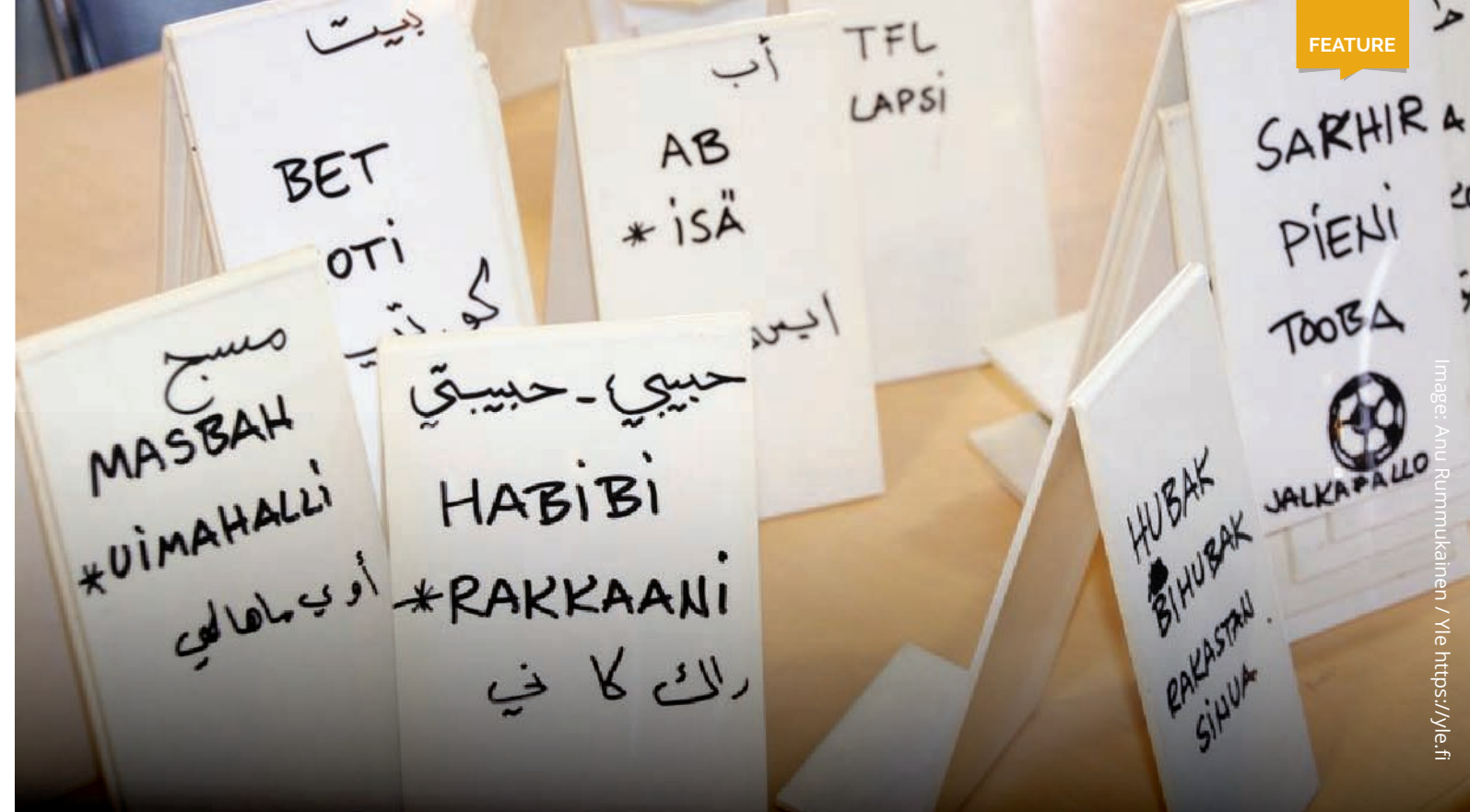
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## Populism and second language acquisition amongst Middle Eastern women living in Eastern Finland



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Second language education has become a commodity often traded by nation states for refugee's access to social benefits, citizenship and in some cases, basic human rights (Edelsky, 2006). As a requirement of integration policy, migrants and refugees are often required to attend language classes in exchange for receipt of benefits. The number of language courses, programs and policies have expanded raising questions as to the quality, ethics and outcomes. This article highlights the highly political nature of language education and its role in developing and maintaining the nation state (Pennycook, 1990). Learning a language is connected to issues such as multiculturalism, bilingualism, minority education and internationalism and yet the inherent political and culture issues are relatively ignored by government and language education services. The acquisition of a second language is essential in achieving social equality however language education may unintentionally serve to facilitate the reproduction of social inequalities within a society.



In many European counties, the emphasis on language acquisition reflects populist and nationalistic sentiments placing unrealistic pressure on migrants to demonstrate their willingness to assimilate and conform to the dominant culture and language. The reality is that large groups of refugees face server challenges and difficulties when acquiring a second language. The following case study illustrates how populist notions as to language acquisition must be challenged by social and community works dedicated to improve linguistic opportunities for Middle Eastern refugees and women in particular.

### Refugees in Finland

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

The research project PROMEQ New Start Finland! initially sort to scope the impact of social marketing interventions on the health and wellbeing status of refugees granted asylum and quota refugees in regional Finland. As a result, an intervention involving language classes for Middle Eastern women was developed, piloted and evaluated. Refugees face significant barriers to equity and language acquisition plays a critical role in access to educational opportunities, employability and social inclusion, which result in negative health and wellbeing outcomes (Davidson et al. 2008). The effectiveness of service interventions to meet the needs of new refugees in regional Finland is

under researched and largely unknown although the international literature demonstrates that new and more participatory approaches are needed to facilitate the integration of new refugees for the mutual benefit of all concerned (Buhin 2012; Kuusela 2014.).

### Language acquisition

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

The language project PROMEQ New start Finland! targeted Arabic speaking refugee women. Refugee



migration from Arabic countries has increased and in 2016, and it is not commonly known that Arabic has become the third largest foreign language group in Finland, surpassing Somali and English speakers population groups (Statistics of Finland 2017).

Besides knowledge of Arabic, other criteria of the inclusion on the PROMEQ New Start Finland! language program were as following: 18-65 years old, woman,

### Inclusive promotion of health and wellbeing

mother of small children (or other reason that has not participated in language courses), residing in Eastern Finland (pilot took its place in Kuopio) and arrived in Finland after 1.1.2014. Acquisition of the Finnish language is of vital importance to the social equity and most importantly is linked to social connectedness and feelings of inclusion. (Ager & Strang 2008.). Difficulties in language proficiency is identified as the number one problem affecting refugee well-being (Watkins, Raze & Richters 2012). However learning Finnish is notoriously difficult for newcomers due the unique origins of the language and insufficient language and translation services. Limited language proficiency leaves women who are mothers or who have domestic responsibilities at particular risk of isolation and marginalisation (Riggs et al. 2012). It is well is documented that migrant women face difficulties participating in language courses. A complex set of gendered, cultural as well as socio-political factors, act as barriers for refugee women to gain access to language education (Watkins et. al 2012). Studies (Riggs et. al.2012) have demonstrated that refugee women are willing and well-motivated to learn, but at the same time find it difficult to attend classes, because of domestic and caring responsibilities. Other barriers include the availability of culturally appropriate childcare and the gender mix of the language classes considered inappropriate by the women's husband or other family members. Women may also be concerned that part time study affect welfare payments. It is common for refugee families to prioritize attendance at language classes for the male of the family. (Riggs et. al. 2012.)

Many refugee women from Middle Eastern countries have no previous access to formal education and are illiterate in their own language. Women's opportunities for education in their country of origin may have been limited because of the socio-political situation and cultural practices and gendered roles, i.e. traditional expectations locate women's role within the home. Besides taking care of children at home, women often have the responsibility to take care of elderly relatives and manage household finances, groceries and maintenance. Limited educational experience mean that some women many be unfamiliar with basic skills such as holding a pen or unable or using a dictionary. Such limitations restrict women's successful engagement

with formal language programs rolled out by the state as part of Finland's social integration policies. A recent study by Naif (2017) found that adult Arab learners ' face significant challenges when learning Finnish as a second language. Besides difficulties in grammar, reading and writing the lack of communication due to the reserved character of Finnish people and difficulties in integrating into Finnish host society are considered a problem both in practical learning as well as motivation to learn. Communication with native speakers is an essential ingredient for better second language learning. However, communication opportunities with natives are rather limited for Arab learners.

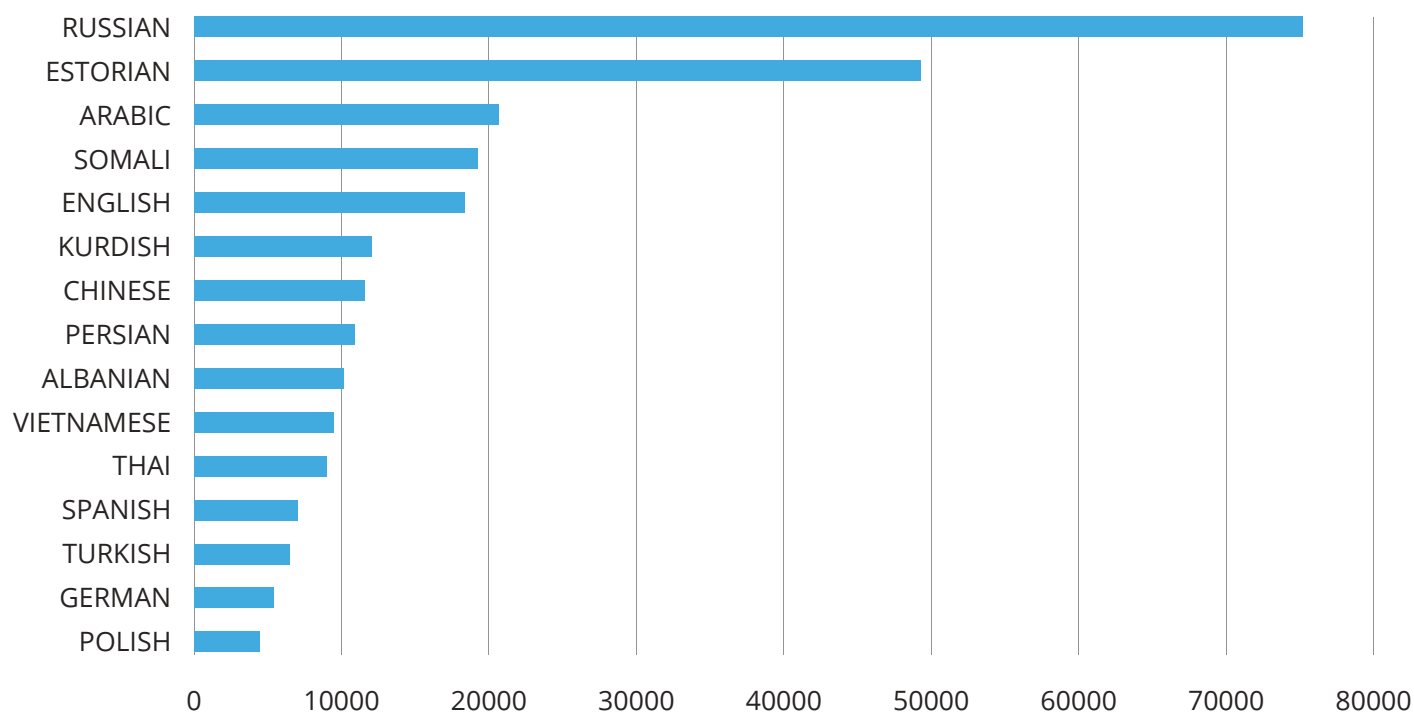
Having to adapt to an unfamiliar education system with no prior experience, in an unfamiliar environment and interacting with unfamiliar people, coupled with ongoing emotional and psychosocial difficulties as part the migration process, makes formal learning a challenge. (Watkins, et al. 2012.)

### Description the language program

New Start Finland's! language program for women, is run in partnership with local services, the City of Kuopio and Multicultural Center Kompassi, Settlementt Puijola. The aim of the language program is to promote social integration through a language acquisition course based on social marketing principles. Social marketing is a not only a model of delivery services but involves a commitment to the consumer participation including the systematic scoping of needs, co-creation of services, tailoring of interventions and an understanding of the value or evaluation of the common outcomes for all concerned (Vaarama et. al. 2016). The language program was advertised through Multicultural Center Kompassi, Settlementt Puijola programs and promoted by the Social Workers, Integration Unit, City of Kuopio. The first pilot commenced, May 2017 with the recruitment of six Arabic speaking participants with assistance from the Kuopio immigration unit social workers. Social work involvement made it possible to target and reach out to stay-at-home mothers who had not had an opportunity to participate to language course previously. Recruitment strategy involved inviting women personally and offering childcare services during the course. Multicultural Center Kompassi, Settlementt Puijola enlisted Finnish volunteers to prove the childcare for participant's children. Native Finnish speakers conducted courses with assistance from Arabic interpreters. Using bilingual research assistants is an effective strategy to achieve cross-cultural linkages between professionals and ethnic minority participants to ensure their views are heard and needs identified (see Lee, Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson 2014).

In the beginning of the course, goals of the participants were elicited using a Goal Attainment Scale (GAS) (Turner-Stokes 2009). Participants had the opportunity to discuss their needs and aims with assistance from the Arabic interpreter. The aim of the GAS was to engage and motivate participants to work toward goals as well as consider the utility and possibilities of the

### Foreign languages spoken in Finland 2016



Source: Yle News Graphic 2017





course. Participants identified goals that were practical, including learning daily phrases of Finnish, computer use for completing online benefit applications, reserving doctor's appointment and communicating with their children's teacher. The GAS results informed the design of the program. Participants studied the Finnish language through different themes through practical activities, information sessions and visits. Themes were tailored, according to social marketing approach, based on the needs and hopes of the participants. Themes included health and dental care, hobbies, social services, housing counselling, computer training, going to grocery store and cooking, learning how to recycle, excursions to city library and to language course of Savo Consortium of Education. Program of the pilot project was a diverse combination of information sessions and language learning activities.

Formal methods of evaluation involved a survey, focus groups interviews, feedback discussion and a reflective log completed by the language teacher and the professionals involved. The survey recorded any changes to women's self-reported health and well-being as the result of participation on the 6-week course. Focus group interviews provided a more descriptive feedback on group processes and strategies. The reflective thoughts and learning from those professionals who ran the program were captured though the use of monthly reflective log completed by the professionals, together with meetings with the research team.

Picture of the professionals of the language program. In front from left to right: Elina Asikainen, Social Worker, Integration Unit, City of Kuopio, Anniina Tourunen, Language Teacher, Multicultural Center Kompassi, Settlement Puijola and Ilham Lhayati, Counsellor of Immigration Support, Integration Unit, City of Kuopio. In the back, from left to right: Katja Kiflie Beka, Social Worker, Integration Unit, City of Kuopio and Johanna Rastas, Coordinator, Multicultural Center Kompassi, Settlement Puijola.

### New Learning and Reflections

The first pilot has provided opportunities for new learning. The motivation of the refugee women to learn a language was high however, it was crucial that the course was tailored and supportive to the specific needs of this group. It is conceivable that participant's goals will change and prospective courses must be responsive and flexible. The language teacher and professionals involved believe that there is a large unmet need for similar type programs amongst refugee women who have been in Finland for a longer period than three years. Contrary to the assumptions of the original program participants reported that they would have preferred more language learning instead of diverse activities combining language learning with information sessions. Reflecting their intense desire to learn the language, participants expressed the need to involve the Arabic interpreter with them during sessions, so they could interact with the teacher i.e. express themselves and ask questions. Participants expressed their desire to continue language learning and hoped to get access a

new course as soon as possible.

Language teachers and professionals involved in the program felt that they were effective in addressing some of the barriers women experience in engaging with language courses. The most significant challenge the professionals faced in delivering the course was limited time. Program activities were time consuming for many reasons e.g. some of the participants were illiterate and were not familiar with studying or had to feed their babies during the course activities. It was felt that a 30 hour program was insufficient to achieve measurable outcomes given the complex needs of group. However pilot, has been significant a trigger for exploring and developing alternative course programs. Over the next two pilots professional will have the opportunity to further develop and improve the program using an action learning approach to language teaching. The second group starts in autumn 2017. Already the new pilot sessions will be lengthened and themes reduced to make the course more effective to participants. The social marketing approach has had a constructive impact on the way language courses are being designed and delivered to the Middle Eastern refugee women. This study confirms that refugee women wish to learn language for very practical everyday activities and results mirror similar studies on other countries (Riggs et. al. 2012).

### Conclusion:

This study confirms that refugee women are best motivated to acquire a second language based on very practical everyday activities and needs (Riggs et. al. 2012) and not the agenda of government or service providers. The findings defy populist beliefs that refugee women are reluctant, lack motivation to attend programs, or not supported by their husbands to attend such courses. There is a demand for more customised and facilitated language courses for refugee women and other migrant groups who have difficulty accessing standard language courses. The growing commodification and politicalisation of language courses and programs has meant the unique needs of refugee mothers are overlooked, leaving women further isolated. Language acquisition is a matter of equality and human rights and without the opportunity to learning, refugee women's world may be confined to the four walls of their home. Watkins et. al. (2012) has argued that greater sensitivity to refugees' backgrounds, culture and gender is necessary in all education programs working toward a multicultural society. Programs must empower and motivate refugee communities, understand and sensitively negotiate cultural customs and take into account the effects of culture, gender and context on adult learning. We would suggest that professionals must review and question prevailing attitudes toward refugees and their established practices and assumptions in relation providing services to diverse migrant groups (Watkins et. al. 2012). Buhin (2012) emphasizes how it is important to keep in mind the demographic heterogeneity of refugees when creating culturally relevant social interventions to maximize the probability of success. It is our experience that social marketing approach appears to a responsive approach to delivering language services by taking into account cultural customs, barriers and needs and by tailoring each language services accordingly. 🌍

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



Dr. Chaitali Das

A line of Syrian refugees crossing the border of Hungary and Austria on their way to Germany, 6 September 2015. Photo: Mstyslav Chernov

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

## Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum seekers in the political Landscape:

In 2015, Angela Merkel opened Germany's doors to Refugees and Asylum seekers, in response to the Syrian crisis. Since then, Germany had received 441,899 applications for asylum, a sharp rise compared to 41,332 asylum applications in 2010 (BAMF, 2016). As Chancellor, Angela Merkel has stood firm on her politics of leaving Germany's doors open, even as the mood in other EU countries (Hungary, Austria, Poland, UK) was largely negative with many rejecting the call for solidarity and to sharing the task of accommodating refugees and asylum seekers. The mainstream reaction to refugees/asylum seekers has however not been as negative and most Germans seem to support their country's commitment to provide refuge to people fleeing from war and persecution. Germans has matched their attitudes with action with huge numbers of Germany participating in supporting refugees with housing, helping them to integrate, offering voluntary services as well as donating resources. Nevertheless, it is also clear that this refugee influx has also led to soul searching, recognition of problems and the difficulties

of integration and perhaps not surprisingly, while the welcome culture still exists, there is also an increasing concern about the implications of this on the welfare state, housing and infrastructure (Studie Deutsche Willkommenskultur, 2017).

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

In an attempt to further streamline asylum seekers, a pact with Turkey was made to limit unaccounted refugees from entering Germany and other parts of the EU. Furthermore, to further manage the asylum seeking process, administratively and financially, Merkel's

government further limited support for asylum seekers and laid down additional conditions and responsibilities on asylum seekers and refugees in terms of where they could live, who could access support for education and living, and under what conditions as well as conditions under which punitive measures could be taken for example: reducing support for lack of participation in integration / language courses. Furthermore, attempts have been made to categorise countries as 'safe' or 'unsafe', such that persons applying from Asylum and Refuge could be identified and processed accordingly. Finally, there has been increasing commentary in terms of what 'Asylum' under the law means, including 'who can be legally given asylum' and attempts have been made to categorise different reasons for immigration such as: those seeking refuge, those seeking asylum and those seeking protection. According to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), those fleeing political persecution can be granted asylum while those fleeing war are eligible to apply for refuge and protection but not necessarily asylum. There are thus three different kind of protection that Germany offers ranging from Refugee protection, Entitlement to Asylum and Subsidiary Protection (BAMF, 2016a). Recent developments indicate that applicants are more likely to receive subsidiary status rather than asylum status (Neue Asylpraxis beim BAMF, 2016). Subsidiary status, however, limits the period of stay in German, access to resources as well as the right to bring families to join persons who are in Germany. These measures, however, have received much criticism as failing to recognise the context of asylum seekers, categorising persons in terms of 'who is and should be protected' and who does not need or should not be protected' and criminalising or punishing them.

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

Furthermore, sexual harassment during new Year's at Cologne, terrorist actions perpetrated by supposed asylum seekers/refugees have further sensitized the German public to the risks of letting refugees into the country where complex administrative and legal systems make it often difficult to recognise possible terrorists and to take action against them. Finally, the very real difficulties of integrating people from a different culture and land are increasingly coming to the fore, posing central questions about German identity, culture, what 'outsiders' need to adapt and should integrate to. This has led to interesting calls for debates and ideas of 'what is German' and 'what should be German'. However, these debates have become increasingly polarised and laced by the influence of populist ideas that tend to present a German as a mono-culture with a particular culture, history, tradition and religion, rather than accept Germany as a multicultural place with a complex history that many diverse people of different religions and ethnicities have shaped.

Based on these ideas, Merkel's party colleague and Germany's interior minister, Thomas de Maizière, has

called for a 'deutsche Leitkultur', in which he calls for a recognition of particular social norms and actions along with the constitution and respect for human rights, that, according to Maziere, forms the fundamental basis of Germany. Within this context he makes it clear that Germans are not 'Burkha' (de Maizière, 2017). This was heavily criticized with some maintaining that German culture is laid in the constitution and others seeing this as a guise to further monitor right and Islamist groups and stress integration. Merkel's own statement of what German culture is, highlights a multiplicity of cultures, historical and regional influences (Merkel, 2017).

With the ruling parties and its members emphasis on drawing sharp differences between practices of Muslims and the general majority population of 'Germans', it is clear that populism is increasingly becoming visible in mainstream politics in Germany, as it is everywhere else in the world. A turning point in German mainstream politics is also the rise of the extreme right wing party, the Alternativ Für Deutschland (AFD). The popularity of AFD has risen so much, that polls predict that they will enter the German parliament as an opposition party in the 2017 German elections in September. AFD leaders envision a 'Germany of Germans!' They oppose immigration, and believe that Germany needs to protect its borders from immigrants, including refugees. Furthermore, they fear the usurpation of German values, culture and history through the influx of Muslim migrants and refugees, particularly since most of the refugees arriving in Germany from Syria and Afghanistan are Muslims. Thus AFD's agenda is not only racist but very clearly Islamophobic. AFD's leader Frauke argued for shooting at refugees at Germany border to halt entry of refugees into Germany (German right leaning AfD, 2016). AFD's rhetoric often emphasises points of difference between Muslims and Christian/German ways of life, and propagate fear of a cultural takeover by Islam. They have argued for a ban on the head scarf and an insistence that immigrants pledge their loyalty to German law and acceptance of German ways of life.

The next upcoming elections in September 2017 in Germany, clearly thematises populist notions with regards to immigrants, Islam, Asylum seekers and so on. Immigrants are portrayed as criminals and persons threatening the security of the nation. AFD posters juxtapose 'German' culture and society against 'immigrant' and 'Muslim' societies, they celebrate Bikinis as opposed to Burkha's and hail the reproduction of 'German' kids instead of 'immigrants' (Kamann 2017). Other parties such as the Left and the main ruling party CDU, also vie for resistance against the hate rhetoric and seek to promote tolerant living respectively. The issue of increasing deportations and definitively managing Asylum seekers is also a political manifesto for the current ruling party Christian Democratic Party (CDU) (Merkel's party) that is set to win. Though right wing parties like the AFD are keen to link migration, refugees and asylum seekers to security issues, other parties have resisted this simplistic connection, even though issues of Security, taxation, and benefits remain important issues in this election.



## The role of social workers:

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

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we will learn to live together with our differences. I think, as social workers, we should encourage participation in these encounters.

News such as the establishment of a 'liberal mosque' in Berlin and more recently planning of a 'culturally sensitive toilet' in Cologne had become newsworthy. For both topics, I believe a contextualisation is necessary to understand what happened and the reactions that ensued. In my naiveté, I asked an acquaintance who is Muslim what she thought of the liberal mosque. She asked me what I meant by 'liberal', which from what I had read meant a mosque where men and women could pray together and where a female Imam led the services. She answered that her mosque is also 'liberal' where men and women pray together, though they do not have a female Imam, and they had not felt the need to refer to themselves as 'liberal'. This interaction highlighted to me the importance of being aware of how the mainstream or those in power often defines the 'other' or the 'minority' in very limited and problematic ways, limiting the agency of minorities to self-define or express themselves beyond structures and boundaries imposed by the majority.

Perhaps because of, or even irrespective of political personalities and their ideas, I suspect there is a genuine desire to understand the 'other' and to provide 'support'. However, I suspect that it is not the language that holds people and communities apart but simply different lifestyles. Indeed, how would I learn about Goths, or Punks, if I do not belong to the scene or do not have friends who are part of it? I hardly have any idea what the lifeworld of German teenagers is, given that no one in my circle of acquaintances is a teenager. Acceptance of difference is crucial in multi-cultural societies – be it different ethnic, social or religious. Social workers can play a very important role in bringing people together for dialogue, simply by creating spaces where people can come together. It is clear that it is not one space or one format that is required but rather multiple formats and multiple spaces at multiple levels.

I hope social workers can further engage to enable reflection in the population. Social workers do not need to provide answers - these answers have to be found together in democratic dialogues (Parekh, 2006) that may be fundamental to a participatory and deliberative democracy. 🌍

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## IASSW's message for peaceful engagement with Social Justice, opposing and condemning intolerance and violence

IASSW opposes and condemns intolerance and violence in all its pernicious and evil forms, and condemns those governments, quasi-governments and individuals who perpetrate and support intolerance and violence. We condemn people and industries that make and sell the weapons and other equipment that allow terrorists to carry out their violent intentions. Our condemnation does not change according to country, race, ethnicity, religion, or other circumstance. IASSW does support robust conversations undertaken in goodwill to address and resolve injustices around the world that have grown from years of oppression, colonialism, and religious and economic hegemony. The history of oppression, however, cannot in any way justify contemporary violence and daily acts of terror which can only perpetuate the oppressive cycle of violence, and do nothing to advance social justice or peace. The great religions of the world only advocate peaceful resolution of conflict and complaints. Social work educators also teach peaceful engagement for social justice in our classrooms, support it in our research, and are prepared to engage with anyone of goodwill who is interested in addressing and resolving historical or modern grievances with the goal of social justice and an end to oppression in all its forms. 🌍



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



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## Introduction

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

## Background

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

Malikane (2017) defines radical transformation as the product of the output which is produced by the economy of a country and existing patterns of ownership and control. The questions which could be generated by this assessment concern those who own the entities; those who production makes the most significant contributions to the economy; those who manages them and those who make decisions about investment patterns, employment patterns and rates of pay in the labour market. Maserumule (2012) maintains that South Africa is in the midst of a battle between defining a developmental state and a democratic one, while the latter goal seems to be the one to which the African National Congress (ANC) government is giving most of its attention, although it outwardly purports to be committed to the emergence of a developmental state. The authors of this short article maintain that radical transformation is required in South Africa, in

order to achieve a state which is inclusive, democratic, universal and fair- as the only means by which social justice is likely to be achieved in South Africa should therefore become a moral imperative.

## White monopoly capital and paradoxes in institutions of governance

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

Southall (2017) maintains that while policies targeting equal opportunity and preference to blacks are necessary, it however needs attention on addressing rampant corruption, promotion of transparency and accountability. For example, the Treasury of the country has been flagged for unaccountable millions. The South African Police Service (SAPS) is also struggling to secure a Police Commissioner for years now as the appointed ones end up trapped in criminal cases associated with



Photo credit: United Nations Photo

alleged wrong doing. Institutions of governance are failing to effectively implement social services while their purpose is understood, unfortunately reality shows something else. Another branch of monopoly if one could call it that concerns the alleged state capture by the Gupta family. While social work does not concern itself with allegations, a key question arises if the state capture (whether real or not) will replace white monopoly capital, meaning that one corrupt practice is replaced by another. Based on the ideal of real transformation and social development, the best capital is inclusive and people centred. Monyai (2011) points out that the paradox of current social policy initiatives is still the marginalized who are still excluded by the apartheid regime even though social policy and programmes are claiming to be targeting them.

## The ongoing debate concerning decolonisation

The debate concerning decolonisation has swept through many of the corridors of learning in South Africa, particularly those in the domain of higher education. As there is a great deal of confusion concerning how the concept should be understood and interpreted, there is also a possibility of overlooking the 'Other' (Sewpaul, 2013). As a consequence, endeavours to decolonise can arouse intense emotions and be perceived as destructive if they are not carried out within professional and humane parameters. Essop (2016) points out that the decolonisation debate raises concerns with respect to the relationship between power, knowledge and learning. However, there are two categories of dangers which are inherent in most decolonising enterprises. The first concerns

the tendency to prompt racial essentialism, in accordance with which white is replaced by black or Freud by Fanon. The second concerns manifestations of social conservatism, which pit modernity against tradition. These dangers can be avoided through an acknowledgement and an acceptance of epistemological diversity. Broadbent (2017) explains that it would require a great deal of thorough critical scrutiny to decolonise knowledge in a meaningful sense. Critical decolonisation entails accepting the possibility of error and also considering whether indigenous knowledge systems may contain certain truths which have been inaccessible to western science. However, it could also entail accepting that indigenous knowledge systems may be flawed or wrong.

## The plight of the poor as a focus for political rhetoric and not for actual attention

In his discussion of the dilemma which is presented by widespread grinding poverty in Africa, Hope (2004: 127) explains that the poor are afflicted by a lack of purchasing power, a predominantly rural culture, exposure to risk, insufficient access to social and economic services and few opportunities for generating incomes in the formal sector. However, it is abundantly evident that the plight of the poor becomes an abstract political concern in the messages of political parties, while their actual concerns are far from those of the people on whose behalf they purport to speak from their political platforms. A great many people have been given cause to wonder how politicians are able to continue to deceive large swathes of the populations



of countries such as South Africa, while doing very little which effectively alleviates their shared plight. A cynical response to the question may suggest that politicians of all ostensible political persuasions feel no compassion at all for the poor and simply exploit their plight to garner votes for their parties.

### Should social work undergo radical transformation?

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

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

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

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

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## Nationalist Populism and Social Work



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### Introduction

Not so long ago, political commentators confidently declared that Western economic and political liberalism had triumphed and that viable systemic alternatives had been exhausted. The victory of Western consumerism was interpreted as “an endpoint in mankind’s ideological evolution” signalling an “end of history” (Fukujama, 1989). It was just a matter of time until Western liberal democracy would affirm itself as the “final form of human government” (Fukujama, 1989). The two major ideological challenges to liberal democracy – communism and fascism – no longer harboured popular appeal – communism because its lack of viability and fascism because of its lack of success (Fukujama, 1989). Fast forward two decades and the faith that some placed in the political force of liberal ideology seems to have been utterly misplaced. The ‘Arab Spring’, while at least initially giving rise to a range of democratic processes, ushered in a clash between communal, liberal, and populist

religious factions that, aided by opposing geopolitical forces, annihilated tens of thousands of civilians and returned to rubble artefacts of ancient and modern civilisations. Citizens in Eastern Europe and Russia have seen a hollowing out of democratic processes and institutions and the rise of nostalgic teleology featuring a strong state that protects citizens from the avarice of the free market. Even in Western Europe and North America, the bastions of liberal and social democracy, an increasing number of citizens no longer regard it as essential to live in a country governed democratically (Foa & Mounk, 2016). The rise of conservative nationalist populism in countries such as the United States, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, England, Italy, and Scandinavia is increasingly perceived as a threat to the very liberal democratic fabric that only two decades ago seemed to be on the verge of becoming what Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan termed ‘the only game in town’ (Linz & Stepan, 1996).



## What happened?

A growing number of observers agree that we are witnessing a deconsolidation of liberal democracy (Foa & Mounk, 2016). That is, a growing number of citizens no longer believe that liberal democracy is the best way to govern a country and are increasingly tempted to embrace authoritarian alternatives. Indeed, some observers fear that this deconsolidation could endanger even wealthy and stable democracies that were, until recently, regarded as 'safe' (Foa & Mounk, 2016). Explanations as to why liberal democracies are deconsolidating focus on its inability to ensure material stability or continuity of culture and tradition. The former line of argument holds that economic and political liberalism have been too successful. That is, neo-liberalism aggressively undermined the tripartite agreement that mitigated the conflict between labour and capital and formed the basis of social democracies. Deregulation and austerity measures, the economic remedies of a post-Keynesian 'welfare' state now prescribed by parties on both sides of the political spectrum, render the lives of ordinary citizens increasingly precarious, unstable, and competitive. As a result, citizens find themselves less and less represented by established political parties. With a diminishing stake in liberal democracy, citizens find themselves more and more prepared to forgo human rights as well as democratic, and pluralist ideals in favour of ideological alternatives that promise easy solutions (Lanzone & Woods, 2015; McSwiney & Cottle, 2017).

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

Another relatively novel line of exploration focuses on the impact of new forms of communications and particularly social media (Das, 2017; Dittrich, 2017; Speed & Mannion, 2017). This embryonic body of work posits that rhizomic, non-hierarchical forms of knowledge (Guattari, 1972) attached to social media can be manipulated so that they, charged with post truth facts, affix themselves to hierarchical machineries of 'knowledge' production whose structures are often barely visible to social media consumers. Further, social network members linked by social media cluster more readily around anti-establishment issues and can be more easily identified, accessed, and mobilised by political entrepreneurs (Dittrich, 2017). In the absence

of editorial policies and a lack of fact checking, social media content tends to be more readily aligned with networks associated with populist causes than with centrist ideologies (Hendrickson & Galston, 2017; Page & Dittmer, 2016).

## Nationalist Populism and Social Work

The nexus between nationalist populism and social work has been poorly explored. Indeed, few researchers have systematically researched the phenomenon. This is surprising given the fact that the growing popularity of nationalist populism rhetoric clearly signals that this brand of populism is a force that is intent on sweeping away the universality of human rights. It re-defines how the crumbs that are available under the neo-liberal welfare state are to be distributed. This proposition shakes the very foundations of social work. To illustrate the point, Luca Fazzi's research (2015) focusing on the rise of nationalist populism in northern Italy is worth summarising. According to Fazzi, the political success of nationalist populist Northern League led to a 're-targeting' of welfare where access to social services by ethnic or social minorities is becoming increasingly restricted (Fazzi, 2015). As a result, essential services such as housing, income support, and early childhood services are delivered on an 'our people first' basis. Luca Fazzi's account also describes the rise of overtly racist institutions and vigilante groups that are created to denounce infringements against cultural norms and to protect neighbourhoods against crime committed by 'illegal immigrants' (Fazzi, 2015). As the populist message highlighting the threat of an "invasion of immigrants" is increasingly absorbed by the local population, social workers find it more and more difficult to activate informal support for migrants (Fazzi, 2015). The departure from humanitarian principles and universal social rights to a system of welfare based on the political ideology and clientelism impacts directly on the professional practice of social workers employed by administrations in these areas (Fazzi, 2015). Fazzi outlines four distinct responses by social workers to these changes: supporters of the new administration, the passively dissatisfied, the pragmatists, and the activists. Fazzi highlights that less educated and less experienced social workers employed by small municipalities tend to be among the supporters and passively dissatisfied. Pragmatists and activists, on the other hand, tend to have specialist training had more experience, are skilled in creating alliances, and have larger networks. Social work activists could be mainly found in medium-sized or large municipalities (Fazzi, 2015). Fazzi warns that if not countered populism, in combination with neo-liberal austerity has an astonishing capacity to reshape social work culture (Fazzi, 2015).

## What is to be done?

This raises the question how nationalist populism can be countered. For progressive political observers, the answer rests with a radical reworking of democracy that harks back to John Dewey's political experimentalism that sees political procedures and institutions as being



permanently constructed as they are justified only as long as they fulfil their purpose (Dewey, 1927). The rise of populist nationalism seems to indicate that it is time to, in Dewey's sense, re-shape political institutions and re-define citizenship to make them more representative. It may well be that mechanisms that allow for more direct access to the political system, such as DemocracyOS, a grassroots approach based on an App allowing its users to deliberate and vote on political issues, and its associated Net Party in Buenos Aires will form part of a re-invented State. It is also possible that political parties will have to be reformed to allow for grassroots participation that extends beyond canvassing and donations. While changes at the systemic level will be crucial to counter the rise of nationalist populism, social workers need to think about strategies at the mezzo and micro level of professional practice. Fazzi's account (2015) highlights the role of social workers as moral and political agents making the point that social work education should include solid grounding in professional ethics as well as preparation in dealing with populist doctrines which would include pedagogical emphasis on community development and activism. Clearly, grounding social work practice in human rights (Gray & Webb, 2013) and anti-oppressive theory (Dominelli, 2002) and directing it towards activism (Noble, 2007) is crucial for novice social workers who find themselves within a context that challenges the core values of an inclusive society. Beyond a pedagogical approach, however, those working in the heartland of nationalist populism will find it useful to be supported by a network of like-minded, experienced social workers. The rise of national populism signals that now is the time to forge such networks and create linkages with civil society. 🌐

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## The Challenge of Right-Wing Populism for Social Work



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### Introduction

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

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

Under right-wing populism, the challenges have been rising to social work. The world is changing and the nature of social work must also change. The system is broken and those at the margins are calling for social work advocacy and activism, of their behalf. The patriarchal

neoliberal ideology and its capitalist wave, the politics of austerity, the violation of human rights, gender-based violence against women and towards the LGBTQ community, the recent rise of bigotry, hate, xenophobia and racism fueled by right-wing political populism across different Western nations, the backlash against refugees and migrants moving across international borders who are fleeing from conflict and persecution or other life-threatening situations, and the violations of Indigenous rights and natural sources pose a tremendous challenge for social work (Duarte, 2017).

### 21st Century: The Revival of Right-Wing Populism

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

Following the cuts in the welfare state and the unprecedented rise of unemployment which

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

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

Populism can be defined as a political style that pits people against the status quo (Judis, 2016a). The 21st century political populism has its roots in the 19th and 20th centuries. Throughout the history, political populism has always had a surge in the wake of economic recessions. Certainly, it cannot be defined exclusively in terms of right, left or centre. It includes both. Undoubtedly, there are right-wing, left-wing and

centrist populist parties. Thus, in general, populism can be defined as a political logic – a way of thinking about politics. For the American historian Michael Kazin, populism is a kind of language used by politicians to speak with ordinary people, as if these people were a noble assemblage, not bounded narrowly by class. So, in the 21st century, what distinguishes left-wing populists such as Bernie Sanders (United States), Jeremy Corbyn (United Kingdom), Alexis Tsipras (Greece), Jean-Luc Mélenchon (France) and Pablo Iglesias (Spain) from right-wing populists such as Donald Trump (United States), Marine Le Pen (France) and Nigel Farage (United Kingdom) among others in Eastern Europe? The left-wing populists champion the people against the elite or establishment that hold or impose a system of oppression. Normally they tend to advocate for people's rights, and raise the critical consciousness of society against the status quo. The right-wing populists champion the people against the elite or establishment by accusing them of favouring a third group such as immigrants (in general), Muslims, Jews, refugees or simply people of African origin or from other ethnic minorities. Right-wing populists also tend to accuse and discriminate other minority groups such as those who represent the LGBTQ people (Judis, 2016a; 2016b).

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

### The Social Work Response

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

The global definition of social work (IFSW, 2014) approved by the IFSW General Meeting and by the IASSW General Assembly in July 2014 which occurred in Melbourne, Australia, defines social work as a "practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing" (IFSW, 2014).





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

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

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

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

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

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



## A Community Development response to ‘Sham’ right-wing populism

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To be clear about my position, alluding to Ian Hyslop’s recent blog on social work, there’s no ‘essence’ of community development, no community development ‘as a thing’. There are diverse theories and practices that co-exist in tension with one another, producing specific types of practice in different contexts. Community development can be oriented in conservative, pluralist and radical directions (Gilchrist, 2004). I will argue for a radical orientation.

In some ways I have approached this blog post intrigued by Martin Buber’s thought about history’s claim on each person and each new generation (Friedman, 1991). What might history, right now, in this moment of right-wing populism, require of community development?

### The problem of ‘sham’ right wing populism

Right-wing nativist populism (most recently seen in Trump’s election, Brexit in the UK and the revival of Pauline Hanson in Australia), which I refer to here as ‘sham populism’, rejects liberal democracy (Altman, 2017) with its ideals of protecting minority rights, avoiding ‘majority’ rule. Sham populism stands for:

An animating force fuelled by anger directed at elites who have betrayed the people and against threatening out-groups;

Removing doubt in a complicated world – transforming complexity and ambiguity in political controversies into a search for enemies; and,

A political style, which matches intolerance of various groups (mainly immigrants) with a style of confronting argument – where offensiveness seems to imply authenticity (Tiffen, 2017).

I am not suggesting the left can’t also get caught in sham populism – as we see in Venezuela right now for example. But it’s more often the political right at this historical moment.

### Community Development and ‘sham’ populism

Many people in the community development world share the concerns of contemporary sham populisms – we mistrust elites and institutions of liberal democracy (media, political parties, even the state, as many aspects of the state are captured by corporations), and many of us have been angry and anxious about the future.

Yet, I hope that we do not share the same narrow response and are able to hold a more nuanced understanding of ‘the state’ and ‘the media’, avoiding totalising narratives and recognizing the pluralistic dimensions – that there are many diverse players within the state and media, partly allies in our work, not simply enemies.

Community development has also been enriched by the notion of ‘the popular’ as in Paulo Freire’s radicalising of adult education. ‘Popular’, particularly the Latino version of the word, equates to ‘the people’s education’ – education ‘for the people, by the people, with the people’. Freire’s popular education is dialogical, committed to ‘love, and



humility, which is nothing like the anger and deception that is central to contemporary right-wing sham populism.

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

### To be at the table – a radical community development agenda

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

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

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

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

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

Such organising also needs to be linked to trans-local work. In Queensland, we call this meta-level work – forming networks, federations, and coalitions to ensure local issues are also articulated into policy-oriented trans-local activity. Increasingly this work also needs to enter the local-global nexus. One recent example of this is the formation of the New Economy Network Australia (NENA), where at last local experiments in social-solidarity economy are being connected, and we are organising nationally and internationally.

### In conclusion

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

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



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## Fascism Here We Come: the Rise of the Reactionary Right and the Collapse of "The Left"



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The white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia over this last weekend is an important moment in American politics, symbolizing the ascendance of the reactionary right and showcasing the dangers of its toxic assault on democracy, equality and the rule of law. News outlets on early Sunday reported that one person was killed on August 12th after a car accelerated into a crowd of counter-protestors, while dozens more were injured. That intimidation, terror, and murder are tools of the reactionary right in their war on people of color and non-Christians is nothing new in history. Still, the most recent wave of right-wing hate is instructive, offering numerous lessons regarding the state of American politics.



First, the incident reveals that right-wing fascism has officially “arrived” on the American political scene, as seen in Trump’s refusal to condemn the murders. Trump knows he can’t afford to alienate racist elements on the right to get re-elected, and he doesn’t want to alienate them, since he himself is a racist and a bigot. Hence the refusal to use clear language to condemn the murders. His political reasoning here is completely transparent, as he’s spent his entire political career cultivating hate on the reactionary right. Although Trump eventually condemned the attack after receiving a large amount of negative press, his reversal is part of a broader trend Trump is known for, in which he initially signals to racists in his support base that he approves of their actions, thereby devaluing any later reversal as merely the product of political pressure, rather than principled opposition. The damage, of course, has already been done. Far-right fascists and racists know that the president supports their behavior when he goes out of his way to provide them cover.

The second lesson from this tragedy relates to the futility of claims that Trump and his far-right supporters are the sort of people with which “the left” should be working. First, there’s the claim among numerous “left” pundits that Trump’s campaign represented the rise of working class populism, the implication being that Trump himself was a working class hero set on restoring America’s past economic greatness. Other nonsense abounded about Trump the principled anti-imperialist, but that rhetoric is contradicted by his administration’s belligerent rhetoric and nuclear threats toward North Korea, his militarism in Syria, and his embrace of increased sanctions against Russia. The rhetoric about Trump the economic populist is contradicted by his record since taking office of embracing typical corporatist Republican policies, including deep cuts in social welfare spending, deregulation of big business, and efforts to ram through tax cuts for the wealthy.

It would be silly and wrong to say that all Trump supporters are right-wing fascists or extremists. Many are simply conservatives who do not embrace racism or bigotry. According to data from the Pew Research Center and elsewhere, while two-thirds to three quarters of Trump supporters embrace reactionary and bigoted social views, the quarter to third do not. Still, the recent push among numerous “leftists” to seek an alliance between the left and the far right (a “Brown-Red” alliance) is worrisome considering the growing data suggesting the right-wing elements of Trump’s support base are out-and-out fascists.

Three recent surveys raise alarm bells on the Trump-fascist front. First, there was a poll reported in the Washington Post which found that a plurality of Trump voters believed that white Americans face “a lot of discrimination” in the United States. Comparatively, just 19 percent said “Latino people” face “a lot of discrimination,” while just 22 percent felt the same about “black people.” These results suggest mass delusion on the part of much of Trump’s base, considering the mountain of social science data demonstrating that people of color are systematically discriminated against in the mass media, on the job

market, in the criminal justice system, and in other social settings. This paranoia is no doubt feeding the reactionary right’s escalation of the “culture war” against people of color.

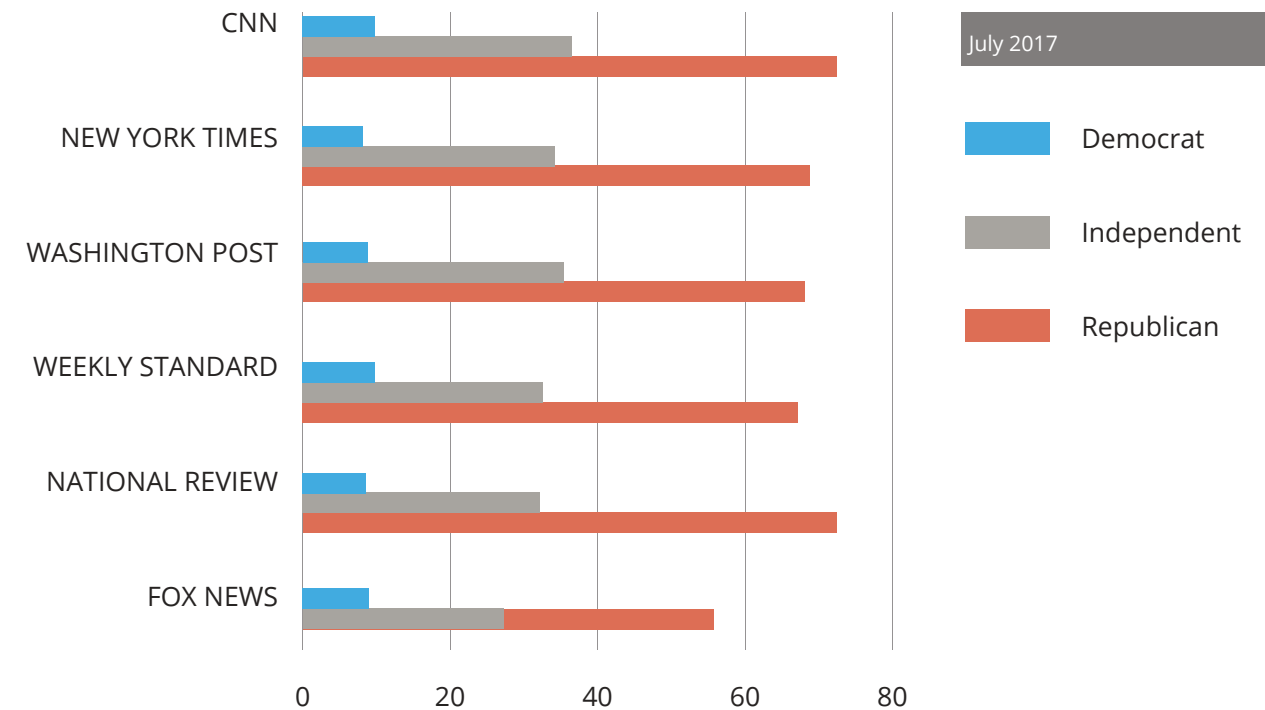
A second recent poll suggests that much of Trump’s support base has fallen into a cultish relationship with the president, expressing a blind trust for “The Donald” and authoritarian contempt for the press. As the Economist reports, nearly half of Republican Americans now believe that the government should “shut down” news media outlets for “broadcasting stories that are biased or inaccurate,” while over half think these outlets should be fined for allegedly pushing falsehoods – the First Amendment be damned. If these reactionaries get their way, government will be empowered to decide what constitutes responsible or accurate journalism. Cultish support for Trump is most evident in the Economist’s polling of trust for Trump, in comparison to trust of various media outlets. Three-quarters of Republicans state they trust Trump more than each of the following news outlets: CNN, the New York Times, and the Washington Post. While conservatives have long lambasted these outlets for their alleged liberal bias, the same cannot be said for other outlets, including the neoconservative Weekly Standard and the National Review. But three-quarters of Republicans say they have more trust in Trump than these outlets. More than half of Republicans express greater trust in Trump than Fox News.

Mass blind trust in a political leader – especially a con-man as narcissistic, duplicitous, and shamelessly deceptive as Trump – raises dire concerns about the ability of critical literacy skills to survive moving forward. When citizens favor blatant propaganda as their primary source of information about the world, there is little hope that they will be able to separate themselves from reactionary, officially-endorsed fascism. The cult of Trump will provide cover for an administration that has long expressed contempt for freedom of the press, and is now indicating its support for fascist policies aimed at criminalizing journalists for reporting on classified intelligence the Trump administration would prefer be kept secret.

A final red flag is raised regarding a new poll reported on by the Washington Post, which finds that 52 percent of Republicans would support postponing the 2020 presidential election if Trump says it is necessary to root out voter-fraud before allowing a vote, while 56 percent say that shutting down elections is acceptable so long as Republicans in Congress agree. No matter that Trump has presented no evidence of rampant voter fraud in the last election, or that the political experts who actually study the issue conclude that voter fraud amounts to a minuscule and trivial amount of all votes cast. In a political world in which Lord Trump’s word is gospel, and media outlets challenging his propaganda are heretics, the truth no longer matters.

The organized left has been in serious trouble for years, which is evident in the decline of labor unions, the disappearance of leftist public intellectuals in academia, the rightward drift of the Democratic Party, and the

United States, % polled who trust Donald Trump more than:



Source: YouGov; The Economist; Economist.com

complete failure of the Green Party to make inroads with the mass public. There are of course some positive signs, as seen in the rise of Black Lives Matter and protests against the Trump administration – particularly those protests that provide a constructive agenda by supporting greater government funding for education and the introduction of universal health care.

Despite these positive developments, much of “the left” – if one could call them that, have turned to increasingly desperate statements and actions in an effort to become relevant again to American politics. This desperation manifests itself in numerous forms. First, there is the trend toward dealing with the Trump administration and reactionary supporters with kid’s gloves, downplaying the importance of the right’s bigotry and prejudice, as seen not only in racist and xenophobic rhetoric, but policies that discriminate against Muslims, people of color, and immigrants. Some have claimed that Trump should be supported by leftists because of his election rhetoric about returning jobs to America, in opposition to free trade, and in support of normalizing relations with Russia. None of this rhetoric has manifested itself in tangible policy proposals or actual policies, now more than half a year into this administration, which is a sign of how little commitment Trump had to these positions. As it’s become harder and harder to maintain the myth that Trump’s electoral victory was a product of mounting anger among a working class left behind in the era of outsourcing and free trade, some on “the left” have tried to promote a “Brown-Red” alliance agenda by claiming that the far right can join with the far left to fight oppression and defeat the liberal media and the “deep state.”

Now some Green Party personalities and some of their “public intellectual” supporters who are nominally on the left seek to make common cause with openly white nationalist reactionaries. This development demonstrates a serious intellectual decline in what counts for “the left.” By downplaying the severity of the racist, sexist, classist, and xenophobic tendencies of the far-right and the reactionary elements of Trump’s base, individuals who claim to support the left betray the long history of resistance to bigotry, prejudice, and oppression that has historically defined progressive social movements. Any sane person should want to have nothing to do with right-wing bigots or fascists, although this point has been obscured in talk of a “Brown-Red” alliance.

The decision by Cobb and McKinney to ally with fascists is a serious betrayal of progressive values. It harms the credibility of anyone on the left who still claims the mantle of the democratic, anti-racist politics. The Green’s alliance will not be forgotten by people of color, immigrant rights groups, and those opposing America’s Islamophobic turn. One can’t realistically “work with” right-wing nationalists one minute, then claim common cause with minority groups that are the targets of reactionary fascists.

Much of what remains of “the left” today is comprised of anxious, angry individuals who are rightly angry at a dysfunctional political-economic system that fails to represent the needs of the bottom 99 percent. These individuals often feel deeply isolated from American mainstream society, and unfortunately, have been willing to gravitate toward all types of kooky ideas due to the decline of left-public intellectualism in the



neoliberal era. As public educational institutions have been dismantled and privatized, professors have been pressured and bullied by administrators and state officials to abandon advocacy work. And with the decline of American labor unions, productive venues for progressive activism have also begun to dry up.

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

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

I've recently heard from numerous self-described leftists who defend the supporters of the "Brown-Red" alliance agenda, but the moral bankruptcy of these apologists' claims have been stripped bare considering the wretched politics of individuals like Steele and Cernovich. Steele has reached out to me in the past, seeking to recruit me in his battle against "the deep state." It was immediately clear that there was something very wrong with this man, which was apparent when he started spouting "deep state" conspiracies about Watergate, 9/11, and JFK. Not yet knowing about his anti-semitism, I politely told him I had no interest in anything he was selling. That Green Party leaders could be supportive of such a figure speaks poorly of their judgment.

Marginalized from access to mainstream political, economic, or media institutions, some claiming to speak for "the left" have concluded that the path forward is in allying with fascist forces on the right. This act of desperation reveals the utter failure of the Green Party to make serious inroads with the public or in gaining political power. But this Hail Mary is destined to fail. No progressive social movement is ever going to be built by propping up reactionary bigots and conspiracy theorists, who have zero interest in the fight against economic inequality, racism, and capitalism more broadly. Progressively minded people would be far better served opposing the relatively small number of Americans who openly advocate reactionary white nationalism, and instead focusing on the millions of people of color, in addition to working class, middle class, and poor Americans who are all increasingly left behind in an era of growing corporate, plutocratic power over politics. There is still time to return respectability to the progressive community in America, but this can't happen so long as fascist enablers speak for the left. 🌐

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# SW Czech and Slovak Social Work

## Call for papers – ERIS Journal – Summer 2018

### A call for papers for the English edition of the journal Czech and Slovak Social Work (ERIS Journal)

The journal *Czech and Slovak Social Work* invites submissions for a special edition on **Social Work in Health Care Settings, Summer 2018**

#### Special Edition

The purpose of the special edition is to explore the implications of working in dynamic and often controversial health contexts for social work practice, education, and research and theory development. Social work is an established interdisciplinary and transnational health care profession, contributing effective skills, interventions and technologies and providing measurable outcomes for health and wellbeing. Social work education seeks to offer state of the art teaching and learning opportunities in order to prepare students for working in interdisciplinary teams caring for individuals, families and communities. Social work students and practitioners are encouraged to undertake active leadership in health systems responding to the complex health and social needs of culturally diverse communities. Social work research evidences new interventions and sources of knowledge in collaboration with other health care disciplines and consumers of health services. Social work academics offer radical theories and insights as to achieving social justice and equality through health and social care policy, legislation and practices. Contributions representing advances in best and creative practice, education and research in social work in health care settings are therefore invited, together with interdisciplinary and international submissions.

#### Possible topic

The following topics are merely a guide:

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

#### Instructions

Manuscripts are to be submitted as academic articles in the range between 5,000 – 10,000 words (including its title, biography, abstracts, key words, the main body, list of sources, explanatory notes). See the website for

further details on the format (<http://socialnprace.cz/eng/index.php>) and instructions for authors (<http://socialnprace.cz/eng/index.php?sekce=15>).

All submissions must include discussion of implications for social work practice, education, research, theory or ethics at the individual, community or policy level. We encourage prospective authors to contact the Guest Editor, Janet Anand, Professor in International Social Work, University of Eastern Finland at [janet.anand@uef.fi](mailto:janet.anand@uef.fi)

We are also looking for book reviews and research notes.

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

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

#### Submission Deadline

The deadline for submissions for this special edition is **March 10th, 2018**.

Two copies of the manuscript should be submitted to the editor's office, sent via e-mail to the administrator of the academic papers who will also provide additional information upon request: [barbora.grundelova@osu.cz](mailto:barbora.grundelova@osu.cz). One copy should be free of any information which would lead to the identification of the author/s. The other copy should be a complete version of the article.



# Call for Abstracts

## Building Networks and Frameworks for Global Social Work Annual Symposium

September 16-18, 2018

Valuing Diversity in Global Social Work: Practice with People on the Move

### Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, Kochi, Kerala, India

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

### The themes for this symposium include

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

### Guide for submitting abstracts and publishing an abstract:

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

### Important Dates

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

For all general enquiries, please contact: [anish@rajagiri.edu](mailto:anish@rajagiri.edu)



Ci-Siou CHIN  
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Florence Ka-yu Wu

## ICPR2017 – The Fourth International Conference on Practice Research: overview

The fourth international conference on practice research took place in Hong Kong in May 2017. From small beginnings in Salisbury (UK) in 2008 attended by 25 people, the Hong Kong ICPR 2017 was attended by over 265 people from 33 countries.

The participants in the inaugural conference in Salisbury formed a steering committee to provide long term continuity. As the conference grew with meetings in Helsinki in 2012 (Austin et al., 2014) and New York in 2014 (Epstein et al. 2015; Fisher, 2014), the initial vision developed to reflect the issues important in the host country and region.

The Hong Kong conference provided strong reasons to take this further. The conference organiser was very clear from the outset that bringing the conference to

Hong Kong should provide an opportunity to reflect the development of social work in China and South-East Asia more broadly (Sim, 2016).

In particular, his success in recruiting sponsors from several countries raised the profile of practice and increased the number of practitioners attending. This gave rise to some reflection on whether the largely academic language of research was appropriate as a framework for the exchange of ideas, with practitioners arguing that a more everyday, more direct practice



language would better suit a practice research conference. Changing the language might be one way of signalling the improving partnership between practice and research.

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

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

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

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

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



and poster presentations, to enrich the conference participants' understanding of practice research.

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

**(1) "Practicizing" the language**

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

**(2) Increasing practitioners' capacity to conduct practice research**

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

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

Different stakeholders (people who use services; policy makers; government; funders; practitioners; academics) have different purposes in conducting practice research. The different and sometimes conflicting objectives



of different stakeholders made it harder for researchers or practitioners to conduct research targeted at specific issue and providing concrete solutions. Members of the group are not asking for the consensus of research topics amongst the stakeholders. Instead, understanding the uniqueness of each stakeholder helps solicit outcomes that best cater for the needs of each party.

**(4) Enhancing practitioners' coordinating and leadership roles**

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

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

**Reference**

Austin, M., Fisher, M., Uggerhøj, L., on behalf of the Second Practice Research International Conference Scientific Committee (2014). Helsinki statement on social work practice research. *Nordic Social Work Research*, 4(sup1), 7-13. <http://doi.org/10.1080/2156857X.2014.981426>

Epstein, I., Fisher, M., Julkunen, I., Uggerhøj, L., Austin, M. J., & Sim, T. (2015). The New York Statement on the Evolving Definition of Practice Research Designed for Continuing Dialogue: A Bulletin From the 3rd International Conference on Practice Research (2014). *Research on Social Work Practice*, 25(6), 711-714. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1049731515582250>

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



Dr. Venkat Pulla  
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## Introduction

This paper is drawn from my teaching experience and contributions to curriculum development within in Australian Universities. More recently a teaching team of three Lecturers began writing a new unit of social work study called SWTP217: Social work with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, (CALD) for the accredited BSW programme at the Australian Catholic University. The core questions that we pondered were: How do we engage students in reflexive practice with diverse communities? This paper is based on my understanding of the collective learning that shaped teaching

and planning of assessments and my teaching practice in this unit. Specific to SWTP 217 Unit, the intended learning outcomes, (ILOs), that students ought to demonstrate an understanding of the impact of the Australian migration history, related social policy with an emphasis on how those policies impact on the experiences of a range of migrant, refugee and asylum seeker populations and how these communities fare. The second crucial objective is to have class room based opportunities to develop competencies in cross cultural practice and service delivery.

Alder, expects that the students undertake a personal review of their beliefs and biases; reflect over and duly consider how they may have already impacted on their knowledge of diversity ((2011, p 620). However I raise a deeper question such as, how has this knowledge of the world distorted/influenced our perceptions of another individual's reality or the truth. It is their truth as they perceive it. As a teacher my own epistemology strongly deploys such reflexivity. My narratives assist the students to grow intellectually and organically. This process is similar to Gramscian counter hegemony which suggests development of a transformation power from within (Pulla, 2017). In Gramscian terms, a thinking individual contributes to action. I see the role and purpose of social work teaching in preparing such 'organic intellectuals' that could work towards a fundamental transformation of society (Gramsci, 1987: 161-323, Pulla, 2016a, Pulla, 2016b, and Pulla, 2017). Utilising auto ethnographic accounts and research findings based on grounded theory approaches (Charmaz, 2014, Pulla, 2016a) further assist me in helping students to delineate and deconstruct their own professional and personal experiences. Additionally it allows me to generalise and resonate with the lives of my audience and the lives of others that they know (Ellis 2004:194-195, Townson, and Pulla, 2015). Through such constructivist agenda devoid of pre-conceived notions, opportunities are created for the learners to construct

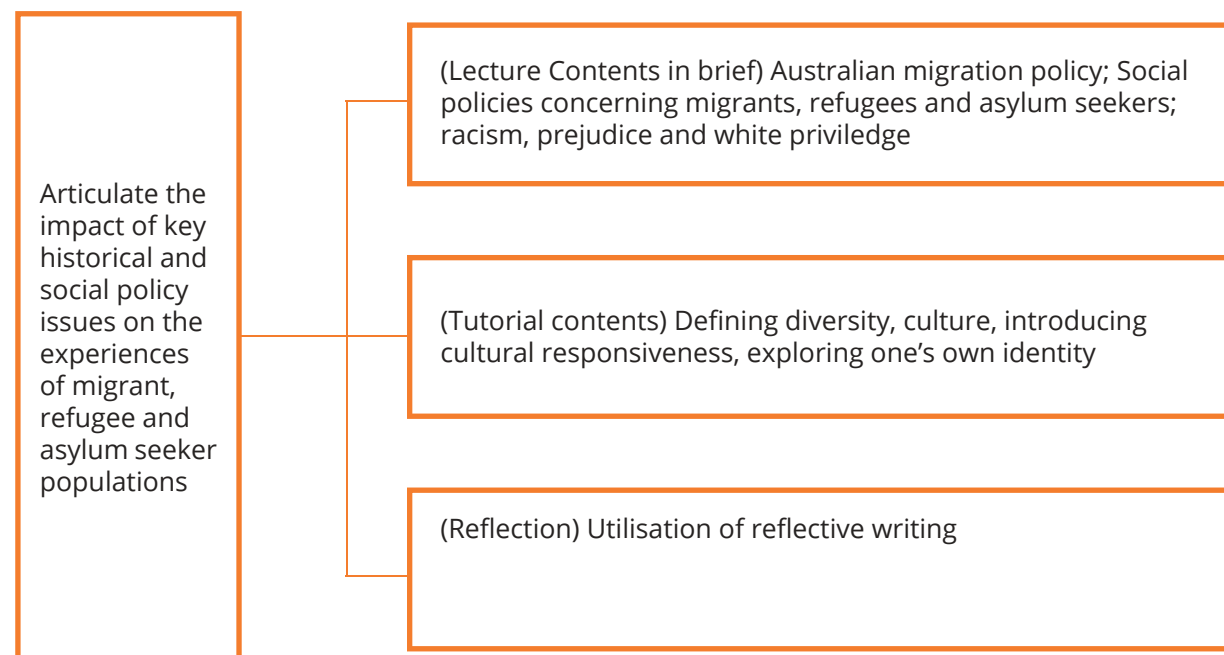
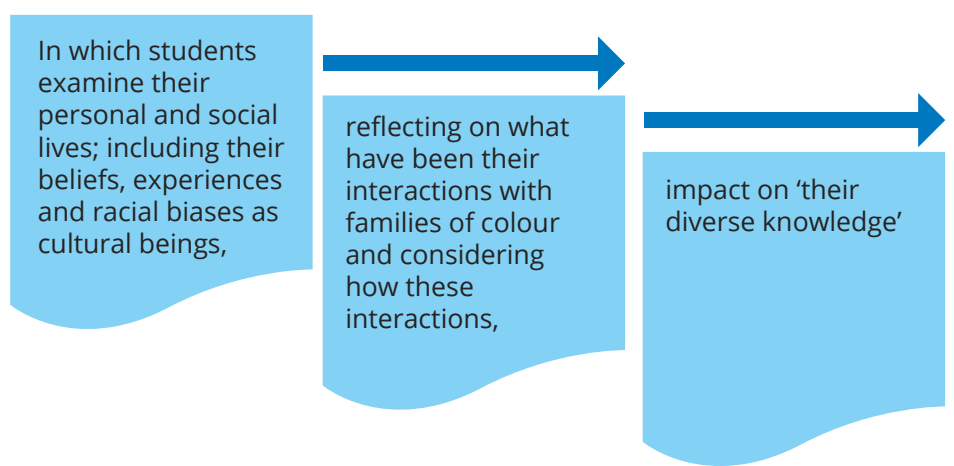
their own cognitive maps unique to their experience and their needs (Neuman and Blundo, 2000).

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

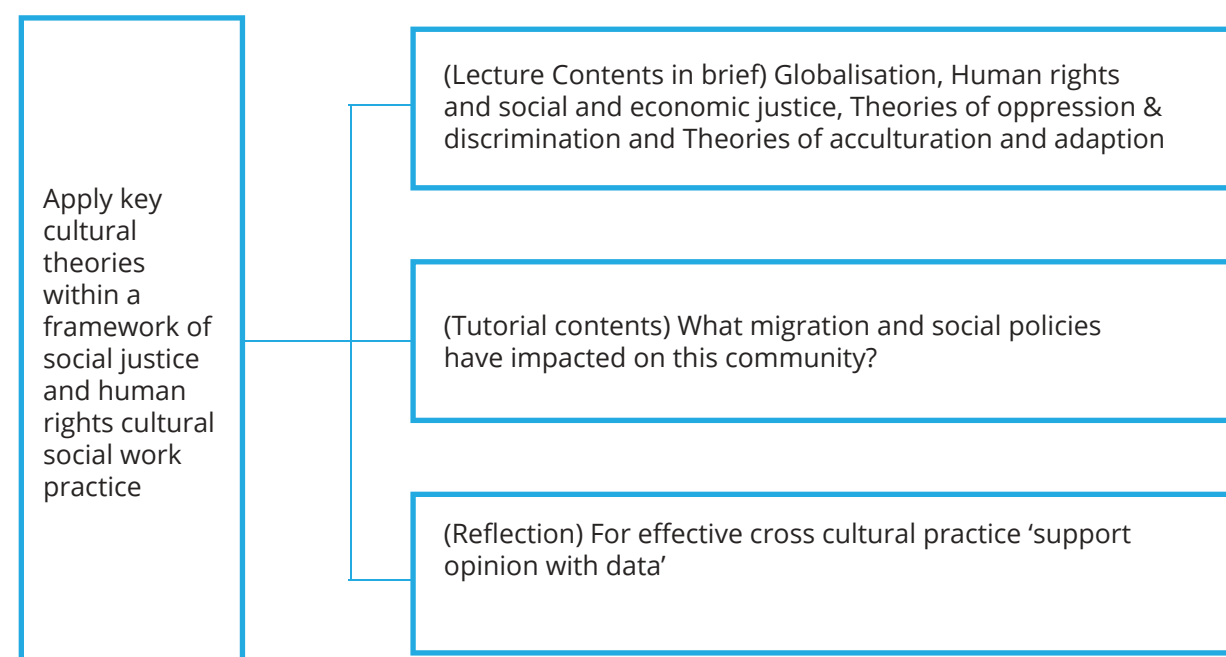
## A reflective Journey

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

### Susan Alder's approach of narrative inquiry (2011)







## Profile of My students

My second year BSW students are still in their formative years with limited exposure to social work issues. Their exposure to social issues is varied and have limited understanding of what happens in social work. Many of them come from schools where career guidance or aptitude matching has occurred prior to their entry into the tertiary portals. By the same token they have not had any prior opportunity to see much social work in action. Within this cohort we also have a very small number of mature age students that bring with them their narratives of real life, pre-existing skills from employment and additional caring responsibilities such as caring for a person with disability or caring for a member of their household with mental illness or caring for siblings that are frail aged that are closer to social work profession (Fraser and Baker, 2014). Some of my students are academically committed and many others are keen to finish the degree in order to obtain a 'decent job' (Biggs and Tang's (2011). My own reflection is that there are a substantial number of students in the middle order, that respond to a higher level of scaffolding of matters pertaining to cross cultural diversity, acquiring competencies etc, through focus grouped discussions and through case studies that are set in the style of 'problem based learning' (Biggs and Tang, 2011, pp 5-7).

Within social work it is well considered view that 'that the knowledge, understanding acceptance and sensitivity to cultural and human diversity is prerequisite for effective work with our clients' (Chau, 1990, p-124). To that end my teaching strategies incrementally build on the Intended learning Outcomes (ILOs) as outlined below. The following four diagrams that are self-explanatory show how the The Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) are matched with Lecture and Tutorial Contents

## Assessment Tasks

I will now briefly address the assessment tasks that were set for this unit with sequenced learning. Sequencing learning is very important (Nulty, 2011) and likewise it is also important to make students to get a grasp of the concept. The idea is to letting them apply their understanding in tutorial settings and become culturally responsive and confident to utilise them in real life situations when they are in practice settings.

The first task that I set is a reflective piece. It begins with the student's personal reflection. Written as a personal narrative the students introduce themselves and focus on their cultural identity and reflect on how their cultural identity informs their professional identity and their practice as a social worker. The second part of the assignment of 800 words expects the student to choose an ethnic group from a pre-selected list that is provided to the student. The student has an opportunity to display their analytical and research skills in generating a culturally different from their own. The second assignment relates to the concepts of racism and the possibility of social work intervention. This reflective assignment challenges them and expects the students to reflect on practical strategies that will attack prejudices in our society. Three questions are important in this context. How do we retain the motivation of our students? How do we offer them a new set of information and ideas? And finally how do we create an opportunity for them to think? Once we are clear on how to set our answers to the above questions, we are already on the right track. On a reflection I understand that values accrue to a task for a variety of reasons: extrinsic, where the consequences bring something that we desire and want (Biggs and Tang, 2011, p55).

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

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

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

## Findings:

One major finding for me as a mentor / teacher is to provide enough opportunity for reflection for the student. In my teaching I realised that strengths perspective advantages social work teaching as it sits closer to the resilience paradigm that is present in education (Pulla et Al, 2012). Additionally the strengths perspective acknowledges the students with a sense of recognition of their own personal strengths and assets, thus providing the motivation to meet their goals. I utilise this as part of a my own pedagogical framework to address both fragility and creativity in the classroom learning environment and to understand the complexities of culturally and Linguistically Diverse challenges in our society today including those presented in the classroom. Such an approach has proved handy for me in teaching from the narratives of the migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Similarly teaching about racism, prejudice and white privilege; understanding culture and cultural differences and cultural relativism. The analogy extends to mental health and wellbeing defined from the client perspectives, sometimes pretty challenging for the students. In teaching this unit of cross cultural methods beginning with conversations around the above significant issues right in the second year of social work of a four year social work programme has been rather useful. Needless to mention that discussion around ethical issues and dilemmas in cross cultural practice goes hand in hand which is once again a great opportunity for teachers to assist the students to increase contents for Self-awareness and reflection. 🌍

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# i am building a wall

i am building a wall

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

i am building a wall

i am building a wall with the press of my palms  
i am building a wall i am asking for alms  
from mexico; brexit, yo  
nigel Farage you are farang i will build you a garage  
and it will only have three walls  
it will drive you up one of them –

i am building the fourth wall, just you wait for it  
i will make bertolt brecht pay for it  
nobody can break it they'll all come to grief  
this past month has been the longest suspension of  
disbelief –

i am building a wall out of loonies and hicks  
i will bury dead immigrants under the bricks  
i will separate lovers and split families  
there are the best practices from chinese  
they will see from the moon the results of my reign  
i will make America a great wall again –

i am building a wallflower a witling seasonal succulent  
climbing weed one indiscretion one microaggression at  
a time  
i am willing her into her place i am building her live  
she's five - no, a six - really, six? no, a five.  
i am building a wallflower may flower  
may i? no need for consent  
we can judge by intent

i am building a wal-do a wally where is he  
where are the red and white stripes of his hat  
where is his equally red and white striped girlfriend  
where is he beneath the white stars in the blue night  
i cannot find him among the immigrants  
who are playing sudoku and have put wally out of a job

i am building a wal-mart  
with the tall parts and the small farts  
i am building a wal-mart in north korea  
and the chinese are going to pay for it  
i am building a wall street journal  
my name is elite and eternal in the halls  
of the washington mall  
i am building a walrus  
And i am a carpenter  
suddenly all of us  
pursued by dementors  
they're foreigners, toll 'em!  
expect patronum!  
in the wispy dull night  
my patronus is white.

i am building a wall  
i am willing a bald spot out of existence  
there is no resistance  
i am billing you for that call  
i am welding you to the toilet stall

i am building my way back to a world  
before orange is the new black  
i am whitewashing your yellowface  
i am waltzing with her majesty her grace  
i am building a walt disney world  
version of wall-e, the secret walter  
mitty my male fantasy, i am bill clintoning  
a lewinsky, I am beaming my stupidity  
into your feed whether you need it or not

i'm building a walk to the park  
i'm building an ark for the two by two families  
i'm building a trigger Obama you notable figure  
i'm building a trigger warning, an awning we can shelter  
under  
i am building the warp and the woof  
i am building the truth  
which is bigger than the voice of america's youth

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

or you can build a wall full of words  
full of herds  
a wall full of sheep a wall full of sheep  
i will count them and recount them  
for i have promises to keep  
and a conservative veep  
i'm gonna make a great leap  
forward before twitter beeps  
i lurve the steep learning curve  
and miles to sow before I reap

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

## Joshua Ip



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

GriffithReview 57  
Perils of Populism



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pp.23-26)



# Resources



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



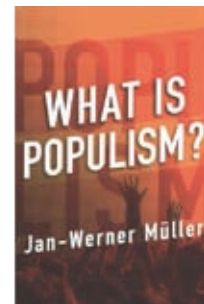
**Populism: A very short introduction (very short introduction)**  
Cas Mudde & Cristobal Kaltwasser (2017)



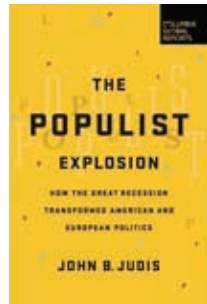
**A question of order: India, Turkey and the Return of the Strongman**  
Basharal Peer (2017)



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



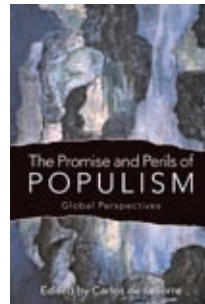
**What is populism?**  
Jan-Weiner Muller (2016)



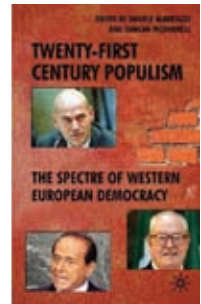
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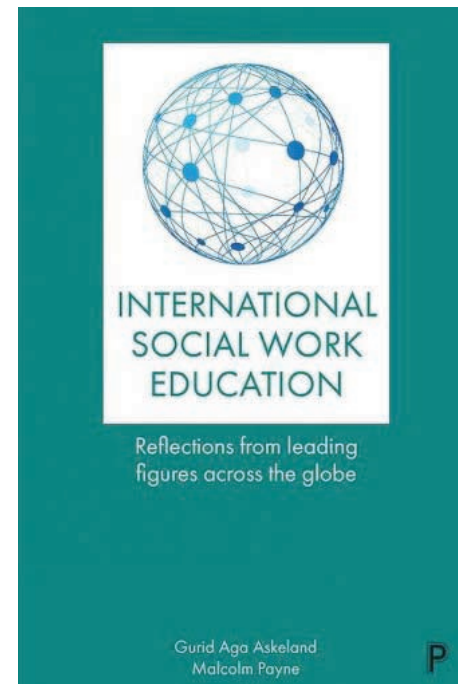


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