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Human Rights and Social, Economic, & Environmental Justice: Ethics of Samfundssind & Agape

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Dente, C. L. (2020). Human Rights and Social, Economic, & Environmental Justice: Ethics of Samfundssind & Agape. Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.wcupa.edu/srca_sp/32

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Human Rights and Social, Economic, & Environmental Justice: Ethics of *Samfundssind* & *Agape*



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Sustainability Research & Practice Seminar
October 28, 2020



Welcome & Introduction

- Our Families
- Our World



My Danish Language Competency (limited!)



Hygge (hew-ge)

- No exact translation to English
- Coziness
- Warmth
- Shared with those close



Samfundssind

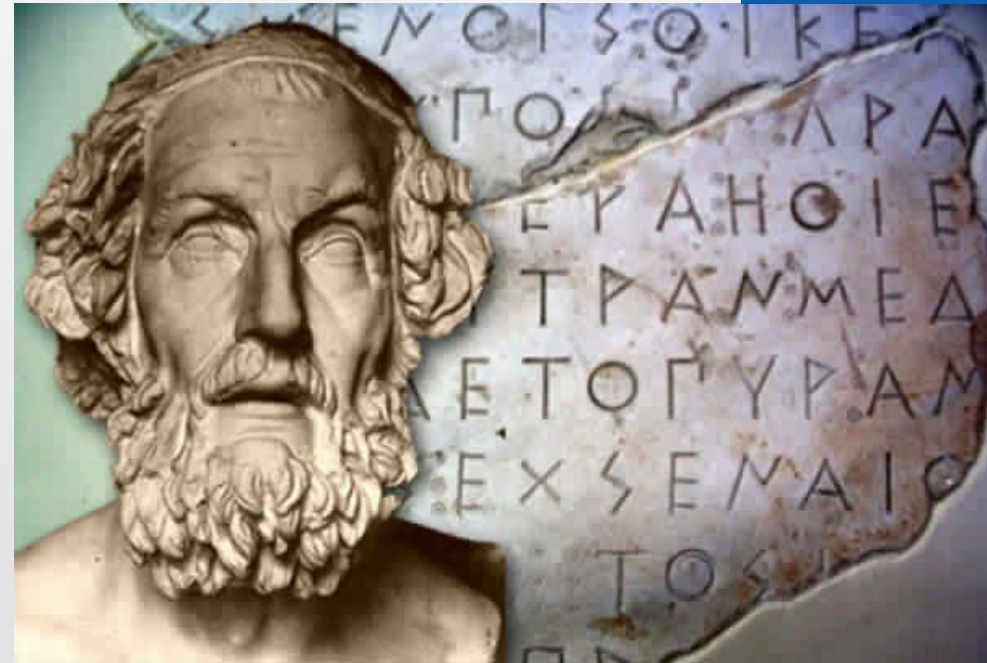
- No exact translation to English
- Etymology: 'samfund' (society) + 'sind' (mind)
- Collective responsibility
- Community spirit



My Greek Language Competency (even more limited!)



- **Eros:** Sexual/romantic attraction and love
- **Philia:** Brotherly love (and sisterly affection)
- **Agape:** 'High' form of selfless, altruistic genuine concern/love
- (With my apologies to the Philosophy Department)




6 Core Social Work Values

[NASW Code of Ethics \(2017\)](#)

- Service
- Competence
- Integrity
- Social justice
- Dignity and worth of the person
- Importance of human relationships





Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy & Accreditation Standards, 2015

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, & Environmental Justice

- Social workers understand that **every person** regardless of position in society **has fundamental human rights** such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, & education.
- Social workers **understand the global interconnections** of oppression & human rights violations, & are knowledgeable about theories of human need & social justice & strategies to promote social & economic justice & human rights.
- Social workers understand strategies designed to **eliminate oppressive structural barriers** to ensure that social goods, rights, & responsibilities are **distributed equitably** & that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, & cultural **human rights are protected**.
- Social workers:
 - apply their understanding of social, economic, & environmental justice to **advocate** for human rights at the individual & system levels; and
 - engage in practices that **advance social, economic, & environmental justice**. (CSWE EPAS, 2015, pp 7-8)



United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals



1 NO POVERTY 	2 ZERO HUNGER 	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 	4 QUALITY EDUCATION 	5 GENDER EQUALITY 	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES 	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
13 CLIMATE ACTION 	14 LIFE BELOW WATER 	15 LIFE ON LAND 	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS 	



Grand Challenges for Social Work

Social progress powered by science

- **Individual & family well-being**
 - Ensure healthy development for all youth
 - Close the health gap
 - Build healthy relationships to end violence
 - Advance long & productive lives
- **Stronger social fabric**
 - Eradicate social isolation
 - End homelessness
 - Create social responses to a changing environment
 - Harness technology for social good
- **Just society**
 - Eliminate racism
 - Promote smart decarceration
 - Build financial capability for all
 - Reduce extreme economic inequality
 - Achieve equal opportunity & justice



Grand Challenges
for Social Work

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen March, 2020

- Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen stated at a press conference:
- “We have to stand together by keeping our distance... We need community spirit. We need help. I would like to thank ... all who have so far shown that this is exactly what we have in Denmark — samfundssind.”
- Leadership appealed for community response to advance a goal, and community responded.



What about Samfundssind in the United States?

- Generous spirit
 - Following natural disasters
 - Family tragedies
- Historical rallying points
 - World War II
 - Post 9/11/2001
- COVID-19 Pandemic?
- Frederiksen: Standing apart to stand together; in USA:
 - Politicization of the pandemic
 - Politicization of strategies (mask-wearing, social distancing)
 - Anti-science bias, disrespect for experts





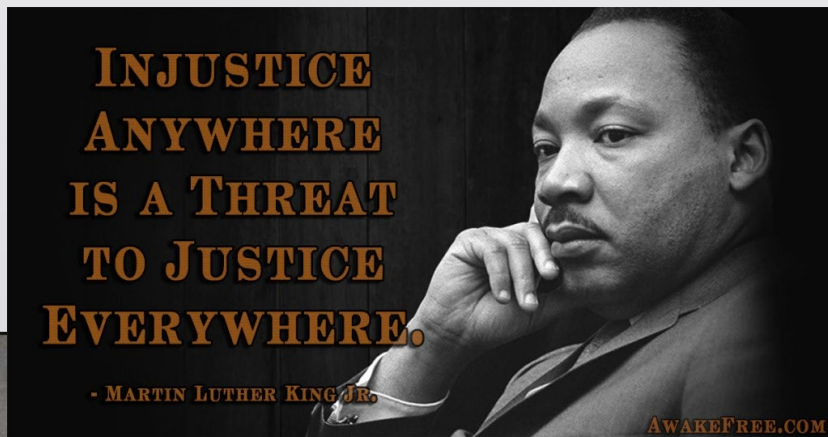
Human Rights and Social, Economic, & Environmental Justice Samfundssind & SW Ethics

Collective Responsibility

- Social justice
- Competence
- Importance of human relationships

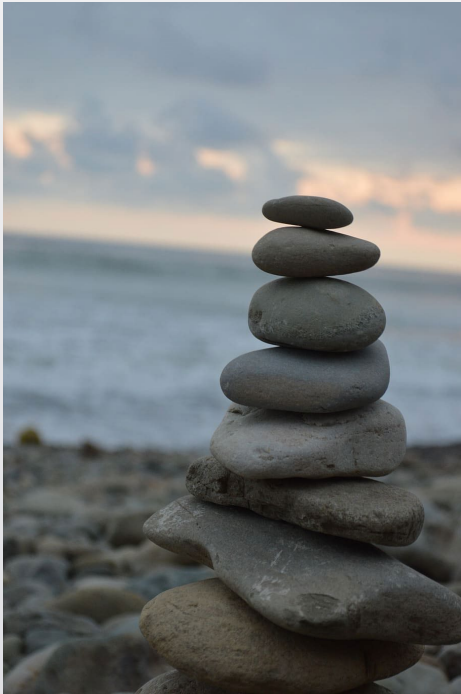
Community Spirit

- Integrity
- Service
- Dignity & worth of the human person





Human Rights and Social, Economic, & Environmental Justice Samfundssind



- Seeking unity
- A spiritual (not religious!) process
- Becoming one: We are all connected
- Life-giving choices
- [Conviction of the Heart](#)

What would collective responsibility & community spirit look like today, here & now?



- Mental health (MH) issues
 - Imagine a MH system where we could support & protect someone for their own and others' safety without having to fire a gun
 - Imagine funding more trained crisis teams rather than SWAT teams
- Law enforcement & judicial system
 - Imagine a system where a white prep school boy can't make it through the best schools, feeling entitled to sit on the highest court, without someone intervening first for his alleged addictions & alleged mistreatment of women
- Imagine safe places & ways to express one's fear or rage rather than shooting black and brown bodies, or looting.
- Imagine living & working feeling safe enough to living without such hyper-arousal.

What would collective responsibility and community spirit look like today, here & now?



- Political systems:
 - Imagine a system that supports fair voting for all
 - Imagine leaders who debate constructive ideas for the betterment of our society
 - Imagine service leadership at the highest levels of government
 - Imagine informed responsiveness to crises
 - Imagine funding initiatives that grow & expand knowledge, & provide outreach to raise up individuals & communities
- Economy: Imagine dignified work & reduction of poverty

Imagine: Just a Start

- How can YOU (I) take action to create a more just society?
- Here and now
- Starting small
- Ending big!
- HOPE for the future
- [PAR-Recycle Works](#)
 - PAR: People Advancing Reintegration
- There are many examples





Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

“The day will come when, after harnessing space, the winds, the tides, and gravitation, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And on that day, for the second time in the history of the world, we shall have discovered fire.”

(“The Evolution of Chastity,” in Toward the Future, 1936, XI, 86-87)



“The future is more beautiful than all the pasts.”

(Letter, 5 September 1919, Making of a Mind, 306)



Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

“Love is the most universal, the most tremendous and the most mystical of cosmic forces. Love is the primal and universal psychic energy. Love is a sacred reserve of energy; it is like the blood of spiritual evolution.”

(The Spirit of the Earth, 1931, VI, 32, 33, 34)





Forward Motion



- Do not give up. Do not despair that all is not completed in your timeframe. See the work that you do as bringing the forward motion of the universe toward greater completion and one-ness.
 - Human Rights
 - Social, Economic, & Environmental Justice

Thank You!
Your Thoughts or Comments?





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