The Engaged Identity

An approach to identity, complexity, and intravation
for human adaptivity & transformation

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Abstract

Human adaptive capacity is increasingly understood as an important element of human flourishing and sustainability and yet the question of how we cultivate the capacities for transformation and human flourishing remains. This thesis introduces the Engaged Identity approach and examines the intersections of how we enact and embody identity, complexity, and adaptability. As a practice, it works to build the adaptive capacity of individuals and support identity expansion in order to create sustainable relationships. Grounded in identity theory, complexity science, and contemplative practice, the approach serves as a foundation on which frameworks and methodologies for conflict transformation and peacebuilding can exist. Furthermore, it proposes that without the cultivation of these capacities, regardless of the theoretical framework or methodology used, sustainable relationships and solutions are not possible.

The thesis provides an overview of the Engaged Identity approach, examines the literature that grounds the praxis, and analyzes a case study, comprised of six training workshops held in Nigeria from October 2013 through August 2014. Examining how the approach aligns with and enhances conflict transformation processes, this thesis argues for an intravative approach to conceptualizing, cultivating, and enacting human adaptive capacity and transformative processes. Through phenomenological and grounded theory methodology, the study uses survey, interview, and participatory observations to document participants experiences and observations on the effects of the approach and the implications for inclusion in the broader context for adaptive and transformative praxis.

Declaration by the Author

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification. I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis and all sources used have been acknowledged in this thesis.

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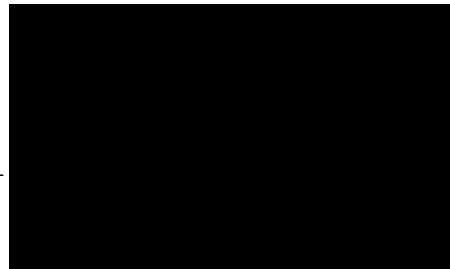
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For Stella & Judy

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PART ONE
Beginnings

Photograph 1: Participants waiting for a certification ceremony after a workshop in Gboko, Benue State, Nigeria
Photo credit: JKLynne

Chapter One: The Inquiry

Chapter one outlines the history, contribution, and organization of this study. In the chapter, I provide a brief history that lead to the inquiry along with my own personal perspectives and experiences as a researcher. This is followed with a statement on the contribution of the research. The chapter concludes with an outline of the thesis.

Locating the self in research

I have been developing and working with the Engaged Identity approach since 2006. It goes to say that our relationship is not unlike a parent and child. I wish to see it challenged without injury, be influenced by its surroundings and relationships without losing its ability to adapt and be dynamic, and quite honestly I wish to see it grow and flourish without loosing my parental identity. The realization of this relationship has been paramount to not only my own personal development, but to that of the approach and research design.

Identifying myself as a Buddhist, my perspective is informed by an engagement with issues of identity, suffering, transformation, and spirituality.[1] I had my first meditation experience when I was just six months old. My Mother had been raised in the Catholic faith, but had moved away from it during her adult life. At the time of my birth, she was actively practicing meditation while still maintaining a relationship with the tradition of her youth. This is how I came to experience meditation at such a young age. As the family story goes, it was the day of my baptism and my mother wanted to take a few minutes for reflection before the ceremony began. Sitting at the ocean's edge in northern California, nestled in my mother's arms, cradled under a shade tree, breathing together, the experience was my introduction to meditation. Seven years later, I would make my first trip as an unaccompanied minor flying from the US to Europe. I travelled a lot as a child,

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[1] In the Buddhist context, the roots of suffering [conflict] are seen as the result of three 'poisons'; ignorance, aversion, and attachment. This constitutes a different understanding of the roots of conflict then those used in a Western based perspective. For a deeper understanding Buddhist and its views on philosophy, psychology, sociology, ecology, and conflict. See Dalai Lama, The Meaning of Life, translated and edited by Jeffrey Hopkins, Boston: Wisdom, 1992; Mark Epstein, Thoughts Without A Thinker: Psychotherapy from a Buddhist Perspective. Basic Books, 2004; Rupert Gethin, Foundations of Buddhism, Oxford University Press, 1998; Geshe Tashi Tsering Buddhist Psychology: The Foundation of Buddhist Thought, Volume III, Perseus Books Group, 2006.

throughout Europe and Central America and the US states. I had Swiss friends, French friends, Mexican friends, and Kanaka Maoli (native Hawaiian) friends. For me, the different foods my friends parents would make, or the rituals that influenced our play time were simply interesting. Some I liked more than others, like the splash of wine in my water glass during family dinners in Lille, France or the smell of the grass skirts we used to play dress up in Waikiki, O'ahu. Others fascinated me because they were so different from my own traditions, like eating three finger poi[2] or the Gondoliers singing as they navigated the waterways in Venice. Difference and diversity were a part of my world; unaware that later in life, these same differences, along with political and geographical boundaries, faith, and identity would be used to create divisions.

My upbringing provided a breath of experience of rituals, cultures, languages, and landscapes. And so when I took my refuge vows in Buddhism, the ideas of interdependence, non-duality, and inter-connectedness were firmly placed in my lived experience and not just as ideological dogma. Although those early experiences were instrumental to forming my perceptions, the years that have followed provided the experience for beliefs I hold today. It is this embodied ideology, along with a deep belief of non-dualism[3] and a voracious curiosity that have influenced the development of the approach, practice, and this research.

This ontological framework has implications for my understanding of knowledge and truth, i.e. epistemology. My epistemological perspective on social phenomena is non-foundationalist and radically enactive/embodied[4], in that knowledge is an event inclusive of the interactions among biological, cognitive, behavioral, and emotional interaction. It is also not an occurrence within an individual, but rather is a dynamic

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[2] A traditional Hawaiian staple that is often referred to by the number of fingers used to eat it.

[3] The concept of non-duality is prevalent in many religious and spiritual tridents including Buddhism,, Hinduism, Vedanta, Taoism, and in Christian, Judaism, and Islamic mysticism. Non-dualism is the idea that the universe and all its multiplicity are ultimately expressions or appearances of one essential reality. The disillusion of the separateness of phenomena is the direct experience of the concept of non-duality. See Jay L. Garfield, The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nagarjuna's Mulamadhyamakakarika, Oxford University Press, 1995; Gary Renard, The Disappearance of the Universe, Carlsbad, CA, Hay House, 2004; Keith E. Yandell, The Epistemology of Religious Experience, Cambridge University Press, 1994.

[4] Enactivism argues that cognition arises through a dynamic interaction between an acting organism and its environment. It includes a belief that sense-making is a participatory event among embodied minds where the physical aspects of phenomena are co-creating perceptions to create meaning. The concept was introduced by Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch, and is akin to embodied cognition.

interaction amongst phenomena where knowledge is never permanently established, nor a particular truth ever established for everyone in all places. Methodologically, the approach that best represents my conception of reality could be seen as phenomenological, which is, appropriately, one of the methods I used to conduct this study (and is discussed in greater detail in chapter eight).

One of the truths of social science and for that matter human interaction I find particularly compelling is how people effect and change each other. As this research will explore, the lived experience of phenomena, the enacting of identity, complexity, and relationships, creates webs of new ways of understanding the world and one another. As researchers, we imbed ourselves into new contexts far from the familiarity of our own identities and yet this imbeddedness is of a reciprocal nature. We are forever changed by and through our experiences and the people with whom we interact. Throughout this inquiry, I will reflect on how my perspectives were changed and my identity expanded. Immersed in literature and scholarship and later in culture and relationship, I was challenging myself through the tremendous opportunities provided by the collaborations with participants and colleagues; thinkers and philosophers all. In the midst of exploring the phenomena of identity, meaning, adaptivity, with the generous contributions of the participants, I found myself identifying very closely with the shared heart of human experience. Although time, exposure, and experiences has shaped us all in different ways, the love, fear, joys, and sorrow are apparent in our kindnesses, questions, celebrations, and tears. I have been nothing less than transformed by the people I encountered. My sense of faith, spirituality, identity, friendship and the complexity of human flourishing forever changed. For this, I am deeply grateful to the people who contributed to this research.

In 2008, I had the opportunity to attend the Summer Peacebuilding Institute held at the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. At the time, I was pursuing my Bachelors degree in Peace Studies at Naropa University and was looking for additional experience to fulfill my

degree requirements. Naropa University[5] has a Buddhist-inspired curriculum and as a practicing Buddhist, I was interested in exploring the topics of peace and conflict in a different ideological setting. Eastern Mennonite[6] was an opportunity for me to engage with peacebuilding practitioners from around the world who predominately come from Abrahamic faith traditions. The Institute holds week-long intensive studies that provide an experiential platform for participants to learn and work together in the hopes of developing not only skill enhancement, but fostering cross-cultural communication and relationships. During my month long stay at the institute, I met and studied with peacebuilding practitioners from over seventy countries. Among them was a large contingency from West Africa, including representatives from Cameroon, Liberia, Nigeria, Ghana, and Guinea.

Like any relationship, the one between a researcher and the research involves uncertainty, expectations, and the need for adaptability. Researchers are taught to expect the unexpected, and understand that inevitable changes will occur during the process of research design, implementation, and collection. I am incredibly grateful to my supervisors, colleagues, and the participants who provided insights, feedback, and support as I navigated the course of these changes. What occurred in October of 2013, was case in point. After I arrived in Nigeria, the realities I encountered (which I discuss in further in chapters) caused me to re-think the original design and objective of the research and embrace new opportunities that I had not envisioned during the design process. With a redefined research plan, I set out in the fall of 2013 to discover the efficacy of the Engaged Identity approach and learn about the complexity of human adaptive capacity. The following chapters will provide a detailed examination of the inquiry, results, and experiences that comprise the efforts of us all.

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5 Naropa University is a Buddhist-inspired liberal arts college based in the Kagyü and Nyingma traditions. Combining the pedagogies of the East and West, the curriculum is based in world wisdom traditions. Noted scholars and faculty include Allen Ginsberg, Ken Wilbur, Anne Waldman, John Cage, and Joanna Macy. The University is located in Boulder, Colorado, USA.
6 The Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University has held the annual Summer Peacebuilding Institute for more than ten years and has attracted participants from over 100 countries.

The contribution

The purpose of the inquiry is to analyze how the Engaged Identity approach aligns with, and enhances conflict transformation processes. Over the course of the inquiry, I introduce the approach, examine the relevant scholarship that supports it, and provide a case study to explore its efficacy in practice. However, there is larger interest that guides the scholarship; my interest in exploring how we enact and embody identity, complexity, and adaptability. More specifically, how do we as a species, a part of a vast web of sentient beings and a shared ecology, cultivate the capacities to transform and flourish amongst the diversity, difference, and conflicts in the human experience? From spiritual and wisdom traditions, to the expression of life at the cellular level, questions around the true nature of self, adaptivity, and impermanence still remain. The Engaged Identity approach looks to make a contribution to the scholarship, not within a singular discipline, but in a broader range of inquiry with interests in human adaptivity, transformative processes, and the engagement of an embodied self. It aims to contribute in three distinct ways. The first is a new transdisciplinary approach to human adaptive capacity; introducing the term Intravation. The second through the suggestion of three precepts as a foundational praxis for engagement and transformative processes. The third is the grounding of transformative praxis in an enactive embodied approach.

Outline

The thesis is divided into six parts. Part One introduces the study, myself as the researcher, and discusses the challenges, contributions, and outline of the thesis. Part Two is the literature review. I explore the literature on identity theory and the influence of identity in conflict transformation theory. Then I examine the role of complexity and the self as a complex system including the biological, cognitive, and behavioral aspects. Finally, the inquiry discusses human adaptive capacity and examines the current uses of capacity for transformation and sustainability. The various roles and enactment of identity and capacity in transformative processes direct the inquiry to examine the complexity and adaptive capacity of identity through a transdisciplinary framework. Part three introduces the Engaged Identity

approach, a new transdisciplinary framework that utilizes identity, complexity, and adaptive capacity through an enactive and embodied approach to transformation. I then look at the approach moving into praxis and highlighting the elicitive, transformative, and contemplative elements that provide the foundation of the praxis. Part four outlines the design and methodology of the research and describes the journey from a personal perspective. I begin with a narrative of designing the project and discuss the context and history that influence the design and implementation. I describe the methodologies and methods used during the inquiry providing an overview of both phenomenological and grounded theory and their contributions to the interest of the research and the emic- and etic- methods that provided the foundation for exploring the efficacy of the Engaged Identity approach and informing transformative processes. The section concludes with a discussion of the limitations, ethics, and reliability in the design and findings of the inquiry, along with the relational ad identity aspects of their influence. Part five examines the findings of the research. Exploring the qualitative and quantitative data along with participatory narratives, the findings illuminate the participants experiences and generate questions for further inquiry. The final chapter provides an overview of the research, contributions of the findings, and concluding remarks for future investigations.

Photograph 2: Students take notes during a dialogue session in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria
Photo Credit: JKLynne

Chapter Two: The literature on Identity

This literature review examines the theoretical and disciplinary perspectives that form the foundation of the engaged identity approach. The literature on identity forms the basis of the inquiry. This is accompanied by the literature on complexity and systems thinking, and the literature on intravation.[7] The scholarship examines the literature with a focus on the relationships, contributions, intersections, and limitations of these disciplines within the fields of conflict transformation and peacebuilding, and for the development of the engaged identity approach.

Identity Threat vs. Identity Expansion

In 2008, I delivered a workshop on the Engaged Identity at the Association for Conflict Resolution conference in Atlanta, Georgia. As a part of the workshop, I introduced the term identity expansion[8] as a means of explaining what and how an identity can flourish, despite the challenges we encounter in life, such as trauma, difference, diversity, and conflict. I had been developing the concept through theoretical and experiential research since 2006, and by 2008 had enough 'science' behind it to include in the theory and practice. What follows below is the continuation of that research and praxis as a reflection of the current use of the term within the Engaged Identity platform.

Antonio Gramsci states, 'The crisis consists precisely in the fact the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.' In this quotation, lies not only an explanation for the root cause of crisis (conflict), but also a direction to point the inquiry of transformation's requirements. Here we see where crisis, trauma, and conflict could all be seen as inhibitors from the ability to engage a different paradigm by creating stagnation in the dynamic nature of identity. A static identity is in an unnatural state, whereby the identity, or facets of it, is unable to participate in relationships, roles, and systems. It is not only trauma that can cause these limitations, anti-social behavior, decreased emotional

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[7] Intravation is a new conceptualization for human adaptive capacity and transformation. It will be discussed, in-depth, in chapter four.

[8] The concept of identity expansion is discussed in depth in chapters two and five.

regulation, or lack social emotional intelligence can also be contributing factors to this stagnation. Regardless of the factor that causes the condition, there is often a shared sense of identity threat. How is threat defined in this context? For the purpose of this research, although noting that threat in and of itself is subjective, I will include the following; psychological threat, biological threat, and physiological threat. More specifically, the harm, trauma, conflict, addiction, violence, mortality, humiliation, stigma, dignity, and lack of human needs that act as threats to identity. However, in addition to the above, a sense of threat also arises in times of uncertainty, fear of failure, and in the midst of change. Similarly, the concept of dukkha is understood as the suffering that comes from experiencing fear, pain, loneliness, and aging; it is the experience of impermanence and the suffering that arises from it are threatening to our identities. Mark Knickelbine's (2011) definition of Dukha aims to clarify,

> This is dukkha: birth is painful, aging is painful, sickness is painful,
> death is painful, encountering what is not dear is painful, separation
> from what is dear is painful, not getting what one wants is painful.
> This psycho-physical condition is painful. In other words, dukha is
> part of the fundamental nature of our phenomenal world (p.1).

As the divide in identity theory has been largely drawn between roles and groups, so to has the understanding of identity threat. For example, Integrated Threat Theory (Stephan, Diaz-Loving & Duran, 2000; Stephan & Renfro, 2002; Riek, & Gaertner, 2006; Wagner, Tropp, Finchilescu & Tredoux, 2009) focuses on the conditions that lead to perceptions of threat which in turn have an impact on in-group and out-group attitudes and behavior or Erving Goffman's (Goffman,1997) theory of social stigma, which posits the role of stigma in self-esteem, academic achievement, and social dignity (Heatherton, Kleck, Hebl & Hull, 2000; Jetten, Postmes & McAuliffe, 2002). While threats to personal values, as Steven Hitlin (2003, pg.118-137) suggests in his look at the role of values in forming personal identity, can effect self-esteem, self-actualization, and coherence on the part of individuals.[9]

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[9] Hiltin goes on to suggest that values are a cohesive force in bridging the gap from Social Identity theory (groups based) and Identity theory (role based) and are at the core of personal identity.

In one example, David Matsumoto, Seung Hee Yoo, and Jeffery LeRoux (2007) relate the later cases of stagnation in terms of vindication:

> Those people who cannot control their emotions reinforce and crystallize their pre-existing ethnocentric and stereotypic ways of dealing with the world that are limited. This is a no growth model, and these individuals are not engaged in a journey. This is a model of stagnation, with no growth potential inherent in such a process. We call these people "vindicators," because their worldviews are established solely to vindicate their pre-existing ethnocentrism and stereotypes, not to challenge them and grow. (pg. 78)

Vamik D. Volkan (2004) in his theory of collective violence set out in his book Blind Trust, puts forth that when a chosen trauma is experienced as humiliation and is not mourned, this may lead to feelings of entitlement to revenge and, under the pressure of fear or anxiety, to collective regression. While in The Little Book of Trauma Healing, Carolyn Yoder (2005) outlines the need to address trauma and suggests that if it is not included in transformation processes, we will be left without full recognition and a sense of helplessness in the face of change.Yoder explains how trauma disrupts our ability to be self reflective and consider another person's or group's point of view, whether as a victim or perpetrator. Similarly, when an institutional or collective identity is regarded as the foremost definer of personal identity, at the dismissal or degradation of an individuals own choice of identity, human rights, social injustice, and violence become the means to oppress, conform, eliminate, and ultimately define identity thus contributing to a diminished capacity for self-actualization and identity expansion.[10] Bearing in mind the various types of threat, could we see threat as having our adaptive capacities be suppressed or frozen, such as in trauma? Or as the diminished capability for flourishing? The question then is how can we cultivate the capacities to move beyond 'threat' and allow the natural states of complexity, emergence, and dynamic to support identity expansion. In chapters five and six, I will examine some of the current methods and offer suggestions for moving from identity threat to identity expansion.

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[10] Lederach (1999) suggests the limitations of vertical and horizontal systems hamper our ability to create and sustain integration strategically necessary for implementing the kind of long-term peacebuilding we hope to put in place. Similarly, the issue of vertical ranking through the caste system is examined in Evelin Lindner's (2008) look at humiliation and dignity. See John Paul Lederach, Lederach, The journey toward reconciliation. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1999 and Evelin Linder, Humiliation, trauma, and trauma Recovery in a Globalizing World. In B. Hart (Ed.) Peacebuilding in Traumatized Societies. (pp. 49-63). Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2008.

Neuroscience has noted the plasticity of the brain in forming new pathways for cognition and behavior, and inhibitors to that plasticity I will include in the working definition of threat. Neuroimaging of those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), based on exposure to or participation in violent conflict, show lasting physical deformations of the pre-frontal cortex (Caruth, 1995; Rolls, Hornak, Wade, McGrath, 1994). In essence part of an individual, either psychologically biologically or both, becomes frozen in the event, unable to continue in the other stages of healing. Arlene Audergon (2008) refers to this traumatization as 'shock and witness'(pg. 264), occurs when reflecting or witnessing an event is not allowed the necessary time to conclude the process for full integration of the event, in order for recovery to begin.[11] If no identity is seen or able to be formed outside the traumatic event, the post-traumatic, or threatened state becomes the predominant identity. As Donna Hicks (2011) states,

> Without check, human beings usually react to a threat to their dignity
> with the impulse to "attack and blame" and to seek revenge. This is a
> "default" reaction that is "hardwired' in us. It is part of our
> evolutionary inheritance. (pg. 87)

Ultimately the impulses for survival (flight, fight, freeze) stem from the enaction of emotional, biological, behavioral, and cognitive responses; desire to stop the fear, pain, discomfort, or threat to homeostasis that occurs.

Both in the natural sciences and the social sciences, executive function, emotional intelligence, compassion, empathy, pro-social behavior, and mindfulness have been at the forefront of recent research. (Flook, Goldberg, Pinger, Davidson, 2015; Morelli, Rameson & Lieberman, 2014; Gunkel, Schlägel, Engle, 2014; Cavallo, Holmes, Fitzsimons, Murray & Wood, 2012). In each respect the role of trauma and threat have been proven to diminish these capacities (Aupperle, Melrose, Stein & Paulus, 2012; von Dawans, Fischbacher, Kirschbaum, Fehr, & Heinrichs, 2012; MacBeth & Gumley, 2012). Shapiro, Berreby, Lindner and Hicks see conflict

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[11] Peter Levine addresses the issue of re-traumatization, through titration and pendulation. Titration utilizes the event's distress to release the stored energy, allowing the central nervous system to return to balance. Pendulation refers to the movement between regulation and dysregulation providing small does of exposure to allow for physical and mental responses to return to mobility. See Peter Levine and Ann Fredrick, Waking the Tiger. Healing Trauma. North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, CA, 1997.

transformation, or as I suggest moving from identity threat to identity expansion, as a process that 'allows the emotional componentry to be addressed and acknowledged in order for a mutually tolerable interpretation of events to be reconstructed (Lindner, 2008, pg. 273). In essence, negotiating for the inclusion of emotion into the new identity paradigms. This type of negotiation,in its intra and inter dimensions requires listening, patience, and respect in order to provide the security, acknowledgement, and recognition necessary for the co-creation of the new paradigm. As Audergon (Audergon, 2008) notes, without patience, hasty entry into the process of transformation can cause a wide range of adverse effects from retraumatization to protracted conflicts due to the exclusion of the frozen parts of identity.

Two distinct traditions form the literature and scholarship on identity, namely the Identity theorists from the natural sciences and the Social Identity theorists from the social sciences. Social Identity theory has been largely concentrated on the causes and consequences of identifying with a social group or category, while Identity theory has focused on the causes and consequences of identifying with a particular role (Burke & Stets 1997, 2000; Stryker 1991; Jenkins, 2014; Stets & Serpe, 2013). Social identity theorists posit that people define themselves in terms of their social group membership and enact roles as part of the expectations of in-group members, where the concept of role is subsumed under the concept of group (Turner, Oakes, Haslam McGarty, 1994; Biddle, 2013). Given their greater emphasis on group identification, they have concentrated more on cognitive outcomes such as ethnocentrism, group polarization, and group cohesiveness (Greitemeyer, 2012; Poortinga,2012; Hogg, 2014; Hogg & Adelman, 2013). As such, Social Identity theory has been understood as having 'a greater emphasis on socio-cognitive processes, contextual responsiveness, group behavior and intergroup relations, with a clearer distinction between role and group.'(Burke & Stets, 2000, pg. 237).

However, the work of Peter Burke and Jan Stets suggest that these distinctions are not mutually exclusive, but rather both are central features of identity. Stets and Burke (2000) offered a new unified Identity theory that provides linkage between the

two existing schools of theory and create an integrated Identity theory that, while still developing, suggests:

> A complete theory of the self would consider both the role of the group bases of identity as well as identities based in the person that provide stability across groups, roles, and situations. (pg. 234).

This unified theory, with its incorporation of both the cognitive based and behavioral based aspects, aims to examine identity in the societal (macro), group (meso), and personal (micro) levels. These social levels are often used in understanding Identity in the praxis of Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding, where theorists and practitioners have included both the cognitive and behavioral aspects in addressing the influence of identity in the various aspects of conflict transformation and peacebuilding.[12] The language of identity is ubiquitous in conflict transformation and the contemporary social sciences including psychology, political science, philosophy, biology, anthropology, sociology, history, and neuroscience. The common usage of the term identity, however, belies the variability in both its conceptual meaning and its theoretical basis (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 284) and suggests the need for theories that reflect the complex nature of the enactment of identity; such as Burke and Stets' Unified Identity theory.

Yet even as theories and approaches reflective of the complexity of identity contributed to our understanding, the concept of identity is further entwined in the energetic and biological. Outside the western orientations to identity, the idea of a non-self is prevalent within the concept of non-duality. Beyond an understanding of interdependence, non-dualism is the 'idea that the universe and all its multiplicity are ultimately expressions or appearances of one essential reality.' (Espín & Nickoloff, 2007). Believing that there is no inherent difference between subject and object or the categories that form conceptual constructs, non-dualism suggests that identity is a construct of the mind and not a true representation of the essence of being. David Loy's (2003) Buddhist social theory is grounded in a non-dualistic framework, and introduces the concept of social dukha. Loy's use of the term 'social dukha' stems

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[12] With Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding encompassing a wide variety of theories and practices including Negotiation, Mediation, Reconciliation, Restorative Justice, Human Security, Inter-faith Dialogue, and Psycho-Social Trauma, theorists and practitioners are engaging at multiple levels of intra- and inter- social interaction.

from the concept of dukha in the Buddhist traditions.[13] Exploring how dukkha, the pervasive sense of unsatisfactoriness, drives the creation, attitudes, and behaviors of our sense of self, and by way of social dukkha, Loy applies these to contemporary socio-political issues. Loy's work is neither concentrated in conflict transformation nor peacebuilding, but his social theory employs Buddhist philosophy as a means of understanding identity and relationships.[14] Looking at the Buddhist view on the roots of suffering, the three poisons of greed, hatred, and ignorance, Loy links the global conflict issues to the these mental states and examines the role of personal identity in the intersection. Loy (2003) suggests that as we embrace our personal relationship with dukha, 'the world begins to heal as we realize that its sufferings are our own' (pg. 103). Echoing Loy's argument, Aung San Suu Kyi (2010) suggests, 'Calamities that are not the result of purely natural phenomena usually have their origins, distant and obscure as they may be, in common human feelings.'(pg. 48). As the Venerable Shih Sheng-yen (1999) stresses, 'peace in society begins with peace within oneself' (pg. 137), as the widening circle of influence of each individual would expand from their immediate sphere gradually to the larger contexts. This is one of the intersections of identity and the concept of dukkha, the intra-personal relationship with suffering, dissatisfaction, fear, greed, and ignorance. Namely, the intra- and inter- aspects of self and phenomena are co-arising and interconnected. As the mind and ego create perceptions, so to the behavior is enacted. Later in this chapter, and also in chapter five, I will explore this suggestion, and the intersection of emotions, identity, dukkha, and the three poisons.

Whilst the philosophical, spiritual, and scientific debates around identity formation are still emerging, I suggest is the act and experience of exploring identity is the *practice* of conflict transformation. As the review develops, I will discuss the attributes and capacities that support this exploration and create as the foundations for identity expansion and cultivating an engaged identity.

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[13] Mark Knickelbine's definition of Dukha aims to clarify this intersection of identity and experience, "This is dukkha: birth is painful, aging is painful, sickness is painful, death is painful, encountering what is not dear is painful, separation from what is dear is painful, not getting what one wants is painful. This psycho-physical condition is painful. In other words, dukkha is part of the fundamental nature of our phenomenal world. Dukkha is what it's like to be a human being" http://secularbuddhism.org/2013/05/06/the-four-noble-truths, Retrieved June 7, 2013.

[14] The specific areas of his critique range from issues of wealth and poverty, to good and evil, economic and corporate structures, nationalism, colonialism, technology, and environmentalism.

Identity & Conflict Transformation

In the following section, I look more closely and theorists and practitioners in the fields of conflict transformation and peacebuilding where identity is seen as a primary or prevalent contributor to the creation of conflict and its transformation. Conflict transformation is a distinct strand in the global discourse of conflict. Differing from either conflict resolution or conflict management, conflict transformation views the existence of conflicts (not violence) as a valuable part of social change and development and utilizes a systemic and inclusive approach to conflicts that acknowledges their interdependent dimensions and dynamic nature. Conflict transformation is seen as a complex process of constructively changing relationships, attitudes, behaviors, interests and addresses underlying structures, cultures and institutions that contribute to social conflict (Berghof, 2011).

Developed in the work of scholars in peace and conflict studies such as Adam Curle, Johan Galtung, Louis Kriesberg and John Paul Lederach, Lederach (2003) defines peacebuilding as 'a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates and sustains the full array of processes, approaches and stages needed to transform to more sustainable, peaceful relationships' (pg. 28). The field of conflict transformation includes processes and approaches as diverse as dialogue, restorative justice, negotiation and mediation, reconciliation, and psycho-social trauma healing, as well as advocacy, analysis, and policy. Exploring conflict transformation through the macro, meso, and micro levels, social theorists such as Morton Deutsch, Lewis Coser, Mary Clark, Maire Dugan, Jay Rothman, Peter Coleman, Terrell Northrup, David Berreby, Daniel Shapiro and the work of Donna Hicks, Evelin Linder, Arlene Audergon have emphasized both the relational and behavioral aspects of identity within the broad rubric of conflict transformation. From Anthropologist Ward Goodenough's (1963) emphasis on personal creativity using culture as a tool to elicit change and Alfred Kroeber's concept of the super organic, emphasizing culture as a structural factor that shapes human conduct (Brettell, 2002) to Coser's (1957) structural functionalism and conflict theory, where he argued that inter-group conflict can serve to solidify a loosely structured group or society and restore the

integrative core, the role of identity as catalyst for and tool to create and engage conflict and its transformation has been explored through the both the social and natural sciences.
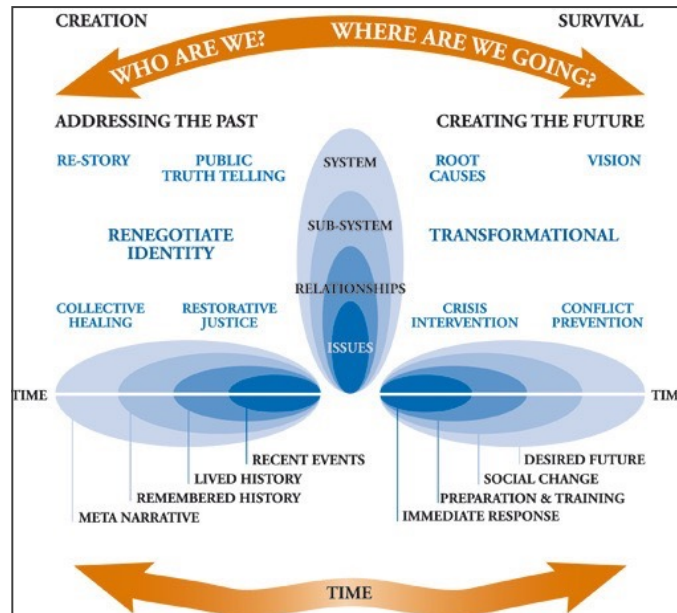
Figure 2.1: Expanded Framework for Peacebuilding; John Paul Lederach, The Moral Imagination, 2005

Within conflict transformation and peacebuilding, Maire Dugan's Nested Model and Lederach's Integrated Framework look to the intersection of agency and structure, where issues, relationships, and systems are seen as interrelated. In Lederach's (2005) Expanded Framework for Peacebuilding identity is strongly tied to the transformation of relationships between the various systems of structure, agency, and time. Sheng-yen, Northrup and Lederach include the personal identity within the frameworks for transformation, not only group and role identities found within social identity and identity theory. Personal identity is seen as consisting of 'moral sensibility and conscience, and also a desire for achievement, mastery, and competence.' (Mayer, Greenbaum, Kuenzi & Shteynberg, 2009, pg. 149) In addition, personal identity is defined as 'the combination of objective biosocial markers such as age, race, sex, and so on, and the personal life history of the individual' and 'the aspects of one's self that make them unique and help define that individual' (Brewer & Gardner, 1996, pg. 85). The inclusion of personal is important to note due its exclusion in many social identity and conflict transformation theories. Northrup

(1989) addresses the role of identity in the development, maintenance, and transformation of conflict by suggesting that differing levels of identity require and have distinct stages of resolution and transformation. First, Northrup outlines a transformative process moving from threat, to distortion, rigidification, collusion and warns that only settlements, and not transformation, can be made if there is a lack of personal core identity. The second level of change affects the relational aspects of the individual and therefore involves the core identity. Northrup views this as the mid-ground between settlement and transformation. The third is the level of change that affects behavior and is where the similarities or differences of the parties begin to alter the core identity. Although this level may include settlements, it is viewed the level with the strongest opportunity for transformation to take place. Moving from the structural, to the relational, and ultimately the intra-personal, Northrup provides two key insights, that identity has differing expressions and therefore options in addressing conflict, and that time plays a factor in the level of transformation of identity.

These differing expressions of personal and group identity are similar to a codebook, David Berreby (2005) suggests. Signs, symbols, structures, stereotypes, and stigma all contribute the formation of the book and through face-to-face experience codes are re-written or overridden. Berreby notes, 'Circumstances change, so do perceptions of what kinds of people there are, and what kinds you belong with' (pg. 179). This dynamic provides an individual with the ability to remain adaptable in the face of change. Both as a biological function for survival and a psychological function for understanding self and other, the connections we make provide us with the basic human needs of security and recognition. I argue that without its inclusion within the frameworks of conflict analysis, and conflict transformation processes, we fail to create foundations for sustainable relationships. I will look more at the role of adaptive systems, personal identity, and complexity within the Engaged Identity approach in chapter five.

In the search to address identity, human needs, and inter-group dynamics, it is noted that direct contact and uses of the Contact Approach have been prevalent in the

praxis of conflict transformation.[15] (Gómez, Tropp & Fernández, 2011; Dovidio, Eller & Hewstone, 2011; Amichai-Hamburger, & McKenna, 2006). The theory posits that sustained interactions among small groups can promote humanization, empathy and compromise. One example is Jay Rothman's (1997) ARIA framework, outlining four stages ranging from antagonism, to resonance, to invention, and then action, where the transformative process rests in 'inventing joint solutions'(pg. 83), a dynamic process that Rothman suggests provides 'people on one side of conflict [the ability] to find their own voices, while those on the other side can learn to listen and to make their own music' (pg. 87). Thomas F. Pettigrew and Linda Tropp (2006) conducted a "meta-review" of 515 studies undertaken between the 1940s and 2000, based on 713 independent samples, and concluded that they demonstrated a positive relationship between higher contact and lower prejudice. However, they caution that the type of contact matters. Tropp and Pettigrew note that positive outcomes were the result of structured versus ad hoc contact moments where efforts to promote equal status between the contact groups were highlighted. Rothman (1997) states that 'only when people are clear about their own values and motivations can they truly say what they mean, and only when they can fully articulate what they mean can they act upon their ideas.' (pg. 112).

However, direct contact is only supportive to conflict transformation when parties have both security and recognition, which Lisa Schirch (2005b), Northrup and others suggest requires addressing various issues of power, including security and psycho-social trauma. As Tropp and Pettigrew's research notes, in cases of asymmetrical power positive contact generally had less impact on members of the non-dominant group. Evelin Linder (2008, 2009, 2013) and Donna Hicks (2011) research into the role of humiliation and dignity in conflict are examples of how asymmetrical power can influence and impede transformative contact approaches.

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[15] Gordon W. Allport is credited with the development of the contact hypothesis, also known as the Contact Approach, Intergroup Contact Theory., and sometimes referred to as Contact theory. Allport's premise is that under the appropriate conditions, inter personal contact is effective for the reduction of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination. Contact theory has been one of the prominent theories of conflict studies within psychology, and sociology and has been the focus of countless sub-theories, reviews, and studies.

Perhaps the most relevant findings of the study were that positive contact with an "out" group produced more affective changes (how groups felt about each other) versus cognitive changes (how they thought about each other). In the desire to address the inhibitors to transformation, theorists and practitioners can have unintended consequences when it fails to account for how unconscious brain processes interact with conscious awareness to shape our identity and behavior[16] (Cikara, Bruneau & Saxe, 2011; Ochsner, Bunge, Gross,& Gabrieli, 2002). Neuroscientists have begun to ask if the outcomes of the theoretical and experiential praxis of conflict transformation are able to be confirmed (Avenanti, Sirigu & Aglioti, 2010; Chiao, 2011; Tarrant, Dazeley & Cottom, 2009). They are questioning if what our identities are cognitively reporting is what they are biologically experiencing. Looking at the affective shift, I question if it is personal identity that is actually changing, the values, beliefs, and attitudes, or is it in-group behavior, and the desire for continued attachment/recognition to that group, that is driving the change.[17] Additionally, what are the skills and capacities needed to have positive contact between groups? Tropp (2015) offers a direction for practitioners to consider suggesting that

> While building trust can be important, it may be best to focus first on breaking down biases and engaging in perspective-taking, rather than prioritizing improved personal relationships. Many "contact" programs are successful in building trust among their participants. However, if the newly sensitized participant returns to his or her home community and has negative interactions with a member of the other group, he or she may feel betrayed and develop even deeper animosity towards the group. (*n.a.*)

As Stryker and Burke (2000) maintain, the more strongly people are committed to certain identities, the harder they work to maintain the salience and behavior patterns

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[16] Neuroscientist Emile Bruneau suggests 'While building trust can be important, it may be best to focus first on breaking down biases and engaging in perspective-taking, rather than prioritizing improved personal relationships. As Peacebuilding efforts can easily backfire if they only rely on intuitions and ignore the underlying drivers of human behavior. Many "contact" programs are successful in building trust among their participants. However, if the newly sensitized participant returns to his or her home community and has negative interactions with a member of the other group, he or she may feel betrayed and develop even deeper animosity towards the group.' Comments at the NeuroPeace conference held in Washington, D.C. January, 2014.

[17] The question of whether an actual shift in personal identity, values, beliefs, or behaviors occurs or a temporary normative behavior for in-group acceptance during contact based interventions remains unclear, See Sheldon and Bettencourt. "Psychological need–satisfaction and subjective well–being within social groups." British Journal of Social Psychology 41, no. 1, 2002, 25-38 and Vivan L. Vignoles, Camillo Regalia, Claudia Manzi, Jen Golledge, and Eugenia Scabini. "Beyond self-esteem: influence of multiple motives on identity construction." Journal of personality and social psychology 90, no. 2, 2006, 308.

associated with that identity (pg. 289). Contact approaches alone may not be enough. We must develop the capacities for perspective taking, and develop respect for the time both development and reflection require. However, breaking down biases and increasing opportunities for perspective taking can be challenging in the face of an increasingly globalized landscape, where contact through technology, combined with population increases, and diminishing natural resources creates almost a perfect storm where identity experiences threat due to ecological and relational needs.

Daniel Shapiro's (2010) looks into the binders of group relations/identity with his Relational Identity Theory[18], which suggest that affiliation and autonomy are the predominant motives that define individual and group associations.[19] The theory focuses on the dynamics of identity and the emotional aspects of conflict as a means of addressing the behavioral and salient patterns that arise. Moving beyond human needs theories, Shapiro suggests the RIT contributes to creating cooperative norms that can elicit positive reciprocal relationships among groups and assist in the rigidification of the 'tribes effect'.[20] (Shapiro, 2010, p. 634). Like Lederach, Tropp and Northrup, Shapiro has included, respect, time, and systems thinking to transformative process, yet the work of developing the capacity to engage in these processes for transformation remains unaddressed.

From a biological perspective, neuroplasticity confirms the need for patience in transformation, noting that creating new synapses and strengthening pathways for cognition, takes time (Draganski et al., 2004; May et al., 2007). Yet knowing that perspective, listening, patience, and respect are components for transformation does not provide for the development of these capacities. Can we cultivate malleability? Can we prime for perspective to transform? Develop an understanding of patience

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[18] The theory offers four building processes for addressing affiliation and autonomy; respecting autonomy by including group members, creating spaces outside of official capacities for inventing options, taking a gradualist approach to dialogues, and embarking on joint problem solving.

[19] Shapiro's suggestion that affiliation and autonomy are predominant motives of group association were proposed in the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory presented by Dr. Marilynn B. Brewer in 1991. The social psychology theory proposed that people identify with social groups to satisfy opposing motives for belonging and distinctiveness . See Marilynn Brewer, The social self: On being the same and different at the same time. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 17, 475–482, 1991.

[20] The tribes affect id described as the 'national and communal bonds that are essentially tribal in nature, and how a tribe's unaddressed relational identity concerns make it susceptible to what I term the tribes effect, a rigidification of its relational identity.' Shaprio, 2010, p.634.

inclusive of intra- and inter- capacity? Can we enhance listening and respect as components of equanimity? In light of the complexity of context, rigidity, emotions, affiliation, autonomy, attitudes, and behaviors, the idea that one theory or framework could provide the template for conflict transformation seems unlikely. However the underlying capacities required to engage these theories and processes is remarkable similar.

Jane Docherty (2005) offers a solution to the questions of how and if one theory can address the complexity of transformation. Docherty's Unique Case Theory suggests that in order to transform conflict practitioners would construct 'a new theory of the unique case', which allow the identities, structures, and worldviews that are unique to a given conflictual situation to be integrated into a new shared paradigm (pg. 281). While I agree with Docherty's premise that each engagement is unique opportunity for co-creation, and that providing a new basis for each case allows for context specific solutions and adaptions to emerge, I propose the same elicitive nature of engagement be applied to cultivating capacities for transformation, so identities to capable of participating in the processes.

In his work The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace, Lederach (2005) looks to the behavioral aspects of identity and peacebuilding where the practitioner sees the work of peacebuilding as an art that encompasses the morality of peace. Not unlike Goodenough, Lederach sees creativity as a key to transforming conflict, but Lederach sees creativity as more than an externalized ability to create outcomes. He suggests communication, shared power, strong social fabrics, and mutual empowerment, and awareness of interconnectedness are developed through creative collaborative approaches that include the capacities for imagination, curiosity, humility, stillness, and what he terms 'sensuous perception' (pg. 97). Describing the challenges posed by commitment to process versus commitment to outcome as the "Gandhi Dilemma," Lederach notes that the transformative approach similarly adopts a Gandhian solution. Namely, that a commitment to the process of transformation is a commitment to a particular philosophy and lifestyle: a pursuit of truth and the restoration of relationships (Lederach, 1996, pg. 3-23). As Mohandas

Gandhi's stated, 'pursuit of Truth did not violence being inflicted on one's opponent but that he must be weaned from error by patience and sympathy. For what appears to truth to the one may appear to be error to the other.' (Gandhi, 1922).

Questions remain on how to engage identity in the praxis of conflict transformation. How do we cultivate humility, or curiosity, or stillness? How do we develop relationships and commitment to interconnectedness? Many conflict transformation theories, frameworks and approaches include skills and tools such as creativity, patience, collaboration, listening, empathy, respect, and compassion. However, a prescription for their inclusion in transformative practices does not provide the means for their cultivation. The prevalence of trauma in the praxis of conflict transformation suggests the effects of trauma and its role in inhibiting our capability for development and transformation are profoundly entwined.[21] The question of how these capacities can be cultivated will be explored in more depth in chapters five and six. However, how to cultivate these capacities is only a part of the equation.

Conclusion

The chapter began with an overview of social identity and identity theory, looking at the differences and similarities that Burke and Stets' used to create a new unified identity theory. I then explored identity within the rubric of conflict transformation, looking at both theory and practice to outline the contributions, intersections, and limitations current to the field of conflict transformation. The concepts of identity threat and identity expansion were examined to address the prevalent issues in conflict that create threat, and potential processes to enhance healing, cooperation, and flourishing. The scope of the chapter is limited within the constraints of time, resources, and the Western context from which my identity is largely associated. In addition, the historic separation of academic disciplines creates challenges in addressing identity from truly holistic and comparative lens.The reduction of sense

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[21] As trauma scholars have suggested, structural, cultural, historical, shared, secondary, developmental, or intergenerational are contributing factors to the health of an identity, and to the potentials for conflict transformation. The idea of capability factors greatly into the conflict transformation rubric, in examining how conflict and trauma effect our capacity to achieve well-being. The Capability Approach, accredited largely to Amartya Sen and further developed by Martha Nussbaum and other humanities scholars, defines well-being in terms of people's capabilities, their real opportunities to do and be what they have reason to value. In Sen's capability approach, the range of activities include the assessment of individual well-being, the evaluation and assessment of social arrangements, and the design of policies and proposals about social change in society.

threat has been shown as key factors in reducing conflict, although the praxis of conflict transformation includes this as a desired outcome, it rarely offers intrapersonal practices and methodologies to cultivate them. As the silos of psychology, sociology, neuroscience, anthropology, and philosophy continue to break open and reflect the complexity inherent in conflict and the human experience, we largely have remained unable to engage conflict without harm, violence, or oppression. What are we missing? Are our prescriptions too narrow or not deep enough? Does haste inhibit our understandable desire to stop suffering? Or is our expectation for transformation not reflective of the time required?

My position is that identity expands in the process of transformation. By developing adaptive capacity, we are able to include the other in our worldview and maintain our core identity, lessening the sense of threat from insecurity, uncertainty, or difference. When crisis or trauma prevents the development of empathy, wisdom, and compassion that are necessary for conflict transformation, we must have the capacity to address the complexity of conflict and provide for the expansion identity, where the new can be born. I consider these to be, what I term, human adaptive capacities. Our inherent ability to engage with the fear, greed, and ignorance that lie at the heart of suffering. They are present in all human beings, transcending identity, worldview, and context and are a part of our ability to evolve as a species, and as a part of the diversity of the world we inhabit.

Photograph 3: Looking over the identity mapping results during a workshop in Harga, Benue State, Nigeria
Photo Credit: JKLynne

Chapter Three: The Literature on Complexity and Systems

In the prior chapter, I established both the multiplicity and malleability of identity and its role in conflict transformation. I will now explore the literature on complexity science and systems thinking. More specifically, I investigate the self as a complex adaptive system to support the transformation of self, society, and conflict. First I will look at complexity science and systems thinking to bring some clarity and definition to the inquiry, then I will explore the sciences that attribute the self as a system, and furthermore, as a complex adaptive system in order to illuminate the various aspects of self that contribute to transformative processes.

Complexity & Systems

Complexity. Complexity theory, also known as complexity science, or complex systems,[22] is a unifying framework to understand how parts of a system and their relationships give rise to the collective behaviors of a system, and how the system interacts and forms relationships with its environment (Bar-Yam, 2002; Walby, 2007). Complexity (as I will refer henceforth for ease), identified underlying parallels in phenomena such as the rise and fall of civilizations, the human immune system, the origins of life, the evolution of species, the workings of the human brain, the onset of psychiatric illnesses, ecological systems, genetic selection, and the world economy (Breslin, 2004). The application is prevalent in biology, mathematics, philosophy, medicine, neuroscience, sociology, anthropology, ecology, psychology, and philosophy, basically encompassing the realm of relationships rather than the distinction of academic discipline. Complexity emerged from general systems theory and cybernetics, and later included chaos theory and catastrophe theory as a means understand systemic relationships, and rejects the reductionist view that systems can be understood through the analysis of their individual parts, and instead examines the relational aspects to determine organizational patterns, predict systems behavior, and discover reflexive networks. Complexity embraces both the autonomous existence of the parts composing a system and the larger overarching determining structures. The elements and the whole co-constitute one another with a relationship of 'reciprocal

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[22] The continuing development of the field across disciplines and ideologically has yet to result in definite terms.

causality' between personal, local and global levels (Thompson & Varela. 2001, pg. 421). The etymology of the word: complexus meaning 'totality', derived from complecti, meaning 'embrace' and plectere 'to weave, entwine.'[23] Hence complexity suggests 'the embracing of totality and interconnectivity of elements within and between systems' (Mitleton-Kelly, 2000, pg. 25). The terms emergence, open systems, self-organization, and non-linearity are often used to explain the underlying dynamic, interdependent, and resilient qualities that result from these relationships. I will define and explore these concepts further, as they become relevant during the inquiry. In the figure below, Brian Castellani shows the history and intersections of complexity and systems in his interdisciplinary mapping of key figures and research areas in order to understand the overarching philosophies and applications as a conceptual toolkit.[24]
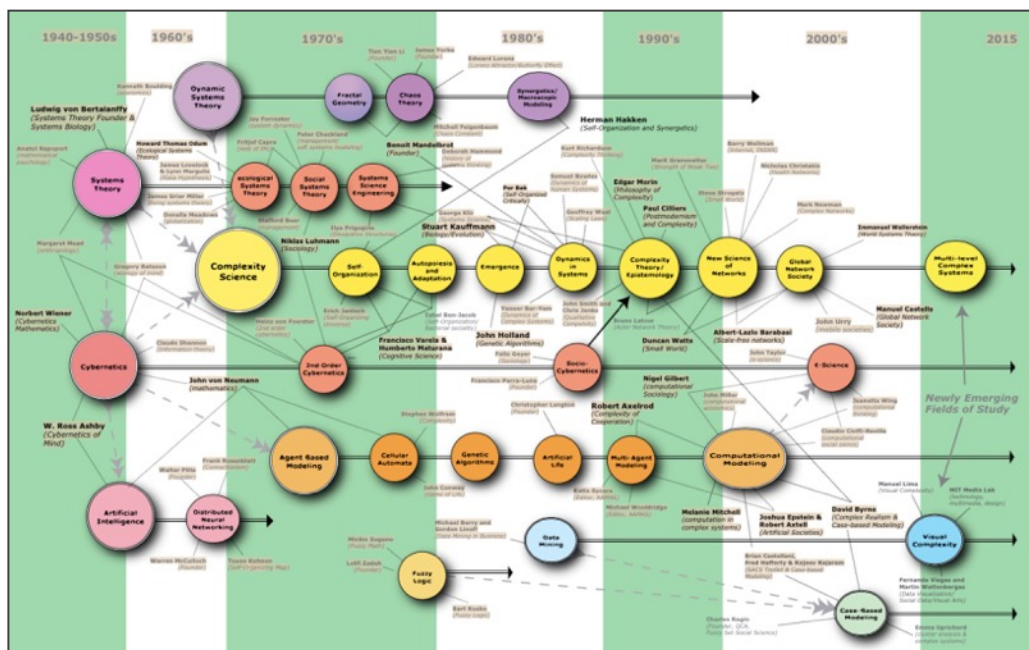
Figure 3.1: A Historical Map of Complexity and Systems by Brian Castellani[25]

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[23] From http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/complex.; http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=complex. Retrieved on May 14, 2014.

[24] The concept of complexity science as a 'conceptual toolkit' was coined by Antoine Bousquet and Simon Curtis. I have adapted their thinking to include systems theory, systems thinking, and systems approaches. See Bousquet, Antoine, and Simon Curtis. "Beyond models and metaphors: complexity theory, systems thinking and international relations." Cambridge Review of International Affairs 24, no. 01, p. 45, 2011.

[25] https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AComplexity_Map.svg Retrieved October 19, 2014. Used with permission via BY-SA 3.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0)], via Wikimedia Commons.

Systems. Systems thinking is derived from General Systems theory and much like complexity science, systems approaches have yet to gain a universal epistemology. Also referred to as systems theory, or systems approach, the commonality is the holistic view of their interactions and their effects on complex systems over time (Meadows &Wright, 2008; Stichweh, 2011). As such, systems thinking has been identified as an approach to problem solving, by viewing 'problems' as a consequence of an overall system, rather than the reductionist methodology that isolates the problem or part without regard to the relational aspects of the system. Looking at the role of systems dynamics in identity-based conflict, David Peter Stroh (2011) outlines five core principles about how systems function:

- Feedback: *system performance is largely determined by a web of inter connected circular (not linear) relationships among its elements. Actions taken by one group affect both its own performance and the behavior of others – often in non-obvious ways.*

- Delay: *actions people take have both immediate and delayed consequences that they do not always anticipate.*

- Unintended Consequences: *immediate and intended consequences of people's actions are often neutralized or reversed by the long-term unintended consequences of these same actions. People often contribute unwittingly to the very problems they are trying to solve.*

- Power of Awareness: *when people see and understand the system as it really operates, they are no longer controlled by it and can make different choices.*

- Leverage: *systems improve as the result of a few key coordinates changes sustained over time. (pg. 168)*

For the use in this inquiry, the term 'systems thinking' defined as an awareness of the complexity that is found within systems and the influences of the structure and function of systems as a means to understand and enhance the relational aspects of systems. This awareness includes the concepts interdependence, mutual causality, homeostasis, and resilience. Interdependence recognizes the universal interrelatedness of systems and similarly mutual causality (Macy, 1991, 2007)

(reciprocal causation) reflects the reliance and effects that occur between the elements of a system, and systems with one another, over time.

Buddhist philosophy, developed through empirical evidence and later though ontological and epistemological inquiry, is grounded in non-dualism and dependent origination. Dependent origination suggests that all dharmas (phenomena) arise in dependence upon other dharmas (phenomena) (Loy, 1993). It posits that events, concepts, or realities are dependent on other specific things and at no point in time are considered to be individuated entities. This belief is seen in many philosophies and wisdom traditions including the concept of Ubuntu, described by Michael Onyebuchi Eze as 'A person is a person through other people where the 'I am' is not a rigid subject, but a dynamic self-constitution dependent on this otherness creation of relation and distance.' (Eze, 2010, pg.190). In Mipham Rinpoche's teachings on , the Dzogchen[26], (Pettit, 1999) this relationship is explained using the metaphor of the reflection of the moon in water. According to this metaphor:

- The nature of all phenomena is like the reflection of the moon in water— completely lacking inherent existence. However,

- The appearance of the moon in the water is an expression of dependent origination—the appearance is completely dependent upon causes and conditions. (pg. 156)

The concept of dependent origination is synonymous with a sense of interconnectedness where the ecosystems we encounter are seen as inseparable from a sense of self. Thick Nhat Hanh's 'interbeing'[27], the metaphor of Indra's web[28], interpenetration and "mutual identity"[29] from Chinese Buddhism, further describe the emergent, non-linear, and self-organizational qualities inherent in complexity science

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[26] Dzogchen is a central teaching in the Nyngma schools of Tibetan Buddhism. The teaching reflects and discusses what is considered to be the highest, or clear, path to the state of liberation from suffering (dukkha) and samsara (the cycles of rebirth and delusions).

[27] Hanh describes Interbeing through the metaphor of a cloud, 'Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without trees, we cannot make paper. The cloud is essential for the paper to exist'. Thich Nhat Hạnh, (1998) Interbeing: Fourteen guidelines for engaged Buddhism. Parallax Press. pg. 37.

[28] From the Hindu tradition, the metaphor of 'Indra's Net is the net of the Vedic god Indra, whose net hangs over his palace on Mount Meru, Indra's net has a multifaceted jewel at each vertex, and each jewel is reflected in all of the other jewels. See Guy Claxton, (2000), Indra's Net at Work: The Mainstreaming of Dharma Practice in Society. In: The Psychology of Awakening: Buddhism, Science, and Our Day-to-Day Lives, Weiser. p.225

[29] Developed in the Hua-yen tradition of Chinese Buddhism, most notably by its third patriarch and founder Fa-tsang.

and systems thinking. Not only is there interconnection, but as the etymology of complexity highlights, there is an entwined totality. David Loy (1993) explains,

> Sustainability is inherently a matter of interdependence, so the applicability of these ideas to the modern ecology is obvious. Indra's Net embodies a far wider scope than just the material accepts of nature. The basic principle is that each individual is both the cause for the whole and is caused by the whole. Ecological interdependence implies that if any one part of a system is disturbed, the whole systems is affected…Nature is not seen as a backdrop for human existence; rather humans are seen as insupportable from nature. (pg. 488).

As Frank Cook (1977) states 'The cosmos is, in short, a self-creating, self-maintaining, and self-defining organism. Such a universe has no hierarchy' (p. 2).

Complexity, Systems & Self

In the continuing investigation into the location, creation, and resilience of self, complexity and systems thinking have produced volumes of philosophies, theories and empirical research. For the purpose of this research, my focus is on the self as a complex adaptive system. In the course of this inquiry, I examine the self as a system inclusive of identity (personal, group, role) and biology (evolutionary, physiologically, neurologically). Looking at self as an embodied identity, in order to explore the self as a complex adaptive system and apply the properties of self-complexity, self-aspects, malleability, resilience, self-preservation, organization, and limitation as potentials for conflict transformation.

Self as System. Fransisco Varela and Humberto Maturana's (1974, 980, 1987), in their seminal work on biology and cognition, introduced the idea of autopoiesis to show the organization of a minimal living system, such as a cell. Autopoiesis, as described by Varela (1999),

> captures the mechanism or process that generates the identity of a living system and thus distinguishes living things from non-living things. It attempts to define the uniqueness of the emergence that produces life in its fundamental cellular form. It suggests a circular or network process that engenders a paradox: a self-organizing network of biochemical reactions produces molecules, which do something specific and unique: they create a boundary, a

membrane, which   constrains the network that has produced the
constituents of the membrane. The entity doesn't require an external
agent to notice it, or to say, "I'm here." It is, by itself, a self-
distinction. (pg. 212)

Varela and Maturana, later applied the term to multicellular organisms, including

human beings. Relating autopoiesis to the human condition, Varela (1999) states,

I see the mind as an emergent property, and the very important and
interesting consequence of this emergent property is our own sense
of self. My sense of self exists because it gives me an interface with
the world. I'm "me" for interactions, but my "I" doesn't
substantially exist, in the sense that it can't be localized anywhere.
This view, of course, resonates with the notions of the other
biological selves   mentioned, but there are subtle and important
differences. An emergent property, which is produced by an
underlying network, is a coherent condition that allows the system
in which it exists to interface at that level—that is, with other selves
or identities of the same kind. You can never say, "This property is
here; it's in this component." In the case of autopoiesis, you can't
say that life—the condition of being self-produced—is in this
molecule, or in the DNA, or in the cellular membrane, or in the
protein. Life is in the configuration and in the dynamical pattern,
which is what embodies it as an emergent property. (pg. 216)

The 'underlying network' of which Varela speaks, the coherent condition that allows

the system to interface with other selves or identities is at once dynamic and

emergent. A biological capability to both effect and be effected, influence and be

influenced, while simultaneously self-organize.

One of the distinctions in complex systems is the adaptability or determination of a

system; how the output of a system (influence) and the input (influencers) are

connected. As Valera and Maturana's work on autopoiesis showed, adaptive systems

are self-organizing, emergent and open systems; the internal components (agents) of

a system exchange information and energy through feedback that transforms and co-

creates the system, its biology and behavior. In complex systems, these feedback

interactions occur in a non-linear fashion; meaning they are not proportional.

Negative feedback acts as a regulator to the system aiding in stability, while positive

feedback amplifies (or reinforces) system characteristics. Edward Lorenz' (1972)

'Butterfly Effect' eloquently describes the effects of positive feedback whereby small changes in either input or output can result in large systemic change, and vice versa.

In examining self as a complex system through the natural sciences, three distinguishable yet interrelated facets emerge; biological complexity, cognitive complexity, and the complexity of consciousness. Biological complexity is thought to be an outcome of evolution (Adami, Ofria & Collier, 2000; Edelman & Gally, 2001; Lineweaver, Davies & Ruse, 2013). This process, in which complex organisms can be produced from simpler ones, supported the common philosophical interpretation of evolution being progressive and having a forward or linear direction that leads towards what are viewed as 'higher organisms'. However, this idea of 'progression' is misleading. Natural selection has been proven to have no intrinsic direction, whereby complexity trumps simplicity (Ayala, 2007; Lobo, 2008; Carroll, 2001).

This serves as a key point to understanding self-organization and malleability. The organism's sustainability lies in its reflexive adaptability to complexity or simplify. I would also suggest it as a key concept for conflict transformation, as I will discuss further in this chapter, and in subsequent chapters. Cognitive complexity, the psychological variable that reflects the complexity or simplicity of the frame and perceptual skill of a person, includes the thinking, decision making, attention, memory, and learning capacity. High cognitive complexity is associated with the increased ability to analyze, discern, and perceive nuance and subtle differences, while lower measures result in decreased capacity (Haggard, Rossetti & Kawato, 2008; Bergeron, 2008; Landy, Allen & Anderson, 2011). Although both high and low self-complexity have each been shown to contribute to well-being depending on the distinction and integration of self aspects (Strauss, Griffin & Parker, 2012; Lilgendahl & McAdams, 2011). This reflexivity is in essentially memetic to the biological evolution where both complexity and simplification contribute to the sustainability, adaptability, and well-being of the system. Differentiation, integration, and articulation are the foundational concepts of cognitive complexity, and include social and emotional intelligence, communication skills, and problem solving

(Moody, 2003). Additionally, there is the complexity of consciousness. One of the most fundamental questions that can be asked about consciousness is why it exists? That asked, the question splits into two related questions: What causes consciousness, and what is it for?[30] Allen Combs (2002) defines the phenomenon of consciousness:

> Consciousness is the essence of experience. Its touch is the bearer
> of meaning. It is pointed neither inward nor outward . . . it is neither
> introverted nor extroverted. It is not simple nor is it complex. It has
> no structure of its own but only essence. It is not static nor is it in
> motion. Consciousness is the perfect transparent subjectivity
> through which the phenomenal world shines (pg. 7).

The ongoing search to answers for these questions speaks to the complexity rooted within what it means to be biologically, psychologically, and ontologically present in consciousness (Zelazo, Moscovitch & Thompson, 2007; Damasio, 2000; Fatemi, 2012; McBride, 2013; Tononi, 2008; Laureys & Tononi, 2009). As Loy (2003) suggests, 'humans are not separate from ecology'(pg. 132). Which brings, as Giulio Tononi and Christof Koch (Tononi & Koch, 2015) have suggested, the universality of consciousness into the equation. There remains a question of assigning consciousness to phenomena, namely can we claim that consciousness only resides as we define it or is relegating consciousness to our current understanding hierarchical and negating the key factors of complexity such as emergence? Furthermore, phenomena as perceived by the self, cannot ultimately be defined by the self, due to the inherent subjectivity and emergent qualities of both perceptions and self. By extension, the intellectual understanding of complexity should not exclude the nature of uncertainty that lies at the heart of complexity and systems. I will explore this further in the following section on self as a complex adaptive system.

Self as Complex Adaptive System. The theory of complex adaptive systems (CAS) developed out of the work of Murray Gell-Mann, Karl Popper, Warren Weaver,

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[30] One theory that has posited the nature of consciousness is Integrated Information Theory of consciousness (IIT) based on two axiomatic pillars; that conscious states are highly differentiated and informationally very rich and information is highly integrated.

Friedrich Hayek, John Holland, Herb Anderson, and Gregory Bateson. CAS was based in a transdisciplinary approach, constituting computational methodologies to simulate and explore the behavior of complex systems (Gell-Mann, 1994; Holland, 2012; Hanel, Thurner & Gell-Mann, 2014; Hayek, 2012). Looking at the roles governing agency, action, and adaptation over time, CAS theory explores the intersection of agents and structures and their malleability through exposure, influence and reflexivity to dynamically co-evolve. Aimed largely at observing and predicting behavior and influences of systems over time, the modeling and mapping that arose from the computational foundations of CAS continue to be applied to social theories and methodologies although a shift in focus from generalizable rules has given way to the 'local theory' whereby specific processes and mechanisms are included to derive greater relationality within the systems observed (Walker & Cooper, 2011; Rosser, 2012; Purzycki, Haque & Sosis, 2014). One of the key benefits of CAS is the incorporation of the interaction of agents and structures over time, allowing for observations and methods to explore how the processes of dynamic co-creation and co-evolution are occurring.

In biology, two distinctive yet related categories explore how these processes are occurring in CAS, the continuous adaptation of an organism to its environment to maintain itself in a viable state through sensory feedback mechanisms (homeostasis), and the adaptation of anatomic structure, physiological process or behavior characteristic that increases the probability of an organism reproducing itself; adaptation, specialization and evolution (Jones, 2003). While in the social sciences, the focus of these feedback influences is in the cognition and behavior of a system (Park, 2010; Selverston, 2013; Glenberg, Witt & Metcalfe, 2013). As I demonstrated in chapter two, social identity and identity theorists, and the approaches that develop as a result, are largely relational and inclusive of the knowledge of the self as complex. There is a shared processual ontology with complexity based approaches. In addition, cognitive neuroscience, neuropsychology, neurophysiology, neurophenomenology, and neuroanthropology have begun to reveal the relationship between biological processes and the cognitive/behavioral/consciousness aspects of

the self as a complex adaptive system (Gros,2015; Hannah, Balthazard, Waldman, Jennings & Thatcher, 2013; Laughlin, 2013; Joseph, 2013).

A cornerstone to the co-creation that occurs in the relational and evolutionary processes of CAS is adaptive capacity; the concepts of diversity, self-preservation, self-limitation, self-regulation, flexibility, and malleability enable the coexistence of a system with other systems, without requiring the collapse of either system. Acting as an interrelated set of capabilities ,including emergence and resilience, that are present in both ecological and human social systems. In social psychology, self complexity, both low and high, have been have been linked to well-being. Coined by Patricia Linville (1985, 1987), self complexity is the perceived knowledge a person holds of themselves and a based on the number of distinctive attributes or self-aspects they believe they possess. Self aspects are defined as idiographic representations of the self that correspond to various roles, relationships, traits, contexts, and activities, and contain personal, relational, and collective levels (Sedikides & Brewer, 2001; Brewer & Chen, 2007; Cheek, Tropp, Underwood & Cheek, 2013; Vignoles, Schwartz & Luyckx, 2011). Burke and Stets (2009) explore the interlinkage of multiple self-aspects stating,

> Person becomes a link between the various agencies that exist within the person. For example, Mary is a teacher and a mother. Mary may gain information in the role as a teacher that can be passed on to herself as a mother in order to help her children learn something. In this case, 'teacher' is linked to 'mother' by being the same person. Teacher and mother are each agent that can act independently or jointly or can interact with each other. (pg.16)

As self is acting simultaneously with multi-agent capacity and in multiple systems, and I would highlight here as a dynamic, emergent system that is in a continuous state of creating, arranging, and engaging those agencies, the self as a complex system becomes illuminated. Again, there is a clear relationship to the autopoietic nature of self. As Burke and Stets (2009) suggest,

> The distinction between person [self] and agent is central to identity theory. An Identity is an agent…part of what makes interaction and the social system work is the fact that different identities within persons [self] engage in transactions (the example of Mary as

teacher and mother) as well as different identities between persons (Mary the teacher and Veronica the mother of one of Mary's students). Both of these kinds of interactions and transactions need to be included incorporated into our theories (pg. 19).

However, the initial belief linking increased self-complexity to well-being has been disputed by additional research (McConnell, Strain, Brown & Rydell, 2009; Rafaeli-Mor & Steinberg, 2002). Research showed that individuals with low self-complexity reported higher well-being and self esteem due to the lack of fragmentation and conflict arising from the stressors that were present in high complexity individuals. This is a key point that directly correlates to the complexify/simplify behavior in biological evolution. Essentially, the cognitive traits of self-complexity mimic the cellular behavior as both engage in mutual causality. As a result, I suggest this reflexivity, the ability to hold complexity and simplicity with the self-concept could be seen as a strong component of adaptive capacity, and an indicator for wellbeing and transformation.

In looking at self as a complex adaptive system, the intra- and inter- relational aspects of self, roles, agency and structure, trauma can be seen as seen a perturbance to the system. Stuart Brand (2008) explains the effects of time and surprise on systems as;

> Some parts respond quickly to the shock, allowing slower parts to ignore the shock and maintain their steady duties of system continuity. The combination of fast and slow components makes the system resilient, along with the way the differently paced parts affect each other. Fast learns, slow remembers. Fast proposes, slow disposes. Fast is discontinuous, slow is continuous. Fast and small instructs slow and big by accrued innovation and occasional revolution. Big and slow controls small and fast by constraint and constancy. (pg. 113).

This ability could be hampered by the perturbance associated with trauma. As Patricia Longstaff (2005) explains the failure of resilience,

> [It] loses its capacity to absorb disturbance or undergo change while still retaining essentially the same functions, structures, identity, and feedbacks. The individual dies or the group reorganizes but looks nothing like it did before. This happens when the danger is too fast, or to abundant. That is, the system does not have response capabilities that are diverse enough, it cannot marshal these

responses quickly enough, or the danger is so forceful that all responses are overwhelmed. The danger may become too forceful if the system has been weakened by previous dangers and has not had time to recover. The system may also fail if those managing it impose a response that is not consistent with the local system's own trajectory or 'path dependence' (pg. 42).

This bears a similarity to the systemic response in ecological crises, when change occurs too quickly to allow for adaptation to occur. (Dai, Vorselen, Korolev & Gore, 2012; Walker & Cooper, 2011). Discussing requirements for resilience, Longstaff (2005) explains, 'developing resilience in systems requires a combination of different times scales operating within a system' (p.21). Time then is required for observing the system, engaging the system (particularly in cases of perturbance), and sustainability of the system. Yet, time is often included as a prescription for inclusion in transformative processes without addressing how to develop the intra-personal capacities for the awareness and patience required.

Complex adaptive systems are said to evolve when agents operate in response to other systems via feedback. At the heart of the agent – structure discourse, the focus has been primarily on the relationship between social actors and structures through the personal, inter-group, intra-group, institutional, and identity aspects. While complexity and systems thinking have dramatically enhanced our ability to understand the complex, multileveled, dynamic, and non-linear nature of these relationships, there has been a void in the inclusion of intra-personal development of those aspects in transformative theory, frameworks, and (methodologies) processes. Although seen as inclusive and influenced by human attributes (biological, cognitive, affective, behavioral), by and large the research in conflict transformation has focused on complex systems as human social systems, rarely addressing the intrapersonal mechanisms for transformation. This scholarship seeks to extend and contribute to this knowledge.

The one constant question in the equations of complexity and systems is the very notion of self. Although self is understood as a dynamic, complex adaptive system, it is the construct from which all other musings arise. Disregarding the inclusion of its

intra-transformation is to continue to posit complexity and systems rather than embody them. As Diane Hendrick (2009) observes, 'this is not a new insight but the tendency to focus on the internal processes of others, albeit with a recognition of the complex non-linear relations with the environment and other systems, still leaves out of account the intervener, the strategist and, for that matter, the analyst' (pg. 84). Hendrick (2009) quotes Coleman (2006),

> An engagement with a conflict system constitutes a perturbation in that system with intended and unintended consequences. The intra-personal processes of the peace researcher or peace worker are part of the complex interaction taking place within the system. Therefore, an alertness to the inner world is important and relevant to the engagement in the outer world. Coleman speaks of intervening in a manner that is 'mindful, reflective, and adaptive' but this too must be cultivated, few posses this ability naturally (pg. 84).

However, I would go beyond Coleman's assertion that alertness is relevant, and suggest the development intra-personal capacities are crucial to transformation of both self and system.

If we begin by looking beyond the common reductionism of agency and instead view the self as the multiplicity of agencies (Burke & Stets, 2009; McConnell, Shoda & Skulborstad, 2012; Yeager & Dweck 2012; Walton, Paunesku & Dweck, 2012) and others, the source of qualities that can introduce change, and even provide attractors for positive interaction begins to reflect a more accurate complexity based landscape. In addition, include the premise that every observer has a blind spot, we are blind for the blind spot, and in this sense every observation is blind (Von Foerster & Poerksen, 2002, pg. 38). Three opportunities arise from these inclusions:

1. The ability to increase the awareness of self as a system including its reflexive potential.
2. The inclusion of self-complexity and self-aspects as and for transformation
3. The development of perception for increased awareness of self and system dynamics.

The prescriptions provided by theorists and methodologies acknowledging requirements such a systems thinking, patience, empathy, listening, worldviews, for

transformation to transpire, rarely offer practitioners and the methods or means for their cultivation and self-transformation. Going beyond Hugh Miall's (2004) phrase 'transforming the transformer'(pg. 4), the inclusion of intra-personal transformation could be seen as the fundamental transformation to which all transformation is linked.

Conclusion

The chapter began with an overview of complexity and systems, looking at their basic tenets and establishing a knowledge base of their use in interdisciplinary theory and methodology. This was followed by a more in depth look at the self as complex system from the biological, cognitive, and consciousness of complexity. Then I focused the inquiry on the self as a complex adaptive systems, and examined the origins of complex adaptive systems, their attributes, and the adaptive capacity of the self. To say these brief explanations are, in any way, even marginally representational of the vast body of scholarship within these fields and sub-fields would be a gross misrepresentation, as such the chapter is limited. However, the point of illuminating the various aspects of human complexity was not intended for rigorous debate, but to focus the inquiry on the foundational aspects of the self as a system; an embodied identity that in its core aspects contain adaptive capacity for conflict transformation. Lastly, I do not aim to offer detailed arguments of complexity or dynamical systems, but rather to highlight aspects and features of these frameworks to posit their inclusion in the broader interest of the Engaged Identity praxis and conflict transformation.

Several questions were raised in chapter that were addressed during the inquiry:

1. Can we cultivate malleability?
2. Prime for perspective to transform?
3. Are our prescriptions too narrow?
4. Or not deep enough?
5. Is our expectation for transformation reflective of the time required?

There remains a tension in the separation of self and system. Namely, the question of how a self, as a subjective component of a system, can analyze and intervene with observations that are at best limited and at worst anthropocentric or hierarchical;

placing the intellect and the self as system in differentiated categories despite the good intentions that fuel the interaction. As Heinz von Foerster (1992) notes,

> If I consider myself as apart from the world then because of my
> independence I can tell others how to think and to act:
> 'Thou shalt ...,' 'Thou shalt not ....'
> However, if I consider myself as part of the world and as a
> participant in human relations and interactions then, because of my
> interdependence, I can only tell to myself how to think and to act.
> "I shall ...", "I shall not ...." (pg. 12).

The question remains of how the personal complex adaptive system of self can engage other complex systems to promote well-being and transformation. I offer one contribution of the inclusion of adaptive capacity development for consideration.

Photograph 4: Receiving a traditional gift in the kingdom of Guyuk, Adamawa State, Nigeria
Photo Credit: Joseph Sampson

Chapter Four: Intravation

Having raised the issues of identity and self as complex systems, in this chapter I turn towards the theory and praxis surrounding the capacities within the self for transformation and sustainability. Beginning with a discussion on transdisciplinarity and its relationship with complexity, I will then examine the concept of embodied cognition as it relates to interaction and adaptivity. Finally, I introduce the term *intravation* as a new framework for understanding human adaptive capacity, examining and highlighting the attributes that contribute to transformative processes.

Engaging Complexity Transdisciplinarity is a term that carries different connotations; there is a broad understanding that it moves beyond interdisciplinarity, where theory, research, and praxis move *across* disciplines and is often inclusive of systems thinking, non-linearity, and interdependence (Lemke & Sabelli, 2008; Nicolescu, 2007, 2008; Vanasupa, McCormick, Stefanco, Herter & McDonald, 2011; Jorg, 2011; Nowotny, 2003). Basarab Nicolescu (2006) describes transdisciplinarity[31] as 'what is between the disciplines, across the different disciplines, and beyond all disciplines'(pg. 143) and suggests new concepts will be needed in order to examine the findings from this approach. Transdisciplinarity, like complexity, asks for more than inclusion and re-organization. It challenges us, as Piaget (1972) suggests, 'to not be limited to recognize the interactions and/or reciprocities between the specialized researches, but to locate these links within a total system without stable boundaries between the disciplines.' (pg. 144). However, Nicolescu (2007) warns of Piaget's concept of total system transdisciplinarity and the creation of a 'superior stage of interdisciplinarity…where transdisciplinarity is posited as a super or hyper-discipline; a 'science of sciences' (pg. 36). Nicolescu's concern of the dissolution or subsumation of disciplines is warranted. Like the autopoietic balance described in chapter four, there is space for an autonomy of disciplines for depth and a conceptual permeation of those boundaries for breadth.

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[31] Nicolescu suggests three distinct types of transdisciplinarity; the theoretical, phenomenological, and experimental.

As John Van Breda (2007) explains[32],

> What is needed and warranted is a transdisciplinary approach
> which is not only capable of 'thinking the complex', but which is
> also capable of developing a new language with new words,
> concepts and images with which to understand the complex
> problems under consideration. (pp. 148-149).

Concepts that could address what Nicolescu (2007, 2008) describes as the 'levels of reality' and the contradictions that occur in perceptions of both object and subject within these levels. While new concepts and language could assist in the discovery, re-organization, and communication of these levels of reality, questions remain around how to address uncertainty and emergence. As Van Breda continues,

> As we are dealing with complex, social–ecological systems
> problems not only do we have to anticipate that a new language
> with new ideas, concepts and representations are necessary, but we
> will equally have to anticipate that such language may contain both
> exact and probabilistic words, notions and ideas. As these social–
> ecological systems problems span different levels of reality…it is
> highly likely that a new language capable of 'seeing' (thinking) and
> 'dealing' (praxis) with all the different levels of reality involved in
> this dynamic, will have to be a mixed type of language – containing
> both exact and non-exact words and notions as well as both higher
> and lower levels of certainty (pp. 148-149).

However, Eric Weislogel (2007) expresses concern over the search for the whole story and complete speech,[33]

> A further complication: as we cannot posses the complete speech, it
> is difficult to tell whether our speech about the complete speech
> counts as philosophy or merely sophistry, just idle chatter, simple
> cocktail party pleasantries. Our desire for a complete speech, for a
> whole try, might having is wind up spouting gibberish. (pg.17)

The issues they raise, philosophically, ontologically, epistemologically, and axiologically, are considerations that reflect on the meaning of knowledge, and our

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[32] Van Breda uses Edgar Morin's concept of 'thinking in the complex'. Morin believed ' We need a kind of thinking that relinks that which is disjointed and compartmentalized, that respects diversity as it recognizes unity, and that tries to discern interdependencies. We need a radical thinking (which gets to the root of problems), a multidimensional thinking, and an organizational or systemic thinking.' In Edgar Morin and B. Kern. (1999) Homeland Earth: A manifesto for the new millennium. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press. p. 130.

[33] Here Weislogel refers to Stanley Rosen's suggestion that 'complete speech' is akin to silence. As Rosen states, 'There is no complete speech (since it would then be the same as, or indistinguishable, from silence), but only speech about complete speech, or speech which articulates, renders intelligible, and is accompanied by desire.' The issue of knowledge and the limitations of language are also questioned by Valerie Brown. See Valerie A. Brown "Multiple knowledges, multiple languages: are the limits of my language the limits of my world?." Knowledge Management for Development Journal 6.2 (2010): 120-131. Stanley Rosen, Nihilism: A Philosophical Essay. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969, p. 209.

capacity to engage complexity. While propositional knowledge, procedural knowledge, and acquaintance knowledge are implied, there remains a question of embodiment.[34] *Knowing that* (propositional knowledge) new language and concepts are needed, *knowing how* (procedural knowledge) they may be applied, or *knowing of* (knowledge of acquaintance) those concepts fails address the fundamental question of the *lived experience* of uncertainty and emergence; the capacities for cognition that *enact* perception, cognition, or sense-making. For example, Van Breda (2007) suggestion of a transdisciplinary hermeneutics,

> to understand the complexity of our multi-leveled relationship to the world, to use such understanding for the purposes of engaging the complexity of interaction and adaption with a complex world and finding long-term, sustainable solutions (pg. 149).

What of the emergence and uncertainty inherent in complexity? I suggest that understanding complexity, and the subsequent adaptation to continue that understanding, do not occur solely within an epistemological, in this case hermeneutic, framework. One example, as mentioned in prior chapters, from a biological perspective, is the temporal consideration in forming new or strengthening pre-existing synapses. The question here is what capacity does the knower have for knowing? Knowledge that levels of perspective are components for understanding, does not predispose the capacities to engage in either inquiry or the interactions of systems.

Despite an awareness or alertness of these capabilities, there remains a disconnect whereby the epistemological framework lacks the inclusion of both phenomenological methodology and embodiment, where understanding and adaptation occur in an complex web of cognitive, biological, emotional, and behavioral stimuli (Kravchenko, 2014; Introna,1998; Gibbs, 2005, Csordas, 1990). As Julie Thompson Klein (2004) suggests,

> Changes in the spatial and temporal structures of knowledge also call into question traditional images of knowledge as a cognitive map with distinct territories and borders or a tree with different branches. They are too linear. In their place, images of fractals, a

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[34] A body of scholarship on the phenomenology of embodiment, particularly in light of neuroscientific methodologies to examine neural circuitry, has occurred over the last twenty years. However, the term functions within a wide scope of definitions ranging from its use in psychology, sociology, and anthropology among others.

kaleidoscope, or a wildly growing rhizome without a central root
have been proposed (pg. 3).

As discussed in chapter three, there remains standing debate over the primacy of structure or agency in shaping human behavior. (Zahle & Collin, 2014). The debate raises questions of socialization against autonomy in determining what dictates, or influences, individual disposition and capacity for action. Is the actor a free agent who is central to the theoretical and ontological elements of social systems? Or is the actor embedded in and shaped by social structures? Or in fact is there a reflexive (autopoietic) relationship between agency and structure? The debate is reflected in the current understanding of human adaptive capacity; largely grounded in the agency of biology (capacity as capability for homeostasis or reproduction) or the structure of social-systems (vulnerability, resilience, sustainability). In the following sections I will explore the ideas of embodied cognition and adaptive capacity as a means of introducing a new framework for human adaptive capacity.

Enactive Adaptive Capacity In prior chapters, as the inquiry looked at identity, complexity, and systems, concepts and contributors such as autopoiesis, autonomy, self-organization, and emergence were introduced as components of the self as complex system. In this section, the focus shifts from understanding the self as system, to more pointed questions concerning cognition and adaptation. More specifically, I will examine adaptivity through an enactive approach of embodied cognition,[35] and the current understanding of human adaptive capacity as framed through evolutionary biology and human systems.

Embodied cognition itself has been widely examined over the two decades, which has resulted in a wide range of definitions and contributions.[36] At their intersect, embodied approaches to cognition hold the view that the physical body is entwined

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[35] Deeper exploration into related inquiries such as Philosophy and Theory of Mind, Interaction theory, and Simulation theory cannot be adequately addressed within this inquiry. However, chapter five will bring a cursory look at the intersections with the Engaged Identity approach and intravation.

[36] Within the embodiment thesis, extended cognition, embedded or situated cognition, and the enactive approach to cognition each hold a differentiated view of both embodiment and cognition. For the sake of this inquiry, I limit the scope of investigation to Rosch, Thompson, and Varela's enactive approach. For a more comprehensive view of the embodied cognition see Lawrence Shapiro (2010) Embodied cognition. Routledge.

and interactive in cognitive processes. As Eleanor Rosch, Evan Thompson, and Francisco Varela (1991) explain,

> by using the term embodied we mean to highlight two points: first that cognition depends upon the kinds of experience that come from having a body with various sensorimotor capacities, and second, that these individual sensorimotor capacities are themselves embedded in a more encompassing biological, psychological and cultural context."(pg. 172).

The enactive approach and concept of enaction, introduced by Rosch, Thompson, and Varela, is inherently transdisciplinary and situated in five core concepts of autonomy, sense-making, emergence, embodiment, and experience (Varela, 1999; Thompson 2007; Thompson & Varela, 2001). Positing cognition as an interaction between autonomous agents and their environments, where sense-making occurs as a product of the their interaction rather than within (or inside) an agent (Thompson, 2005; De Jaegher & Di Paolo 2007; Fuchs & De Jaegher, 2009; Di Paolo & De Jaegher, 2012). Enactivism brings constructivist epistemology, which is centered in the active participation of the subject in constructing reality, and grounds interaction in a phenomenological (embodied) relationship where cognition is seen as an adaptive interaction between an autonomous agent and its environment. As Varela, Thompson, and Rosch explain,

> The kind of embodied cognition we advocate is the claim that the brain, while important, is not the only resource we have available to us to generate behaviour. Instead, the form of our behaviour emerges from the real-time interaction between a nervous system in a body with particular capabilities and an environment that offers opportunities for behaviour and information about those opportunities. The reason this is quite a radical claim is that it changes the job description for the brain; instead of having to represent knowledge about the world and using that knowledge to simply output commands, the brain is now a part of a broader system that critically involves perception and action as well. The actual solution an organism comes up with for a given task includes all these elements (pg. 179).

While enactivism posits autonomy and adaptivity as the basis for agency, the concept of human adaptive capacity envelopes a broad range of biological, cognitive, affective, and behavioral characteristics as applied to individual, organizational, social, ecological, and cultural influencers. As Froese, Paolo & Ezequiel (2011)

define agency, 'is the ability to of an autonomous system to achieve adaptation not only via internal re-organization, but also by adaptive regulation of its sensorimotor interactions.'(pg. 4). Additionally, adaptive capacity has been largely linked to resilience, vulnerability, and sustainability (Gallopín, 2006; Smit & Wandel, 2006; Berkes; Hinkel, 2011), most notably in applied and developmental psychology, social and behavioral ecology, behavioral economics, and more recently in organizational development and leadership. Similarly, it is linked or closely related to several other commonly used concepts, including adaptability, coping ability, management capacity, stability, robustness, flexibility (Smithers & Smit, 1997; Berman, Quinn & Paavola,, 2012; Colombi & Smith, 2012; Brooks, 2003). However, the focus on adaptive capacity has been largely on either socio-cognitive capacity as social system, without more specific regard to individuated (intra) capacity (Smit & Pilifosova, 2001; Adger, 2003) or towards the biological aspects of adaptivity, evolution, and individuation (Volkenstein, 2012; Neubauer & Hublin, 2012). Physical approaches to biological evolution. Springer Science & Business Media. Capacity is either seen outside self in behaviors and skills of interaction (social system) or the intrapersonal biological attributes that contribute to evolutionary process. The result is a disconnection to the embodied, cognitive human system and I suggest is cause of the prescriptive nature of many of theories and methodologies. If we know what elements or attributes of behavior, skill, or adaptivity are required, that suffices to address the concern at hand.

Throughout the previous chapters, I have raised questions around the prescription for certain behaviors, skills, and cognitive abilities that theorists and methods ask of us; alertness, seeing the complex, compassion, thinking in complexity, empathy, mindfulness, adaptability, and reflection. There are noticeable repetitions of certain sets of behaviors and skills that are asked for and included in the ontological and methodological aspects of identity theory, conflict transformation, psycho-social trauma healing, complexity, systems thinking, and transdisciplinarity.[37] Yet there is rarely an inclusion for the development or embodiment of these capabilities.

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[37] This would not represent a definitive list of either disciplines or contexts where behaviors and skills are prescribed.

Three concerns arise from the current, or prevalent, usage of human adaptive capacity. The first being the causal relationship between human biological, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral capacity is not adequately represented to support a transdisciplinary use of human adaptive capacity. Despite prevalent conceptual views of the interaction of these systems, new terminology and reorganization has barely moved beyond the classifications based on reductionist thinking; biological adaptation vs psychological adaption. Secondly, the pervasive disconnection from the cultivation of capacity and the prescription for enaction. Although recognized, they are presented with either a presupposition of capability or relegated as a diminished side note without serious consideration. Finally, there is the more subtle positioning of human as disembodied thinker or knower. The predisposition that mind as cognitive machine contains knowledge without the sense-making and reflexivity of its biological systems. Simply stated, there is not equal value to the cultivation of the capacities (behaviors and skills) to enact as is held to the knowledge of action, whereby the presumption is possession of superior capability. As Edgar Morin (2011) warns,

> We must stop seeing man as a supernatural being and abandon the project formulated by Bacon and Descartes, and then by Marx, of conquest and possession of nature. This project became ridiculous from the moment we realized that the immense cosmos, in its infinitude, is beyond our reach. It became crazy from the moment when we realized that the promethean coming of techno-science leads to the ruin of the biosphere and, consequently, the suicide of humanity (pg. 106).

I suggest that in order to meet the prescriptions for human adaptive capacities such as alertness, seeing the complex, compassion, thinking in complexity, empathy, mindfulness, adaptability, reflection, and others, we must re-imagine what and how capacity is not only categorized, but also must acknowledge our relationship with the cultivation of the attributes for their enactment. As Thompson-Klein (2004) continues,

> Even where the value of adaptive capacity, interdisciplinary approaches and the complexity of problems has been acknowledged the analysis, strategy and policy-making has occurred within mechanistic paradigms (pg. 4).

Furthermore, a shift from the position where epistemology is viewed as the preeminent attribute for engaging emergence and uncertainty[38] (i.e. complexity) to a vision where the phenomenological experience of capacity is aligned with adaptivity. In the following section, I introduce a new framework for human adaptive capacity that aims to address these concerns.

Intravation The Intravative framework suggests the re-organization and re-imagination of our relationship to human adaptive capacity. It suggests an alternative framework for human capacity that is supportive of a transdisciplinary, interdependent ontology and methodology. Three key concepts guide the framework. First is the concept of capacity as the *ability for engagement* with emergence and uncertainty without collapse of the system or self, rather than capacity as cultivated in order to control, predict, of effect or outcome.[39] Second is the shift from seeing adaptive capacity as differentiated from behavior or skill to a broader range of interdependent and related activities that contribute and support transformation, sustainability, and well being. Finally, there is awareness of the reflexivity in capacity that is contingent on capability; in particular, the capacities to complexify or simplify for adaptation or transformation.

Figure 4.1: Etymology of Intravation

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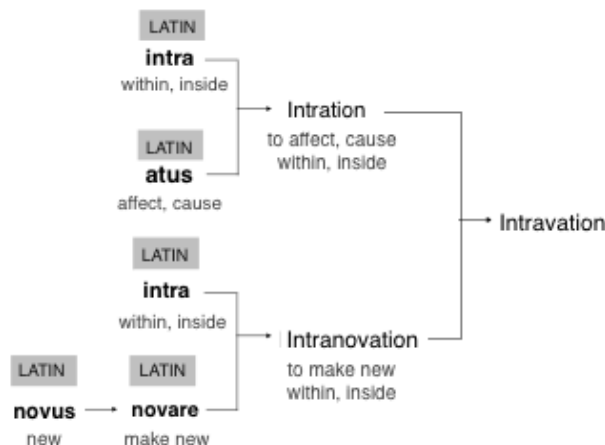
[38] For example, the recognition that the complexity analyst mapping a system is bias to the conditions of their capacities and capabilities. Therefore, rendering any observation subjective, despite superior cognitive abilities. Whereas, if the prescription for the capacities for analysis included the cultivation of those capacities the analyst and map increase the quality of interaction and understanding.

[39] In the intravative approach the emphasis is on cultivation of capacities, rather than a prescriptive for the use of capacity. For example, the knowledge that time is a factor in outcomes, does not provide the capacity for patience. Patience then is seen as a capacity that a) requires cultivation b) is subjective to capability c) is reflexive and dynamic (available one moment, but not continuously).

The immense breadth of definitions, and subsequent connotations, of adaptive skills, adaptive behavior, and adaptive capacity, requires clarification for their use within the framework. Although far from conclusive, a broad interpretation would be that skills are learned activities that promote functionality within given contexts, behaviors are capable of regulating, altering, and maintaining structure and function in changing environments, and capacity is the extent to which both skills and behavior are accessible. For clarity, Intravation uses the following definitions

Adaptive capacity	The *preconditions* necessary to enable adaptation to take place; behaviors, skills, emotions, and perception.
Capabilities	The alternative combinations of functionings a person is feasibly able to enact through intra-personal, inter-personal, and system forces.
Adaptability	The interaction of adaptive capacity and capability to generate an outcome/s resulting in continuation.
Adaptation	A temporal condition of continuation

Intravation adopts the position that adaptability is grounded in embodied cognition, which frames biological, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral activity as interdependent capacities occurring through an entwinement of interaction; and provides a marker in differentiating intravation from other transformative processes of adaptation. In doing so, the intravative framework shifts the lens of adaptive capacity from a disciplinary perspective to a thematic perspective. Where certain capacities have been relegated to behavioral function, skill, tool, or process of consciousness, intravation looks to reframe these abilities in the widest possible range, i.e. not restricted to linguistic, culture, identity, etc. This allows for new pathways between disciplines and approaches to look at how capacity, either thematically or processually, contributes to adaptivity. Furthermore, it recognizes that capacity is contingent on capability, whereby a capacity's potentiality is influenced by interactional capability. With these guidelines in mind, in the following sections I will lay a foundation for an intravative approach as a means of introducing a new framework for human adaptive capacity.

In the biological framing of adaptive capacity, the emphasis is on the alterations of physical elements for adaptivity (capacity as capability for homeostasis, reproduction, etc), while in the the structure of social-systems the foci is on group behaviors (vulnerability, resilience, sustainability). Intravation suggests three particular shifts to re-organizing our understanding of adaptive capacity; the inclusion of the embodied cognition in the biological realm, the inclusion of the individual (or intra-) in the social-system, and the inclusion of the biological, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive functions as human adaptive capacity. Intravation looks to this broadened definition as a means to cultivate these capacities as a holistic system of adaptivity. In other words, as human beings, we use our emotions, bodies, minds, and actions for survive and to thrive. All of these aspects are a part of our capacity for adaptation and transformation. The relegation and segregation of these aspects has not created a accurate representation of the whole-system of self in transformative and adaptive interactions.

Over the last two decades an increasing body of related empirical evidence that suggests the effectiveness of a variety of capacities for human adaptability. In both the natural sciences and the social sciences, executive function, self-regulation, flexibility, problem solving, resilience, empathy, compassion, cooperation, pro-social behavior, authenticity, reflexivity, reflection, self-regulation, emotional regulation, emotional intelligence; social emotional intelligence, self-awareness, well-being have been considered as contributors to being, transformation, and adaptivity. Looking through an intravative framework, emotional self-regulation can be seen as a set of embodied skills that contribute to adaptive behavior. The reflexivity of the skills, their ability to increase or decrease as a result of contextual influencers positions the regulation as adaptive capacity. Another example would be multiple-self aspects, as discussed in chapter three. By increasing awareness of the various aspects, our interactions are complexified or simplified through the aspects we utilize for interaction and create greater probability for adaptation. Thus, awareness of multiple self-aspects would be considered an adaptive capacity. To understand the importance of reflexivity in the intravative framework, I use the example of self-complexity, as noted in the research by McConnell, et al.; low-complexity may result

in higher perceptions of well-being through alleviating the stressors of fragmentation of the self-concept. (McConnell, Strain, Brown & Rydell, 2009). What we see is the need for reflexive capacity in order to complexify/simplify our self identities as a means of adaptive capacity. Finally, with these capacities lies the temporal aspects that contribute to adaptability, what I will refer to as the 'tortoise and the hare' continuum. As Brand (2008) contributes,

> Fast gets all of our attention. Slow has all the power. All durable dynamic systems have this sort of structure; it is what makes them *adaptable* and robust (pg. 113).

The awareness and perception of time and its effects on skills and behavior causes them to contribute to adaptability. This is particularly poignant in the role of trauma and perturbance, as discussed in chapter two.

The interdependence between and among aspects of adaptive capacity provide another cornerstone of intravation. For example, the presence of strong self-awareness may increase the capability for reflection, which may in turn create greater self-regulation which would increase pro-social behavior. Similarly, individual determinants cannot be isolated as adaptive capacity is generated by the interaction of determinants which have temporal and spacial relativity, i.e. 'the determinants of adaptive capacity exist and function differently in different contexts.' (Smit & Wandel, 2006, pg. 288). As Julie Thompson Klein suggests, 'Complex problems are not in the book, but in the 'indeterminate zones of practice' (Klein, 2004, pg. 4). Klein continues, 'the reality being investigated consists of a nexus of phenomena that are not reducible to a single dimension.'(Klein, 2004 p. 6). As such, they are not solved once and forever but are continuously engaged. I would also add the idea they are continuously enacted, requiring capacities that, among other things, promote awareness and attention in order to perceive the dynamical shifts and flux in conditions and systems. While Intravation is presented as a new framework for how human adaptive capacity is perceived and used, it is not meant as a singular replacement to understanding human adaptive capacity in a reductionist or deconstructionist framework. Rather, it asks to sit along side other ontological and

methodological approaches in order to contribute to the transformation of intra- and interpersonal systems.

Conclusion

The chapter began with a brief look at transdisciplinarity, examining the intersections and issues of scholarship in complexity and systems thinking. Afterwards, I introduced Intravation, a new framework for examining and understanding human adaptive capacity, posited the reframing of human adaptive capacity, and suggesting that current uses fail to encapsulate embodied cognition. I then examined how the current understanding of human adaptive capacity is framed through evolutionary biology and human systems. Finally, I explored intravation through an enactive lens, highlighting capacities and methodologies that contribute to adaptation, transformation and sustainability.

As Ezequiel Di Paolo, Marieke Rohde, and Hanne De Jaegher (2010) offer[40], 'we must not underestimate the value of a new framework in allowing us to formulate questions in a different vocabulary, even if satisfactory answers are not yet forthcoming.'(pg. 35). Although transdisciplinarity and complex science have made immense contributions to the ways we organize and approach the vast range of issues that confront us today, the presumption that we have the ability to 'out see' the emergence and uncertainty inherent in the complex web biological, ecological, and spiritual dimensions fails to appreciate the potentiality, reach, and variability of temporality and impermanence. In proposing the Intravative framework, particularly within the constraints of a broader inquiry, the limitations are plentiful. However, my intention is to posit the approach to invite further investigation and collaboration. The framework is presented to encourage a shift in understanding of human adaptive capacity and its inclusion in ontological, theoretical, and methodological praxis of adaptation and transformation. In the following chapters, I examine the concept of intravation further; first as a component of the Engaged Identity approach in chapter five and again in chapter six on praxis.

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[40] Di Paolo, Rohde, and De Jaegher are referencing the Enactive framework of Varela, Thompson and Rosch. However, it is used here to illuminate the importance of allowing for the creation and use of the new language and concepts posited by Van Breda.

PART TWO
The Engaged Identity

Photograph 5: A future doctor, lawyer, nurse, and teacher in Gboko, Benue State, Nigeria
Photo Credit: JKLynne

Chapter Five: The Engaged Identity Approach

Over the course of the last three chapters, I have explored the literature on identity, complexity, and human adaptive capacity. In this chapter, I introduce the Engaged Identity approach, highlight the relationships and intersections within the literatures as a means of identifying key aspects that inform the approach. The chapter begins with a review of the foundational themes of the approach and then provides an in depth exploration on the following aspects: (1) an enactive approach to identity, (2) priming for an awareness of self, society and systems as complex and adaptive, (3) the precepts for intervention an adaptive capacity, and (4) cultivating capacities for transformation. The chapter concludes with an overview of the approach as it pertains to praxis.

In Chapter two whilst examining the similarities and differences in social identity and identity theory, I analyzed the contributions, intersections, and limitations current to the field of social identity within conflict transformation. The underlying capacities required by these theories and methods to engage in transformative processes were shown to be remarkably similar: concepts of autonomy and reflexivity as highlighted in chapter three. Also prevalent was the rigidification of identity from trauma and context; the role emotions play in embodied cognition and the attitudes and behaviors thought to enhance cooperation, collaboration, and relational sustainability. In addition, I highlighted the similarities within the scholarship pertaining to temporal considerations and the role identity threat plays as a perturbance to transformative processes.

The concepts of self and group identity raised questions of how to develop capacity to include the other in our worldview while maintaining our core identity. In chapter two, as a contribution to the debate, I offered the idea of identity expansion as a means to describe the ability to engage self, group, or context without experiencing the perturbance to identity that creates either trauma or reduces the ability for reflexivity. Essentially, this expansion of identity provides the ability to hold affiliation and autonomy simultaneously, where the self has the capacity to engage

with difference, diversity or conflict through a web of complex/simplex (group/self))
identities in a type of autopoietic balance. In addition, I suggested that there remains
a lack of emphasis on addressing the noted and recognized bias of the subjective self.
And while social identity theorists have largely turned to the affective and cognitive
aspects of transformation, there is a need for more rigorous inclusion of the
embodiment of these attributes. The inquiry raises several issues concerning the
prescriptive nature of how identity is asked to participate in transformative processes.
Although a recognition of behaviors and skills were present, intra-personal processes
for developing the capacities for identity to enact and interact were largely
suggestive rather than elicitive (see section 2.3).

As discussed in chapter two, one key example in looking at the biological aspects of
transformation are the temporal aspects of neuroplasticity where the development
and malleability of new pathways may require more consideration then has been
addressed in current conflict transformation theory and practice. As a result, there is
a need for further transdisciplinary research to confirm if reported outcomes are
supported neurologically and to utilize these findings in the creation of new
approaches. Finally, in light of the varies roles of identity and agency, the question
that one theory or framework could provide the template for conflict transformation
was suggested as unlikely and the idea of a unique case approach to the cultivation of
transformative capacities was suggested.

Chapter three expanded the concept of identity into the realm of embodied self as a
complex adaptive system. In concert with the conclusions from chapter three, the
concepts of self-complexity, self-aspects, malleability, resilience, self-preservation,
self-organization were again presented through the literature. However, in looking at
the self as a complex adaptive system, identity was grounded in a biological in the
'cell to system' concept of autopoiesis. Here the identity as threatened or expanded
was mirrored in the reflexivity seen in complex adaptive systems. As a result, I
suggested this reflexivity, the ability to hold complexity and simplicity within the
self-concept could be seen as a strong component of adaptive capacity, and an
indicator for wellbeing and resilience. As in chapter three, questions of subjective

perceptions, capability based on agent-structure dynamics, and relational sustainability were aspects that comprised the ability to engage complexity. Much like in the identity theories presented in chapter two, interdependence, mutual causality, and temporal considerations were highlighted as key concepts for resilience and system survival.

Lastly, the awareness of particular capacities for interdisciplinary inquiry and methodologies were raised. However, these are not inclusive of embodied intra-personal processes for their cultivation. Again, the question of how the self as complex adaptive system can engage other systems to promote well-being and transformation was largely left aside, in this case in favor of a more mechanical approach to systems and complexity through epistemological methods. I suggested the prescription for observing and knowing complexity remains vastly different from engaging and interaction. This resulted in questions of whether these types of approaches, where the separation of mind and intellect from the embodied aspects of lived experience and the self as knower, risk being anthropocentric or hierarchical.

For the purpose of this research, the continued dissonance of epistemological based theories and methodologies and the embodied or enacted experience of adaptive capacity created a need to re-organize the way human adaptive capacity is framed. The Intravative framework was introduced to support a shift in understanding of human adaptive capacity and its inclusion in the ontological, theoretical, and methodological praxis of adaptation and transformation. Suggesting that a singularly epistemological or disciplinary specific organization of adaptive capacity does not represent the complex and emergent aspects of human transformative experience, the approach emphasizes enactive embodied cognition and dissolves the separation of behavior, skill, and tool, as all are contributive to transformation and sustainability. With the introduction of the Intravative approach, the aim is to provide a new orientation for human adaptive capacity that reflects the complexity of an embodied self and the inherent transdisciplinarity in complex adaptive systems. This provides an opportunity to directly address the issues raised around the practitioner as knower, the transdisciplinarity inherent in both complexity and identity, and the expansion of

the subjective observers' capacities for adaptation. In essence, what the scholarship brings to light are several entwined and often similar findings resulting in a list of recommendations and guidelines to inform new approaches to the praxis of transformation,

1. Increase awareness and provide individuals with knowledge of self, systems & society as complex adaptive systems; that is priming

2. Re-organize and shift in the way adaptive capacity is approached to reflect enactive, embodied and meaning-generating processes; Intravation

3. Include practices for cultivating adaptive capacity within the praxis of transformative frameworks; i.*e. contemplative practices*

4. Reflect a transdisciplinary framework within the ontological, theoretical, and methodological praxis of adaptation and transformation; i.e. a mimetic approach

Engaged Identity Approach

The Engaged Identity approach is a transdisciplinary framework for self, society, and systemic transformation. Grounded in identity theory and complexity, it asks us to understand identity not as a collective definition of frameworks but as an evolving maturation of the way we enact and engage as embodied beings. The approach crosses diverse fields such as sociology, anthropology, philosophy, biology, neuroscience, and conflict transformation providing an ontological, epistemological and methodological framework that encompasses identity, embodied cognition, and human adaptive capacity. The Engaged Identity approach suggests that exposure to the concepts of self complexity, systems complexity, and human adaptive capacity enhances transformative processes, sustainable relationships, and well-being. In addition, it utilizes a new framework for human adaptive capacity, intravation, and suggests the cultivation of listening, patience, and respect as three fundamental capacities that can be cultivated through contemplative practice and increased awareness. Utilizing identity, complexity and these adaptive capacities, the approach provides a foundation for human transformation.

Identity

As Gramsci proposed, 'the crisis consists precisely the fact the old dying and the new cannot be born in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms that appear.' In this intersection between the old in the new lies a continuum for transformation. Where crisis or trauma or fear stem from the inability to bear a different paradigm contexts or identity. As I discussed in chapter two, identity is an interwoven and complex creation of our perceptions, values and contexts. Research confirms not only the complexity of identity but its malleability and it's adaptivity particularly in the face of identity threat. However questions remain on how we engage and cultivate the capacities for this dexterity. Too often the assumption has been prescriptive whereby tools and skills are suggested or assumed to be inclusive of the enactment and interaction of self. The engaged identity approach suggests that cultivating an awareness of self and its complexity, malleability and adaptivity creates an opening to not only understanding and healing of self but provides an expanded understanding that changes perspective about society, systems and others. As conflict is often a result of identity, particularly when we are more highly identified with one aspect of self, the concept of identity expansion (see section 3.2) is an ability to have a reflexivity in ones awareness and enactment of their identity. In this way each facet of the identity becomes a conduit for connection, communication, and transformation. An engaged identity has a deep sense of equanimity, where the multiple-aspects can be accessed without the rigidification or fixation on one particular facet. For example, if Mike's daughter doesn't feel comfortable discussing an argument she had at school with her 'father', Mike's ability to shift the attachment from the aspect of father to another aspect, say of friend, offers a different enaction of the participatory sense-making process. The focus here is not on the shifting to a particular aspect, rather the ability to move within the various identities we hold without experiencing threat, resentment, or loss of expectation. In other words, with a sense of equanimity.

As an enactive embodied self, we have a unique opportunity to reorganize and broaden our understanding of how human beings can cultivate adaptive capacity.

Developing an awareness of the self as a complex adaptive system creates opportunity for reorganization and transformation of self. The priming of mind with an awareness of these aspects can be seen in the work of McConnell's (2011) Multiple Self-aspects Framework (MSF) and in Walton, Paunesku, and Dweck's (2012) Expandable Selves theory. Although, providing and priming our embodied cognition can enhance the ability to recognize and respect diversity and difference, it does not address the cultivation of adaptive capacities that are necessary for pro social behavior, emotional intelligence, problem solving, executive function, empathy, compassion and other mindsets that contribute to sustainable relationships. The engaged identity approach utilizes this priming mechanism to create an awareness of self and system complexity. In order to engage the self as a complex system with other complex systems we need the ability to engage our multiple selves. Understanding identity from and inclusive of this biological and evolutionary aspect of the cell to system relationship, we can see the ability of the self as a complex system to cultivate a similar reflexivity through enactive embodied cognition.

Complexity

 This ability to complexify or simplify as an adaptive capacity is key to understanding our relationship with identity threat and the processes necessary to move beyond it. In chapters two and three, I discussed that theorists and practitioners have suggested the need to complexify our thinking. The approach suggests it may be premature to assume the ability to recognize complexity or alter our thinking without the development and practices to enhance the scope of our awareness; and our ability to interact and examine our own subjectivity. In others words, the engaged identity approach suggests that perhaps it is not our thinking that needs to complexify, rather we would turn attention to increasing the capacities of embodied cognition. This shift and perspective requires a re-organization of the way human adaptive capacity is understood.

Historically, conflict interventions have been treated as an end point that is available and conclusive for all parties or adversaries. Although the last decade has brought

forth an inclusion of systems thinking theory and practices, these are predominately focused in conflict mapping, modeling, or stakeholder engagement. The Engaged Identity approach utilizes systems thinking as a theme to prime for transformation by increasing awarenesses of complexity from a cell to society continuum (as discussed in chapters three and four). Examining the temporal, emergent, and mutual causality, the approach examines both the individual and the societal aspects of complexity that are reflective of lived experience. This personalization creates a opportunity for engagement and empowerment that effects both the intra- and inter- personal interactions. Ultimately, increasing the adaptive capacity of individuals to recognize, interact, an enact from a systems perspective. If we understand our personal and relational identities as dynamic, complex systems, it becomes much easier to understand conflict through the lens of complexity.

Understanding complexity, and the ability to remain adaptable in the face of change are essential for conflict transformation. Whether in psycho-social trauma healing, negotiation, or relationship building, a priming perspective is only a part of a larger continuum of transformation. Recognition alone does not offer the possibility for transformation that engagement and experience provide. The tension between autonomy and affiliation, requires interaction and adaptation. As Wolfgang Dietrich (2006) suggests,

> Instead, it is precisely the acceptance of a plurality of societies and pluralism in societies and their truths, often enough contradictory and incompatible, which requires a definition of difference. Unlike modern thinking, postmodern thinking will never attempt to dissolve plurality, it will instead demand respect for and coexistence with difference. (pg. 284)

Dietrich brings into question how we enact and coexists with autonomy, affiliation, and plurality and complexity. Intellectually understanding complexity and complex systems, while providing an important contribution to understanding conflict and sustainability, does not provide us the skills necessary to sustain interaction with those systems. Learning and cultivating the capacities to engage (the temporal considerations) not only requires the development of new neural pathways, it plays a

role in the emotional and spatial aspects of transforming embodied cognition and perception. Rather than mapping or looking for the patterns in complex systems, the approach uses the precepts as capacities, or conduits, for enacted transformation.

Intravation

As described in chapter four, the biological foundation of the cell as it relates to its environment gives insight into the autopoietic and reflexive nature required for adaptation. If we understand our personal and relational identities as dynamic, complex systems, it becomes much easier to understand conflict through the lens of complexity. As practitioners it is not enough to simply acknowledge complexity, we must examine the dynamic nature of our own system (identity), as well as cultivate the capacities to engage with the dynamic nature of the systems in which we interact. As Roy Wagner (Loy, 2003) states, "The anthropologist cannot simply 'learn' the new culture, but must rather 'take it on' so as to experience a transformation of his own world" (pg.10). Knowledge or intellectual understanding of complexity and complex systems, while providing an important contribution to understanding conflict and sustainability, does not provide us the skills necessary to sustain interaction with those systems. Rather than mapping or looking for the patterns in complex systems, the approach uses the precepts serve as conduits, or tools, in our personal development to engage emergent systems.

The approach embraces an enactive framework to transformation whereby human adaptability lies not only in the epistemological but also the phenomenological. The term intravation, introduced in chapter five, is a transdisciplinary framework for human adaptive capacity that moves beyond the current understanding of adaptive capacity as biological or behavioral. Intravation suggests that the skills, tools and behaviors are all enacted capacities for adaptation. If we look at conflict transformation theory or organizational psychology for example we see similarities in the requirements of the praxis. Effective leadership, mediation, trauma healing, and ecological sustainability all ask for the ability to problem solve, identify and build relationships through social and emotional intelligence, compassion, empathy, and executive function. Aside from these capabilities tools and skills being based in

the embodied self, there are three basic capacities that are required to enact and interact with them. As Vaclav Havel suggests (1994),

> In today's multicultural world, the only reliable path to peaceful coexistence and creative cooperation must start from what is at the root of all cultures and what lies infinitely deeper in human hearts and minds than political opinion, convictions, antipathies or sympathies. It must be rooted in self-transcendence. Transcendence as a hand reached out to those close to us, to foreigners, to the human community, to all living creatures, to nature, to the universe; transcendence as a deeply experienced need to be in harmony even with what we ourselves are not, what we do not understand, what seems distant from us in time and space, but with which we are nevertheless mysteriously linked because, together with us, all this constitutes a single world; transcendence as the only real alternative to extinction.

The Precepts

At the foundation of the approach, the capacities of listening, patience, and respect form three precepts for engagement. Through the precepts, our identities become tools to connect with one another and create new perceptions. David Berreby (2005) notes that "As circumstances change, so do perceptions of what kinds of people there are and what kinds you belong with" (pg.69). Conflict often causes us to perceive people through the lens of 'othering' and division. Understanding the self as a complex adaptive system, an embodied being interdependent as a species within the larger ecological framework, it is up to us to cultivate the ability for transformation by respecting and utilizing both the differences and similarities to breed curiosity, creativity, and connection.

As suggested in prior chapters, the interaction and reflexivity for transformation will require these 'pre-coming together' adaptive capacities. The scholarship regarding the various behaviors, traits and tools of self for interaction, sustainability, and well-being, from executive function, to compassion, empathy, social-emotional intelligence, and problem solving, all raise the fundamental capabilities of listening, patience, and respect. Without the ability to genuinely listen to the other party's conceptual and emotional experience, no true correspondence or acknowledgement can be made. In the absence of patience, response is reduced to an empty mandate or hastily applied reaction where the seeds of injury and conflict remain to resurface at

a later time. If respect is not available to every individual, self-acceptance and the opportunity for the individual to take responsibility and personal accountability for their actions is left as an imposed set of standards instead of ones that are mutually shared. The approach refers to the embodiment of these capacities as identity expansion. The reflexivity, reflection, and enaction to shift the focus of our identity and engage through its varying facets holds enormous potential for developing sustainable relationships and systems.

Listening

The first precept for developing an engaged identity is listening. In the Engaged Identity approach listening is understood as auditory, visual, somatic, olfactory, gustatory, and intuitive (mindful). The concept Ayatana, in Buddhist philosophy, is one way of understanding this precept. Ayatana sees the mind as a sense organ and principal gateway to additional stimuli and phenomena, in addition to the traditional five senses. Based on the concept of Ayatana, in Buddhist philosophy, the theory utilizes six internal sense organs and six external sense objects. In addition to the five senses, the mind is also seen as a sense organ and gateway to additional stimuli and phenomena that occur through reflection and perception. Paired together, they form six internal-external pairs of sense bases:

> eye and visible objects
> ear and sound
> nose and odor
> tongue and taste
> body and touch
> mind and mental objects

Using this idea of 'multi-sensory' listening to gain greater understanding, listening is not limited to external stimuli, rather it reflects the autopoiesis and embodied cognition, enhancing the ability to observe our interactions, intuitions, and perceptions. Cultivating the capacity to listen with these six sources of sensation and perception enhances our understanding of the human experience and includes the internal sources of sensation as well as our experience of the external world. In this approach, listening is seen as the enaction of physical, auditory, emotional, and intuitive interaction between systems. From body language to the lump the back of

the throat, tension in the body and the ability to focus, the approach cultivates the capacity of listening as an awareness of this multi-sensory system, the interactive sensations created, and the phenomena it perceives within oneself and with systems at large.

Many types of listening inclusive approaches aim to address trauma and the transformation of conflict.[41] The Engaged Identity approach does not discount any of these particular practices. It does however purposefully decide to avoid particular affiliations to process in favor of a broader embodied interactive view of what and how listening is experienced. By doing so, the approach includes a spectrum of potential processes for listening reflective of capacity, capability, and culture.

Patience

The second precept is patience. Patience provides us time to create, to calm down, to observe, to problem solve, and to develop commitment as an action instead of mere reactions. More often than not, we seek the end point at the expense of thoughtful exchange and experience. Transformation takes time. Patience allows for the creation of thoughtful, inclusive information gathering, the ability to recognize the temporal considerations in use of time, and in assistance with executive function[42] and the self-regulation of emotion. Gandhi's observation that "'the pursuit of Truth did not come of violence being inflicted on one's opponent but that he [the opponent] must be weaned from error by *patience* and sympathy'" (da Silva, 2001, p. 307). In the rush to conclusions, sustainable transformation is unavailable without the patience required to address threats to identity the seeds of injury and conflict may resurface at a later time. Cultivating patience gives us the ability to extend ourselves without attachment to outcomes and more fully engage in the process of transformation. Hal Saunders (1985, 2001) stresses the power of extended interactions to transform relationships, and the importance of transforming relationships within the broader society. (1985, pg. 57). He and others cautioned against being too efficient and

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41 These include active, radical, respectful, reflexive, deep, relational, and compassionate listening.
42 Executive function includes the control and management of a variety of cognitive process including impulse control, reasoning, behavioral inhibition, working memory, problem solving, flexibility with multiple tasking, planning, and execution. These cognitive processes are currently thought to be located within particular regions of the pre-frontal cortex.

"rushing to harmony." In addition, patience is not only considered in intra- and inter-human relationships, it also applies to the interconnected web of ecological systems. Example patience could be seen as a function of consciousness in understanding spatial and temporal aspects of interaction and transformation. It can also be seen as a tool, in such as in negotiation or organizational development that in turn can be developed as a skill, such as with social-emotional regulation or pro-social behavior. Looking to human adaptive capacities such as emotional regulation, compassion, and executive function and empathy, patience plays a vital role in order for their enactment.

Respect

The last precept is respect; a basic human need that includes recognition, acknowledgment, and dignity. It is essential for building the types of relationships supportive of transformation. It offers an identity the ability to flourish, trust and collaborate. This aids us in creation of relationships able to withstand change and disagreement by providing a foundation for our interactions. However, in the approach, respect is not only developed towards others, it is also practiced towards ourselves and the natural world. It is a vehicle that assists us in recognizing our common humanity and interdependent systems, and a way to acknowledge the role of time for transformation. Rilke (Mood, 1975) declares that the ultimate expression of love is to "stand guard over and protect the solitude of the other,"expressing the importance of respecting the autonomous states that lie within interdependency and the diversity of humanity (pg. 30). Without respect, our differences and diversity form hierarchies that blind us to the needs of others and leave us unable to contribute to a just peace. In a Gandhian sense, respect is a vehicle that assists us in judging an action and not the actor. Respect has been a focus of many wisdom and spiritual traditions, particularly in the realms of traditions that comprise a deep ecology or belief in the interdepend wholeness of self, society, and nature. As Dietrich (1997) explains the Mayan context,

> Utziläj k'aslen is the word used by the Maya-Kakchikel for Peace.
> It refers to mental and material well-being and circumscribes in the
> world view of these people the one-ness of society, nature, and the
> universe. Maintaining this unity requires the respect of each man

towards each other, towards the community and the environment. In the Maya's view, this environment is not objectivised and functionalised in the service of man; instead, they see themselves and everything else which exists on the material and spiritual levels as creative elements of the whole. In the Maya's cosmology, wherever this respect - for individuals, the community, nature, or the universe - is absent, the harmony of elements gets lost, Utziläj k'aslen is disturbed, and the result is some kind of peacelessness. (pg. 12).

Dukkha & The Three Poisons

The Engaged Identity approach, as a philosophy of mind and being, is reflective of Buddhist tenants. As discussed in chapter two, one intersection with identity, conflict, and transformation lies in the buddhist concepts of dukkha and the three poisons. In the Mahayana tradition, also known as the 'Great Vehicle' or Middle Way, dukkha, often defined as a pervasive sense of unsatisfactoriness, is based in three patterns or types of suffering, (1) the uneasy feelings or suffering from the process of birth, aging and illness, and death, (2) the fear and stress of constant change and lack of sense of self (impermanence), and (3) the sense of wanting that comes from the near constant lack of satisfaction that often plagues the mind. The experience of dukkha is a result of three mental states or root *kleshas* of greed, hatred, ignorance in their many forms and expressions. These are referred to as the three poisons. In Engaged Identity approach, the precepts of listening, patience, and respect are seen as antidotes to these poisons.

Within Buddhist philosophy, there are many practices and ways of cultivating the abilities to cease dukkha. Namely, the eightfold path, meditation, and the four immeasurables of joy, loving-kindness, compassion, and equanimity. While the approach embraces these practices, is does not offer solely buddhist philosophical or methodological remedies. Rather, it takes the stance that the cessation of greed, hatred, and ignorance requires the cultivation of listening, patience and respect as human adaptive capacities. The embodiment and practice of these vehicles or pathways allows for dukkha, suffering, and conflict to be engaged with equanimity and compassion. As the three poisons serve as the roots of mental suffering, the three precepts provide an interchangeable opportunity for engaging with the temporality,

complexity, and uncertainty inherent in complex systems, identity, and the sensory and emotional experience of embodied cognition. Greed cannot live in the expression of patience, nor hatred in the light of respect, as ignorance ceases within the capacity to listen. As Theresa Deh-lan Yeh (2006) expresses,

> Buddha attributes all our attachments, the resulting harming behaviors and the suffering hence caused, to the human ignorance (avijja), that is, we can not see the world as it is and see our self as such. We are ignorant to the cosmic reality that everything in the world is inter-related, interdependent. Not adopting the Buddhist worldview, we thought we are separate from others as an independent entity: our views are different from theirs; our properties are certainly not theirs. Hence we develop our attachments to views and desires through the reinforcing notions of "me" and "mine." We are not impartial in looking at things. We tend to focus on the harm that is done to us, instead of examining the whole event in its context with all the causes and conditions conducive to its happening. This ignorance to the principle of dependent origination alienates us from what really happens in the situation and the complex set of conditions around any given event, and thus rids us of the possibility of making correct assessment of the event and react accordingly in time. Without the lucidity to discern the causes, development and effects of specific events, we are inevitably causing conflicts and doing harm to others as well as ourselves all the time. (pg. 97)

Beyond the ability to see the complexity, or interdependence, is the ability to enact and interact without these afflictive mental states creating relationships, structures, institutions, political and economic policy, based in the delusions and fears of dukkha. In the Engaged Identity approach, each facet of the multiple self, and the self-aspects is seen as a conduit for engagement through the precepts. The precepts are considered as 'Ethics in Motion' and as aspects to a moral and ethical embodiment vital to our development, engagement, and understanding of conflict; seeing these three as basic for the expression of ethical behavior, compassion, and systems adaptation. No matter the scale, framework, methodology, intention, program, or initiative, without cultivating and practicing these precepts we are left without the attributes inherent for transformation. Arthur Stein and Brian Toomey

(2003) suggest, 'The inner process begins at the level of thoughts and extends outward to actions and ultimately institutions' (pg. 18).

Cultivating Capacity

As the precepts address the concept of dukkha and the three poisons, they also serve to aid the process of moving from identity threat to identity expansion; allowing the emergent, reflexive, and malleable nature of the self as a complex system to be more fully engaged. Within the approach, this process is considered a practice. Within the four themes of the approach, there are six aspects that guide the praxis:

1. Attention
2. Intention
3. Expectation
4. Assumption
5. Reflexivity
6. Equanimity

The approach focuses on the developing of attention rather than intentions. While good intentions are often recognized as beneficial, the Engaged Identity desires to increase *attention* in order for clearer insight into emergent, current events as they are unfolding. This assists in the ability to recognize and acknowledge factors that intention may miss due to expectations, judgements, or assumptions of particular outcomes. The focus on attention creates a framework of engagement that brings Docherty's (2001) 'unique case theory' into the realm of human adaptive capacity. Enhancing attention and recognition of the details unique to the context and the enaction of sense-making inform the praxis and create a broader rubric for problem-solving, systems mapping, restorative or contact initiatives, psycho-social healing, and daily human interactions that are reflective of the unique attributes of personal, contextual, and temporal considerations.

The Engaged Identity approach first exposes or primes individuals with the awareness of self as a complex system through personal elective practices and experiential processes. This mental preparation creates a knowledge base that is

reflective of their own identities and contexts as opportunities to cultivate social, emotional, and adaptive capacities. When aggression, harm, or conflict arise, our identities sense a threat that limits our cognitive and behavioral abilities. Learning how to calm the mind and emotions and then proceed with the insight that comes with a less reactionary frame of mind serves us in our familial relationships as much as it does at the table of international negotiation. Time in nature, the sounds of the ocean, laughter of a loved one, or savoring a moment in silence, all provide us with a greater sense of equanimity. Neuroscience confirms contemplative practices such as meditation, prayer, and acts of giving, and can increase our sense of well-being, empathy, and compassion. (Klimecki, Leiberg, Lamm & Singer, 2012; Monk-Turner, 2003; Siegel, 2008: Davidson & McEwen, 2012) and increases social-emotional capacity, executive function, and self-regulation, help to cultivate self-awareness, attention, and equanimity (Singer & Lamm, 2009; Davidson & Begley, 2012; Siegel & Solomon, 2003). The approach looks to secular contemplative practices as vehicles to aid in understanding complex systems and the development of the precepts, providing a neurological foundation for the inclusion of contemplative practice as intravative processes for increased adaptive capacity. As Richard Rohr (2009) suggests,

> Contemplative prayer "rewires" our brains to think non-dually with compassion…During contemplation we come to know that there is no separation between sacred and secular…through contemplation we develop the capacity to 'witness' our egoic motivations and bring this knowledge into our day-to-day actions, living with increased freedom and authenticity through this deep awareness of our self. (pg. 145)

Rohr echoes the authenticity that self-complexity and self-aspect theories suggest contribute to well-being (Ryan, LaGuardia & Rawsthome, 2005; Goldman & Kernis, 2002; McConnell, Renaud, Dean, Green, Lamoreaux, Hall & Rydell, 2005). Namely that authenticity of self-aspects may prove a more reliable source than either high or low self-complexity. However, the Engaged Identity approach does not prescribe specific methodologies such as meditation, yoga, or prayer. Rather it highlights the theme of contemplation and provides initial information on a variety of contemplative practices such as breathe work, movement, exposure to nature, or

silence that are used thematic to elicit a range of activities that are reflective of the interests, abilities, and contexts of individuals.

Overview

The personal commitment to explore one's own identity is neither easy nor singular. It is a profound willingness to repeatedly examine motive and action as well as fear and needs. It requires humility, transparency, courage, honesty, and authenticity and often possesses the intangible quality of the spiritual. It is often deepened during and after times of great pain and suffering. There remains a dynamic and subjective nature in the relationship between an observable event and an observer's perceptions and reasoning. The Engaged Identity approach acknowledges this subjectivity and provides a praxis for expanding identity, through the precepts. Noting that systems, identity, perception, and conflict are dynamic and impermanent, the approach offers a means to enhance adaptive ability rather than foster fleeting theoretical frameworks.

The aspiration of transformation, whether it is to provide a platform for the rebuilding of civic trust, creating enriching personal relationships, or leading organizational development, ultimately require these three precepts. Where we have seen intractable conflicts or unresponsive institutions we can better equip our interactions and ideas with solutions that are dynamic and adaptable, moving the idea of success from a one time issue oriented event to the development of relationships that can mutually flourish in a ongoing basis. By shifting the focus to the underlying capacities that are necessary for transformation, before engaging in the broader contexts such as culture, religion, or structure, our identities are taught, through these precepts, to expand and collaborate with difference and diversity. Identifying the factors that change the balance between positive and negative feedback in mental and social systems provides an important agenda for empirical research. The universality of the approach is not as a one theory or framework fits all. Rather, it is in the human capacities and multiple identities that contribute and practice through their unique attributes and practice of the precepts. Universality understands that interrelated, interdependent entities are in constant shift, and yet have differing forms of

expression and experience (like a gene). Similarly, the precepts are entwined in their interaction and enaction yet their expressions will be different at differing times. For example, respect needs listening to be fully realized just as patience requires respect inclusion of limitations, preferences, and values.

Along with the cultivation of the precepts is development of an understanding of complexity science, or systems thinking, and interdependence. As practitioners it is not enough to simply acknowledge complexity, we must examine the dynamic nature of our own system (identity), as well as cultivate the capacities to engage with the dynamic nature of the systems in which we interact. Recognition alone does not offer the possibility for transformation that engagement and experience provide. Intellectually understanding complexity and complex systems, while providing an important contribution to understanding conflict and sustainability, does not provide us the skills necessary to sustain interaction with those systems. This expansion of identity and cultivation of human capacity creates an opportunity and commitment to engaging with whole of the system, as it emerges, allowing for the very complexities involved in conflict to participate in its transformation. The ability to think in the complex, or transformation conflict requires the ability to interact with the variety of cultures, worldviews, and identities. As our practice deepens, the recognition that the differences we perceive may contribute to the sustainability and well-being and our interconnectedness stems from a shared embodied sense of being.

As noted at the outset, this approach is seeking to contribute to the scholarship concerning the ways that identity theory, complexity, and adaptive capacity may be brought together to inform conflict transformation and in a broader context, the search for sustainability and well-being. It has shown that although many aspects of the literature and theories are working with similar notions of the self as a unique and dynamic culmination of identities and capacities there remains a disconnection amongst theory and practice that requires transdisciplinary approaches in order to create understanding and methodologies that benefit from the breathe and depth of the current research. While more detailed inquiries of these intersections need to be undertaken, the greater need may be the creation of new approaches that reflect not

only complexity, but an embodied and engaged praxis. Although this inquiry has not had to space to explore the depth of the task, it has sought to show the significance of the need and in the following chapters will look more closely at an approach inclusive of these findings. Moving forward in the ongoing exploration of transformation, well-being, and sustainability, we may be well served by Marcel Proust's insight that 'The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new landscapes but in having new eyes.'

Photograph 6: The Engaged Identity classroom in Harga, Benue State, Nigeria
Photo credit: JKLynne

Chapter Six: Moving an approach into practice

This chapter examines the Engaged Identity approach (EIA) in praxis. The chapter begins with a brief reflection on aspects of the EI approach. I then explore the theoretical frameworks and posit the methodological requirements necessary to translate the approach into praxis. Finally, the EIA praxis is explained and outlined, highlighting the relevant issues and themes. The chapter concludes with insights into the application of the approach in transformative processes.

Reflections on the EI Approach

During the course of chapter six, I introduced and discussed four key themes that comprise the engaged identity approach (EIA): identity, complexity, intravation, and the three precepts of listening, patience, and respect. EIA is not focused on knowledge transference of identity theory, complexity science, or contemplative practices, per se. Rather, it organizes around these themes, providing participants an opportunity to co-create the approach and explore the relevance and lived-experience of the themes that are unique to each individual. In this light, the approach looks to increase awareness of self as a complex system, the complexity and dynamic nature of systems at large, and cultivate the capacities to adapt, transform, and engage with constant changing paradigms. Allowing each person to become skilled in the capacities for poiesis[43], in order to create greater potential for meaning-making and transformation. As Dreyfus and Kelly (2011) explain,

> The task of the craftsman is not to generate the meaning, but rather to cultivate in himself the skill for discerning the meanings that are already there. (pg. 209)[44]

Instead of an end-goal orientation, where an expectation of accomplishment (problem-solving for example) or type of transformation (such as reconciliation) are the foci, EIA looks to cultivate the capacities for engaging in these activities and

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[43] Martin Heidegger describes poiesis as a 'bringing-forth'. The moment when transformation is occurring; the blooming of a flower, or the emergence of a butterfly from its cocoon.

[44] Looking at Dreyfus and Kelly's interpretation, we can place intravation as a category of 'cultivating the skill' for poiesis; as an embodied capacity for adaptability and transformation.

processes. To often, in the rush to stop the crisis, conflict, or suffering, we have largely assumed certain capacities were universally possessed rather than acknowledge that capacity or capability is not available, yet. As I will outline in the following section, the methodological frameworks of the praxis of EIA, like the approach itself, are transdisciplinary and include a broad range of frameworks, theories, and methods in order to create a rubric that is supportive of emergence and poiesis. Essentially, what is required for the approach is a praxis for poiesis.

Frameworks for Engagement

Aristotle posited were three basic activities of man: theoria, poiesis and praxis. From these came three types of knowledge: *theoretical,* with an interest in knowing truth; *poietical*, the process, or making of knowing; and *practical,* the action or engagement of knowledge. Paulo Freire (1970) defines praxis as 'reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed.'(pg. 126). For the Engaged Identity approach, praxis is defined as the creation (making of) of cycles of action and reflection; taking the theoretical aspects of its themes and combining them with embodied practices. The following sections highlight the frameworks used.

Transformative

There is always a new paradigm, a new relationship, being set in motion. Even if historical, ethnic, or other identity and structural contexts seem to stay the same, at the very least, our interactions with them change. For example, as we mature and move from the role of daughter to that of mother, our relationship and views of parenting shift. By increasing our capacities for recognizing these shifts, we create the conditions for greater understanding between individuals and greater reflexivity in our identities for meaning-making, adaptation, and transformation. Transformative learning[45] (Mezirow 1981, 1991, 1997, 2000; Boyd & Meyers, 1988; Taylor, 2010; Dirkx, Mezirow, & Cranton, 2006) looks to facilitate a shift of consciousness and self-identity (Illeris, 2014); 'the meanings that persons attach to the multiple roles they typically play in highly differentiated contemporary

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[45] Several different theories and styles of transformational learning have arisen since Mezirow first coined the term. Where Mezirow focuses on the ego. logic, and reason as a key aspects in transforming perspective, Talyor, Dirkx, Meyers, Boyd and others look to the emotional and intuitive aspects as essential to transformative learning.

societies.'(Stryker & Burke, 2000, pg. 284). As suggested by Mezirow (2003), is 'learning that transforms problematic frames of reference—sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets)—to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change.' (p. 58). Or as Edmund O'Sullivan (2003) describes,

> Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and irreversibly alters our way of being in the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationships with other humans and with the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race and gender; our body awareness, our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy. (pg. 238)

Therefore, it emphasizes examining and assessing beliefs, feelings, and values in three levels of transformation; psychological, convictional, and behavioral. (Mezirow, 1991, pg. 167). For the EI approach, it provides an open, dynamic, and emergent framework for meaning-making and critical thinking. One concern raised with the concept of transformation is that of viewing it as a prescribed outcome. The concerns stem from the often overlooked aspects of temporal aspects in the processes of psycho-social healing and expectations of transformation both within a time frame and as a prescribed outcome (or unspoken expectation.) For example, often in transformative processes involve instructions to listen deeply, or empathically. But what if a participant in these exercises is not ready or able to listen? Particularly when trauma is present, or if the exercise involves aspects that are unfamiliar culturally, the experience of the exercise may further traumatize or be inappropriate outside the context of the exercise.[46] Therefore, in the EIA praxis, the transformative aspects are related to the cultivation of adaptive capacities and the development of awareness for transformative processes.

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[46] For a further discussion on the issues concerning transformative learning see, Heddy & Pugh (2015). Bigger is not always better: Should educators aim for big transformative learning events or small transformative experiences?. Journal of Transformative Learning, 3(1), 52-58.
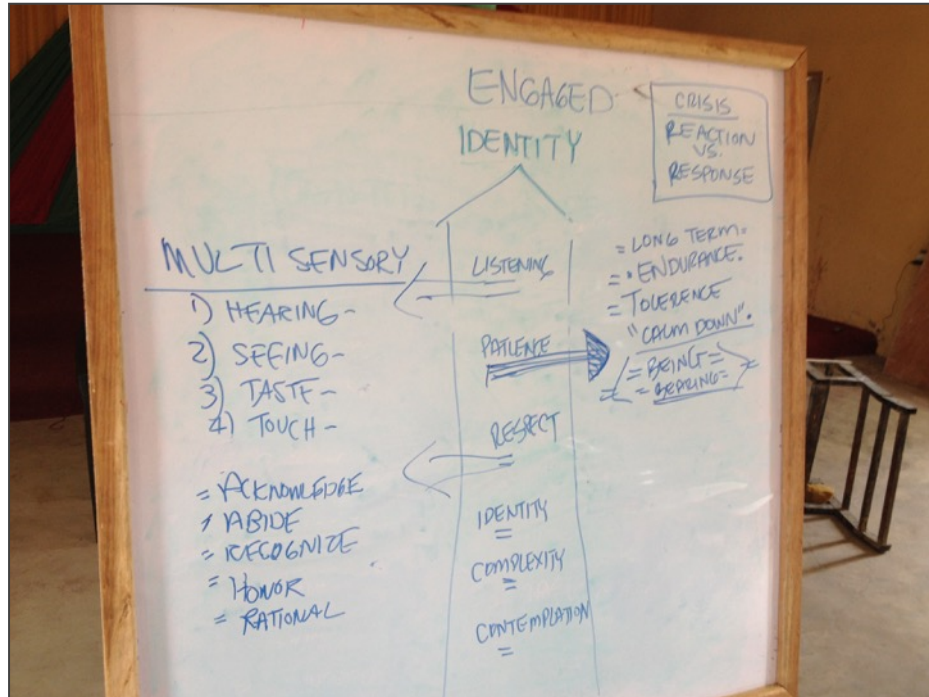
Photograph 7: A visual harvest of the EI approach. Ngorore, Adamawa, Nigeria
Photo Credit: JKLynne

Elicitive *and* prescriptive

Lederach (1995) derived the term elicitive in order to express a new type of
interaction that could adapt to local knowledge, engage participants in a process of
discovery, and create meaning specific to the emergence of interactions within at the
particular setting, *in situ*. In this model, the role of trainer or teacher is replaced by a
facilitator acting as a catalyst. Similar to Docherty's (2005) unique case theory
discussed in chapter two, each situational interaction brings forth new meaning and
understanding. An elicitive model is therefore highly participatory and aims to
alleviate the hierarchical aspects of the prescriptive, 'expert with superior
knowledge' model. Another aspect of the elicitive method is the reflexivity in the
interactions. As new information is brought forth, it is immediately felt with the
group and included in the dynamic. This meets the needs of the EI approach in three
ways: 1) participatory sense-making is acknowledged and embodied in the model; 2)
The complexity and systems thinking themes are embraced through emergence and
reflexivity; and 3) includes and models the respect and listening themes of the
approach.

However, if the elicitive approach is examined further, and facilitators and program designs are honest with themselves, an elicitive approach almost always includes at least in part, a prescriptive approach. Although the elicitive model shifts the role of teacher or expert to that of facilitator, there remains (perhaps unspoken) a perception of the facilitator as a leader or having information that is significant to the group and the tension of a facilitator sharing their own personal knowledge and having those views perceived in a prescriptive fashion. In either case, the recognition of the prescriptive elements are important to the transparency and trust of the praxis and participants. This is certainly the case in the EIA praxis. For example, in the EI approach there may be a need to explain and/or introduce alternative contemplative practices. Therefore, although the EI approach uses an elicitive approach, it also uses a prescriptive approach. Although the inclusion of prescriptive aspects does not negate the elicitive aspects, it provides for the introduction of the themes of the approach and accounts for the facilitators personal knowledge. As Lederach (1995) explains,

> In the prescriptive approach, trainers provide "how to" recipes for handling conflict and trainees strive to master these approaches and techniques. The elicitive approach, on the other hand, understands training as a participatory process in which trainees themselves draw from local knowledge to create the training model. While both models aim to empower people, they go about it in very different ways. Both of these approaches have strengths and weaknesses. (pg. 68).

Thus, the prescribing shifts from the trainer/facilitator to the participants at large supporting the elicitive model to 'redefine expertise as implicit in the setting rather than in the trainer' (Lederach 1995, p. 62).

Building on Lederach's work is Wolfgang Dietrich's (2014) elicitive conflict transformation. In working and training scholar-practitioners involved with intractable conflicts, he describes the elicitive methodology as 'a method, an art, and a science' (pg. 53). Dietrich's approach for conflict transformation includes increasing awareness of interdependence, reducing fear, engendering trust, and working with emotions. Similarly, the EIA praxis incorporates elicitive methodology, but in a broader rubric of use.

Contemplative

In chapter four, I discussed the epistemological issues of hermeneutics and the need to include a phenomenological approach in order to cultivate capacities for adaptation and transformation. This requires a praxis that embraces both the epistemological and phenomenological aspects of sense-making and embodied cognition. While both the transformational and elicitive models incorporate experiential methods, such as the work of Daniel Kolb (1981, 1984, 2000), John Dewey (1997, 2007), and Freire (1970, 1976), the approach requires the inclusion of methods that support mind-body-life connections which in turn support the multi-sensory and embodied aspects of participatory sense-making and cultivating intravative capacities. Contemplative education (Sanders, 2014; Simmer-Brown & Grace, 2011; Zajonic & Palmer, 2010; Shapiro, Brown & Austin, 2011) integrates participants' introspection and the cultivation of self-awareness and attention, analytical and critical capacities, and skills for engaging constructively with others and in relationship to other phenomena. Drawing on numerous philosophies and religions, contemplative education looks to first-person experience and embodied reflection and encompasses a wide range of practices and methods..

Contemplative practices include the observation of phenomena (physical states, natural processes, cultural productions, mental and emotional states), development attention and focus, and the cultivation of an awareness of interdependence. Among the practices employed are meditation, yoga, prayer, journaling, silence, dance, storytelling, quieting the mind, bearing witness, and rituals.[47] As Barbezat and Pingree (2013) explain,

> Classroom introspective and contemplative exercises have a variety
> of objectives, including these:
>
> - Attention building, mainly through focusing meditation and
>   exercises that support mental stability.
>
> - Introspection into the content of the course. Exercises are
>   designed to have students discover the material in themselves and

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[47] The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society founded the Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education in Society, with an international membership of multidisciplinary educators, administrators, researchers, and students, and the Journal of Contemplative Inquiry. See http://www.contemplativemind.org/practices for a more comprehensive list of contemplative practices.

thus deepen their understanding of it. This is a personal form of the deeper critical reasoning in more traditional pedagogy.

- Building compassion, connection to others, and a deepening sense of the moral and spiritual aspect of their education (contemplative practices are uniquely situated to support this sort of inquiry).

- Perhaps most important, an invitation to begin an inquiry into the nature of their minds, selves, and their relationship to others. A simple meditation focusing on the breath can quickly lead to an inquiry as to where these intervening thoughts come from, an inquiry into the nature of our self-determination, and so forth.

Some of the practices are focused rather narrowly on only one of these objectives, while others are combinations of each. Most often, they focus on one, but on reflection, they naturally open into the others (pg. 182).

In the EIA praxis, contemplative education is used in two ways, as contemplative practices within the workshop setting (experientially) and by providing information about contemplative practices for future use (didactically). Using an elicitive approach to incorporate different practices there is a variance of practices, both experientially and didactically, due to the facilitators and the participants contexts, interests, and capabilities.

Photograph 8: EI workshop participants practicing mediation, Nigeria
Photo Credit: JKLynne

EIA in Praxis

The Engaged Identity approach (EIA) utilizes elicitive, transformative, and contemplative frameworks and draws on a diverse body of scholarship, empirical research, and practice. The focus is on the cultivation 'being' not 'having.' by cultivating awareness and capacity rather than having solutions or problems solved. It brings an elicitive transdisciplinary approach to cultivating human adaptive capacity where each enactment of the praxis carries the understanding that who is in the room, where the room is, what is able to be done in the room (capability), perceived (attention), and reason (intention) will be unique to any given interactions of praxis.
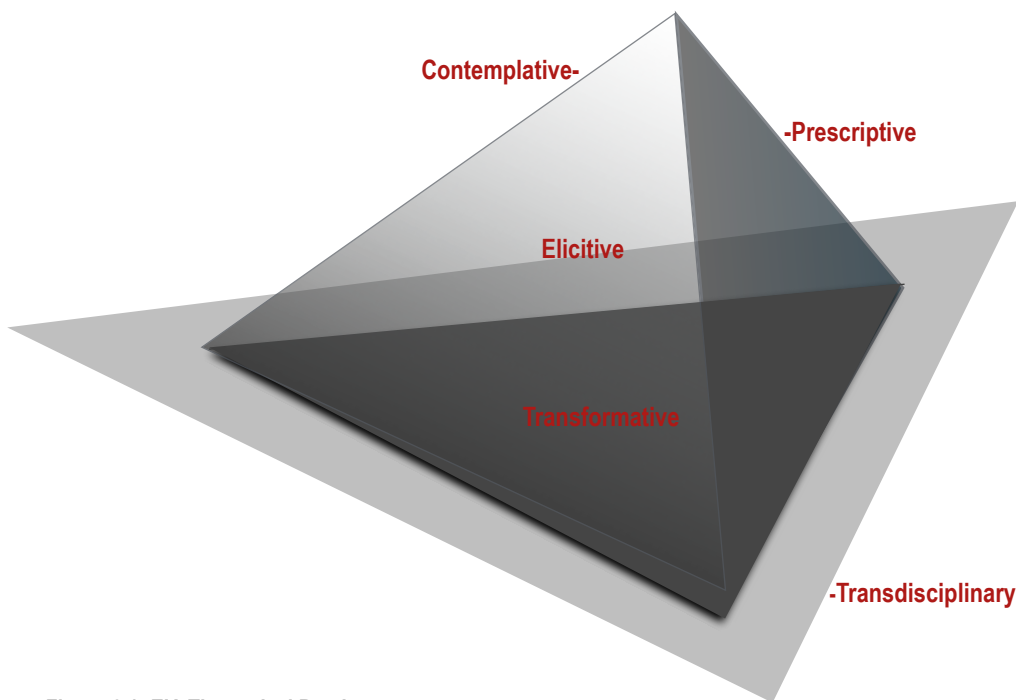
Figure 6.1: EIA Theoretical Praxis

Including the themes of identity and complexity in these exchanges, practitioners/ participants are shifting awareness and perspectives of self-identity, group-identity, possibilities and potentials. As Walton, Paunesku & Dweck (2012) work with expandable selves and mindset illuminates, exposure to a concept leads to the potential for more capacity. Within the Engaged Identity praxis, this expansion is seen as a understanding the malleability, the reflexivity, and the engagement of 'selves' through the precepts in a poietic.

One of the key aspects of the praxis is the emphasis on practice rather than process. In fact if we look to the definition of process we see quite clearly the end point emphasis which is *process*: a systematic series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end or a series of actions that produce something or that lead to a particular result. The EIA praxis focuses on practice in order to convey the reality that as self and systems are in constant flux, mastery of understanding, thinking, or engaging will be ongoing as circumstances, agency, structures, attitudes, and emotions are changing. If we are honest and authentic in our admissions of knowledge and capabilities, none one has all the answers, all of the time. Our capacities and capabilities are in a constant state of flux. In other words I may be able to 'think in the complex' in one scenario, but emotions, attitudes, or perturbance may result in the inability in another situation. Simply stated, we are all practicing being human.

Looking at the reflexivity and expansion of identity, the praxis is more than a conduit for ownership of process so often sought in participatory methodology. It is intrinsically reflective of the enactment of the sense-making unique to the individual, context, capability, and temporal aspects of interaction. EIA fosters identity expansion in two particular ways. The first is the priming or awareness of self, society and systems as complex, dynamic, reflexive and embodied. The second through the enactment of the three precepts and the engagement of the broad range of self aspects. It is tailored to mimetically provide platforms for showing listening, patience and respect with the experience and value each participant brings. Practitioner engagement will vary based on their unique perceptions and interactions. Simply stated, practitioners will listen differently, develop patience in situations and circumstances at differing rates, and show respect according to their particular worldviews.

It should be noted that facilitators are intrinsically embedded in the landscape of the praxis. Ultimately having a similar experience to participants as their role involves the reflexive quality of engaging their own self-aspects; their own unique express of experience of facilitator, participant, student, human, self. This is reflected in

Vanasupa, Schlemer, Burton, Brogno, Hendrix & MacDougall (2014) comments on experiences using transformative and transdisciplinary frameworks,

> Our naive expectations, shaped by the industrial era, were that we would enact new techniques or processes that would result in better results for the transdisciplinary research. What we encountered instead was that we, ourselves, were embroiled in conflict and faced with crises of identity that had profound implications for our professional and personal lives. We did not anticipate that creating the conditions for transformative learning would mean that we, ourselves, would undergo a transformation. If we had not shifted to viewing transdisciplinarity as a complex system, we would have concluded that these experiences were indicators of our inherent deficiency for doing the work. From a systems point of view, we saw that dynamics of domination were located and unconsciously enacted in our habitual patterns of thought and behavior. There was strong emotional content in encountering this gap between our espoused and enacted values (pg. 2906).

Conclusion

The chapter began with a brief reflection on aspects of the EI approach and explored the theoretical and methodological frameworks required for the EI approach to move into praxis. The praxis was explained and outlined, highlighting the use of the frameworks and their relationship to key themes in the approach. The EIA praxis, with its emphasis on participatory sense-making, self-awareness, attention, and adaptive capacities, is complementary to a wide range of applications such as conflict transformation, change management, psycho-social trauma healing, leadership development, and peace education, among others. Many modalities for transformative processes incorporate experiential methods, utilizing one or more of the frameworks cited here. By combining exposure, engagement, introspection, and awareness, the approach as practice, looks to explore the experience of poiesis, and the aspects for 'becoming' that support adaptation and transformation. In the following chapters, the Nigerian case study explores the Engaged Identity approach, highlighting participants experiences and perceptions and providing insight into uses and efficacy.

PART THREE
The research journey

Photograph 9: A Traditional Átē-ŭ-Tiv (Tiv Mud Hut) in Harga, Benue State, Nigeria
Photo Credit: JKLynne

Chapter Seven: The Research Journey

The chapter provides an overview of the journey of the scholarship from research design to implementation, discussing the challenges of conducting research outside of a researchers personal context. It begins with a reflection on the research from the original framework[48] to the final design, and the contextual, conflictual, and cultural realities that influenced the process. Then I reflect more closely on the role of my own identity in the research process, looking at the challenges of western methods and the concerns of creating valid feedback when multiple worldviews are present.

Designing Research

Developing a plan. Acknowledging the complexity inherent in the identities and worldviews of the parties involved in the research provides a deeper understanding of the human experience of the research and its outcomes. In using participatory methods, a researcher must simultaneously acknowledge and question how their participation may influence or change group dynamics and outcomes while in turn recognizing how they are being influenced by the contexts they engage in. Understanding this complex web of perceptions, behaviors, and relationships is a lesson in humility. The research framework that has emerged serves as a memetic example of the very approach it questions by creating a design that requires the inclusion of complexity and identity as a vehicles to understand research, the researcher, and the research community/ies; a dynamic I will discuss further in this chapter.

I had used the Engaged Identity approach as the basis for a listening project during my Masters research along the US/Mexico border in 2009. It was a six month long project examining the roles of listening, patience, and respect in the communities comprising the Big Bend region of Southwestern Texas, a region that holds some of the least populated counties in the United States. The area is bordered on the South

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[48] The original research framework was altered soon after in data collection began in October 2013. This is discussed in the section Conducting Research, and in depth in chapters ten and eleven.

by the Rio Grande river, a waterway that is shared by the US and Mexico and serves as an entry point for immigration from Mexico and Central America. Among the conflict issues affecting the area are boundary and border issues, immigration, ethnicity, and resource concerns. The mixed-methods research design included seventeen in-depth interviews, participant observation, and three focus groups. The final analysis was instrumental in the continued development of the approach with the focus groups providing platforms for the operationalization of the approach into practice. Having had the opportunity to look at the approach against this diverse conflictual back drop, I was interested in exploring the approach in other geographical regions and contexts to examine the universality of the approach for conflict transformation processes. This led me to develop a research plan that included teachers of displaced youth in Costa Rica, Christian and Muslim clergy in Nigeria, and graduate students of Conflict & Peace studies programs in Universities in the United States. I had been asked by various representatives of these groups to conduct the Engaged Identity workshops and was working on my research schedule, funding, and timelines to gauge the feasibility. An ambitious undertaking at best, with logistical and financial difficulties at the forefront of my mind. I thought that traveling to Nigeria, it being the longest distance, would be best accomplished first.

It was one of the people, Dr. Joseph Sampson, that I met back in 2008 at the Summer Peacebuilding Institute, who was my contact and entry into the Nigerian opportunity. Dr. Sampson is the Founder and Director of Reconciliation Trainers Africa (RETA) and the RETA Peace Institute. Based in Jos, Nigeria since 2007, RETA works in research, advocacy, education, and reporting in the five Nigerian states of Kaduna, Plateau, Benue, Adamawa, and Taraba. Since 2008, Dr. Sampson and I had stayed in touch and kept trying to find the time and resources to partner together on peace initiatives in Nigeria. We had the opportunity to see each other once again, in 2012, and began in earnest to plan our collaborations for the fall of 2013. In the spring of 2013, we finalized our plans and agreed that I would arrive in Nigeria in early October to begin the programs that would be used for this research. Having crossed the milestone of Candidature confirmation in mid-August, and working to confirm

the other research partnerships, I was planning on scheduling the workshops after my return from Nigeria in December. We had tentative dates in January 2014 for the US programs, and March of 2014 for Costa Rica. With only a window of six weeks from the confirmation to my arrival in Nigeria, I wanted to concentrate on preparations for the trip and research instruments, and so it was agreed the final arrangements for the remaining two locations would be addressed in December.

As I began to design the research, my initial interest was to focus on the universality of the approach and practice, and conduct the Engaged Identity trainings in three countries with participants representing different backgrounds. I wanted to compare how the approach was understood and was used across a large breath of contexts. The objective was to look at the various ways it could be applied for conflict transformation and peacebuilding processes. It was expected that the outcomes may provide insights into the inclusion of the approach in various methods such as mediation and negotiation, psycho-social trauma healing, and community development initiatives. I had received invitations from colleagues in Costa Rica, where the sessions would be held for teachers of displaced youth; the United States, where the participants would comprise of undergraduate and graduate students studying peace and conflict; and Nigeria, where the focus would be on Christian and Muslim Clergy. Of course, as anyone who has embarked on a long research project knows, circumstances would change my plans and alter my objectives.

I arrived in Nigeria in October, as planned. By November, I had decided to cancel the programs in Costa Rica and the United States and concentrate on what was unfolding in Nigeria. The circumstances surrounding my decision to focus the research in the Nigerian context included the realization that the opportunities presented for me in Nigeria would provide a deeper understanding of the theory and practice that would be lost if more time was not given to the ethnographic process. Fearing the loss of my original objective of examining the universality of the theory in multiple contexts, I reexamined my objectives to determine what this change would mean. If I wasn't looking at the broader use of the theory in different conflict transformation processes and cultural contexts, how would I choose to reframe the research

question? Could I let go of that initial desire to examine the work against a multi-cultural setting and recognize the importance of developing relationships and understanding that could enrich the research and ultimately the approach and practice?

Conducting the Research

With a new-found focus on conducting the research within one nation-state, I began to immerse myself in the participatory aspects of my design. In addition to the scheduled workshops, there were formal and informal lectures, various community celebrations, travel to ten of the thirty-six Nigerian states, living with community members, meetings with both political and traditional leaders at the national, state, and local levels, bunking with the Nigerian air force, consulting work with a national NGO, and consuming kilos of pounded yams.

Despite the incredible hospitality and extraordinary experiences, I was constantly aware of the increasing security concerns that were mounting during the fall of 2013. Nigeria has experienced a long and tumultuous journey from British colonial rule to that of independent nation. After a civil war in 1966-70, the divides of ethnic and religious identity continued to weak havoc on the political, economic, and social stability of the region. Although decades of military rule, dictatorships, and coups d'etat were replaced by democratic system in 1999, the transition has proven challenging due to continued ethnic and religious conflicts.[49] In addition to these concerns, corruption, poverty, lack of education and infrastructure, and an increasing

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[49] To learn more about the history of the creation of Nigeria from the neolithic period through the twentieth century see http://www.everyculture.com/Ma-Ni/Nigeria.html.

divide between the wealthy elite and average Nigerian has fueled deep mistrust in government and enhanced the already existing tensions among ethnic and religious groups (Falola & Heaton, 2008).

Although conflict was not new to the political, ethnic, or religious landscape, a new resurgence began in the fall of 2013 just as the research was being implemented.[50] The escalation of activities by Boko Haram, a Muslim extremist group founded in 2002, was creating a situation in the Northeast and Middle Belt that threatened to destabilize the existing rule of law. Boko Haram, translated in the local Hausa dialect as 'Western Education is Evil', had been responsible for numerous attacks in northern and central Nigeria, including bombing churches, bus ranks, bars, military barracks and the police and UN headquarters in the capital of Abuja, resulting in the United States government declaring it a terrorist organization in 2010. In May of 2013, President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in the three northern states of Adamawa, Yobe, and Borno, where the organization is known to be based.[51] These ongoing security challenges directly influenced my personal participation and the research process, as several of the data collection locations were in these areas. These challenges will the addressed in a greater context in the chapters on the Nigerian case study. As the reality on the ground was changing rapidly, so were the attitudes and behaviors of the politic and people. Increasingly, the awareness that I was far from my own comfort and privilege created deeply challenging experiences as a researcher and raised additional questions of how and when research can be conducted. The research design provided a unique opportunity to allow the development of these realities to be reflected in the research workshops and feedback processes. How were listening, patience, and respect understood within the Nigeria context? How were they practiced culturally? How was the escalation of conflict affecting these capacities? Did individuals see their own identities as complex systems? Was analysis inclusive of the complex systems?

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[50] For a more comprehensive look at the history of Nigeria and the climate of conflict, see Toyin Falola and Matthew Heaton, A History of Nigeria Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008.

[51] Stephanie Schwartz discusses the factors and influences in the rise and escalation of Boko Haram activities and ideology in Nigeria a Hotbed of Islamic Extremism? Washington DC: United States Institute for Peace (USIP), 2010. The analysis gives an over view of conflict in Nigeria, and suggests Islamic extremism is not the driver of the escalation, rather a complex web of political and social issues that have resulted in the increase in violence and intolerance.

Understanding the complex web of interests, ethnic, cultural and religious, that populate the Nigerian landscape is just one of the many challenges of conducting research in a region that includes over 250 ethnic groups[52] and 400 recognized languages (Crozier & Blench, 1992). With foundation of the Engaged Identity approach based in the principles of identity and complexity, the research and approach were mimetic in design. Although the focus and themes of the workshops remained with the concepts of the approach, identity, complexity, and the cultivation of listening, patience, and respect, the materials and methods were informed by the participants various experiences and expertise.

By using information that was relevant to the identity, culture and beliefs of participants, the methods used in the workshops were not only elicitive in nature, but able to create content and meaning relevant to the participants context. For example, the approach is supported by the latest neuro-scientific research into the development of empathy and compassion for well-being and human flourishing. However, many workshops included evangelical christians whose view and understanding of scientific methodology rendered that support largely irrelevant. The approach, practice, and research design allowed for the adjustment to present the material by referring to biblical scriptures and root the example within the participants religious beliefs, providing a conduit relevant to participants.

Negotiating Perspectives

Conducting participatory and phenomenological research, particularly when a researcher is from another cultural and holds different worldviews, requires both an ability to translate meaning and experience as well as engage the difference and diversity of their own identity. Notably, these factors are also present in effective peacebuilding processes and the EI approach examined during the course of this research. All are dynamic and emergent processes, much like the individuals and contexts they are set against.

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[52] The number of ethnic or tribal distinctions in Nigeria varies from 250 to over 500. This in turn is reflected in the number of recognized languages, which is estimate to be around 500. Each community or village has its own distinct language, or dialect, although many share similar characteristics.

Before a researcher can translate the experiences and findings of a project, they must examine their own perspectives and embark on a journey of discovering how those perspectives relate to the people and places involved in the collaborative processes of participatory and ethnographic research. From the challenges of western research methodology and the concerns of creating valid feedback when multiple worldviews are present, to language, religion, economic status and cultural behaviors, the journey is never completed, only enhanced through reflection, dialogue, and feedback. With the diversity within Nigeria and my own differing perspectives and experiences, I realized a formidable journey lay ahead.

Photograph 11: On the road. Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria
Photo Credit: JKLynne

In an attempt to unify the country, both culturally and linguistically, the 1946 constitution of the colonial administration recognized English as the official language of Nigeria. After the independence of Nigeria, in 1960, English was adopted as the official language for the country. The research and workshops were conducted in English and although I am fluent in English, Nigerians often speak three or four languages; English, Pidgin English, their tribal language such as Yorba, Igbo, or Hausa, and the language of their community or village. There were many

times when I was unable to understand a conversation due to the blend of languages often used. Many times participants speaking in their local village dialects switched to their tribal language and onto English even when speaking with one another, as members from two communities even 50km apart would have a different local language. Despite this challenge, people were very patient and accommodating and assisted me with translations and informal lessons in Hausa and Igbo. Between the cultural and linguistic differences, the real challenge was in listening to what was being said and not what was wanting to be heard.

Although I had many friends from West Africa and Nigeria, my first experience in country coincided with my research project. I recall Dr. Sampson collecting me in the federal capitol of Abuja the day I arrived. We immediately began our three hour road trip to Jos, Plateau State where I would spend my first night in a home stay with friends of Dr. Sampson. Due to the ongoing conflicts and security issues, Nigeria maintains security checkpoints throughout the country. Between the military, drug enforcement, local police forces, and immigration stops, travel can be slow and tedious. During our approach into the Jos plateau, the namesake of the state, I experienced what would be the first of many encounters with Nigerian security forces. As we stopped at the allocated area, a young man approached our vehicle. Dressed in fatigues, with the customary semi-automatic riffle slung over his shoulder, the young man peered into the window, looked at me, smiled and at the top of his lungs exclaimed 'Hey. Hey! Whitey!!' Stunned and uncertain, I looked to Dr. Sampson who began to chuckle. After the two men exchanged a few words, the young man leaned further in the window and looking at me square in the eyes, asked me a question. One topic of conversation that is certain to arise, no matter where in world you may find yourself, is the weather. The young soldier wanted to know how I found the weather in Nigeria. I told him I had only been in the country for a few hours, but so far it was pretty good. 'No, no, no! The weather is terrible. Too, hot', he informed me. As I looked at his riffle, now dangling back and forth from his enthusiasm, all I could think off is that when a man holding a semi-automatic

weapon tells you it is too hot, it gets surprisingly warm, and he in fact is right. It was my third hour in the country. Welcome to Nigeria.

Conclusion

Researchers are faced with embracing methods and timeframes that often don't reflect the cultural perspectives they are engaging. Cultural differences, like the relationship to time, fail to be acknowledged or accurately represented in both design and methodology. From the challenges of transportation in a country with little or decaying infrastructure, to the customary introductions and ceremonial traditions, time became a silent but powerful reminder of the differences in attitudes and behaviors. In the same vain, it would frequently alert me to my outsider status no matter if I was identifying as a researcher, participant, friend, or colleague. This dynamic web of expectations, identities, perceptions, and behaviors, which I will discuss further in part four, served to enhance the research as well as challenge it. Navigating this complexity requires both reflection and action. At the outset, examining the motives that drive the research against the responsibilities and obligations that arise from embedding oneself in communities asking to have access to feelings and experiences of fellow human beings. Is the researcher concerned with the integrity of the process? Is the motivation one sided or are there perceived benefits from the participants involved? Research projects may have a timeline, but what is the obligation to the relationships built during the process? Reflection, for a researcher, is an important component not just while conducting the research, but particularly as the roles of the researcher shift towards the conclusion of project. Did you accurately represent the individuals with whom you interacted? How, or will, you continue to serve the communities in order to sustain ongoing relationships? Negotiating multiple perspectives, sometimes all of them my own was, and I believe is, one of the our greatest challenges. But more than as researcher, this ability lies at the heart of adaptability and transformation. This has led me understand that while my research in Nigeria had to come to an end, the relationships and experiences that have transformed me will continue their influence long after the project concluded.

Photograph 12: Water retrieval in Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria
Photo Credit: JKLynne

Chapter Eight: The Research Design

The overarching interest guiding the research is the efficacy and impact of the Engaged Identity approach and practice in multiple conflictual and cultural contexts. The research was guided by three objectives, to explore listening, patience and respect through a rubric of complexity science, identity theory, and contemplative practices; to evaluate the roles of these capacities in multiple cultural and personal contexts to enhance conflict transformation and peacebuilding practices; and to inform the Engaged Identity approach and practice. In order to create the feedback and collaborative methods that would address these multiple interests and concerns, the research utilized a mixed methods approach. This chapter will examine the chosen methodologies and methods employed to gather and analyze the research data, providing a detailed exploration of participant demographics, data collection, and the analysis process.

Both Quantitative and Qualitative research methods were chosen to provide a means of triangulating the research findings and deepen the conclusions of the project. Quantitative methods were included in order to verify, through a statistical analysis, the efficacy of the theory and practice for participants when engaged in Conflict Transformation and/or Peacebuilding efforts. Qualitative methods were employed to understand the participants' experiences of the theory and practice in their personal conflict contexts. Collecting subjective data that describes the social phenomenological aspects, providing a deeper holistic perspective of the efficacy and impact of the theory and practice, was critical to the research objectives. While a qualitative approach to data collection is intensive, expansive and time consuming, it enabled me, as a researcher, to discover the humanistic 'lived' experience of participants and provided opportunities for the collective wisdom of participants to influence the research objectives.

Methodology

The creation of a design that could provide relevant insights into the continuing development of the Engaged Identity approach, and simultaneously be of benefit to host communities and participants was a significant challenge. In order to meet these objectives effectively, a mixed-methods approach utilizing Phenomenology and Grounded Theory was chosen (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Sadala & Adorno, 2001). As a result, the multiple methodologies involved ongoing elicitive processes from survey questionnaires, in-depth individual interviews, as well as participatory observations to provide a rich description of both the use and impact of the Engaged Identity approach.

The methods were chosen for their ability to examine both the approach and operationalization as praxis. Using the two methods, I was able to create a research design that was mimetic to the theoretical and philosophical basis used of Engaged Identity approach. The research involved individuals participating in the Engaged Identity workshop; exploring identity, complexity, systems thinking, and the cultivation of listening, patience & respect as tools for conflict transformation and peacebuilding. The workshops include group dialogue, narrative, knowledge transfer, and small group work, in an emergent format where participants are encouraged to co-create program processes within the inherent themes outlined above. The combination of the phenomenological approach, with its focus on describing the experiences of individuals, in this case, their participation in the training, and the grounded theory method, with its inductive inclusion of the phenomena, created an elicitive system that mirrors the systems approach used in the Engaged Identity praxis.

Phenomenology. The phenomenological research approach uses the foundational question, 'What is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon by an individual or by many individuals?' (Patton, 2012, pg. 243). Using this method, a researcher looks to gain access into the lived experience of participants and to further understand their unique relationship between identity,

context, and consciousness. Jenny Ploeg (1999) describes the method as key to uncovering how participants' make meaning of the complex and dynamic process of integrating and relating to experience (pp.36-37). Through the analysis of phenomenological methods, emerging themes can be validated because their meanings of that lived experience are central to the phenomenological study.

The foundations of phenomenology are based in the origins of philosophy, particularly Kant, Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty. Husserl 'sought to develop a new philosophical method which would lend absolute certainty to a disintegrating civilization.' (Eagleton, 1983, p. 54). Husserl believed anything outside immediate experience must be ignored, and that the external world is ultimately the sum contents of personal consciousness. This consciousness forms a reality as pure 'phenomena' and is seen as the absolute point from where understanding begins. Noting this relational quality of reality, he rejected the belief that objects in the external world exist independently and that our perceived information about objects is reliable. According to Max Van Manen (1990), the four aspects of 'lived experience' that are of interest to phenomenologists are:

> • lived space (spatiality)
>
> • lived body (corporeality)
>
> • lived time (temporality)
>
> • lived human relations (relationality) (pg. 54)

In looking at the four aspects, I recognized a correlation between types of responses seen in conflict situations, from the corporeality, relationality, and temporality of trauma, to the spatiality aspects of security measures. As mentioned earlier, I adopted the phenomenological methodology for it's similarity to the Engaged Identity approach's premise that phenomena/reality is based in a subjective experience, that

sense-making is inter-relational and participatory, and the systems based thinking that the external world lives interdependently of other phenomena or consciousness.

While a phenomenological approach aims to understand the lived experience (phenomena) of participants, 'it does not allow for the construction or imposition of method on the phenomena in question, as that would do a great injustice to the phenomena' (Hycner, 1999, pg.143). In order to meet the research objective of informing the Engaged Identity approach, I adopted the grounded theory methodology, which allowed for the data collected in the phenomenological method to be utilized to inform the research, and address the questions of efficacy in differing cultural and personal contexts. Beverly Hancock (2002) explains that grounded theory 'goes beyond phenomenology because the explanations that emerge are genuinely new knowledge and are used to develop new theories about a phenomenon.' (pg. 6).

Grounded Theory. The purpose of a grounded theory approach to qualitative research is to discover social-psychological processes. The grounded theory perspective locates the phenomena of human experiences within the world of social interaction, and views reality as an emergent entity that can be changed by interactions among people. This perspective implies that a perpetual interaction, of both reflection and action, is one of the imperatives in transforming human realities. Carol Grbich (2007) states that 'the focus in grounded theory then becomes life as it is actually happening – the empirical, social world 'out there', as well as public and private views' (pg. 71). As a result, the grounded theory approach provides an inductive method of qualitative research, which allows social theory to be generated systematically from the collected data. Theories are generated based on, or grounded in, rigorous empirical research rather than produced in the abstract.

The Grounded Theory approach emerged in 1967, developed by Barney Glaser, a psychologist, and Anselm Strauss, a sociologist. The method 'explicitly involves generating theory and doing social research [as] two parts of the same process' (Glaser, 1978, p.2), and is one of the distinct ways it differs from other

qualitative methods. The collection methods include interviews, observations, field notes from informal interviews, lectures, seminars, and can include both qualitative data and quantitative. (Glaser, 1978, pg. 79). In other words, anything is data that helps the researcher generate concepts for the emerging theory. And while these data collection methods may be similar to other qualitative approaches, another distinct difference is the inductive, rather than deductive, interplay of the data during the actual research. (Strauss & Corbin,1994). Grounded theory requires an ongoing 'constant comparative' methodology, where the researcher strives to verify the resulting theory throughout the course of the current research, instead of through additional research. This validation process continues until the researcher reaches theoretical saturation, which occurs when the new information confirms a stable pattern and when no new significant ideas and concepts appeared to emerge (Lacey & Luff, 2001, pg. 7). As a result, grounded theories embrace reciprocal relationships, elicitive process, and fluidity, and produce a theory that is conceptually dense (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 279).

Since the method is specifically designed to further the development of effective theory, it can be used not only to generate new theory, but also allow existing theories to be elaborated and developed as new data is incorporated into their existing framework (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). I wanted to use the lived experience provided by the phenomenological approach and validate the phenomena to support, elaborate, or clarify the Engaged Identity theory in order to create the density and fluidity needed for a theory to expound and reflect systems thinking, interdependent phenomena, and the emergent quality inherent in human experience. Ultimately, my desire was to then include these findings in the Engaged Identity practice platform where I could validate the need for emergent, systems based practices as foundations for conflict transformation.

Methods

The research was undertaken using a multi-methods collection approach. Using both phenomenological and grounded theory as methodologies, the research design required both emic, or 'approaches investigating how local people think' (Kottak,

2006, p.47) and etic, or 'how social systems function' (Kottak, 2006, p. 53). Often researchers use "etic" to refer to objective or outsider accounts, and "emic" to refer to subjective or insider accounts (Headland, Pike & Harris, 1990). In order to understand the lived-experience (emic) of participants, in-depth interviews and questionnaires were adopted. Using participant observation and ethnographic methods to capture the behaviors, attitudes, and relationships of systems within the research context, the etic accounts aimed to capture data to ground the approach within the larger social context. The following section looks more closely at the various methods used to collect and analyze the research data.

A critical decision made in this research design was to be physically located in Nigeria during the process of data collection and analysis processes. Over an eighteen month period from October 2013 until April 2015, I spent eleven months in nine Nigerian states and the Federal Capitol Territory. As a researcher, being physically located in the research area contributed towards a broader, holistic perspective that was people-centered, participatory, and deeply informed by the unfolding of personal, local, state and national events.[53] This allowed for a richer, thicker description in the etic methods and provided more time for the challenges I faced with data collection in the emic methods. However, as a researcher located in Nigeria for extended periods of time, the experience intensified the awareness and recognition of my own personal involvement with the research issues as an outsider to the social, economic, and religious contexts and processes in Nigeria and West Africa. I felt the need for a mechanism to enable self-monitoring and objectivity.

I had used an informal support group in a prior research project, and decided to create an external advisory group for the duration of the research project. The group consisted of practitioners, scholars, lawyers, journalists, and elders from Nigeria,

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[53] DeWalt, DeWalt, and Wayland suggest 'An extended research time period means that the researcher is able to obtain more detailed and accurate information about the individuals, community, and/or population under study. Observable details (like daily time allotment) and more hidden details (like taboo behavior) are more easily observed and interpreted over a longer period of time….in contrast, a one-time survey of people's answers to a set of questions might be quite consistent, but is less likely to show conflicts between different aspects of the social system or between conscious representations and behavior.' See Kathleen DeWalt, Billie DeWalt, & Coral Wayland, "Participant observation." In H. R. Bernard (Ed.), Handbook of methods in cultural anthropology, Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. pp. 259-299, 1998.

USA, Austria, Liberia, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Having their counsel aided my process of understanding the realities on the ground with various global reactions and responses, and provided an opportunity for reflection, dialogue and constructive criticism. As the research project developed, the contributions of the group included substantive discussions that sharpened my analyses and understanding, and increased my awareness around personal biases, protecting the research's integrity and academic objectivity as well as my own.

Participant Observation. The role of a participant observer is to 'take part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of people being studied as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their culture' (DeWalt, DeWalt, Wayland, 1998, pg. 260). My research has been deeply influenced by the participant observation method. Not only for its role in the data collection, but as a tool for my own personal education. Conducting research in a country that I had never set foot in meant I had a lot to learn about how to conduct myself and survive, let alone how to do that as a researcher with an outsider status. What would happen over the course of the next eighteen months would transform me, inform the research, and have an impact in the lives of the people I would engage. My guideline for engagement as both a participant and an observer came from anthropologist Linda Seligmann. Seligmann (2005) describes participant observation as:

> Consciously shedding ethnocentrism, cultivating cultural relativism, speaking and understanding the native language; listening well, not being intrusive, being alert to one's own biases, and participating in people's daily lives. Allowing ethnographers to meet and interview the widest range of individuals and participate in the greatest number of activities at their field site. (pg. 73)

Living in a mixture of home-stays, motels, villages, hotels, and on several occasions bunking with Nigerian Air Force cadets, were only a few of the ways I was able to meet and interact with a wide range of the people who called Nigeria home.[54] Over the course of eleven months, I travelled by bus, car, and air to nine Nigerian states and visited dozens of cities, towns, and villages. Participating in and observing

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[54] Along with Nigerians, I met individuals living in Nigeria who came from other West African countries, the United Kingdom, North America, South America, and Europe.

cultural festivals, religious ceremonies, sporting events, national elections, conferences, and security challenges that informed the research and gave me valuable insights. Reading local and national newspapers, magazines, and the occasion television newscast or drama allowed me to see how people analyzed and observed themselves. In addition, the observations that came during the events and workshop mentioned in the previous section provided both formal and informal settings to interact with people around the themes central to the research questions and objectives.[55] The inclusion of these experiences and observations helped me to contextualize the data collected through the interviews and workshops and by way understand the social or lived experience of participants.

Survey Questionnaires. The survey questionnaires were developed from the research questions and with an interest examining the efficacy of the approach across demographic boundaries. They consisted of eight multiple choice questions and two essay questions including age, nationality, gender, use of course content, rating of specific course modules, interest in specific course content, most and least useful moments, and overall course rating. Two questionnaires were given to participants. One was given to all the workshop participants as an exit survey at the end of the Engaged Identity workshop and the other was given to those who expressed interest in participating in a 90 day final survey. My aim was to examine how participants gauged the training after three months of daily life. Once the first questionnaires became available, the analysis process began. As the questionnaires were simultaneously being given while interviews and additional workshop questionnaires were collected, the results that emerged were influencing the semi-structured interviews. The first questionnaire was provided as a tangible document that was filled out prior to the workshops closing ceremony, while the second was made available through the online survey tool Survey Monkey. The reliance on internet for the collection of the second questionnaires proved to be quiet a challenge, one I will reflect on further in chapter eleven on 'Making Meaning'.

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[55] Grounded theory permits the inclusion of 'all data at all times' as viable in developing an emergent theory. See Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, Grounded theory methodology: An overview. 1994.

In-depth Interviews. Conducting in-depth interviews is a common method for gaining access to individuals' life- worlds. The researcher then searches for the invariant structures of individuals' experiences, also called the essences of their experience (Groenewald, 2004). For this research project, semi-structured interviews were conducted approximately two months after participants completed the Engaged Identity workshop. Participants were given the information and consent forms at the beginning of the workshop with the instruction to contact me if they had an interest in a follow-up interview. Many of the interviews were conducted in person, while the remainder to place over the phone or voice over IP (VOIP) providers. The interviews were recorded with a small digital voice recorder and with notes taken in my field notebook. All of the interviews were conducted in English and no interpreters or translations were required. All participants were provided copies of their interviews for validation, and the quotes used within the dissertation were highlighted to provide participants the opportunity to assess their accuracy and provide any additional clarification. Interview sampling occurred through one of three processes; interviews with workshop participants that expressed interest in being contacted for a follow-up to their exit questionnaire, leaders and directors of the institutes where the workshops were held, and with individuals who had contact with participants or the Engaged Identity approach that resided in Nigeria.

Examples of the Interview Questions:

- Tell me bout your experience as a participant in the Engaged Identity training process?

- Since the training, have you experienced or noticed any changes in the way you are addressing conflict?

- If so, how have these changes affected you? Personally? Socially? Professionally?

- Are you currently pursuing any type of contemplative practice?

- Was the information scientific research of interest? Would you use it to inform others?

- Has your understanding of listening, patience and respect changed?

- How would describe those changes?

- Is there anything else you would like to talk about?

The Engaged Identity workshops took place over a three to five day period and due to the interviewees participation, I became friendly with many of people who participated in the interview process. Often times, I kept in contact with participants and by the time the interview was conducted, about two months after the workshop experience, we had built a stronger foundation of trust and familiarity with one another. This familiarity greatly enhanced the interview process, where we adopted an informal approach to discussing the outcomes and experiences that had take place in the months following the workshop. Although I had prepared a list of issues, topics, and sample questions, the interviews often took a causal tone where a range of topics and issues would pepper our conversation. We would meet at the participant's home, my accommodation, or another venue that could offer convenience, comfort, and a bit of privacy. With the exception of the first pilot group training, survey questionnaires were being collected simultaneously while other research methods were being conducted, including interviews. This elicitive approach created an emergent feedback loop that I then included in the themes of the remaining interviews.

During the course of the research, 69 participants completed the Engaged Identity workshop and over 570 individuals participated in workshops and lectures featuring the Engaged Identity approach and practice. In total, sixteen in-depth interviews were conducted. With a wide range of experience, education, ethnicity, occupation, and ages represented, interviewees from the security sector, government, teachers, traditional leaders, youth, religious and community members shared their stories and perspectives with generosity and candor. In many cases, security reasons or lack of infrastructure (electricity, internet, telecommunications) caused delays in schedule interview times or limited access and I was unable to interview some of the participants who expressed interest in participating. In hindsight, I was able to draw a much deeper understanding of the 'lived-experience' as my own understanding of the historical, religious, and cultural identities that comprised Nigeria. As my own

worldviews shifted during the course of the research, so were my observations and interactions during the interview process.[56] I will discuss these challenges and others in the following chapter, Learnings along the Way.

Informal Group Interviews. Over the course of my time in Nigeria, many informal gatherings offer opportunities to elicit group interviews. These interviews often occurred in the days prior to or following a workshop, and were convened through an informal process where I would invite people to join me for a discussion to get to know one another before the formal workshop began. I was interested to learn about their daily life, relationships, gender issues, child rearing, employment, politics, joys, and fears and wanted to offer the time to share my own personal experiences in exchange. Group interviews were recorded in my field book, after gaining the verbal approval of those participating. I wanted to raise questions and share stories, to hear what and how people would engage the themes, and not to impose or direct the conversation other than to offer a few questions for the group to discuss. These informal group interviews include ethnography and participant observation and provided opportunities to listen to the lived-experience of the group. Over the course of the research, eleven sessions were convened in six states with 31 participants comprising workshop and event participants, and community members.

Engaged Identity (EI) Workshops. The research methods included workshops on the EI approach and practice that took place from the fall of 2013 through the spring of 2014. These workshops were developed as a result of direct invitations from community members with long standing ties and known commitments to education and conflict transformation. All of the workshops were held in partnership with local peacebuilding initiatives or institutes who worked as organizational committees, and provided resource assistance. Held in four Nigerian states, six workshops ranging from three to five days with a seated class time of six to eight hours were conducted.

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[56] Much has be written about the need for researchers involved in a qualitative, participatory research to include and place themselves within the research rubric by acknowledging their own experience and development during the research period. See for example Clifford Geertz, After the fact: Two Countries, Four Decades, One Anthropologist, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1995; Kenneth Good, Into the Heart: One man's Pursuit of Love and Knowledge among the Yanomama, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991; Kathleen DeWalt,, Billie DeWalt, & Coral Wayland, "Participant observation." In H. R. Bernard (Ed.), Handbook of methods in cultural anthropology, Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. 1998.

Participants included representatives from twelve Nigeria States. The Engaged Identity training, a workshop exploring identity, complexity, and the roles of listening, patience & respect as tools for conflict transformation and peacebuilding included group dialogue, narrative, storytelling, and small group work in an emergent format where participants were encouraged to co-create program processes within the inherent themes outlined above.

The trainings were held in english and no interpreters or translators were used. I served as the lead facilitator in all six trainings with some assistance in trainings where there were more than ten participants. During the workshops I explicitly talked about my identity and worldview as a part of the collaborative environment of the training format. This included clearly expressing my roles as both facilitator and as researcher, although the latter would be the secondary emphasis during the workshops. This would change during follow-up interview where I would more pointedly assume the role of researcher. As the workshops took place, I also made participant observations in my field book and took informal surveys from questions participants were asked during the duration. Later, if I was interested in using someone's specific thoughts or words that I had noted, I sought verbal approval to use the data in addition to the consent form that was signed as a part of research format. Further examination of the workshops and the Nigerian case study are in chapters ten and eleven.

Community Events. In addition to the Engaged Identity workshops, two additional events were scheduled where the Engaged Identity platform was featured. One was an inter-religious conflict transformation workshop in February 2014, where over 200 Christian and Muslims from five local government areas in North Eastern Nigeria participated in a three day training including gender issues, religious dialogue, and the Engaged Identity approach and practice. The event took place in Demsa, Adamawa State, Nigeria, an area that at the time was under curfew limiting travel and movement due to a series of violent attacks credited to the extremist group

Boko Haram.[57] Despite the curfew, and with a few adjust participants committed to cooperation, non-violet conflict resolution, and peaceful inter-religious co-existence gathered. Participatory observation, ethnography, and informal interviews shaped the data collection from this event with notes being recorded through photographs and field notes.

The second event was held in Gembu, Taraba State, Nigeria. Gembu is a town along the Nigerian/Cameroon Board in eastern Nigeria and is located in the highest elevation in Nigeria. I was invited to give a morning lecture during a four day training for over 300 Nigerian ministers from around the state. The three hour lecture included a question and answer session, where participants could ask questions to both myself and the group at large, concerning the themes raise in my presentation of the Engaged Identity approach and practice. I had the opportunity during the four day event to meet with many participants, either one on one or in group settings, and recorded my experiences as well as my thoughts and observations of the lecture in field notes.

Data Analysis. The research analysis incorporated both Grounded Theory and Interpretive Phenomenological analysis in order to capture both the emerging data for the development of the Engaged Identity approach, and to discover the lived-experience of the approach in praxis. The Grounded theory analysis is based in Glaser's emergent coding method, while the Interpretive Phenomenology analysis is based in Heidegger's inclusion of ontology and hermeneutics. After receiving approval from UNE's Human Research Ethics Committee, the data collection process began in October 2013. Although the data from the workshops, interviews, and questionnaires was completed in August 2014, the participant observation concluded in April 2015. A summary of the data collection method and number of participants is shown in the following diagram:

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[57] From February 1st through February 28th, 2014 Boko Haram claimed responsibility for over 500 deaths in Yobe, Borno, and Adamawa states. including attacks on schools, villages, churches, and mosques. The curfew in Demsa, Adamawa state, lasted for thirty six hours, restricting all travel by road from 6pm until 6am from February 27th until March 1st.

Table 8.1
Summary of Data Collection methods and Participants

DATA SOURCE	GROUP ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	TOTAL
In-depth interviews	1	3	4	3	3	2	16
Exit questionnaires	3	5	12	4	7	18	49
Final questionnaires	0	3	3	2	1	1	10
Total Participants	6	9	16	6	9	23	69

The interview and questionnaires provided the following data in support of the research aims and objectives:

1. A demographic profile of participants with regards to age, gender, and nationality.

2. The participants' views and use of workshop content based on the questionnaire via a Likert Scale and personal narrative.

3. The participants' experience with the approach and practice based on Semi-Structured Interviews via substantive (open & selective), constant comparison, and theoretical coding.

Analysis of the interviews, exit and final questionnaires were simultaneously performed with each stage so that the ideas which emerge from one group were informing the data collection methods for the next.[58] As the ideas and concepts were emerging from one stage of the data analysis, they were also compared to the data from prior groups. The purpose was to look for relationships between them, through constant comparison,[59] draw out similarities and disparity generated from the data,

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[58] In keeping with Grounded Theory analysis, theorizing is involved in every step. My aim was to continue to build and test approach throughout the project.

[59] Glaser describes constant comparison as "'Using the constant comparison method gets the analyst to the desired conceptual power quickly, with ease and joy. Categories emerge upon comparison and properties emerge upon more comparison. And that is all there is to it." Glaser, 1992, p. 42.

and create a reflection and action cycle that could represent the emerging themes in the subsequent stages. [60] One example of connecting different themes occurred when neuroscientific research to support psycho-social trauma and healing methods was recognize as the least effective course content. As a result, the use of narrative, and religious context were substituted with subsequent data analysis supporting their effectiveness.

In addition to the data collected from the questionnaires, participant observation, dialogue, interviews, and informal discussions provided ideas and concepts for clarifying and validating the emerging outcomes from the analysis. This reflection and integration process was crucial in appreciating and incorporating theoretical sensitivity in both the data, and my own personal experience. As an individual, acting as a participant, observer, and researcher, the processes of reflection has been integral to the research methods and to my own personal development. The reflective process was essential to conducting the research and interpreting data. Much of the reflection was a process of personal discernment, interweaving of the local conditions in the research areas, cultural interpretations and the recorded data with my desire to continually place personal experience and narrative within the research rubric. The assistance of the External Advisory Group and my personal spiritual practices were invaluable in creating feedback and integration of the core themes arising from the analysis process. Namely, the continuous commitment to cultivating my capacities for listening, patience, and respect.

The analysis was not a linear process, but akin to a web of methods and systems[61] which were created through acknowledging the interdependence of the lived-experience and perspectives of the researcher, participants, and emergent themes as they were being integrated and generated through the analytical process. The decision to focus on the emerging outcomes from the data by integrating the ideas

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[60] Using the constant comparative method to discover the relationships between concepts and categories, and by constantly comparing them, supported the theoretical and ontological frameworks of the approach such as emergence and participatory sense-making. In this case, the methodology and the approach were supportive of this ongoing recognition of new concepts and perceptions offered by the participants.

[61] Drawing from both the phenomenological and grounded theory a simultaneous process of collecting, analyzing, comparing, and generating connections and ideas, and establishing relationships.

and concepts relevant to the research objectives. In this case, despite the wide spectrum of issues and the rich meanings generated from the data, the grounded theory method, through its constant comparison, ensured that the parameters set by the research objective were respected.

Conclusion

The chapter outlines the interest, objectives, and methods used for the research. To note, the research study does not dwell on the contextual issues surrounding the conflict in Nigeria or provide a literature review on conflict transformation in the Nigeria context. Rather, it focused on gleaning information, ideas, and experiences to enhance the Engaged Identity approach and praxis for conflict transformation and peacebuilding frameworks. In addressing the research objectives and maintaining the integrity of the chosen research methodologies, it provided the detailed methodologies for data collection and analysis, and addresses issues of researcher subjectivity and objectivity. In doing so, concerns of validity, ethics, and reliability come into question and will be addressed in the following chapter.

Photograph 13: A divider in Gembu, Taraba State, Nigeria
Photo Credit: JKLynne

Chapter Nine: Learnings along the way

The research journey provided an opportunity to challenge my own worldviews, assumptions, and expectations in the course of exploring particular research questions and personal interests. In setting out on this journey, my 'outsider' status was not relegated to nationality, ethnicity, or gender. I found myself confronted with the fears that arise when working in a conflict zone, living in a different cultural setting, and struggling at times to find a balance between objectivity and subjectivity. Along with these challenges there were an endless stream of questions, many which had no easy answers. The following chapter will examine these challenges, the role of ethics in the research, and the issue of validity.

Challenges and Limitations

There are always challenges and limitations to a research project. Subjectivity, logistics, time, and resources are but a few of the oft encountered constraints. In the case of this study, I experienced constant reminders of these limitations and reflected on their implications for the research objectives and reporting. My genuine interest and commitment to conduct the research through reflexive, elicitive methods, and the tension between intent and reality must be acknowledged. Mary Hesse (1980) explains the methodological and epistemological limitations as 'the attempt to produce value-neutral social science [which] is…at best unrealizable, and at worst self-deceptive' (pg.24).

Despite Glaser's (2003) insistence that grounded theory 'rejects the neat divide between positivist and interpretivist paradigms' (pg.115), believing that grounded theory is neutral and as 'issues free as research can get – conceptually abstract of issues and subject to modification by constant comparison'(pg.115), there remained a inherent tension in conducting the participatory research within the limits of my own worldviews and biases and without, what Patti Lather (1986) calls, 'over-determinism: circular reinforcement of theory by experience conditioned by theory' (pg.72). Recognizing the challenge of not only my outsider status, but the challenges of acknowledging, reporting, and navigating that status and bias was

greatly enhanced through the reflexive nature of both the phenomenological and grounded theory methodologies. I was particularly sensitive to pushing my personal bias onto participants when analyzing data, in order to gain a particular response or outcome. As I mentioned in chapter eight, I relied on an external advisory group to help me navigate my outsider status, and provide additional feedback in my constant reflection around personal bias, conduct, and transparency. In hindsight, I was able to draw a much deeper understanding of the 'lived-experience' as my own worldviews shifted during the course of the research, so did my observations and interactions during the participatory processes.

In many cases, security concerns or lack of infrastructure (electricity, internet, telecommunications) caused delays in scheduled interview times, workshops, events, and/or resulted in limited access. At times, I was unable to interview some of the participants due to challenges with cellular networks or participants not having access to telephone services. In addition, several interviews required multiple attempts as network connections were dropped or unavailable. During one event, curfews restricting movement were in effect and resulted in delays to the schedule and concerns for participant and facilitator safety. With three states under a Presidential and security council issued state of emergency during the duration of the research, I often encountered military and security forces along check points across Nigeria. Conflict would escalate into violence in many of the villages and states over the eighteen-month project. One question I would often reflect on was when and what type of research can be undertaken when psycho-social trauma was so prevalent among many of the participants. My own fears and threats to my personal safety required particular care and reflection in order to understand the role of personal experience within the greater landscape of my roles as researcher, facilitator, student, and human being.

With multiple trips to the research location and an eighteen-month research window, the research project required a substantial investment of personal resources and significant amounts of time and energy were expended seeking additional funds to support the project. Issues of funding and finance, although not often recognized as

typical biases to analysis, certainly must be acknowledged in order to reflect the mind set of the researcher and consequently the effects on collection and analysis. In addition, the lengthy research process raised issues about the sustainability of my commitment, focus, and ability to maintain an unbiased approach.

Ethics

The ethical concerns in research require not only inherence to the code of ethics present within academic requirements, but also the sensitivity to address concerns of ethical behavior within the context of the cultural, religious, legal, and personal perspectives of the participants. The transparency, honesty, and trust required for credible research were not set only by my personal worldviews and academic requirements, but through the data being collected during interviews, participatory observation, and informal group dialogues. In addition, I was also guided by colleagues, gatekeepers, and cultural mentors who helped me develop a richer understanding of local customs and practices. This provided a contextualized understanding of how issues of confidentiality and ownership were entwined with an ethical responsibility to the participants and the research.

The research was conducted during time when issues of security were prevalent in many areas where data collection was taking place. The need to create opportunities for confidentiality in the collection process were paramount to building trust and to providing participants a setting that met their interests and needs. Beyond the confidentially in reporting, the security and well-being of participants was considered. I took care not to coerce or pressure individuals to participate if they felt that doing so would put them in physical, psychological, or emotional peril. At times, identities and objectives were entangled in complex power relations. With participants representing different ethic, religious, and economic groups, the questions of equality, agency, and access were encountered during the workshops, events, and group interviews. These issues were further complicated by my 'Americanism' and the range of worldviews from participants that included misconceptions and expectations that challenged me to develop an ethical and moral stance that could guide my activities and as much as possible protect myself those I

was working with, and the integrity of the research. Mindful of my identity as an American conducting research in Nigeria, I actively sought to embody the role of student as much as researcher. I maintained a clear policy of neutrality when discussions of conflict, politics, or accountability arose, choosing to neither intervene on behalf of one party or another, nor express opinions assigning responsibility. This affected my relationship with participants by creating an identity of neutrality that served to build trust and respect for all parties involved and set a foundation for transparency and validity during the data collection processes.

Validity and Reliability

Validity in its traditional sense is described as 'the accuracy of the data by incorporating the procedures of triangulation, member checks, and participant involvement, while external validity addresses the areas, of reliability and generalization.'(Creswell, 2007, pg. 104). However, in grounded theory methodology, validity is not at issue and data is judged by fit, relevance, workability, and modifiability (Glaser & Strauss 1967, 1998, 2009; Glaser 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The four criteria are explained below:

- *Fit.* How closely concepts fit with the incidents they are representing, and this is related to how thorough the constant comparison of incidents to concepts was done.

- *Relevance*. A relevant study deals with the real concern of participants, evokes "grab" (captures the attention) and is not only of academic interest.

- *Workability*. The theory works when it explains how the problem is being solved with much variation.

- *Modifiability*. A modifiable theory can be altered when new relevant data is compared to existing data. Ground theory is never right or wrong, it just has more or less fit, relevance, workability and modifiability (Glaser, 1978, pg.6).

The research's reliability lies in its multiple-methods approach, elicitive data collection, and reflexive practices. Survey questionnaires, in-depth interview, informal group interviews, workshops, events, and participant observations were triangulated and carried out with transparency and participant consent. To enhance

the credibility of the research, a reflexive process of examination, exploration, and action were used with the external advisory board provided additional feedback and monitoring. In addition, several factors further validated the data.

These included:

1. When interviews were audio recorded, any questions as to context or clarification were brought to the interviewee to ensure that there were no misinterpretations ensuring the validity of the data.

2. No translations or interpretation was needed at any time as the English language was used for all data collection methods. If questions regarding word choice or meaning arose, the participant was contacted to provide additional information.

3. The research and workshop formats were elicitive, with the emphasis on the participants reporting of their personal experience. Through the interviews, survey questionnaires, and participant observation, the analysis provides both direct quotes and triangulation of the data.

4. In keeping with the methodological protocol, data analysis began immediately, and continued interpretive analysis was conducted until the completion of the research.

Conclusion

In the preceding chapters, I introduced the research objectives and questions, provided personal background information, discussed the research design and process, outlined the methodology and methods chosen, explored the challenges I encountered during the research, and examined the issues of validity, ethics, and research limitations. Given the scope of the research outlined, the interpretive and grounded analysis will be able to inform and develop the Engaged Identity approach and practice. To a lesser extent, there may be a degree of application to other research projects within and outside Nigeria. Beyond that is the research objective of informing other social theories on identity, complexity, and conflict transformation. By providing the reader the foundation to ground the case study and analysis, it is hoped that the elicitive process of the research extends to a broader audience.

PART FOUR
The experience

Photograph 14: Participants during a workshop in Demsa, Adamawa State, Nigeria
Photo credit: JKLynne

Chapter Ten: The Nigerian Case Study

This chapter examines the Engaged Identity approach within a case study comprising activities held in Nigeria from October, 2013 until April, 2015. The chapter begins with an overview outlining the case study. I then provide an example of the workshop format highlighting the methods and materials employed as well as the variations of the approach. The chapter concludes with an exploration of the workshop experiences and discusses the findings of participant interviews and participant observations.

An Overview

From October 2013 until May 2014, the approach was used as the basis for trainings and workshops in Benue, Kaduna, Adamawa, and Plateau States. During the eight month period, the initial pilot program and five workshops reached participants representing twelve Nigerian states. In total, 69 participants completed the Engaged Identity workshop and over 570 individuals participated in workshops, trainings and lectures featuring the Engaged Identity approach and practice. With a wide range of experience, education, ethnicity, occupation, and ages represented, participants from the security sector, government, teachers, traditional leaders, youth, religious and community members shared their stories and perspectives with generosity and candor.

These workshops were developed as a result of direct invitations from community members with long standing ties and known commitments to education and conflict transformation. All of the workshops were held in partnership with local institutes or peacebuilding initiatives who worked as organizational committees, and provided resource assistance. The trainings were held in english and no interpreters or translators were used. I served as the lead facilitator in all six trainings with some assistance in trainings where there were more than ten participants. The workshops ranged from three to five days with a seated class time of six to eight hours as a part of Post Graduate Diploma and Post Graduate Certification programs in partnership

with the RETA Peace Institute, Jos, Nigeria and the CTS Peace Institute, Ngorore, Nigeria. The table below provides an overview of the locations and activities:

Table 10.1
Locations, Dates, Type of workshop, and Participants

GROUP	LOCATION	DATES	TYPE	PARTICIPANTS
1	Harga, Benue	October 2013	Post Graduate Certification (Pilot Program)	6
2	Gboko, Benue	October/November 2013	Post Graduate Certification	9
3	Kagoro, Kaduna	November 2013	Post Graduate Diploma	16
4	Jos, Plateau	March 2014	Post Graduate Diploma	6
5	Ngorore, Adamawa	April 2014	Post Graduate Certification	9
6	Ngorore, Adamawa	May 2014	Post Graduate Diploma	23

Participants included a cross section of government, traditional, and local leaders, along with medical and security professionals, and students gathered to learn and collaborate in their understanding of conflict, identity, complexity, and contemplation. The inter-religious and inter-ethnic groups comprised of Muslims, Christians, and varying ethnic and tribal groups including Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo. These workshops were evaluated through survey questionnaires, in-depth and informal interviews, and participant observation and will be discussed in the following sections and in chapter eleven.

In addition to the Engaged Identity workshops, two additional events were scheduled where the Engaged Identity platform was featured. One was an inter-religious conflict transformation workshop in February 2014, where over 200 Christian and Muslims from five local government areas (LGAs) in North Eastern Nigeria participated in a three day training including gender issues, religious dialogue, and

the Engaged Identity approach and practice. The second event was held in Gembu, Taraba State, Nigeria in April, 2014. I was invited to give a morning lecture during a four day training for over 300 Nigerian ministers from around the state. The three hour lecture included a question and answer session, where participants could ask questions, to both myself and the group at large, concerning the themes raise in my presentation of the Engaged Identity approach and practice. Participatory observation, ethnography, and informal interviews shaped the data collection from these events.
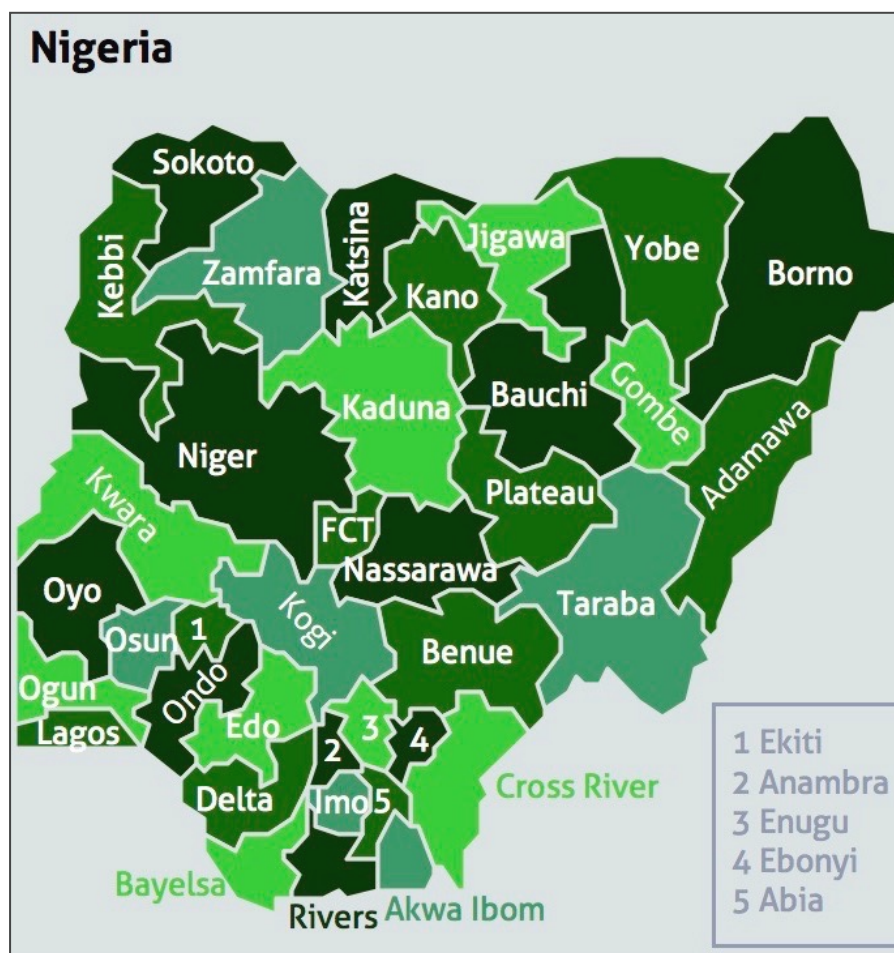

Figure 10.1: Map of Nigerian States

Understanding EIA workshops

Each workshop is a unique experience; ranging from six participants in a traditional mud constructed building sitting on hand made benches without electricity to 170

participants in a large conference hall complete with media support and more formalized decor. Utilizing the theoretical, methodological, and ontological frameworks of the Engaged Identity approach, as discussed in chapters five and six, the EI workshops were organized around the four themes of the EI approach; identity, complexity, intravation, and the three precepts. The following outline is a direct replication of the overview of the course description, learning objectives, and the workshop sessions/modules that is given to each participant prior to each course:

Workshop Outline

Course Description. Effective conflict transformation requires the participation of institutions, organizations, and individuals, where multiple frameworks, contexts and personalities come together to develop relationships, understanding and solutions. How do we cultivate the ability to collaborate with this diversity? As individuals, we create an identity that is a dynamic culmination of perceptions. This identity is formed and informed through the relationships we engage in. Whether it is relationship we share with ourselves or our relationship with others, context is a part of the relational dynamic that defines self. The environment, community, education, economic status, access to basic human needs, organizations and institutions we engage with inform our perceptions with the perceptions of others. If we are to look to conflict transformations requirements, we must understand what it is that is being transformed. The perceptions of citizens? The policies of their institutions? Members of a community? Individuals and their actions? This course helps you to understand the theory of identity and how to make the most use of it.

Learning Objectives

- Gain a working knowledge of identity in Conflict Transformation & Management

- Explore how the transformation of conflict depends on an awareness of identity and worldview.

- Provide course participants with deeper personal and experiential perspective on identity

- Make the connection between trauma, identity threat, and identity expansion.

- Participants will learn the "three precepts" for practitioner engagement

- Examine the roles of listening, patience and respect in conflict & conflict transformation

- Explore practices to cultivate the capacities for listening, patience, and respect.

- Learn the ways contemplative practice can change behavior, understanding and expand identity.

Class Modules
Session I
Orientation and Introductions Syllabus Review & Class Guidelines
Identity Chart Exercise

After course and participant introductions, the session will explore role of the various identities we assume; from the personal to the institutional, the societal, and the natural. Understanding identity not as a collective definition of experience and time, but as an evolving maturation of the way we view and value life. We will conclude with an exercise examining the dynamic of personal identity.

Session II
Identity & Worldviewing-Expression and Perception
Shapiro's Relational Identity Theory (RIT)
Complexity-Self, Systems, and Society

The session explores how identity forms and informs conflict and peacebuilding. We'll look at how Relational Identity and Reconstruction bring emotion and dignity into our understanding of Identity, Trauma and Conflict Transformation. We will revisit our personal identity charts and begin to identify the complex relational aspects and requirements for conflict transformation.

Session III
The Engaged Identity approach: Practice & theory
Engaging Complexity
Listening, Patience & Respect as Foundations for CT & P LPR
Identity Expansion & LPR

The session begins with an overview of the Engaged Identity approach & Practice. Exploring the complexity of self and systems, we will look at how listening, patience, and respect can provide a foundation for conflict transformation and peacebuilding. We will examine Intention & Attention, Identity Threat & Identity Expansion and explore ways to cultivate the capacities for an Engaged Identity.

Session IV
Contemplative Practice Introduction
Contemplative Practice for Transformation-Neuroscience & the Practices Tree
Practice Session

In this session, we look at the role of contemplative practices in cultivating listening, patience and respect for conflict transformation. We will examine the neuroscientific research supporting these practices, explore different types of practices, and engage our identities in practice.

Session V
Putting it all together with Systems Thinking
Practice to go~Ethics in Motion
Capacity & Collaboration Survey

Photograph 15: In class at the RETA Peace Institute, Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria
Photo Credit: Joseph Sampson

Workshop environment: Setting and sense-making

The classroom setting, as mentioned above, was varied not only in the logistical support (electricity, white boards, flip charts, etc.), but within the various ways the classroom was imagined and constructed. Often the class began with chairs in rows facing the note board with the facilitators materials and seating off to one side. This was a conscious choice so that participants had the experience of changing the classroom layout as a community building exercise and an embodied example of the malleability of structures. As participants arrive and are seated, introductions would begin and a proposal to rearrange the room configuration is offered. This rearrangement takes place amidst a bit of conversation, confusion, and collaboration. In addition, I take the opportunity to explain the thinking behind changing the setting; to create an environment more conducive to collaboration, to provide an atmosphere that was reflective of the equality, respect, experience, and expertise of the entire participant body, and to explore how physical space influences perception and behavior. It should be emphasized that the offer was made to participants, and thus that the classroom configuration would not always change, pending their choices.

The workshop would often open with a round of introductions, of the facilitator/s and participants, using various methods to enhance the sense of creativity and relaxation. Two examples of introductions were having participants provide a general introduction, select a fruit or vegetable they most resemble, and explain the connection or to have participants write down introductory information and then pass the statements around whereby students would in fact be anonymously introducing one another. Many of these choices were made based on the number of participants and their familiarity with one another prior to the course. Afterwards, we would then move into the discussions mentioned for session one; introductions, workshop guidelines, and exploring identity.

As I outlined in chapter six, three particular educational formats guided the workshops; elicitive, transformational, and contemplative. Using several educational frameworks provided the workshops a flexibility and emergent design that was in

keeping with the theoretical aspects of the approach. Namely, that the conditions of complexity and identity, such as uncertainty, emergence, self-organization, and reflexivity, were able to be used as learning and cultivation tools. For example, although the workshops often opened with the introduction 'ice-breaker' activities mentioned above, other introductions were employed by elicitive methods such as asking participants to share their traditional or cultural introductions; utilizing their knowledge and capacity. This also serves as a way of equalizing the facilitator/ participant relationship, mimetically showing how everyone's contributions are important and needed as well as reinforcing the EI approach's themes of listening, patience, and respect. The following section looks more closely at how setting and sense-making was created through an emergent design. Participants are referred to by the workshop group number from table 10.1 and formal interviewees through an assigned numerical.

Workshop methods: Materials & emergence

After the introductions and/or room configuration, the five session outline is discussed and a dialogue around the themes and objectives is initiated to discover participants' initial thoughts and questions. Large group, small group, and parter exchanges provided information gathering and material for further exploration of the themes from the participants experiences and knowledge. This provided a series of platforms to further discuss participatory sense-making not only in knowledge and experience exchanges, but also through deeper understanding of how the multi-sensory aspects of listening, patience, and respect create enhanced opportunities for awareness and adaptability.

In one workshop, during the session on contemplative practice, a participant shared that 'I didn't realize that Christians could meditate *and* pray.'[62] This led to a rich discussion, including insights from local religious scholars present at the training who explained Jesus taking silence and solitude as a practice to better hear the word of God.[63] As this particular workshop was held near a grassy field at the base of a

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[62] Field notes from November 28, 2013.
[63] Field notes from November 28,2013.

small range of hills, the participants agreed we would meet the following day at the field for the morning session on 'putting it all together' and 'practice on the go' before returning to the indoor classroom for final thoughts and feedback. This allowed us to explore some of the contemplative practices in a natural setting, including the experience of intention and attention to the environment, one's awareness of identity, and the concepts of self-regulation and interdependence. Here we see a use of elicitive, contemplative, and potentially transformational methods being employed. As one participant reflected after our outdoor experience, 'I could

Photograph 16: An alternative setting for a session on self as a complex system in Harga, Benue State
Photo Credit: JKLynne

just feel myself relax, I didn't feel scared about the violence. I was lighter, having fun, and felt connected to my land and my colleagues.'[64] In other reflections, participants expressed that the contemplative practice aspect of the approach was their least favorite, and brought concerns of whether alternative practices to prayer would be un-Christian.[65]

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[64] Field notes from October 31st, 2013. The violence referenced was concerning recent events, still ongoing, in a following village involving an ethnic conflict that resulted in curfews for the area as mediators tried to address the situation.
[65] Data from Group two exit surveys.

As the workshops are created with the participants around the themes of the EI approach, each expression (collaboration) results in differentiated outcomes and experiences. For example, the Gboko workshop was held at an enclosed compound where access to outside opportunities were not available. In this training, we utilized the kitchen facilities to cook meals together and used the ingredients for the meal as the learning lessons on complexity. The participants came from five different states, and each had unique ways of cooking similar dishes. The cooking became a participatory exchange where respect for ethnic and regional culture came by the embodiment of a delicious meal. New ingredients, different proportions, and a dash of emergence created lasting impact.[66]

Another key aspect of the workshops was the participants' co-facilitation of sections of the sessions based on their experience and interests. One particular instance came during the training in Ngorore, Adamawa State. Not far away, in Taraba state, there was a tribal conflict that had resulted in several deaths. Two of the participants were also working as mediators in the Taraba dispute and were using examples of their work during the session on identity. As the session came to a dialogue on multiple self -aspects the two participants shared examples of their mediation techniques and how they were in fact using the idea of multiple self-aspects as a means to find common ground. Essentially, they led the session on the ways multiple self-aspects were assisting their efforts and providing a unique, experiential, and context specific understanding of how understanding self-aspects (as both facilitators and as a transformational tool) were being used. The participants used their example as the foundation for our session on identity and complexity; noting that the ability for reflexivity (focusing on one aspect of identity or multiple aspects) could either hinder or help in conflict settings.[67]

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[66] Field notes from October 30 2013. As noted in the 60 day follow-up interviews with selected participants. Several remarked on the experience of cooking as away to better understand complexity and noted the aspects of complex systems.

[67] Field notes from April 29, 2014. This type of elicitive dialogue provided not only assistance to the participants acting as mediators, but also put the themes of the approach directly in the hands of the lived-experience of the group. This example is one of many where, as a facilitator, I would become the student and learn new concepts and ideas to include in the approach and support the grounded theory methodology of the research. In essence, I was required to be reflexive in my identity.

What is noted through these examples is how the frameworks and theoretical foundations of the approach are brought into praxis through the combination of the three educational methods. Each method reinforces the ideas of embodied cognition, participatory sense-making, and complexity. This framework provides the praxis real-time examples of the EIA themes, reinforces the emergent aspects of engaging identity, and supports the ontology of the approach.

Exploring Experience

As I outlined in chapter eight, the data collection methods included formal and informal interviews, participatory observations and survey questionnaires. In this section, I look more closely at the interviews and observations during the course of the research project and explain the patterns that emerged from the qualitative data. More specific information and reporting of the questionnaires and outcomes are provided in chapter eleven.

Starting Stories

There is a relevance to understanding culture, lived-experience, human security, and well-being. News media reports, for example, often concentrate of the aspects of fear, despair, and outrage. This is particularly true in the case of Nigeria after a state of emergency was declared in Yobe, Borno, and Adamawa states in May of 2013 (Jonathan Declares State of Emergency In Borno, Yobe and Adamawa State, 2013).[68] Although the frequent attacks on villages, massacres, and bombings that were occurring in these states led to headlines of terror and death around the country, the participants I spoke with, spoke, often with great emotion, of needing to carry on in the need to educate, rebuild, and repair the harms that violence had brought.[69] In fact shortly after a bombing at a military airbase in Maiduguri, Borno State, I interviewed a participant from Maiduguri who attended the Harga, Benue workshop. Forgoing the formalities of the usual introduction to the interview process, my first question was to ask about their and their families' well-being. Despite the circumstances,

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[68] The state of emergency was extended for all three states in subsequent federal government renewals in November 2013, April 2014, November 2014, and May 2015.
[69] Field notes and Interviewees 3,4,6,7,9,12,13,14,15.

increased security concerns, and curfews, the answer came as a bit of a surprise. 'We're all fine, thanks God. Everything is fine. It's okay. These things must stop. It is crazy, but we stay strong. It's okay for us. Thanks God.' they said.[70] I expressed my concerns about the situation and the response was 'Jennifer, it's complex. (laughter). A difference between security and safety, what you hear and read, and what is actual happening. I am disgusted with this violence. So much military and security forces, but no safety.'[71] This exchange exemplifies what many of the participants were experiencing. In addition to the ongoing tribal and ethic violence in many states, the domestic violence, poverty, lack of basic sanitation, water, and electricity, and amidst what many would consider post-traumatic stress, participants often expressed how blessed they were.[72] Even more wanted to find ways to contribute to helping their communities and families.[73]

I preface the more specific feedback on the workshops in order to provide insights into of the mindsets and lived-experiences of the participants and to understand their questions, interests, and passions in their own context. These insights help to contextualize questions like that from a participant in Kagoro, Kaduna. While discussing the concept of respect, a concern was raised not about the respecting the 'other' in a conflict, but of the worry about being seen as associating with the 'other' that may be perceived by community members as condoning or abetting. A participant then asked, 'Yes, so how can I act in such a way, when they will target my family, my village?'[74] In essence, the participant was worried that a willingness to respect an individual/s, not necessarily the actions, might mean they or their family would be targets for violence based on perceptions that respect equates with acceptance or the condoning of the 'others' actions. The question raised issues in the group of personal harm and security issues when engaging in advocacy, activism, or as a mediator, and offered the participants an opportunity to examine the need to

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[70] Interviewee 4.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Gathered from informal interviews and personal dialogues.

[73] From field notes reported as: Participants 2,3,5 (Group one); Participants 1,3,5,6,7 (Group two); Participants 2,3,7,8,9,10,14,15 (Group three); Participants 1,3,4,(Group four); Participants 1.2.4.5.7.8 (Group five); Participants 1,2,3,5,7,9,11,13,15,16,17,19,22 (Group six) and data from exit survey responses.

[74] Field notes from November 27th, 2013.

balance respect of self with respect for others. Not having any direct experience with the type of situation the discussion centered around, I moved into the role of observer and listened as participants offered one another options and methods as to how they might engage in order to assess and enact respect of self *and* others. As I mentioned earlier in the chapter, using the elicitive approach often meant my role as a facilitator was itself reflexive, at times in a more traditional role, and in others as a participant learning news ways of interpreting and perceiving phenomena. I was not only gaining valuable insights into the embodied experience of respect within this context, but also able to incorporate the discussion outcomes in future workshops.[75] This would not be the only time I found myself having to look at the approach, and for that matter my own perceptions, with an eye as to how vast the scope of individual, community, and societal sense-making creates differentiated identities and relationships. In this case, how showing respect to others as an individual may endanger the relationship between them and their communities due to different senses of respect.

Photograph 17: A participant takes the role of facilitator during an EI session in Kagoro, Kaduna State
Photo Credit: JKLynne

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[75] In other words, I was engaging both the phenomenological and ground theory methodologies described in chapter eight.

Over the course of the research project, the time outside of the formalized workshop sessions provided opportunities for informal interviews and group dialogues, many of which allowed me to learn the ways identity and complexity was understood and experienced. On an eighteen hour bus ride from Jos, Plateau State, I joined eight Nigerian colleagues traveling to the mountaintop town of Gembu in Taraba State for a three day workshop on conflict transformation & peacebuilding. Over the hours we discussed each members' presentations and materials, shared stories, laughter, and at one point a rather heated debate. It should be noted that all eight of my colleagues were male.

As the hours went by, the gentlemen repeatedly kept asking me if I was feeling alright. After the ninth round of questions in as many hours, I politely asked them why they continued to ask after my health and comfort. One of the men explained to me that 'Women do not carry the stamina of a man. This is why long distances are too tiring for them.'[76] At first I thought it a joke, but came to realize this was a deeply held cultural belief after all the men expressed the same sentiment. Moreover, they explained to me that women are usually not allowed to drive a car long distances due to this lack of stamina. This of course led to a lengthy conversation, and the question of biological, emotional, and mental stamina. Towards the end of the conversation, my colleagues agreed that I clearly possessed the stamina closer to that of man and was deemed by many to be one of the strongest women they had met. Having been bestowed with this acknowledgment, I rather strongly, yet with a bit humor, suggested they may start viewing their wives, daughters, and friends with a new attitude as to their capabilities. However, by the time we arrived in Gembu, I was truly exhausted but stubbornly refused to let anyone know as I did not want to lose the gains for women's rights that may have been acquired on the bus. Although this certainly cannot be referenced as a statement to the mindsets and beliefs of all Nigerian males, it does confirm a reality for many men, and in turn women.

These stories bear reporting not only to understand the participant narratives within their contexts and perspectives, but also for the underlying relationship with the EI

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[76] Field notes from April 13, 2014.

approach's themes; identity, complexity, respect, listening, and patience. In addition, they point to the role of embodied cognition in adaptability where fears of violence, capacity for resilience, and aspects of identity such as gender play roles in our sense-making and interactions, and are influenced through the biology of phenomena.

Personal Perspectives

The research resulted in sixteen formal interviews and eleven informal group interviews. The formal interviews took place at the sixty day mark of the close of the workshop and lasted, on average, about an hour and a half and in many cases required several sessions due to the lack of internet connectivity or poor cellular networks. Although this certainly created lapses in the continuity of the dialogues, it also gave a sense of context and added input for the conversations. For example in the second interview, I had to call five separate times to re-establish the connection.[77] The interviewee, after the fourth attempt, related the question of how the workshop had changed them personally to their lack of irritation over the disruptions, 'I have been trying different types of mediation from the workshop. Everyday, except for two or three. It is working. I don't get so angry with things - things, like this poor network. (laughter).'[78]

In making meaning of the narratives, five themes emerged: self-worth; relational shift; enthusiasm, anti-contagion; and universality. As these aspects were present in participant narratives to differing degrees, I provide excerpts from the interviews to illustrate the patterns.

Table 10.2: Thematic patterns emerging in the participant narratives

Self-Worth
Relational Shift
Enthusiasm
Anti-Contagion
Universality

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[77] Interviewee 2

[78] Ibid.

Self-worth. Many of the participants interviewed reported that the experience of the EI workshop lead them to feel a greater sense self-worth. In particular, this was relevant in about sixty percent of male participants in the age range of 21-39. As the workshop locations were held in areas that had recent exposure to violent conflict, or near areas were in current conflict, most of the participants were suffering from traumatic stress. The issues of unemployment, poverty, access/quality education, and human rights concerns added to the low self-worth reporting for the demographic.

> 'I didn't think I had anything to contribute to my community. No skill or ability to make a difference. I have been very low and people treat me that way to. I felt inferior, but now I feel like I have capacity. I feel empowered'[79]

> 'I never thought that all this was in me. I have a lot of ways to make connections and ways to develop myself.'[80]

> 'The idea that things change, people change as a part of life helps me look at my situation differently. I knew it, but I didn't understand it. It's not hope, it's something different, more like intelligence. I have new intelligence.'[81]

The sense of self-worth however, was not only reported as towards within the individual, but also revealed changes in the value and self-worth of others. For example, Northwestern Nigeria has a very high rate of domestic violence that is still culturally condoned in many areas, although now illegal (Ogunjuyigbe, Akinlo & Ebigbola, 2005; CLEEN Foundation, 2013). As mentioned earlier in the chapter, gender roles and values hold a strong place in the lived-experience of participants. Many of the narratives represented the impact of the workshop on gender issues.

> 'How can you respect someone and beat them. You cannot. Our culture says a man is respected by raising a hand, but this is not true. My respect cannot be beaten into someone like the Boko Haram tries to control with these attacks and fear. The respect you spoke is the true respect. By choice it is given in love and understanding.'[82]

> 'I'm just a young woman. They didn't take me serious until I began counseling with other young girls in the village. After a month, I was stopped by an elder who told me the parents liked what I was doing, that the girls were respecting themselves more.'[83]

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[79] Interviewee 13
[80] Interviewee 9
[81] Interviewee 3
[82] Comments from a participant in Group five. Field notes dated April 29th, 2014.
[83] Interviewee 11

Relational Shift. One of unique aspects of the approach was the ability to support changes (shifts) in a variety of relationships simultaneously. Changes in personal, community, and professional relationships were reported by over seventy percent of interviewees. Meaning that they perceived or received feedback on more than one relational level in the months following the workshop experience.

> 'My wife wants to cook you dinner Jennifer. A beautiful Nigerian meal with your favorite foods. She says I am a better father and husband since the training. More attentive, slower to anger, and better with the children. Even my subordinates at work have commented on my new ways on handling crisis.'[84]

> 'It's useful. The change happens in me, but of course that effects all my community…so my friends have been trying to see if they can get me upset now that I am better at talking without the anger (laughter).'[85]

Many of these shifts related to the issue of ego. Interviewees spoke about the precepts as ways to overcome the stubbornness and fixed nature of their opinions. Pointing to the aspects of reflexivity of identity and static or dynamic self-concept, they often described a willingness to engage in dialogues without preconceptions clouding the exchange.

> 'I realized I always was waiting to say what was on my mind. I didn't really listen to them, just wanted to get my point across as if I was always right and should be agreed with. My ego got the best of me and everyone else got the worst.'[86]

> 'I use to not pay attention. The workshop helped me to realize the importance of attention if I want to understand the world in new ways and not just through my own judgements.'[87]

> 'The ego causes so many problems. You want to be respected and in charge, but if you cannot truly listen to others you cannot understand the right things to do. You have to admit it, you don't know it all. This is what the Engaged Identity thought me. To be a leader, you should be able to admit you don't know it all. We must be understanding, patient, and respectful in order to make good choices.'[88]

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[84] Interviewee 14
[85] Interviewee 6
[86] Interviewee 5
[87] Interviewee 7
[88] Interviewee 3

Enthusiasm. Although the interviews were conducted in a sixty-day post workshop timeframe, over a third of participants reported a high level of enthusiasm with the workshop content and its effects. The continued interest in the practice of the precepts and increasing awareness of self-aspects and perspectives resulted in twenty percent of interviewees reporting engaging in daily contemplative practices and thirty percent in weekly practices. These averages held with the larger group of interviews as well as within the specific groups showing a consistency of engagement despite the elicitive nature of the workshops. In others words, regardless of how the four themes of the EI approach were enacted during a workshop, the resulting interest and engagement with the themes was consistent throughout the groups.

> 'I am practicing different contemplations each day. Even if for ten minutes, I make time. Sometimes, I do not want to, but I see the changes in myself and know it's because of this.'[89]

> 'I'm more curious now and I like it. I'm paying more attention to people's thoughts and feelings, and how I feel around them. It's like a challenge I want to get better at.'[90]

> 'Every week I take a trip up the hill for half day. I just sit, and look around at the beauty. When I come down I feel tired, but I'm refreshed. Lighter in my mood. When things are troublesome, I just think of that feeling in the hills and it helps calm me.'[91]

Another key aspect in the reporting of enthusiasm was a desire and interest in sharing the themes and practice with family and community members, as well as in a professional setting for leadership and team building.

> 'I told you before. I have four wives and twelve horses. I am the head of the district and the information I got with the workshop should be shared with the whole community.We must bring this to them to help.'[92]

> 'I am trying to get my husband to practice, he needs some help reducing the stress. And making the commitment to listen, be patience, and respectful of myself, my family, and towards others is something the children should learn from young.'[93]

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[89] Interviewee 2
[90] Interviewee 16
[91] Interviewee 9
[92] Interviewee 15
[93] Interviewee 16

Anti-contagion. The fact that most of the participants reported being actively embedded or exposed to situations of violence, or post-violent conflict, was a consistency that I wanted to explore further. As a method of making meaning, I examined the concept of violence, or for that matter afflictive emotions, as an contagion.[94] Many of the participants reported either cultural, tribal, or family habituation to beliefs and behaviors they viewed as harmful to the transformation of social issues and personal divides. In the course of the interviews and observations, the experience with the EI approach was often reported as a prevention and counter measure to the escalation of conflict.

> 'We were working with the chiefs, trying to bring a peace agreement together, but the demands of the stakeholders were not being met. Coming to the workshop and participating gave us the idea to use the identity mapping exercise as a means to locate some common ground. Also, we implemented a new dialogue protocol that used listening, patience, and respect as a foundation. It has been slow, but the relationships are stronger and the cease-fire has been maintained.'[95]

> 'I was nervous and scared to talk to them. I didn't know if they would attack me for getting involved but I felt I had to try to talk some sense. I was thinking what to do, and about what we had learned, so I told them respect doesn't come from the blade, it comes from the heart. If you want the respect, you must stay calm in order to get it. They kept shouting, but no one was injured.[96]

> 'We talked about why. He told me that was the way he was raised and did not know about acting differently. Then we talked about education and I told him the Engaged Identity is like education for your emotions, you can change your behaviors with this knowledge. Now his wife has told me he has been trying these things as has not touched her.'[97]

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[94] Epidemiologist Gary Slutkin, M.D. views violence as a curable disease. He created the the Cure Violence Health Model in response to his work on infectious contagious disease in Africa. The model uses the same three components that are used to reverse epidemic disease outbreaks. 1) Interrupting transmission of the disease. 2) Reducing the risk of the highest risk. 3) Changing community norms. I use the concept here to capture the effects reported from the data suggesting the EI approach worked, as an anti-contagion, in a similar fashion by preventing and countering violent responses and afflictive emotions. Also see http://cureviolence.org/understand-violence/science-of-violent-behavior/ and http://cureviolence.org/resources/cure-violence-resources/ for more information of the violence as disease model.

[95] Informal interview the participants from Group 5. Field notes from May 1st, 2014.

[96] Interviewee 10

[97] Interviewee 8

Universality. The theme of universality includes three different aspects; the ability to use the approach in concert with existing belief and value systems, the appeal to people regardless of their orientations, gender, or age; and participants use of the approach in multiple contexts. The overall response to the approach included commentary on the way the approach could be incorporated into existing belief and value systems, including both religious and ethnic. Although, as I mentioned earlier in the chapter, several participants expressed some initial hesitation with the contemplative aspects of the approach, the ability for participants to shift their focus to themes of the approach that were personally resonant.

> 'What is good is it's simple. You can understand it from your views and also try new things. It doesn't matter Hausa, Igbo,Yoruba, Jukun, Tiv, Fulani. You see us, Muslims and Christians together, nodding our heads.'[98]

> 'Even Christians can do this. Really all people. It has nothing to do with the religion.'[99]

> 'Listening, patience, and respect are in all traditions, somewhere. Finding the connections to your own beliefs isn't hard, but actually listening, being patient and respectful, and noticing what is happening, not what you think is happening, is the challenge.'[100]

Along these lines was the complementary view that the approach was something anyone could participant in and benefit from.

> 'This is for people. People who want to be better. Just thinking listening, patience, and respect is something everyone understands. The workshops helps you to understand how we can use these to overcoming our issues, and everyone has issues.'[101]

> 'I just am looking at people differently, and practicing listening, patience, and respect. I think everyone can under that people's identities are complex. We just forget or get in the habit of letting our emotions take over. But the EI workshop is good in that it can appeal to things in all people's lives.'[102]

> 'I like how we can change the materials. Like when you talked about the brain, it was interesting. But the stories people told about getting

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[98] Informal group interview. Field notes from February 28, 2014.
[99] Interviewee 7
[100] Interviewee 14
[101] Interviewee 13
[102] Interviewee 1

angry or defensive, I think everyone has stories that they have and that way you feel a connection to the materials.'[103]

'In our workshop, we had youth and some of us were older. What really interested me is how we all, regardless of age, could relate to the concepts. Really it helps you to relate to life, to your life, but honestly.'[104]

In addition, participants reported that they were using the approach and its themes in multiple contexts. As the interview excerpts have shown, sometimes with family members or friends, and at others professionally or in community. A key finding here is that the use was not contained to one particular context; i.e. type of relationship, interaction, temporally. Participants were using the approach with multiple aspects of their identities.

Conclusion

The chapter began with an overview of the case study, provided a detailed example of the workshop format, and highlighted the methods and materials employed as well as the variations of the approach. I then presented five themes that emerged from the analysis of the qualitative data and explored the experiences and findings of the participant interviews and participant observations. I will defer a further discussion until after the reporting of the questionnaires and outcomes in the following chapter, where I introduce those findings and provide a discussion on the overall analysis.

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[103] Informal group interview. Field notes from March 15, 2014.
[104] Informal group interview. Field notes from November 29, 2013.

Photograph 18: Conversations and questions during a break. Harga, Benue State, Nigeria
Photo Credit: JKLynne

Chapter Eleven: Making Meaning

This chapter continues the examination of Engaged Identity approach and documents the analysis and outcomes from the Nigerian case study. First, I introduce findings from the survey questionnaires and examine the data. This is followed with a discussion of the outcomes from both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the study. Finally, I reflective on the research questions and discuss the challenges and reflections of the study. The chapter concludes with a review of the case study and suggestions for future research and applications.

Exploring the Data

In this section, I discuss the findings from the survey questionnaires, including participant observations and narratives from the in-depth and informal group interviews as a means of illuminating the quantitative data. As I discussed in chapter eight, two survey questionnaires were administered; the first was given to all the workshop participants at the end of the Engaged Identity workshop (exit), while the other was given to those who expressed interest in participating in a ninety day post-workshop survey (final). Each survey consisted of eight multiple choice questions and two open-ended questions, including age, nationality, gender, use of course content, rating of specific course modules, importance of specific course content, most and least useful modules, and overall course rating. The following table (11.1) compares the total participants per group with the participation in the survey questionnaires.

Table 11.1: Participants and Survey Questionnaire participation

	Group One	Group Two	Group Three	Group Four	Group Five	Group Six	Totals
Participants	6	9	16	6	9	23	69
Exit Questionnaire	3	5	12	4	7	18	49
Final Questionnaire	0	3	3	2	1	1	10

In order to relate the findings within the context of the participants, insights into gender, age, and nationality are listed below (*table 11.2; figure 11.1*).

Table 11.2: Gender & Age Statistics (*n=69*)
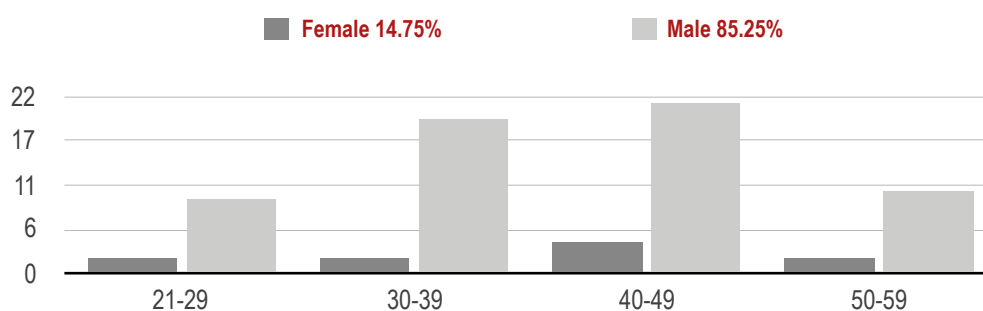
As the participants gathered for the first pilot workshop in Harga, Benue State, I was making mental (and soon after field journal) notes. Of course the lack of any female participants in the workshop was noted, and during the course of an informal group interview I asked several of the participants, 'Where are the women?' Their replies included at home, working, and a longer explanation about the role of men in conducting the business of the community, as well as having control of the familial purse strings.[105] In subsequent workshops, where women were participants, I asked the women the same question.[106] Their responses were not significantly different, although they expressed concern about the role of women and the lack of equality in family, community, and professional life.[107]

> 'Their are six of us here, and I am the only one [woman]. I have to quietly save my own money to take the course, which is hard to do when my husband doesn't give me much. I work but I'm spending the money running the house, for the children's education and school needs. He provides only a little.'[108]

> 'So many of the girls quit school or don't receive education because their getting married, having babies, or the money is spend on other things.'[109]

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[105] Informal group interview. Field notes from October 23, 2013.
[106] In the six workshops conducted, women were present at five. Although never breaching 22.2% of the participants in a given workshop.
[107] Informal group interview. Field notes from November 1, 2013; November 29, 2013; April 30, 2014.
[108] Informal group interview. Field notes from November 29, 2013.
[109] Informal group interview. Field notes from November 1, 2013.

In fact, during the workshop in Harga, the dean of a secondary school nearby asked if I would come and talk with the students about the importance of young women staying in school and finishing their education.[110]

Using the constant comparison methods of grounded theory analysis, the answers from female participants, along with additional observations, resulted in an emphasis on gender and identity in subsequent workshops. This led to interesting conversations around how listening, patience, and respect were understood through the lens of gender, and provided opportunities for male and female participants to explore the differences and similarities within their lived experience. In the workshop with the largest number of female participants, the elicitive and transformative frameworks of the praxis were in full effect as the group elected to spend a large portion of both the identity module and the precepts module discussing how gender effected their interactions. As one exchange exemplifies,

> 'But there is little or no respect for most women. They are seen as servants, maids, and sub-class citizens. Even with an education, men are not listening…they just act like they know everything. There is too much pressure, and to much pride.'[111]

> 'That's true, Auntie.[112] I am not saying that's right, but that is the truth for many. We men need to learn to respect women and their contributions to society. Not as mothers and wives, but as members with contributions to make in all levels of society.'[113]

> 'But sometimes, I don't believe men aren't actually thinking. It is just what we saw, how we were raised. It takes time to understand how to do things differently, and even longer to learn to behave differently.'[114]

> 'I can actually feel when I am about to anger. I walk out, or raise a hand. Then like Jennifer talked about, I have to come back and make amends for what I did *and* we have to discuss the issues that caused the problem. You women are better at listening and patience.'[115]

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[110] Field notes from October 30, 2013.
[111] Female participant (C.E..) commenting on identity, gender, and the three precepts. Field notes from April 29, 2014.
[112] Auntie is not reflective of a familial relationship. Women aged 30-40 yrs. are often referred to as Auntie.
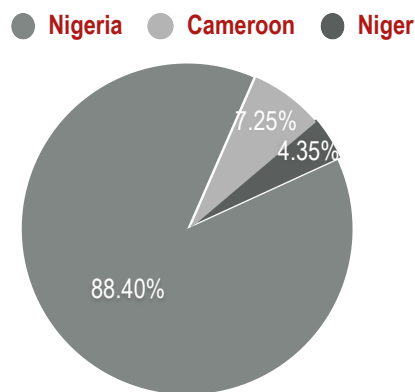[113] Male participant (E.M.) responding. Field notes from April 29, 2014.
[114] Male participant (A.B.) adds his thoughts. Ibid.
[115] Male participant (E.M.) replies. Ibid. Emphasis added.

> 'Maybe we are better, but maybe here is little choice. I think the point here is that we all can learn to think and act differently. No matter woman or man, it can be developed.'[116]

The majority of the participants (*n=69)*, 66% in fact, were males aged 30-49. In addition, of the sixty-nine participants, sixty-one identified as Nigerian, five as Cameroonian, and three as Nigerien. The following figure (*11.1*) provides an overview.

Figure 11.1: Nationality (*n=69*)

The comment was met with much laughter and quite a few heads nodding in agreement as it had some merit. Timeliness, or rather punctuality, is not known as a particularly strong trait in Nigeria. Many times, my biggest challenge as a researcher was adjusting to the hurry up and wait, and wait, and wait paradigm that is so prevalent. As one of my colleagues mentioned about me, 'She keeps asking

Having had no expectation of participants having affiliations from outside Nigeria, I was surprised to see the almost 13% inclusion. Although this did not seem to have significant influence on the participants reporting on the workshop, it did provide some rather interesting, and humorous exchanges during the workshops. As one Cameroonian, the only group member not from Nigeria in this particular workshop, offered,

> 'Yes, but you Nigerians. It's hurry, hurry, hurry. Everything's in a rush. Until you're so busy you are late to everything. You have a crazy sense of time.'[117]

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[116] Female participant (H.M.) concludes. Ibid.
[117] Participant (J.B.). Field notes from November 26, 2103.

for a schedule, and I have to keep telling her, it's Nigeria. 'I'm coming' could be thirty minutes or three hours!'[118]

Survey Insights

One of the key questions in the surveys was how participants would use the course content. I wanted to gauge where, or if, participants saw value of the content for the various systems in which they interacted. With the significant portion of workshop looking at the self as a complex system, the cultivation of adaptive capacities, and the three precepts, all of which have a strong emphasis on the role of self and identity, it was surprising to see where participants placed the value for their personal use (*table 11.3*).

Table 11.3: Participants use of content (*n=69*)
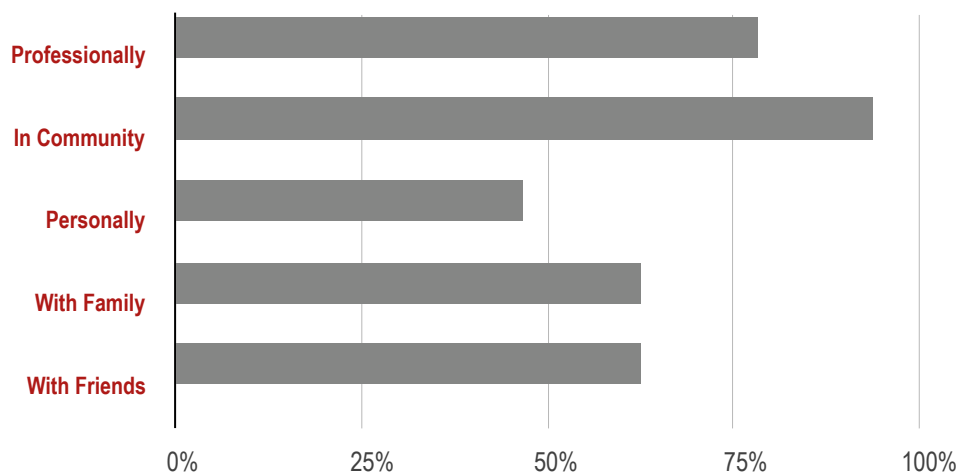
Although participants reported a 37.5% use of content for personal use, the informal and in-depth interviews conclusively showed that the content was being used more personally. Again using the constant comparison methods of grounded theory, I began asking questions during informal and in-depth interviews to discover why the survey reporting was revealing different findings. Among the various responses, three themes developed. Participants spoke of the focus on family, community, and relationships in Nigeria,[119] the fact that the workshops were held as a part of conflict

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[118] Comments from J.S.; Field notes from November 16, 2013.
[119] Nigeria is ranked as one of the most collectivist societies along side Pakistan and Peru. See Geert Hofstede (2001) Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, and Organizations Across Nations. 2nd edition. Sage Publications.

transformation and peacebuilding trainings and therefore were related closely to problems in community and professional settings, and the belief that a personal identity is in relationship to the community, family, and other groups.[120] The in-depth interviews provided narratives on the use of the workshop content sixty days after the completion,

> 'It's me, I'm changing, but what is happening involves everyone. At first it was practicing new techniques [contemplative] and just trying the precepts with family. Then I had an incident with a employee at work, and that's when I noticed I was changing my leadership style.'[121]

> 'The workshop was for peacebuilding and conflict transformation, but what I see is that I am the agent of change. Still, it is for the betterment of the community, to help them, but the way to help best is to develop as a human being myself.'[122]

In addition to discovering how participants were using the content, other key questions sought to find out the content that they were interested in and which particular content was seen as meeting their personal needs. I was looking to discover where the interest in particular aspects of the workshops and themes of the approach intersected with participants' more specific personal context. As I discussed in chapter ten, learning and knowledge of contemplative practices were reported as the least important aspects of the approach. While the interviews suggested that participants were engaging in contemplative practice, the overall interest in the knowledge of different practices was reported as one of the least important aspects. For example, 85.71% of survey participants felt that learning more about different types of contemplatives practices was very important. However, compared to learning more about identity and the three precepts (94.74% and 90.74%, respectively), interest in contemplative practice was 5-9% lower.

Several possibilities lead to the lower interest in contemplative practices. First, as I mentioned previous chapters, Nigeria's population is comprised of both Christians and Muslims and is nearly equally divided between the two with approximately 1%

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[120] As noted above, the collectivist beliefs of community over, or inclusive, of individual is a component.
[121] Interviewee 5
[122] Interviewee 7

identifying as other.[123] Firstly, participants largely identified with the practices of the religion, in particular with prayer, and to a lesser extent, they also engaged in singing, dance, and silence as practices. Although participants were provided with a list of the range of practices that are embraced as contemplative that span the historical and faith traditions of humanity,[124] there remained a disconnection between contemplative practices and the practices that participants engaged in from their own context. Secondly, as a Buddhist, I identify most strongly with meditation, yoga, silence, and time in nature as my contemplative practices. The question this raises is did I, unwittingly, emphasize the practices I was most familiar with and by way of create a 'definition' of contemplative practice that did not translate in the written survey, but through the narratives was able to be recognized? To note, as a result of these findings, and the use of the constant comparison analysis, there was an emphasis on learning about identity, identity threat, identity expansion and the three precepts of the EI approach in the later workshops and they did not necessarily include contemplative practice sessions.[125]

Lastly, the survey explored participants' additional interests and future needs. Assuming that participants may or may not want to learn more about particular themes of the approach in the future, the question was posited to discover what may be of interest to include in future or follow-up workshops. Asked about what themes participants felt should be emphasized in future workshops, 53.23% felt more information on contemplative practices should be included and 66.6.% reported practicing different types of contemplation should be increased. Yet, 81.37% expressed wanting more inclusion of the precepts and 75.27% an increase in learning more about identity and worldview concepts. Again, the reporting shows participants' interest in learning more about the three precepts, identity and worldview. Surprisingly, there was also an interest in learning more about the

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[123] The exact ratio has been unclear, but ranges from 43%-56% Christian and 42%-52% Muslim. This statistic is taken from the 2010 PEW report on the religious demography of sub-saharan Africa. See http://www.pewforum.org/files/2010/04/sub-saharan-africa-appendix-b.pdf. for more information.
[124] Participants were provided with The Tree of Contemplative Practices, from the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society. See http://www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree.
[125] While the practice sessions were not included in all of the later workshops, the offer was still provided and in the fifth workshop participants had a consensus to try a contemplative breath exercise.

scientific research supporting the use of contemplative practices in the development of adaptive capacities such as social emotional learning, executive function, pro-social behaviors, and compassion. The latter conclusion illustrates the importance of an elicitive design. For example, in the second workshop, I introduced some of the neuro-scientific research on contemplative practices and executive function. Observing a bit of dissonance with the material, I asked the group 'Is this interesting to you?'. With this particular group of participants, the consensus was that they would rather talk more about how their own experiences influenced their behavior.[126] What can be noted is the importance of including learning frameworks that support exchanges where participants can making-meaning based on what they value most; a strong indicator of the elicitive method enhancing the transformative. As participants from different workshops explain,

'I don't know any of those terms. The science part doesn't really make sense to me, but I do understand how my emotions affect my ability to think. Hearing stories about how and what other people were dealing with this gave me some new ideas and made me feel like I wasn't the only one who gets this way.'[127]

'It is amazing to know how the mind is working, what is actually happening when I am feeling, behaving this way. It is almost like I can see that part of my brain and tell it to calm down or to say step up.'[128]

'It was interesting to learn about different parts of the brain and what they do, but honestly what I remember is the idea that increases in emotions can create decreases in my ability to reason. When we all shared those stories, the times we were too hot to make any sense, that is something I can relate to!'[129]

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[126] Field notes from November 1, 2013.
[127] Participant D.E. Field Notes from May 1, 2014.
[128] Interviewee 3
[129] Interviewee 15

Outcomes and Emergence

This section brings together the qualitative and quantitative data and discusses the outcomes and emergence of the case study; not only examining the analysis of the content and themes of the approach, but also exploring the efficacy of the praxis frameworks. Subsequently, I reflect on the research questions and objectives and provide an overview of the learnings and challenges of the research.

Exploring Outcomes

As I discussed in chapter eight, the inclusion of both grounded theory and phenomenological methods provided an opportunity to look at the lived-experience (phenomenology) of participants as well as incorporate this new knowledge into the Engaged Identity approach (grounded theory). The following table (11.4) illustrates the research methods and their relationship to the qualitative and quantitative data.

Table 11.4: Methods, methodology, and outcomes

METHOD	METHODOLOGY	OUTCOMES
Phenomenological	Qualitative	• Lived-experience and narratives informed the five themes of analysis • Researcher's field notes (memoing); including observational, theoretical, methodological and analytical
	Quantitative	• Comparative reporting on use of content, interest in EI themes and meeting participant needs
Grounded Theory	Qualitative	• 5 themes - self-worth, relational shift, enthusiasm, anti-contagion, universality. • Inclusion of informal & formal interview data into workshop content • Inclusion of participant observations into workshop content
	Quantitative	• Understanding use of content of EI workshops used to adapt workshop modules • Personal Interest in themes of EI approach used to adapt workshop modules • Potential use of EIA themes in future use

Much has been discussed about the subjectivity in ground theory methodology, and I would agree that beyond coding and analysis, the decisions of what to write, and how phenomena are perceived are subjective to the researchers' own contexts. Yet, within the phenomenological approaches, a researcher's field notes can be considered 'a step toward data analysis…and part of the analysis rather than the data collection' Morgan (1997, pp. 57-58). I mention this for two reasons. The first being, subjectivity in and of itself, for the sake of this research, is not considered in a negative bias. For example, if I am a researcher looking at complex systems and human behaviour, the phenomena being observed (systems and humans) are open, reflexive, non-linear, emergent, and self-organizing. If objectivity was possible it would, by nature, include a presupposition that a system (in this case the researcher) is a closed system that does not require or receive outside information for sense-making or behavioral adaptation. This would create a deficit, or insufficient, information on the interactions involved in the enaction of sense-making. Objectivity then could actually been seen in relation to a hierarchical state of mind, 'I am objective, therefore all I know is devoid of interaction, I stand outside/above it.'

In both the phenomenological and grounded theory methodology, analysis is not focused on measurements of validity such as success or failure. Rather, the intent is to understand and engage with experience and phenomena to generate meaning; much like that of the Engaged Identity approach itself. In addition to the questions around the efficacy of the content of the approach, examining how, and if, these methods are able to operationalize the approach in a way that is supportive and reflective of its theoretical and ontological foundations. In other words, is the workshop providing an example of the very things it is thematically supporting; awareness of self and complexity, participatory sense-making, cultivating adaptive capacities (intravation), and the three precepts of listening, patience, and respect. The informal and in-depth interviews, sited in chapter ten and earlier in this chapter, suggest that the praxis frameworks were consistent with the theoretical, epistemological, and ontological frameworks of the EI approach.

Secondly, the inclusion of subjectivity within the research design, data collection, and analysis allows for the embodiment of the whole system to be potentially available. I am not suggesting here some bizarre and extraordinary gift for research, rather I posit that if the live-experienced (the interaction and participatory sense-making) that is occurring in all the factors of a system is not attributed in the observations and outcomes, the research in fact has failed to acknowledge the phenomena of interest. Simply put, of course a researcher is subjective, as is everything else in the complex system (or in mutual causality, interdependent ontology), they are supposed to be open, reflexive, and adaptable. Of course all the subjective components of a systems cannot be accounted for from the perspective of one subjective researcher. The reality is a temporal and spatial snapshot of a system from the perspective of a part of the system (the researcher). This directly speaks to the mimetic and reinforcing nature of the research design and the EI approach.

As I mentioned in chapter five, the EI approach is not focused on particular outcomes such as problem-solving, reconciliation, or justice. The emphasis is on the cultivation of capacities for adaptivity and transformation. As such, the lack of what we may call objectivity, and wrongly often equate with knowing or truth, is replaced by a subjective model that is mimetic of a complex adaptive system and requires capacities for adaptation (in this case research in a context that is interactive and enacted). In other words, the research methods, the themes of EI approach, and the praxis frameworks are all supportive, reinforcing, and mimetic of other another. Having outlined the use of the research methodologies in the context above, I now look more closely at the use of the transformative, elicitive, and contemplative methods in the praxis framework that were essential to incorporating the systems and complexity aspects of the approach into the workshop schema (*table 11.5)*.

Table 11.5: How the EI praxis frameworks incorporated aspects of complex adaptable systems

OPEN	Participants contribute to workshop themes, materials, and methods with personal experience through elicitive methods.
SELF-ORGANIZING	Participatory sense-making and participant interaction created new (dynamic/ transformational) relationships and knowledge of EI approach themes.
EMERGENT	Contributions and interests of participants is varied based on personal context and interests; transforming the workshops with the inclusion of the newly revealed conditions and attributes, creating a new emergent workshop design and experience. This was particularly strong where contemplative aspects were present in the praxis.
NON-LINEAR	Participants engagement with the EI themes created dynamic and emergent sense-making that was recursive and allowed for the rearrangement and inclusion of feedback and inquiry at any point.
DYNAMIC	Workshops were consistently shaped by new forces from the emergent knowledge and experience of the participants as well as the unique emotional and ontological aspects of the interactions.
REFLEXIVE	Participants, as well as the temporal, and spatial aspects, created feedback loops. This inclusion created new meanings for participants and again new input for the workshop. This reflexivity created new content, meaning, and structure to each workshop, uniquely.

Open. The elicitive and transformative frameworks created a context whereby participants could contribute to the workshop themes, material, and methods. The system (workshop) was open (elicitive) to broader range of experience that participants had prior to and during the workshop. For example, in chapter ten, I provided a quote from a participant involved in an outside negotiation while participating in the workshop. In this case the participant's lived-experience was included in the workshop as a means of looking at the themes of the EI approach,[130] namely, how identity and the precepts were effecting the negotiation process of which the participant was a lead negotiator.[131] The inclusion of the material created new learnings and feedback loops and would not have been available in a solely prescriptive framework.

Self-organizing. Decisions about how, where, what, why, and if the themes or the content of the workshop would be used were at the discretion of participants while as a collective system, participants would make inquiries and adjustments to materials and modules as a group within the workshop and outside of it. For instance, in one

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[130] Field notes from May 1-3, 2014.
[131] Ibid.

workshop, the group of participants stayed in close contact and supported one another in projects involving their experiences with the approach.[132] The group as workshop participants evolved into friendship and support mechanisms in a self-organizing process.

Emergent. The aspect of emergence has a close relationship with intravation. While emergence is the coming out of the new or previously concealed, intravation seeks to assist in the process by enhancing capacities for adaptivity and transformation. In the course of the praxis, using the transformative framework brought conceptual as well as spatial emergence to the approach. During the pilot workshop just as we were beginning a discussion on the precepts, one of my colleagues fell ill and had to go to the hospital.[133] He was not due to facilitate until later in the day and so the participants elected to continue with the workshop. His health and well-being became a topic of our discussions and the subjects moved from tips on how to handle the heat to how many participants had been diagnosed with malaria.[134] What these inadvertent turns in topics and foci brought to our exchanges included a wealth of new knowledge that was sitting in the room unearthed prior to the opportunity to bring the immediate context into our recognition. For example, we learned of health concerns and hardships, socio-economic issues that led to poor medical care, and the corruption in the distribution of mosquito netting. As for the relationship with intravation, without the respect, patience, social emotional intelligence, and the capacity for attention (noticing what is happening rather than intention to have something happen), we created both trust and deeper understanding of one another, and in turn a reflexive mechanism supporting our learning and co-collaborations.

Non-linear. In the Spring of 2015 I received an email from a participant in the Kagoro, Kaduna workshop. They had emailed to that they 'wanted you to know how much I remember and use the important things we learned.' The learning, integration, meaning-generation, and alignment with transformative process is rarely linear. As one participant put it,

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[132] Field notes from November 24, 2015; March 1, 2014; April 3, 2014. Interviewees 1; 2; 4.
[133] Field notes from October 23, 2013.
[134] Ibid.

> 'It is lifetime of work and learning, and one day, one way you may get it. Next day, 'nother way, you can't. I understand why you call it practice.[135]

The use of elicitive, transformative, and contemplative frameworks for the praxis actually created web for learning and exchange rather than a road. Topics, memories, questions, all taking place simultaneously with the ability to move freely back and forth as interests or understanding arise. The knowledge-exchange does not require a linear progression in order for it to occur.

Learnings and Challenges

One of the contributing factors in complex systems, as well as transformative processes, is the temporal aspects. What is observed is a moment, or string of moments in a timeline that is unbounded by deadlines and other constraints of time. And just as time in unbounded, it also is not subjected to the linear process of progression. This creates a bit of a disadvantage to a researcher who is looking to understand complex systems and their enactions. All that can be stated is simply a culmination of reflections and perceptions from a particular period in time, as adaptive systems and transformation do not always progress in a linear fashion. The undoing, re-organizing, reflexive, and deconstruction creates the cycles of growth and sense-making. At times like Gramsci's morbid symptoms of the cycle of death and birth, what looks to stagnant may be in merely in a temporary state of crisis. Reporting and analysis should been taken for what it is, a momentary see of subjective perceptions. However, it does not suggest that what is discovered is without merit. In this case, the Nigerian case study provided a glimpse into the interaction and use of the EI approach, offered insights into the ways the praxis frameworks were supporting the approach's ontological and theoretical foundations, and suggests that it can contribute to transformative processes through the development of self-awareness intravation, and the three precepts.

Although transformative and elicitive methodology has become more prevalent in knowledge-exchange processes, one of the challenges I encountered in the experience of facilitating workshops utilizing these methods was that participants

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135 Interviewee 9.

were largely unfamiliar with elicitive methodology. The first module of the workshop, on introductions and course themes, required more time to gain the trust and confidence of the participants and to establish new relationships in the role as facilitator/participant. This was a consistent challenge throughout the workshops, not only in co-creating models of collaborative learning methods, but as a facilitator. I challenged myself to not take the 'easy' road of lecture about topics I was familiar with and prescribing a framework for transformation based on my relationships with the themes of the approach. In addition, it was important to embody the themes of the approach as a meanings of creating an environment and relationships that were respectful of participants willingness and comfort in interacting. However, it was not only my behavior and attitudes that needed attention. Often, one or more participants would want to assume the role of expert, not just for a particular exchange, but in place of the fact that I would not assume the role entirely.

Skillful means, transparency, respect, vulnerability, and a strong sense of attention are important for the facilitator, in this the researcher, to cultivate. Essentially, the capacity and capability to engage their own identities fully and with awareness. For example, one particular day during a workshop held in a room with no windows, electricity, and very basic seating, the temperature was registering above 40 degrees celsius. In the morning before the workshop starting, and knowing it would a very hot and long day, I put a bottle of water in a special spot to retrieve later. During the lunch break, I went to get it and it was gone. I was hot, tired, and unamused that my water had disappeared. I strongly suggested to the head of the facility that my water should be where I left it. As the workshop picked back up, I was still in a rather bad mood and my irritation lingered. Instead of trying to participate in the workshop as if nothing had happened. I used the moment as a way to reflect on how expectations and emotions play a role in our responses, or in this case mine. The participants appreciated my candor and began to share their own stories of when circumstances, expectations, and emotions are not aligned. Simply put, leaving the 'I am in control and a master/expect in these subjects' at the door and getting real enhances the trust and relationships essential to this type of praxis. As I discussed in chapter two,

identity threat can take many forms, including the lack of composure when one loses a bottle of water. Learning to work skillfully with ones own identities, weaknesses, sense of survival, and ego is a learning curve that lasts a lifetime and reflects the importance three precepts of the Engaged Identity approach as capacities for adaptation, transformation, and well-being.

Beyond the personal challenges and learnings were the design and logistics of data collection. For example, as I discussed in chapter nine, the final questionnaire was administered in an online format. Looking at the participation in the final questionnaire, there was a decrease from 71.01% in the exit survey to 14.49% in the final survey, a contributing factor of the decline includes a lack of internet access and poor networks. Although not the sole reason, many participants expressed concerns about being able to respond within the timeframes set for the survey. Moving forward, I would certainly look to alternative methods to include or replace the mechanism for the final survey process.

Relating, Reflecting and Research Objectives

Reflecting on the research findings and the research questions, with nod to honesty and transparency, three questions arise. Were the research objectives met? Did the findings answer the research questions? And what difference, if any, does it make? Two questions grounded the research; Does the Engaged Identity approach align and enhance conflict transformation processes? And how do we enact and embody identity and cultivate capacities for adaptability and transformation. The objectives of the research were to examine how the approach was enacted within the Nigerian context to inform the EI approach and to contribute to further scholarship on conflict transformation, human adaptivity and well-being.

Looking at the narratives of participants, there are a variety of experiences with the approach including increased self-worth, relational shifts, enthusiasm for the content and practice, using the approach as an anti-contagion, and a sense of universality for the use of the approach. These five themes, along with the layers of interactions and relationships they affected, answer the question as to alignment of the approach for

transformation in the context of the Nigeria case study. In addition, the effects on psycho-social trauma healing, intra-personal and interpersonal conflict transformation, and increased adaptive capacity in personal, community, and professional relationships points to the potential for enhancing transformative processes, and contributes to the scholarship and study of human adaptivity, transformation and well-being. This universality is one reason why the Engaged Identity approach may be considered in a transdisciplinary framework not only in scholarship but in praxis. Although often the workshops were in concert with other skills, dialogues or modules, the focus again on human awareness and adaptive capacity, rather than on specific outcomes such as conflict transformation, negotiation, mediation, problem solving or conflict resolution supports the inclusion of the approach in concert with other transformative processes, as well its use singularly.

Conclusion

Over the course of the chapter, the analysis and outcomes of the qualitative and quantitative data was presented. Looking at the intersections and findings of the data, the praxis frameworks, and the research methodologies to examine the intersections with the theoretical and ontological aspects of the Engaged Identity approach. Exploring the challenges and learnings from the study, I then reflected back on the research questions and objectives and limitations of the study. Beyond meeting the criteria of the research, how or do the findings make a difference? Too often our academic inquiries are left in halls of the academy or used solely as knowledge of the mind. However, the interest of the approach is in the lived experience and interactions of embodied sense-making. In order to meet that interest, the knowledge gained from the research must be actively engaged over time and continued to be explored.

PART FIVE
Identity Expansion

Photograph 19: A timely message from a restaurant in Gembu, Taraba State, Nigeria
Photo Credit: JKLynne

Chapter Twelve: Identity Expansion

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a conclusion to the thesis. While providing a summary of the research, key findings, and limitations, it also addresses the experience of the researcher and development of the EI approach within the concept of intravation. Further, it examines the contributions of the scholarship and the recommendations for future inquiry in relation to identity expansion.

Research as Identity

The thesis comprises an overview of the Engaged Identity approach, through an exploration of the literature that grounds the praxis, and a case study to examine the alignment and enhancement of the approach with conflict transformation processes. Two questions grounded the research: Does the Engaged Identity approach align and enhance conflict transformation processes? and, How do we enact and embody identity to cultivate capacities for adaptability and transformation? The objectives of the research were to contribute to further scholarship on conflict transformation, human adaptivity, and well-being and to examine how the approach was enacted within the Nigerian context. Through phenomenological and grounded theory methodology, the study comprised of survey, interview, and participatory observations in order to document participants' experiences with the workshops to inform the approach, and discover the implications for inclusion in the broader context of transformative theory and practice.

The transdisciplinary approach and systems thinking applied to the research offered an opportunity to examine the concepts of identity, complexity, and human adaptive capacity with insights and contributions from identity theory, complexity theory, systems thinking, philosophy, conflict transformation theory, biological systems, and sociology, the breadth of which is only able to be briefly included due to the constraints of the thesis framework. However, the inclusion of the theoretical and applied practice (praxis) of the approach resulted in a rich matrix from which to inform both the approach and the relevant scopes of interest. The literature review examined the scholarship of identity, complexity, and the enactive aspects of human

adaptive capacity, raising questions around the prescription of certain behaviors, skills, and cognitive abilities that theorists and methods ask of us; alertness, seeing the complex, compassion, thinking in complexity, listening, empathy, mindfulness, adaptability, reflection, etc. Yet, there was rarely an inclusion for the development or embodiment of these capacities. Rather, there is an expectation or assumption that the capacity is able to be enacted. What was revealed is a need for the inclusion of phenomenological, embodied practices for their development. Examining how we view and understand adaptive capacity, I posited there was a lack of inclusion of a whole systems understanding of what human adaptive capacity constitutes. As a result, the review introduced the concept of intravation, a new orientation to human adaptive capacity, as a re-organization and orientation to the ways adaptive capacity is currently used.

Inquiry into Intravation

Intravation suggests that these behaviors, tools, traits, and skills are in fact embodied and enacted adaptive capacities. This re-orientation creates a spacial, temporal, and ontological framework for transdisciplinary and transformative inquires and suggests that grounding adaptive capacity within an enactive and embodied framework supports the cultivating of these capacities. In other words, if human adaptive capacity is the culmination of behaviors, skills, emotions, and cognition that allow us to make meaning, transform, and adapt as an embodied species, then intravation is the cultivation of these capacities. Essentially, creating a new space beyond the disciplinary silos of the academy and providing an enactive, embodied approach to human transformation and adaptation. The human experience is comprised and driven by these capacities, and each, in its own way, contributes to our interactions and sustainability.

Subsequently, the Nigerian case study examined the approach in praxis. Utilizing transformative, elicitive, and contemplative methodologies, the approach was operationalized in a workshop format and resulted in the exploring of the lived experience of participants with the approach. Five themes arose from the inquiry. These themes, self-worth, relational shift, enthusiasm, anti-contagion, and

universality suggested that the approach did align with and enhance transformative processes. Participants reported changes in their personal, community, and professional relationships, as well as their own personal awareness and self-perceptions with impacts including psycho-social trauma healing, community development, and increases in gender equality.

In addition, the findings revealed the use of the approach in developing capacities for transformation such as increased awareness, patience, and emotional regulation. Future inquiries would provide an opportunity to gauge variables in the findings, such as if supportive practice environments or repetition enhances efficacy, and to discover if self-reporting and narratives are consistent with psycho-physiological states. Mitleton-Kelly (2003) suggests that learning, and the generation and sharing of knowledge, need to be supported by providing the appropriate socio-cultural and technical conditions, what she refers to as the 'enabling environment', that creates space for connectivity to facilitate emergence and self-organization. In this light, further inquiries may include a control group in order to assess the influence or enhancement of the approach with or without a supportive environment. This also raises questions of temporality and repetition in the approaches efficacy. Would longer term exposure to practices support the alignment with transformation? As stated earlier in chapter two, the question of whether self-reporting provides an honest assessment of impact is questionable. Therefore, the inclusion of neuro-imaging and other reporting mechanisms may provide insight into the effects that are unable to be captured through qualitative methodologies.

There are always challenges and limitations to a research project. Methodological, epistemological, ontological along side subjectivity, logistics, time, and resources are but a few of the oft encountered constraints. The challenges of security, infrastructure, outsider status were all considered, but in the case of this study, I suggest that time was the greatest limitation. The reason being, as I discussed throughout the inquiry, are the temporal considerations of the processes of learning and integration. This in turn creates a tension in research to obtain and strain for conclusions that are at best subjective and at worst deceptive in their lack of

accountability for the temporal considerations of dynamic, complex systems. Instead of conclusive outcomes, the inquiry looked to transparency and subjectivity as the viable means of reporting. On this basis, the Engaged Identity draws from, and continues to generate, not one approach to either conflict or its transformation, but to the enacted, embodied, and lived experience of intravation, the cultivation of awareness, and practice of the precepts.

As a mirror to the concepts, methods and frameworks of the approach and the research, my own cultivation of awareness and capacities for the precepts were enhanced during the study. Learning of my own limitations, biases, expectations, and assumptions, I was as much a participant as I was a researcher with my own multiple self aspects and complexities of identity. This created entwined webs of transformation between myself, the EI approach and its ontology, epistemology, and operationalization, and the relationships and experiences of the participants. Essentially, the cultivation of adaptive capacities, as suggested through intravation, for the expansion of identity were mimetically present in each aspect of this *system* of research. The result of which is a tapestry of perceptions, transformations, and interactions between, among, and beyond the abstracted philosophical level of ontology and the in-situ experiences of the Engaged Identity approach.

Identity Expansion

As noted at the outset, this approach is seeking to contribute to the scholarship concerning the ways that identity theory, complexity, and adaptive capacity may be brought together to inform conflict transformation and in a broader context, the search for sustainability and well-being. It has shown that although many aspects of the literature and theories are working with similar notions of the self as a unique and dynamic culmination of identities and capacities there remains a disconnection amongst theory and practice that requires transdisciplinary approaches in order to create understanding and methodologies that benefit from the breadth and depth of the current research. While more detailed inquiries of these intersections need to be undertaken, the greater need may be the creation of new approaches that reflect not

only complexity, but an embodied and engaged praxis. This inquiry has sought to show the significance of the need.

The contribution of the research lies in the re-organization of the aspects of adaptive capacity through the introduction of the concept of intravation. The inquiry argued that we need to look at adaptive capacity, enactive embodied cognition, and transformation with a recognition that humans are a component to the larger system of interdependent phenomena and not from a, still prevalent, belief of a hierarchical order in which we 'know' or can 'control' these systems with certainty or expertise. In addition, there lies within the approach a simplicity of engagement that maybe considered useful for addressing complexity. Instead of complexifying our thinking to meet the conditions and considerations of a system, perhaps the cultivation of reflexivity and the capacities to engage with complexity is a stronger contribution to the sustainability and well-being of humanity and the ecosystems in which we reside. It is this reflexivity, that the cell and system and self are able to adaptive and flourish and lies at the heart of the Engaged Identity and this inquiry.

Beyond disciplines, thinking in the complex, multiple agency and self aspects, I suggest that reframing human adaptive capacity in the Intravative framework creates new opportunities to explore and experience the self as system. If we simply utilize systems and identity to intellectually engage emergence, we risk the potential (intended or not) of continuing the misguided notice that the human system is placed in higher regards that the systems that sustain them. With this notion, we shift the anthropocentric and epistemology from human as knower or seer of complexity, to a perspective of deep ecology where our transformation and well-being are intrinsically entwined.

In this light, several recommendations are offered for future inquiries and practitioner consideration. The first being the adoption of methodologies in transformative processes that include either embodied practices for intravation or knowledge sharing of how and what is useful for transformation in situ. In essence, this is representational of the priming aspects of the approach were identity,

complexity and intravation are introduced as themes for further consideration. Secondly, and I offer some clarification as to the term transformative processes as the inclusion of educational, organizational, and personal practices aimed at enhancing sustainable relationships and capacity for adaptability, is to acknowledge these type of initiatives take sustained effort and practice; using models and theories that define end point outcomes as impact, rather than the capacity to meet and engage the dynamic uncertainty inherent in systems, innovation, and adaptation, is to fail to employ our full understanding and capability. Finally, in regards to the issues of objectivity, subjectivity and self-reporting, I would encourage further research incorporating neuro-imaging to provide another means of understanding the reported shifts and themes of the inquiry's outcomes and assess if effects of the approach are in alignment with neuro-biological activities. In addition, I suggest moving the scope of research outside the conflict transformation context and investigate the effects in both educational and organizational settings. Lastly, the need to further explore and develop the concept of intravation with a multi-cultural, transdisciplinary team both inside and outside the academic context is warranted.

The intrinsic shifts in human experience and contexts ask us to question whether conclusions are mere assumptions grounded in a temporal understanding rather than an accurate reflection of the complexity and dynamic qualities inherent in human experience. This realization, or recognition, is what lies at the foundation of the EI approach and practice, and is seen through the methodologies of the praxis and research. Although we can attempt to synthesize and capture phenomena through study, reflection, and action, the very nature of phenomena is both subjective and dynamic. Thus, the observations of the research do not draw conclusions of either data or of human experience, but rather aim to ask the question of what is necessary to engage interactions and enaction for human and ecological flourishing. There in lies the Engaged Identity approach's over arching suggestion, that despite context, framework, identity or experience, the cultivation of the precepts and intravation provide the capacities to transform, adapt, and engage conflict, difference, and diversity.

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