Critical pedagogies of place: Educators' personal and professional experiences of social (in)justice

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Teachers are generally defined by the content they teach.
- Attention to how context shapes teachers' personal and professional identities is often ignored.
- Preoccupation with teachers' roles and responsibilities often eclipse their rights.
- Contexts can affect teachers' pedagogic styles.

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ABSTRACT

Participating in the education system of a foreign country, or within a new political dispensation presents various challenges for teachers. Understanding the challenges that teachers face as a result of relocation to new geographical and political contexts urges analyzing the contexts, which influence teachers' personal and pedagogic identities. Drawing on Buell's (1995) insights on place and identity; and Fraser's (2008) conceptions of social justice, this paper explores how teachers from South Africa, India, Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo reinvent their identities in order to enact their professional and personal lives within different geo-political and socio-cultural contexts.

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1. Introduction

Annually, I serve as a guest supervisor for the University of Johannesburg. Serving in this role requires me to observe English language lessons, and to provide critical feedback to final year Bachelor of Education Degree students during their school-based practice experience module. While serving in the capacity as guest supervisor, in August 2009, I observed an English Language lesson being delivered by one of the student teachers based at a school on the East of Johannesburg. A class comprising approximately 40 learners shared photocopies of pages from George Orwell's novel, *Animal Farm*. Apart from my being struck by the scarcity of resources, the taken-for–granted normalcy with which the student teacher asked the class to read and repeat excerpts — e.g. ' … the best human being is a dead human being …' left me feeling unsettled by the message transmitted through the non-engagement with this politically laden text. In our post lesson re-flections I asked the student teacher why he had worked through the text in such a literal manner and had not reflected on the novel as political satire. He confided that he was afraid to teach in a politically incendiary manner. He told me that he is a refugee. He had fled Zimbabwe because of the political and economic upheaval in the country. Thus, resorting to a pedagogy of self-censorship was the safest way to teach. His fear emanated from the 2008 xeno-phobic attacks, which had resulted in the killing of a Mozambican refugee in the vicinity of the school. A wave of brutal xenophobic attacks swept through several townships in Johannesburg, making international headlines. (Perumal, 2013).

Although his response did not address why he had made the students repeat phrases that valorized violence within an already crime-ridden country, his adoption of epistemic avoidance that was borne out of his fear of possible xenophobic attacks sparked my interest in how place shapes pedagogy and teachers' personal and professional performance and dispositions. Globalization, forced

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and voluntary migration, and immigration have resulted in increased teacher mobility (Kirk, 2010; Manik, 2014; Sharma, 2012). This phenomenon has seen an increase in the employment of foreign teachers in the South African educational system. Furthermore, the demolition of Apartheid policies have allowed for racial desegregation. This means that teachers are at liberty to seek employment in schools that were previously designated along racially exclusive lines. Against this background, this articles aims to:

(i) explore the biographical and geographical identities, ideologies and pedagogies that this diverse teacher cohort brings to the post Apartheid South African educational landscape;
(ii) explore the varying experiences and interpretations of social (in)justice that they experience by virtue of their race, nationality, language, and socio-economic status; and
(iii) examine the strategies that they employ to navigate the challenges that their contextual situatedness present them with.

2. Connecting critical pedagogy and place

People across time and cultures organically share examples of important places or safe places or foreign places with one another and offer riveting descriptions of favorite places, or strange places (Raill, 2009). Tuan (2001) contends that place is often the starting point for articulating cultural meaning and awareness and is central to human emotional attachment. Rhetorical connotations of place also permeate our language – we may have experienced being 'put in place' or 'feeling out of place'. One of the migrant participants in this study repeatedly mentioned: 'not being given pride of place'. It is therefore necessary that a definition of place captures its multiple nature and multidisciplinary connotations while still being responsive to the specific context of its use in education (Manzo & Perkins, 2006, p. 335). Buell (1995) contends that the concept of place points in at least three directions:

(i) *toward environmental materiality*: This often encompasses the ecology and the built and social environments of a given location, but also the specific continuity of the surroundings - that is, the things that are noticeable to, or important to a person. The environmental materiality of a place - the foods in season, the availability or absence of water, etc. – contributes to adapting to an ecologically sound life.
(ii) *toward social perception or construction*: The social environment which refers to the expectations, experiences, approvals and condemnations of others also shape the behavior of an individual. Dewey (1916/2007) describes democracy as a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. Dewey (1916/2007) grounds democracy in environmental materiality: democracy must begin at home. Its home is the neighborly community.
(iii) *toward individual affect or bond*: Place also signifies for people (positive and negative) individual emotional bonds, and societies (positive and negative) social constructions. The differentiation of individual and social roles in shaping place in Buell's (1995) definition acknowledges the tensions inherent in ideas of place. Bannister and Fyfe (2001) who have written about the role of fear in shaping place contend that fear influences the locations people do or do not go to, and therefore the environments and experiences they are open to.

The connection between place and pedagogy can be divided into roughly two branches: namely, placed-based education and a critical pedagogy of place. Place-based education developed within a rural context, and has become synonymous with environmental/ eco-justice education, the intention being to forge connections between students and their surrounding environment.

Critical pedagogies of place draw attention to the role that power plays in defining and creating place; and in shaping individual's statuses within spatial locations. This means that relationships of power and domination are inscribed in material spaces because places are social constructions shaped by ideologies, hierarchies and experiences. An individual's spatial location has the potential to determine one's destiny. Articulating a critical pedagogy of place is therefore a response to educational reform policies and practices that ignore the role that place/context plays in how teaching and learning is interpreted, implemented and experienced (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 3; Halsey, 2006; McLaren, 1997; Page, 2006; Somerville, Davies, Power, Gannon and de Carteret, 2011). The discourse on critical pedagogies of place encourages those that are disenfranchised to seek, create, and use place as a site for resistance. Critical pedagogies of place encompass mental and physical decolonization. It involves creating spaces for minorities in civil society to claim the right to political, social and economic recognition, representation and contribution.

Haymes (1995) argues for a pedagogy where "territory" and "marginality" can be resisted and where emancipation from oppression can become possible. Critical pedagogies of place recognize the importance of people articulating their own stories so that they can be both affirmed and challenged. It also helps to appreciate how individual stories are connected to larger global patterns of domination and resistance. Making the connection between the individual and the global is consistent with Fraser's (2008), and Ratts and Pedersen's (2014) exposition about the discourse on social justice being cognizant of micro and macro level processes.

Two central concepts that emerge from placed-based pedagogy and critical pedagogies of place are: reinhabitation and decolonization. (i) Reinhabitation involves affirming and creating cultural knowledge that protects people and place; and (ii) decolonization involves recognizing ways of thinking that injure and exploit people and place (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 9). For the purposes of this paper I have extended the concept of reinhabitation to mean also de-territorializing place. In the context of Apartheid South Africa where racial segregation by virtue of the Group Areas Act restricted marginalized racial groups from entering and living in certain areas, reinhabitation/de-territorialization can translate to making physical entry into and living in previously forbidden places - taking back/ reclaiming the land. I extend the concept of decolonization to beyond a mere critical recognition and thinking about ways that injure and exploit people and place. I highlight the tangible enactments of decolonization that the participants make within the contexts that they are located through their personal, professional and pedagogical incursions; interruptions, interventions and revolutions.

Crucial to this paper is unpacking the prevailing conceptions of resistance (Hollander and Einwohner, 2004). Miller (1997, p. 32) argues that most studies of resistance are problematic because "they dichotomize the population into the powerful and the powerless." Dichotomizing resisters and dominators ignores the complexity of resistance and ignores the existence of multiple systems of hierarchy. It ignores the possibility that individuals can be simultaneously powerful/agentic, and powerless/oppressed within different systems. According to Fisher and Davis (1993, p. 6), because many feminist writers have focused on women's oppression, for example, they unintentionally.

> … run the risk of victimizing women by representing them as the passive objects of monolithic systems of oppression. This

presentation leaves little conceptual or political space for uncovering the subtle and ambivalent ways women may be negotiating at the margins of power, sometimes constrained by but also resisting and even undermining asymmetrical power relations.

In making explicit and expanding the connection of critical pedagogies of place to social justice, the work of Fraser (2008) is insightful. Advocating for participatory parity, Fraser contends that justice for all is attainable when economic structures promote an equitable distribution of material resources, when society reflects equitable patterns of cultural recognition and when political spaces ensure equitable representation. Cumulatively, Fraser's model of social justice highlights issues related to reinhabitation, decolonization and deterritorialization. Fraser's model also explicates the tensions in social theory between issues of economic and cultural distribution, redistribution, contribution, recognition and misrecognition. Embedded within her discussion of justice, however, are additional frictions. The first involves different emphases on equality as difference and equality as sameness. The second friction entails being sensitive to the varying degrees of attention paid to macro-level processes, such as educational policymaking and social movement organizing, and micro-level processes, such as individual behaviors and daily social interactions.

3. Research methodology

This paper emanated from The *Women Leading in Disadvantaged Education Contexts* project, which explored, *inter alia*, distributive school leadership as a conceptual narrative that is shaped by biographical, cultural, contextual, and temporal complexities. This qualitative research project aimed to explore the strategies that teachers employed to navigate the challenges that emerged when leading in disadvantaged educational contexts. While conducting this research, I encountered several foreign teachers employed within the South African education system. This reactivated my interest in how place shapes pedagogy and teachers' personal and professional performance and dispositions, which was initially sparked when I observed the lesson on *Animal Farm*.

This study was sensitive to *voice*, *difference*, and *narrative enquiry* – motifs associated with critical feminist research methodologies that argue for the redistribution of the narrative field so that the marginalized voices of the disenfranchised Other become part of the mainstream conversation (Perumal, 2007; Bagele, 2012).

The data were drawn from 90 min long individual semistructured interviews that were conducted with a combination of 20 teachers and principals at schools in Johannesburg. The aim of the interviews was to allow participants an opportunity to narrate their personal and professional experiences in relation to their contextual positionality, that is, in relation to where they lived and worked and how this affected their socio-cultural relationships with colleagues and students. The semi-structured interviews comprised questions pertaining to their personal and professional biographical backgrounds; comparisons between the education system in South Africa and their home country or previous school employment backgrounds i.e. issues related to curriculum differences/similarities; personal and national pedagogical ideologies, philosophies, interpretations and enactments; employment opportunities; cultural, language, and social differences/similarities; social integration experiences, etc. Theorists who extol the merits of narrative inquiry (See Clandinin, 2007; Wertz, et al., 2011) are unanimous in recognizing the value of narrative inquiry in enabling the articulation of stories to understand human lives and experiences. Thus, despite the participants in this study emanating from diverse geographical, cultural and political backgrounds, they shared the commonality of having a story to narrate about their lives in relation to where they lived, worked and socialized.

The sample comprised teachers from countries ravaged by civil unrest and economic meltdown. Their ages ranged between 30 and 55. They included seven refugee teachers who had escaped from Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Zimbabwe. These refugee teachers narrated harrowing pre-flight, flight, and settlement experiences, as well as the xenophobic harassment that they endure within the South African public schooling system and broader society. (See Perumal, 2013 for the experiences of refugee teachers employed in South African schools). The rest of the sample comprised one female teacher from India, who had immigrated to South Africa voluntarily. The sample also included eleven South African teachers. All the South African participants are people of color who grew up, were schooled and graduated during the Apartheid dispensation. The participants recounted first hand experiences of race, class and gender discrimination.

The audio-recorded data was transcribed and was analyzed through a combination of narrative and critical discourse analysis. Narrative analysis, in part, aims to understand the heterogeneous individual as a social actor under construction, and attempts to enter into conversation with the larger theoretical literature so that the researcher can remain sensitive to the nuances of meanings expressed and the multiplicity of meanings that emanate from different contexts (Wertz et al., 2011). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is attentive to how power differentials impact interpersonal relationships. CDA was particularly relevant in discerning the participants' experiences of social (in)justice by virtue of the power dynamics that defined their status within the socio-cultural and political hierarchical structures that they practiced their profession (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012).

Ethical clearance for this study was obtained from various institutional agents. These included the University of Johannesburg's Faculty of Education Ethics Committee; the Gauteng Department of Education; the School Governing Bodies of each of the participating schools; and informed, individually signed consent forms from each participant. Proof of ethical clearance had to be submitted to the funding agent as part of the funding proposal application. Participants were informed that the research would be used for educational purposes and that the data would be used to generate academic publications and would be presented at educational conferences. They were assured that their identities would be protected through the use of pseudonyms. They were also at liberty to discontinue participating in the interview or to decline responding to interview questions that they felt uncomfortable with. Given the sensitive and traumatic experiences that many of the participants shared, a wellness celebration conference, entitled: *You May Say I'm a Dreamer*: *Women Leading in Disadvantaged Education Contexts* was hosted to acknowledge the resilience of the participants in navigating the personal and professional challenges of working in difficult educational contexts. Cultural artists, medical experts, life coaches, and educational experts facilitated the event and provided a combination of coping strategy skills development and a pause for rest, relaxation and reflection.

In the ensuing discussion I draw on Buell's (1995) conception of place as *environmental materiality* and *social perception or construction* to analyze the data that was generated from the interviews. Since people do not experience abstract space; but they experience place in the following discussion I combine the analysis of conceptions of place as *environmental materiality* with place as *affective bond*.

4. Connecting teacher narratives with critical pedagogies of place

(i) Place as environmental materiality and affective bond: sketching the research contexts

The research was conducted in the suburbs of Yeoville, Berea, Eldorado Park and Laudium in Johannesburg. Yeoville was proclaimed a suburb in 1890 (four years after the discovery of gold led to the founding of Johannesburg). The area was designated as a sanitarium for the affluent. However, the rich did not buy into the suburb. Instead, it became a multiclass area, in which many poorer people aspired to live. As in the past, today Yeoville continues to attract waves of immigrants who come to South Africa seeking a new life.

In the hey-day of Apartheid, Berea in downtown Johannesburg was an affluent city that boasted the economic wealth of the *city of gold*. However, over the years inner city Johannesburg has fallen into deterioration and squalor, and the attendant maladies of crime, domestic, sexual and gender violence, poverty, a housing scarcity, and HIV/AIDS plague the community. Many of the learners attending the schools in Yeoville and Berea are refugees and illegal immigrants from across the African continent (Perumal, 2009, 2013). The refugee teachers in this study are employed predominantly at the schools in these areas.

Soweto is the abbreviation for South Western Townships. It refers to the urban settlement, which was earmarked for the marginalized African migrant workers. Beall, Crankshaw and Parnell (2002) trace the current spatial patterning of Soweto and Eldorado Park to developments at the beginning of the Fordist period, when Johannesburg was characterized by a residential division that followed the demarcation of a southern manufacturing sector and a northern service sector. The basic spatial order was reinforced in both racial and class terms. The Apartheid government forcibly relocated most Black residents from inner-city areas in the north and west to suburbs in the south. The Fordist period – a term popularized by American President, Henry Ford – was characterized primarily by mass production and hierarchical management and labor structures. This period saw the expansion of the northern suburbs, and was characterized by home ownership and commuting by motorcar. By contrast, low-cost state housing, rental tenure and commuting by bus and rail distinguished the southern suburbs. Today large sections of the townships of Soweto and Eldorado Park struggle to divest themselves of this socio-economic legacy. Despite the dismantling of the Group Areas Act the schools in the study, with a few exceptions, are still largely racially segregated, and bear the structural impact of Apartheid spatial and socio-economic engineering.

Leslie provided the following description of the material environment that informs the way he enacts his pedagogic role:

Our school is situated in Eldorado Park. If you go to the police station and ask them to arrest somebody in Extension 1 they will tell you we first need backup before we go in there … Socio-economically, lots of fathers because of unemployment have nothing else to do but *spin. Spin* means you do whatever you need to do to get bread on the table. So it is drug infested. There is a lot of gambling and alcohol abuse. You can see it in the neglect of the learners. Five weeks ago a Grade One learner's mother was brutally murdered by the father. Stabbed with a knife. He also tried to kill himself but was unsuccessful. He was arrested, and was in ICU in hospital under police guard. This past Saturday, we went to another funeral, also a mother of one of my learners. The father choked her to death. You can see more or less the domestic violence in the community. Look at the scenario: The mother was killed; the father is in jail … what

happens to the children? Our work is much more than just education at school.

Explicit in Leslie's excerpt is the reference to the socio-economic deprivation and deterioration that characterizes this community. While it highlights the urgency of material resource redistribution such as education, employment and income, – of equal importance is the need to recast the distributive model of social justice not just in terms of possessions but also in terms of relationships and non-material social goods, such as rights, self-respect, safety and security.

Having grown up in the community, Leslie has an affective bond to the people and the place. His bond denotes the continuity of the surroundings with his personal biography, which has been tied to the quest for social improvement. This is the community that he grew up in so its material realities have been ever present and important to him (Buell, 1995). This is captured in the sense of belonging and 'nativeness' that he experiences. He reflects on his insider status in this community, as follows:

I think the community sees me in twofold. First they have this idea that this guy – he's well educated. Then the others see me as this guy who's got all these qualifications but he is one of us, and in our area it would be 'hy's een van die ouens' (Afrikaans expression meaning – *he is one of the boys*). … Those guys sitting at the shops looking like skollies (slang meaning gangsters) and tsotsi's (slang meaning mischief-*makers*) who will greet 'hoe's dit' (Afrikaans expression meaning – *howzit?*) because those are the people that I grew up with. I can identify and relate to them. They greet me with a kind of familiarity. There's one of us that made it … we are proud of you.

The recognition and respect that Leslie enjoys render it easy for the community to identify with and relate to him. His code switching from English to Afrikaans to the local slang is illustrative of his immersion in, and connection to the community, and his quest to uplift their lives. He explains:

As a school leader you're not working for the Department of Education. You're working for the surrounding community. You need to have a passion to say that I would love to take this community even two steps higher from where they are before I get out of here.

Another narrative of pro-social behavior, borne out of a sense of connection to place, is supported by Dina, who reminisced:

The first posting was a real eye opener. I was so comfortable in my dwelling. Suddenly I was posted and I started boarding with a family … the place changed my whole value system. The people I lived with were very poor. There must have been about three families living in this house. It really humbled me. They treated me with the respect of a king. They had so much respect for teachers and me being a teacher and having, and some of the children in that home were learners in the school. I think that also developed me as a teacher who became devoted to my job that I started realizing, what a difference teachers make in the lives of others. Ten to twelve years later I started meeting some of these parents in different settings. They would say: You remember your student from Grade 2, she became a lawyer, he became a doctor, he's a dentist. That for me was tremendous … because it liberated them out of poverty; it took them out of that place, and put them in a different setting.

Having grown up in Apartheid South Africa, Leslie and Dina were weaned on the slogan: 'Education before Liberation' which became the mantra of the struggle against Apartheid. The Apartheid regime had predestined the Black majority to servitude and dehumanization. Thus, as transformative intellectuals, an emotional bond drives Leslie and Dina to decolonize and eliminate – through education – the oppression, institutional constraint on self-development, and domination that plague these communities. Young (1990) points out that institutionalized forms of oppression are built into the taken-for-granted norms, rules, skills, and values of institutions and, because of their naturalized status, frequently remain unchallenged. Leslie and Dina challenge the naturalized status quo that has patented a negative script for Black South Africans. They use education as a path out of the pathology of poverty within the school communities that they serve.

Furthermore, evident in Leslie and Dina's narratives, is the distinction that Orr (1992, p. 130) draws between *inhabiting* and *residing* in a place:

A resident is a temporary occupant, putting down few roots and investing little, knowing little, and perhaps caring little for the immediate locale beyond its ability to gratify. The inhabitant, in contrast, "dwells"… in an intimate, organic, and mutually nurturing relationship with a place …

Orr concedes that 'good inhabitance' is an art requiring detailed knowledge of a place, and a sense of care and rootedness. "Good inhabitance" may also require economic and political resources, and even revolutionary social change, especially for those living in poverty.

Teachers' feelings toward a place may also be understood in terms of whether they are local; or whether they are in transit. Pedagogies of place tend to assume that teachers within a community are static and have roots in that community. There is a silence around the presence of immigrant or migrant teachers moving into foreign environments carrying with them stories and lessons from other places. For many of the participants in this study apart from commuting long distances and depending on unreliable public transport to take them to the schools that they taught at, there was a sense of physical and psychological disconnection, a transient relationship with place by virtue of their socio-cultural dissonance, or because of their migratory status. The narratives of the foreign teachers uncovered the following themes: They expressed a romantic nostalgia for their home country; and the status that they enjoyed in their social communities and communities of professional practice. Being dislocated from their home and families filled them with a sense of alienation and left them feeling vulnerable; alone; and the subject of oppositional relations. They were overcome by a sense of fear and uncertainty about their employment status. In an effort not to offend their employers they subscribed to a politics of self-censorship and compliance. Milton's excerpt captures the cocktail of psychological distress associated with being a refugee teacher:

Milton: … that's why they say home is always best. Whenever you are in a foreign land things are not your way. You always do things with that phobia. 'What will happen next?' You won't express yourself as you would if you were in your home because if you say 'I express myself to this' what will be the results? I should do my best so that they will be impressed by me … so that I remain in employment.

Milton's narrative agitates for a social justice that recognizes the portability of skills. His narrative shows resilience as a form of resistance.

Place does not exist only as environmental materiality. From the above discussion what becomes evident is that a place is seen, heard, smelled, imagined, loved, hated, feared, revered, enjoyed or avoided. Although it is certainly possible to desire to relocate to a place of healing; the sense of location bonding that ensues from this seems to convert space into place (Walter, 1988, p. 142). From the participants' narratives it is evident that place also signifies for people positive and negative individual emotional bonds, and positive and negative social constructions.

(ii) The role of place in constructing social identities and perceptions

Of particular interest for me were the personal and professional experiences and recollections that the South African and foreign teachers narrated. South African teachers, by virtue of Apartheid, had to negotiate the complexity and multiplicity of identity variables and the politics and principles entrenched through the tenets of Apartheid. The following excerpt from the interview with Regina, a Black, female South African teacher, captures the complexity of how growing up, living and working in Apartheid and post Apartheid South Africa shaped and continues to shape her personal and professional experiences:

Regina: To tell you the truth, when I applied in this school, I didn't know that it is a mixed school. I thought it was a Black school. When they phoned me telling me "Madam, you have won the interview", I was excited. Then, when the school opened in October, I said "My God, what, what have I done"? This is a different school. It has Indian teachers and students. This isn't what I expected. But I told myself, "Regina, you have to face the music you have landed yourself in". When I was introduced in the staff I saw some Black ladies. I said "Okay, these are my sisters - at least they are here". Then I was frightened, I don't want to lie to you. I was frightened. I was afraid because the other people are of a different race. The language was a problem because we used to speak our language - Sotho, Zulu and Tsonga. I was afraid with the language barrier. I have to learn the cultural code of behavior. Honestly I'm not comfortable because … I taught in the Black schools for 15 years and I'm used to that culture. I have to learn a new culture. I'm old and it's hard. But I have to learn – there's nothing I can do. When I enter the gate, I tell myself, "Madam Cele you are now in another environment". You have to change. "You can't speak English from quarter past 7 until quarter to 3". I am creating a different identity. That is why I feel restricted. But this is the new South Africa. What can you do? You have to learn, my dear, even though they said we have eleven official languages but English is the most important one.

In this excerpt Regina highlights the palpable discomfort and social dislocation that she has to endure. This is consistent with Buell's (1995) observation that 'the social environment, the expectations, approvals and condemnations of others, shape the learning and behavior of an individual'. What emerges from Regina's narrative is her immediate focus on race capital. This confirms other race related studies, which show that South Africans define themselves, in the first instance, as members of a population group; that is, identifying oneself with a race group is a first order categorization (Perumal, 2007; Goldberg, 2000).

Even prior to the interview she calculates the equation of how many Blacks and Indians were on the interview panel. The preoccupation with racial composition, cultural congruity, and ethnic density may be thought of as the congruence or dissonance of an individual's culture, beliefs and expectations with the surrounding population. On arriving at the school on the first day to assume her

post as Head of the Commerce Department, her initial statements are: "… *I saw some Black ladies*". *I said*, "*Okay, these are my sisters, at least they are here*". Her audit of the racial demographics of the school suggests that she was looking for a familiar cultural zone and racial similarity. This was after exclaiming: "*My God, what have I done?*" on discovering that this was a multiracial school. Regina's reactions may be understood in the light of her socialization in Apartheid South Africa where racial demarcations and spatial prescriptions legislated the restriction of movement imposed upon Black South Africans by the Natives Act, and the Group Areas Act. For Regina entering and working in an area that had been designated for Indians fill her with a sense of psychosocial disequilibrium. Apart from the racial difference Regina also points to the language differences. Teaching in a school where none of her vernacular languages are present means donning a linguistic identity that is foreign to her. Having to learn the '*cultural code*'; having to '*create a new identity*'; having '*to change*' when she enters this school environment are reminiscent of the emotional labor and self-styling that translate into emotion management. Regina, like many of the other participants, masks her physiological and emotional state in order to fulfill the role of critical transformative intellectual. Hochschild (1983, p. 7) defines emotional labor as:

> … the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labor is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value. Emotional labor requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others.

Of equal interest in Regina's excerpt is her idiosyncrasy to refer to herself in the third person abstract. In her self-dialogues she refers to herself as *Regina* and *Madam Cele* — this officious speech idiosyncrasy suggests a distantiation (a distancing mechanism) that she adopts in this culturally foreign environment. It may be surmised that it helps her separate her heterogeneous selves from one another. Perhaps Regina's concluding statements: "*But this is the new South Africa. What can you do? You have to learn, my dear, even though they said we have eleven official languages but English is the most important one*," points towards the disjuncture between the functional and the symbolic pronouncements of equality and redress in the democratic South African Constitution. In a country that boasts 11 official languages, English still wields dominance in the domains of education, commerce and business. The symbolic recognition of other languages means that the vast majority of South African's linguistic capital is unrecognized at a functional level. Apart from signaling her disenchantment with the variant of democracy that is unfolding in South Africa, Regina's self punitive declaration — *You have to face the music you have landed yourself in*; … *But I have to learn* — there's nothing I can do because I found myself in this environment; … *What can you do? You have to learn …*" — suggests a lack of agency by virtue of not having the power to challenge the status quo. Instead she has to resort to a self-styling that suppresses her cultural capital. Bhugra and Becker (2005) observe that migration involves the loss of the familiar, including language (especially colloquial and dialect), attitudes, values, social structures and support networks.

Regina's narrative does not show an overt or classical demonstration of a politics of resistance to the structural and cultural misrecognition of her identity. It does, however, show her making incursions into a place that she would under Apartheid not have been able to enter. During the Apartheid dispensation, a Black woman would typically enter an area that was designated for Indians to work as a 'servant'. That Regina enters this place as an educated woman who holds the post of the Head of Department of Commerce is an act of de-territorialization. She claims a space and a

professional position that scorn the diminishing destiny that Apartheid had scripted for her.

In recounting her experiences of being a teacher at a South African school, Surie, an Indian national, echoed similar experiences to those narrated by South African teachers, like Regina. The similarity of the personal and professional experiences of foreign teachers and those of South African Black teachers reconfirms the denial of citizenship status that South African Blacks endured under Apartheid. This effectively relegated South Africans, like Regina, to feeling dispossessed and being strangers in their homeland. Surie's excerpt encapsulates the complexity and deep rootedness of the pathology of Apartheid. She recalls:

> I came during Apartheid to South Africa. I found it difficult to understand why can't my children study at any school, which I like. Another thing is work … you can't move to a particular school where you like to teach … It was difficult because we couldn't stay in Laudium. We wanted to be with the Indian community but the distance was very far … so we had to stay in Rosslyn … it was difficult for cultural groupings but we had a prayer group there [in Laudium] … where teachers like us used to go weekends, pray and associate. …
>
> In this school they don't want you to be part of management. You must be at the lower level … there are so many tricks. You won't be given information. Therefore you will be in the dark about meetings, workshops. They consider you as a foreigner. It doesn't upset me, because I know there is a problem. That is one of the reasons I did research. I know this is part of the humiliation the community suffered, whether it is Black, White, Asian or Chinese. They were going through an inhuman system. It has affected the people so much. In India in a school, we are a family. We never bickered with each other; bite back, stab one person. It is not only against me, it is prevalent amongst the members of the staff also. It is not only in this school - it is in other schools also. I noticed that it is from that experience in the past because they were going through suspicious circumstances the trust is not between persons and that affects the institutions also. The students and teachers talk … that she's a foreigner. I won't show it in front of the students … even though they ask: "Madam, where are you coming from?" I say I'm coming from my home. If you want to know much about that you must come and talk to me personally. If they want to know, I can explain to them. It is not a secret … the people can't accept another person. I strongly feel that it is because of the situation the generations went through.

Apart from being perplexed by the Apartheid restrictions placed upon her and her children about where to live and which school they could attend, Surie highlights the importance of social capital for feeling connected to a place. Her reference to joining cultural groupings for prayer attests to the importance for feeling connected to those ethnically and culturally similar to her. Social networks and social support are important variables in characterizing social relationships. *Social networks* refer to the web of person-centered social ties and include the structural aspects of social relationships, such as size (the number of network members), density (the extent to which members are connected to one another), boundedness (the degree to which ties are based on group structures such as work and neighborhood), and homogeneity (the extent to which individuals are similar to one another). It also extends to frequency of contact, extent of reciprocity, and duration. *Social support* refers to the various types of assistance that people receive from their social networks and can be further differentiated into instrumental, emotional, and informational support (Hernandez & Blazer, 2006). Surie addresses the withholding of information within the school

context and management practices that prevent upward job mobility. Surie's resistance posture that helps her navigate her non-acceptance, upward career mobility and exclusion manifests in her forming social networks and in conducting sociological research to help her understand the psychological and political repercussions of Apartheid both on South African nationals and on foreigners.

Apart from the psychosocial stress that being a foreigner placed upon foreign teachers, Lydia recalls the toll that being in a new environment took on her physical being. There is a silence about the psychosomatic impact that place can have on teachers. Lydia confided:

> I think the first term when I taught here it was a bit difficult. I lost weight. What made it worse was that you are a foreigner and your country is in the headlines, every day … negative public image portrayed in the media. You lose respect. You are devalued.

It has been hypothesized that social adjustment and the prevalence of mental distress in migrants may be influenced by the duration of the relocation, the similarity or dissimilarity between the culture of origin and the culture of settlement, language and social support systems, acceptance by the 'majority' culture, access and acceptance by the expatriate community, employment, and housing. If the individual feels isolated from his or her culture, feels unaccepted by the majority culture, and has a lack of social support, a sense of rejection, alienation and poor self-esteem may occur. The loss of one's social structure and culture can cause cultural bereavement, which Eisenbruch (1991) defines as the experience of the uprooted person/group, resulting from loss of social structures, cultural values and self-identity. The psychosocial stress that Lydia experienced could be attributed to the cultural bereavement that she endured.

Celine a refugee teacher who also works as a substitute teacher at a public school illustrates through her narrative how her professionalism and pedagogic expertise help her negotiate the negative images that are associated with the color of her skin, her race, her nationality and her command of English.

> **Celine:** … the last term we had a comprehension exercise on Robert Mugabe. When we read the exercise most of them will be shouting "Yeah, Zimbabwe!" knowing so well …, I am from Zimbabwe. I would join them in their jokes. If you get cross then you won't be able to handle it. There is a word they use- *makwerekwere* (foreigners) — I always tell them I'm here by choice. I'm here because I'm qualified. I'm proud to be a Zimbabwean. I would never lie to you that I'm South African. I don't regret what I am. I always tell them … not in a manner which is rude or showing that it hurt me. In fact, it doesn't hurt me any more. The problem is with learners when you are a foreigner … and especially when you are from Zimbabwe they think the worst because of what they see on TV, those squatter camps … that's what they associate you with. During the first days, honestly, it would affect me. These people don't even know you also have a life. I told myself I will never get angry. When you buckle down to dealing with those substantial sensitive issues when you have various opinions being shared … I allow them to discuss it, amplifying exactly what was happening in Zimbabwe … for them to understand … Last week they wrote a poem about Indian children and there were questions which were so racial … we dealt with them … even going on to explain why there is a need for people to understand, to appreciate different cultures. You give examples in class because we have got Indians, Coloureds, and Blacks. They also ridicule your pronunciation. … I said: "Anyone from England in this class? So it is a second

language to all of us. We should appreciate the differences". Simple. Now they joke about it. So it's no problem any more.

Celine's response to the hostility leveled at her in the classroom is reminiscent of Hattam and Every's (2010, p. 422) articulation of a post-indignation pedagogy framed by (re)conciliation. In the face of the symbolic violence that is meted out to her because she embodies a teacher identity that is different from her students, instead of wielding her pedagogical and epistemological authority punitively, Celine enacts pedagogical practices that are laced with gestures of restorative justice, and conciliation rather than persecution, incrimination and confrontation. Like Ibrahaim (2005), rather than succumb to the script that could render her a hostage at the hands of hostile students, Celine employs her foreignness as a resource; as transformative pedagogic capital and a source for deliberative and critical dialogue. In addition to dealing with sensitive political issues that touch her at a personal level, she educates her students that difference should not be misrecognized as deficit. Through a radical presence she establishes conditions in which dialogue is possible. In doing so she invents new modes of relationship through fearless speech (Foucault in Hattam & Every, 2010, p. 422). This transforms her from a guest in a foreign classroom into a gracious and forgiving hostess. Celine's hospitable pedagogic response promotes the official South African education vision of promoting a society respectful of democracy, human dignity, and social justice (See Perumal, 2013).

Celine also comments on her attempts to re-position herself from peripheral professional participation to becoming more centrally involved in the mainstream activities of the school.

> … this coming holiday there is training for Grade 10 teachers, I'm not teaching Grade 10s but I asked the principal if I could join so that I could benefit. It's the first cluster meeting I'm going to. We discuss the syllabus … ask for more support … more workshops …

Her responses to the debilitating xenophobic reception are illustrative of how a critical pedagogy of place can serve as a decolonizing strategy that promotes centrality and social recognition.

In order to help make sense of the varying postures of resistance that the participants display in their narratives, Freire's (1995) identification of three stages of critical conscientization is insightful, namely: (i) One with intransitive consciousness sees life as irrevocably set in place, without human agency. At this level, one does not imagine changing life; life is what it is. (ii) One with semi-transitive consciousness has a worldview in which cause and effect operate in fragmented ways. At this level, people can learn and change things and the semi-transitive person goes about changing one thing at a time. (iii) The critically transitive or critically conscious person recognizes connections between individual problems and the social context within which they are embedded. Furthermore, their varying responses to their locations illustrate Fraser's (2008) postsocialist political imaginary, in which the central problems of justice are cultural recognition and identity recognition as they emerge from sameness and differences.

5. Conclusion

The teachers' narratives in this study highlight the importance of recognizing the contexts in which teachers ply their trade and the positive and negative experiences that they undergo by virtue of being located in particular environments. In trying to understand these positive and negative pedagogic experiences, the article drew on Buell's (1995), and Fraser's (2008) theoretical constructs to

analyze the participants' experiences. The environmental materiality within which the participants practiced their profession testified that socio-economic resource redistribution remains a crucial pre-requisite in realizing a socially just and responsive pedagogy. It fell to teachers (like Leslie and Dina) to contribute towards attempting to eradicate economic injustice. The social perceptions or constructions that the teachers formed within their respective teaching contexts were illustrated in Celine, Regina, and Surie's narratives. As individuals whose presence was unwelcomed within their school contexts, these participants adopted coping strategies that enabled them to decolonize and re-inhabit places that were hostile to them by virtue of their different linguistic, racial, and national status. By forming affective bonds or fostering feelings of disaffection in relation to one's location within a teaching community, the narratives highlighted the importance of recognizing the nature of teachers' employment contracts and whether they are temporary or permanent members of staff; whether they were locals, migrant or immigrants as this could affect their sense of belonging and rootedness within their places of work.

Fraser's (2008) distinctions among economic, political and cultural distribution, redistribution, contribution, and recognition and misrecognition helped to give credence to the contention that educators carry particular social, ideological, cultural and geographical repertoires. When these repertoires are brought into the teaching/learning theater, the varying accents teachers place on their identities reassert the non-essentiality and provisionality of their subject positions and provide a lens to explore the ways in which their rights to social justice are compromised/denied or celebrated by virtue of their difference or sameness. It highlights the particular and contextually embodied expressions of teachers' insertion into interpersonal relations, and challenges them to examine their own claims to centrality and marginality.

Issues of centrality and marginality are at the forefront of the post Apartheid South African social justice redress agenda, because they provide a benchmark against which to assess the relevance and effectiveness of legislation pertaining to education policy and practice. In reflecting on the importance of attending to critical pedagogies of place the following important issues emerged:

Firstly, the participants' narratives highlight the need for teacher education to help teachers how to be in the place they are, critical pedagogies of place must include an element of meta-analysis: learning how to learn how to be in a place, because teacher mobility is a real possibility within the profession. Secondly, allied to teacher mobility and critical pedagogies is the importance of negotiating one's own difference in terms of race, class, language, nationality, etc. in relation to the diversity that the context presents. Thirdly, there is a need to educate teachers about how to be transformative intellectuals who advocate for broader social justice while ensuring that their own right to socially just practice is not compromised or denied. Finally, there is a need to recognize teachers not as disembodied intellectuals but to appreciate them as fully human whose emotional and physiological landscapes affect their work and productivity levels.

Acknowledgments

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