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Theoretical Foundations for Social Justice Education

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What is Social Justice?

Social justice is both a goal and a process. The *goal* of social justice is full and equitable participation of people from all social identity groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. The *process* for attaining the goal of social justice should also be democratic and participatory, respectful of human diversity and group differences, and inclusive and affirming of human agency and capacity for working collaboratively with others to create change. Domination cannot be ended through coercive tactics that recreate domination in new forms. Thus, a "power with" vs. "power over" (Kreisberg, 1992) paradigm is necessary for enacting social justice goals. Forming coalitions and working collaboratively with diverse others is an essential part of social justice.

Our *vision* for social justice is a world in which the distribution of resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure, recognized, and treated with respect. We envision a world in which individuals are both self-determining (able to develop their full capacities) and interdependent (capable of interacting democratically with others). Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others, their society, the environment, and the broader world in which we live. These are conditions we not only wish for ourselves but for all people in our interdependent global community.

What Is Justice?

Philosophers and others have long debated the question, "What constitutes justice?" Our definition of social justice draws on theories that describe justice as a fair and equitable *distribution of resources* (Rawls, 1999, 2003) with the imperative to address those who are least advantaged (Rawls, 2001). We also draw on theories that affirm the importance of fair and

equitable *social processes* (Young, 2011), including recognition and respect for marginalized or subjugated cultures and groups (Young, 1990). We see these two aspects as intertwining, acknowledging that social justice must address *both* resources and recognition. Resources include fair distribution of social, political, and symbolic, as well as economic, assets. Recognition and respect for all individuals and groups requires full inclusion and participation in decision-making and the power to shape the institutions, policies, and processes that affect their lives.

Diversity and social justice are distinct though interconnected terms. *Diversity* refers to differences among social groups such as ethnic heritage, class, age, gender, sexuality, ability, religion, and nationality. These differences are reflected in historical experiences, language, cultural practices, and traditions that ought to be affirmed and respected. Concrete and genuine knowledge of different groups, their histories, experiences, ways of making meaning, and values is important to the social justice goal of recognition and respect.

Social justice refers to reconstructing society in accordance with principles of equity, recognition, and inclusion. It involves eliminating the *injustice* created when differences are sorted and ranked in a hierarchy that unequally confers power, social, and economic advantages, and institutional and cultural validity to social groups based on their location in that hierarchy (Adams, 2014; Johnson, 2005). Social justice requires confronting the ideological frameworks, historical legacies, and institutional patterns and practices that structure social relations unequally so that some groups are advantaged at the expense of other groups that are marginalized. In our view, diversity and social justice are inextricably bound together. Without truly valuing diversity, we cannot effectively address issues of injustice. Without addressing issues of injustice, we cannot truly value diversity.

What Is Social Justice Education?

The definition of social justice education presented in this book includes both an *interdisciplinary conceptual framework* for analyzing multiple forms of oppression and their intersections, as well as *a set of interactive, experiential pedagogical principles and methods/practices*. In this book, we use the term "oppression" rather than discrimination, bias, prejudice, or bigotry to emphasize the pervasive nature of social inequality that is woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. The conceptual framework and pedagogical approach of social justice education provide tools for examining how oppression operates both in the social system and in the personal lives of individuals from diverse communities.

The goal of social justice education is to enable individuals to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand the structural features of oppression and their own socialization within oppressive systems. Social justice education aims to help participants develop

awareness, knowledge, and processes to examine issues of justice/injustice in their personal lives, communities, institutions, and the broader society. It also aims to connect analysis to action; to help participants develop a sense of agency and commitment, as well as skills and tools, for working with others to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and in the institutions and communities of which they are a part.

Working for social justice in a society and world steeped in oppression is no simple feat. For this reason, we need clear ways to define and analyze forms of oppression in order to discern how they operate at individual, cultural, institutional, and structural levels, historically and in the present. We hope the theoretical framework presented here—the pedagogical processes presented in Chapter 2, the facilitation and design information in Chapter 3, and the core concepts and introductory design presented in Chapter 4—will help readers make sense of, and hopefully act, more effectively against oppressive circumstances as these arise in different contexts.

Why Theory?

Articulating the theoretical sources of our approach to social justice education serves several important purposes. First, theory enables social justice educators to think clearly about our intentions and the means we use to actualize them in educational contexts/settings. It provides a framework for making choices about what we do and how, and for distinguishing among different approaches. Second, at its best, theory also provides a framework for questioning and challenging our practices so that we remain open to new approaches as we encounter inevitable problems of cooptation, resistance, insufficient knowledge, and changing social conditions. Ideally, we will keep coming back to and refining our theory as we read emerging scholarship on oppression, participate in and learn from social justice movements, and continually reflect upon the myriad ways oppression can alternately seduce our minds and hearts, or inspire us to further learning and activism. Finally, theory has the potential to help us stay conscious of our position as historically and geographically situated subjects, able to learn from the past as we try to meet current conditions in the specific contexts in which we live, in more effective and imaginative ways.

Understanding Oppression

Oppression is the term we use to embody the interlocking forces that create and sustain injustice. In this book, we focus on how oppression is manifested through racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, transgender oppression, religious oppression, ableism, and youth and elder oppression. In order to work toward a vision of justice, it is essential to understand how

oppression operates institutionally and personally in everyday life. The features of oppression that social justice educational strategies are intended to expose, analyze, and challenge can be seen as interwoven strands in a social fabric that renders oppression durable, flexible, and resilient, as shown in Fig. 1.1. In order to work against oppression effectively, we need to understand the component strands and how they weave together to reinforce and strengthen each other in maintaining an oppressive system.

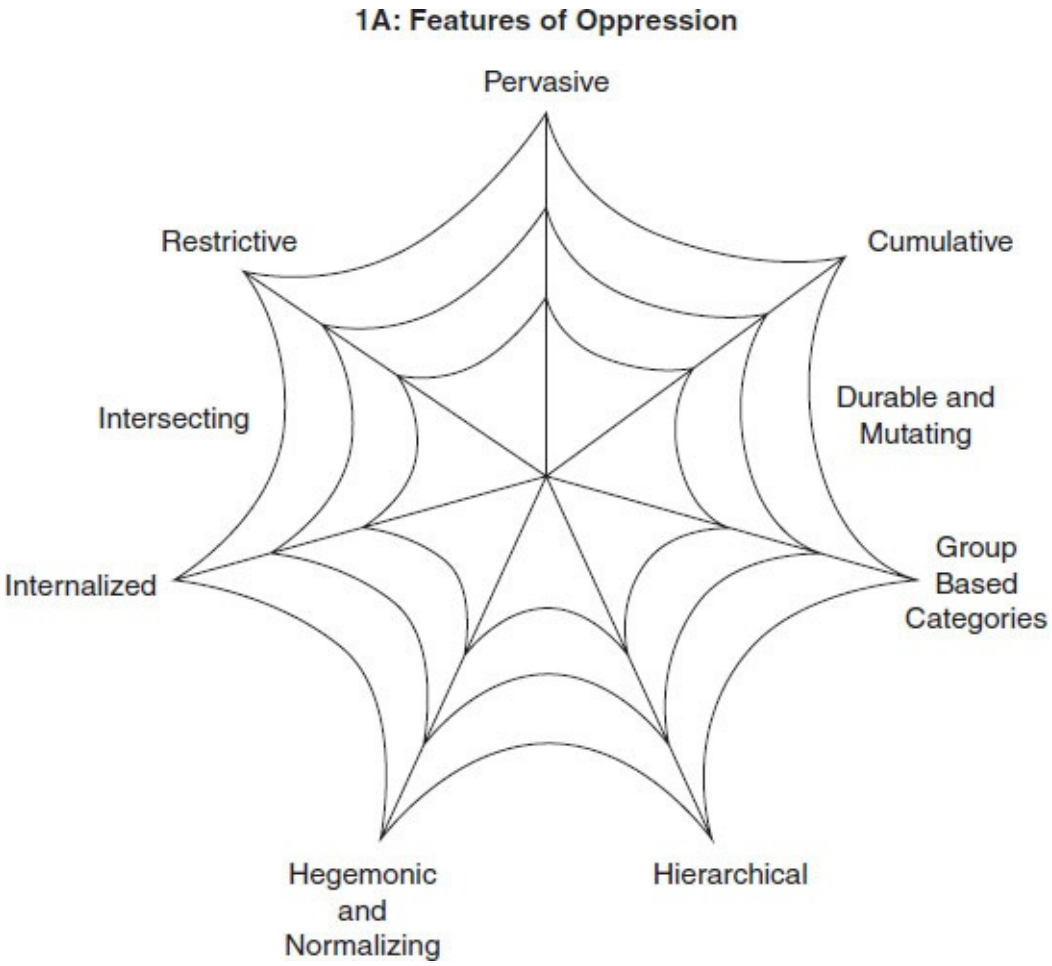

Figure 1.1 Features of Oppression

The dictionary definition of oppression includes such terms as domination, coercion, cruelty, tyranny, subjugation, persecution, harassment, and repression. These terms describe important overt features of oppression but do not capture the more subtle and covert aspects of how oppression is normalized in everyday life. Below we define and discuss both overt and subtle features that characterize oppression as restrictive, pervasive, and cumulative; socially constructed, categorizing, and group-based; hierarchical, normalized, and hegemonic; intersectional and internalized; and durable and mutable. These features are illustrated with examples that show how they interlock with one another to sustain the overall system. While presented as separate terms, these features in fact interweave and mutually reinforce each other in ways that are not as simple to tease apart as a list of discrete terms might suggest.

Rather, they should be understood as interlocking constituent parts of a dynamic process.

Restrictive

On the most general level, oppression denotes structural and material constraints that significantly shape life opportunities and sense of possibility. Oppression restricts both self-development and self-determination, delimiting the person one can imagine becoming as well as the power to act in support of one's rights and aspirations. It encapsulates the fusion of institutional/systemic discrimination with personal bias, bigotry, and social prejudice through a complex web of relationships and structures that saturate everyday life. For example, the national mythology of the American Dream claims that anyone who works hard enough can get ahead, yet evidence shows that people who grow up poor today have the same odds of staying poor as their grandparents did, regardless of how hard they work or what their aspirations are. Further, intergenerational mobility in the U.S. is significantly lower than other countries (Chetty, Hendren, Kline, Saez, & Turner, 2014).

Pervasive

Oppression is institutionalized through pervasive practices grounded in history, law, economic policy, social custom, and education that rationalize and maintain hierarchies among individuals and groups. Individuals are socialized into this system and internalize the dynamics that sustain it. Woven together through time and reinforced in the present, these individual, interpersonal, and institutional practices interact to create and mutually reinforce an all-encompassing, pervasive system. The more institutionalized, sophisticated, and embedded these practices become, the more difficult it is to see how they have been constructed in the first place and how they have come to be taken for granted as inevitable and unchangeable. For example, the pervasiveness of racism is spread across multiple institutions in our society that mutually reinforce one another. Racial profiling by police, employment discrimination, negative images in the media, the inability to get bank loans at the same rates as whites, under-resourced schools, and inadequate health care all interact to support a pervasive system of racism (see Chapter 5).

Cumulative

Oppression accumulates through institutional and social patterns, grounded in history, whose effects aggregate over time. Historical context and detail can reveal the relationships between particular actions, practices, and policies from the past and their structural and cumulative outcomes in the present. For example, the racial wealth gap that exists today is rooted in

slavery and genocide that set white and non-Native people on the road to wealth at the expense of enslaved Africans, dispossessed Native Americans, and exploited Asian and Latino workers. In order to address the racial wealth gap that exists today, it is important to understand the pervasive and cumulative factors that created and continue to sustain it.

For example, the current situation of extreme poverty and isolation of Native American peoples is a result of a long legacy of historical, legal, economic, and educational policies that stripped them of land, rights, cultures, religious practices, and languages through forced relocation, conversion, mass extermination, boarding schools aimed at "removing the Indian" from the child, and paternalistic government oversight. Stereotypes and misinformation perpetuated through movies, textbooks, and popular culture sanitize and rationalize this history.

The corresponding benefits for non-Native people, who profit from appropriated Indian land and wealth that has grown exponentially over centuries, are rendered invisible. Today, the relative success of the non-Native, white majority is attributed to their work ethic and character, while the lack of success of Native peoples is ascribed to problems in their communities rather than the historical, political processes that create and sustain differential outcomes. Mainstream television, media, children's books, cartoons, and popular culture socialize non-Indians to view Native people as quaint artifacts of the past who have vanished or as mascots for sports teams and wealthy casino owners. Most non-Indian people in the U.S. know very little about the present circumstances of Native peoples, their living cultures, or how government policies constructed and perpetuate the dire circumstances they face. Likewise, most non-Native people are unaware of their share in the cumulative benefits reaped from this process of dispossession. All of these conditions combine to describe the pervasive impact of the oppression Native Americans face as a result of racism, colonialism, religious oppression, and economic imperialism.

The cumulative properties of oppression are also evident in the concept of microaggressions. These are the daily, constant, often subtle, and seemingly innocuous, covert and overt negative messages and actions directed toward people from marginalized groups (Sue, 2010). Because they are incessant and difficult to respond to, they take a cumulative toll on the psyche of individuals who are oppressed. Microaggressions "are in fact, a form of everyday suffering that have been socially and systemically normalized and in effect minimized" (Huber & Solorzano, 2015, p. 304). They show the tangible, cumulative ways oppression manifests in the daily lives of people who experience them.

Socially Constructed Categories

Social construction is the process by which society categorizes groups of people. In the U.S., constructed social categories are based on race, class, gender, sexuality, age, religion, and other

social markers. The ways in which a society categorizes social identity groups are embedded in its history, geography, patterns of immigration, and social-political context. The group categories upon which oppression is based, such as gender roles or racial designations, are not "real," but through implicit beliefs and social practices that operate as if real, they become so in practice. Social constructions are used to rationalize differential treatment or allocation of resources and to explain social reality in ways that make inequitable outcomes seem inevitable.

For example, the construction of distinct racial groups was produced to justify particular social, economic, and political practices that justified the enslavement, extermination, segregation, and exploitation of other "races." The meaning-making system of race gained force and power through its reproduction in the material practices of the society across historical eras. Anti-miscegenation laws and segregation in housing, employment, schooling, and other areas of social life reproduced and reinforced race as a social category. Thus, using, and continuing to use, race to allocate resources and opportunities made race real in practice. Today, the idea of race is so taken for granted that it is difficult to see the apparatus that created it in the first place (Leonardo, 2013).

The social construction of gender provides another example. Gender divides humans into categories of male and female with dichotomous masculine or feminine identities, traits, and social roles. A socialization process that treats presumed gender differences as innate reinforces these constructs and makes them appear "natural" (i.e., that there are only two genders—male and female; or that boys are naturally active and rambunctious, while girls are passive and sweet). Such assumptions are supported and reinforced through social norms, roles, and interpersonal and organizational practices that regard and treat males and females accordingly. The assumption that females are innately more emotional and empathic than males is reflected in an organization of labor that slots females in the majority of caretaking roles and positions, where they typically earn lower wages than men, face limits on advancement, and remain the primary caretakers of both children and elders. Despite the many advances women have made in the past few decades, this division continues to show up in social science research on employment, the division of labor at work and at home, and prevalent stereotypes about male and female roles (World Economic Forum, 2014).

Social constructions presented as natural and inevitable are difficult to question and challenge. Once their provenance comes into question, however, imagining alternative scenarios becomes possible. Part of the work of social justice education and social justice movements is to expose and take apart oppressive constructs, understand how they have been created and maintained, and then reconstruct more just ways to organize social life. The construct of gender has been valuably problematized by queer theory (Turner, 2000). "A central endeavor of feminist, queer, and trans activists has been to dismantle the cultural ideologies, social practices, and legal norms that say that certain body parts determine gender

identity and gendered social characteristics and roles" (Spade, 2011, p. 61). Once this construction is challenged, the way is open to imagining a system of "gender self-determination for all people and to eliminating coercive systems that punish gender variance" (Spade, 2011, p. 59).

History, geography, patterns of immigration, and socio-political context are important to how identities are categorized and constructed. For example, the group labeled "Hispanic" in the United States is extremely diverse, comprised of people from many different countries of origin who speak various languages; they are from divergent racial, ethnic, and socio-economic groups and arrive in the United States under widely different conditions of immigration, colonization, or slavery, and over different time periods (Anzaldúa, 1987; Oboler, 1995). The category may include a Spanish-speaking, upper-class white man from Cuba as well as a dark-skinned, Mayan speaking, Indian woman from Guatemala. The dominant society lumps them together in a group labeled "Hispanic" to which certain attributions, assumptions, and stereotypes are applied. Yet their experiences are so divergent as to have little in common at all but for the common group experience of cultural, ethnic, and linguistic oppression based on their categorization and location in a U.S. hierarchy. Indeed, this lumping is often the basis for political organizing among different groups labeled Latino/as who organize as a pan-Latino/a group. The same is true for pan-Asian organizing that cuts across national origins, language, conditions of immigration, and other factors.

Individuals, of course, push back against limiting labels, often through reclaiming and redefining these terms. Social group identities can be consciously embraced and affirmed as a fundamental aspect of self-definition in opposition to oppression. The emergence of black consciousness, gay pride, feminist solidarity, disability rights, the gray panthers, red power, la raza, and other self-chosen labels demonstrates the significance of self-ascribed group status for resisting devaluation by the dominant society (Young, 1990). In fact, individuals may embrace multiple self-ascriptions and align with others in complex coalitions that defy easy categorization ("crips" of color, black lesbian feminists, QTPOC (queer &/or trans people of color). Social justice is concerned with recognizing and respecting the differences and distinctions valued by diverse individuals and groups, not with forcing conformity to a unitary norm, while at the same time challenging hierarchies that divide and discriminate among groups.

In actual practice, neither individual identities nor social groups are homogeneous or stable. Identity categories interact with and co-constitute one another in different geographic and historical contexts to create unique social locations (Hankivsky, 2014). Essentialist notions of group identity as fixed ignore the fluid and changing ways that people experience themselves, both as individuals and as members of different social groups, over the course of a lifetime (Anzaldúa, 1987; Hurtado, 2003; Mohanty, Russo, & Torres, 1991). We need to "recognize the ways in which positions of dominance and subordination work in complex and intersecting

ways to constitute a subject's experiences of personhood" (Nash, 2008). Queer theory pushes further to challenge and deconstruct categories of identity that have been normalized and to question assumptions of uniformity within groups that mask important differences among individuals inside any particular category (Marcus, 2005; Warner, 1999). "Despite our desperate, eternal attempt to separate, contain, and mend, categories always leak" (Trinh, 1989, p. 94).

Power Hierarchies

Social groups are sorted into a hierarchy that confers advantages, status, resources, access, and privilege that are denied or rationed to those lower in the hierarchy. Social groups are not simply different, but ranked in a hierarchy. Thus, individuals are positioned as *dominant* or *advantaged* in relation to other groups that are *subordinated* or *disadvantaged*. Power hierarchies create and maintain a system of advantage and disadvantage based on social group membership.

Dominant groups hold the power and authority to control, in their own interests, the important institutions in society, determine how resources are allocated, and define what is natural, good, and true. They are seen as superior, more capable, and more credible—as normal—compared to those who are differently situated. People in dominant groups are socialized to accept their group's socially advantaged status as normal and deserved, rather than recognizing how it has been conferred through systems of inequality. Thus, one of the privileges of dominant group status is the luxury to see oneself as simply an individual. Group status is typically invisible and unmarked, as is evident in how jarring it is when someone comments on maleness or whiteness or straightness in most settings. A white man, for example, is rarely defined by "whiteness" or "maleness." If he does well at his job, he is acknowledged as a highly qualified individual. If he does poorly, the blame is attributed to him alone.

Subordinated or marginalized groups are represented as less than, inferior, and/or deviant. People who are oppressed are not seen as individuals but as representatives or members of social groups (Cudd, 2006; Young, 1990). For people in subordinated groups, social group membership trumps individuality. They can never fully escape being defined by their social group memberships and the ascriptions the dominant society applies to their group. A Puerto Rican woman, for example, may wish to be viewed as an individual and acknowledged for her personal talents and abilities. Yet she can never fully escape the dominant society's assumptions about her racial/ethnic group, language, and gender. If she excels in her work, she may be seen as atypical or exceptional. If she does poorly, she may be seen as representative of the limitations of her group. In either case, she rises or falls not solely on the basis of individual qualities, but always partly as a member of the social group(s) with which

she is identified.

Thus, those in subordinated groups are caught in a contradiction created by an oppressive system that claims they are free individuals but treats them according to group status. Whether or not individuals in the same social group define themselves in the same way, they must deal with the stereotypes and assumptions attributed to their group and used to rationalize hierarchical relationships. A person's self-defined group identity may be central, as religious identity is to a traditionally observant Jew or Muslim. Or it may be mainly background, only becoming salient in certain interactional contexts, as Jewish identity may become for an assimilated Jew when confronted with antisemitism, or as Muslim identity may become for an Arab or Indian targeted by anti-Muslim prejudice (Malik, 2010). Regardless, they must struggle for individual self-definition within the burden of oppressive attributions, assumptions, and practices toward their group(s).

Young (1990) developed the concept of five faces of oppression to distinguish families of concepts or conditions that constitute oppression differently in the lives of different groups. The five faces are: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. In our teaching, we often use these five terms as a heuristic device to illustrate the shared and different ways oppression plays out and is experienced among different groups of people. In some of the ism chapters in this book, the five faces are used as a tool to examine how oppression operates for that oppression (see Chapter 8, Religious Oppression, and Chapter 9, Ableism, for examples).

Hegemonic and Normalized

The concept of hegemony was developed by Gramsci to explain how domination and control are maintained not only through coercion but also through the voluntary consent of both those who are dominated and those who gain advantage because of the oppression of others (Simon, 2002). Through hegemony, the reproduction of advantage and disadvantage come to be assumed as natural, normal, "business as usual," even by those who are disempowered.

Woven so effectively into the social fabric, the processes and effects of oppression become normalized, thus making it difficult to step outside of the system to discern how it operates—like fish trying to understand the water in which they swim. For example, the exclusion of people with disabilities from many jobs does not require overt discrimination against them. Business as usual is sufficient to prevent change. Physical barriers to access go unnoticed by those who can walk up the stairs, reach elevator buttons and telephones, use furniture and tools that fit their bodies and functional needs, and generally move in a world that is designed to facilitate their passage, and thus support and maintain policies that seem perfectly natural and fair from the privileged vantage point of those not affected.

In hegemonic systems, power is relational and dynamic, something that circulates within a

web of relationships in which we all participate, rather than something imposed from top down (Foucault, 1980). Power operates not simply through persons or groups unilaterally imposing their will on others, but through ongoing systems that are mediated by well-intentioned people acting, usually unconsciously, as agents of oppression by merely going about their daily lives. Hegemony and structural injustice are thus produced and reproduced by "thousands or millions of persons usually acting within institutional rules and according to practices that most people regard as morally acceptable" (Young, 2011, p. 4). In such a system, responsibility for oppression often cannot be isolated to individual or institutional agents but is rather more indirect, collective, and cumulative.

Hegemony is also maintained through "discourse," which includes ideas, texts, theories, language, and ideology. These are embedded in networks of social and political control that Foucault (1980) called "regimes of truth." Regimes of truth operate to legitimize what can be said, who has the authority to speak, and what is sanctioned as true (Kreisberg, 1992). For example, until women began speaking out about spousal abuse, a husband's authority to physically control his wife often went unchallenged, rendered invisible through the language of family privacy and presumptions of sexual consent in marriage. Received wisdom that young people are irresponsible and immature, or that old people are no longer capable of contributing to society in meaningful ways, are other examples of hegemonic discourse.

Through hegemony, the roles and rules, institutional norms, historical accounts, and social practices of dominant groups come to be accepted as the natural order. The advantages of dominant groups and the disadvantages of marginalized groups are normalized through language, ideology, and cultural/material practices. For example, despite rhetoric that the United States is a secular nation, Christian symbols, holidays, and rituals are routinely integrated into public affairs and institutions. Other religious and spiritual traditions held by large numbers of Americans, including Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and Native Americans, are invisible or marginalized, so much so that when members of these groups protest, they are often viewed as challenging the American (i.e., Christian) way of life (Kruse, 2015) (see Chapter 8).

In a similar vein, the material and other advantages of whites as a group are normalized and justified as fair and deserved. As a group, whites earn more money and accumulate more assets than African Americans, Native Americans, and Latina/os; hold the majority of positions of power and influence; and command the controlling institutions in society (Demos, 2015; Lipsitz, 2006; Oliver & Shapiro, 2006). White-dominated institutions restrict the life expectancy, infant mortality, income, housing, employment, and educational opportunities of people in these groups, while enhancing opportunities for white people (Smelser, Wilson, & Mitchell, 2001). When we look beneath the normalizing assumptions that support the status quo, we can see that advantages are not the inevitable result of hard work in a fair system, but rather the created effects of a system rigged in favor of whites in countless and cumulative

ways (see Chapter 5).

Internalized

Through the process of socialization, members of a society appropriate and internalize social norms and beliefs to make meaning of their experiences (Vygotsky, 1978) and to fit in, conform, and survive. As part of this process, people learn and incorporate oppressive stereotypes and beliefs reflected in the broader society. Such stereotypes and beliefs circulate through everyday language and cultural scripts (L. A. Bell, 2003; Bonilla-Silva, Lewis, & Embrick, 2004) that frame their assumptions and interactions with others. In this way, oppression is internalized so that it operates not only through external social institutions and norms, but also through discourse and practice (Fanon, 1968; Freire, 1970; Memmi, 1965; Miller, 1976).

The processes of socialization and internalization illustrate how an unjust status quo comes to be accepted and replicated by those who benefit as well as by those who suffer from oppressive norms. Attribution and internalization are thus reciprocal and mutually reinforcing processes. People may adopt oppressive beliefs and stereotypes attributed to their group, regardless of their particular social locations. To varying degrees, poor people and affluent people alike internalize the attribution that people who are poor deserve and are responsible for poverty, and that the success of wealthy people is merited and deserved. Attributions that youth are irresponsible and incapable of serious commitments, or that elders are slow and less vital than middle-aged people in their "prime," are taken as true by people of all ages.

Conditions of oppression in everyday life are reinforced when we accept systems of domination without question or challenge. As eloquently put by Audre Lorde, "the true focus of revolutionary change is to see the piece of the oppressor inside us" (1984, p. 123). Both those who are advantaged and those who are penalized play a role in maintaining oppression. When members of penalized groups accept and incorporate negative attributions of their group fostered by the dominant society, they collude in supporting the system of oppression (Fanon, 1968; Freire, 1970; Memmi, 1965; Miller, 1976). They may go along because they internalize the false belief that the system is legitimate and/or as a means of survival. Women, for example, may actively accept the belief that men are more capable in politics and business and women more naturally suited to housework and childcare, and unquestioningly adopt assumptions about female limitations and negative stereotypes of women as weak, overemotional, and irrational. Or women may consciously reject such stereotypes, but go along with male dominance as a means of survival, because to challenge may mean risking jobs, relationships, and physical security. Internalized subordination exacts a psychic toll, generating feelings of powerlessness, inferiority, and even self-hatred. It may prompt hiding oneself from others, resignation, isolation, and hopelessness in those who go along with it (Pheterson, 1990).

Those in advantaged positions also adopt and internalize oppression and perpetuate norms, policies, and practices that support the status quo. Through internalized domination, individuals in the advantaged group learn to look at themselves, others, and the broader society through a distorted lens in which the structural privileges they enjoy and the cultural practices of their group are taken to be universal, superior, and deserved (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Piff, 2014). Internalized domination has psychic consequences, too, including false feelings of superiority, self-consciousness, guilt, fear, projection, and denial (Frankenberg, 1993; Pharr, 1988).

Internalized domination and internalized subordination can cause members of both dominant and subordinated groups to devalue or turn on members of their own group who challenge the status quo (Bivens, 2005). Such "horizontal hostility" (Freire, 1970; White & Langer, 1999) blocks solidarity and prevents organizing for change. For example, GLBTQ people who stay in the closet in order to survive may resent activists who insist on publicly working to challenge discrimination against their group. This division within the community helps to maintain the system of heterosexism and transgender oppression, and prevents solidarity and working together for change. People in dominant groups also engage in horizontal hostility toward members of their group who challenge the status quo. For example, white people label other white people who challenge racist practices as "troublemakers," "extremists," or "bleeding hearts." Pressure against rocking the boat or "making trouble" can keep people in dominant positions from challenging inequality and discrimination. By simply doing nothing and going along with business as usual, people perpetuate an unequal status quo.

Internalization and collusion are further complicated by the fact that most people, through the intersecting identities they hold, may experience privilege and penalty simultaneously. Thus, a middle-aged white woman may focus on the penalties she experiences based on a subordinated gender status but ignore the privileges she obtains through her dominant race and age status. A middle- or upper-class man with a disability may focus on his subordinated status as a disabled person and remain unaware of the privileges he receives through dominant class and male status.

However, internalized subordination and domination can be unlearned through consciousness-raising, examining and challenging oppressive attitudes and assumptions that have been internalized, and imagining and enacting new ways of being. Harro (2008) traces the way individuals learn and internalize their roles through interaction with family and other institutions in society. She also uses the same model to illustrate how individuals can come to consciousness about their roles in the system and take action at various points to challenge and change oppressive relationships and actions (Harro, 2008). Love (2013) calls this developing a liberatory consciousness (described further in the final section of this chapter).

Intersectional

Each form of oppression has distinctive qualities and historical/social legacies that distinguish it from other forms of oppression, and we believe that learning about the specific legacies and historical trajectories of different groups is critical for understanding the specific ways different forms of oppression operate. At the same time, we recognize that different forms of oppression interact with and co-constitute one another as interlocking systems that overlap and reinforce each other, at both the systemic/institutional level and at the individual/interpersonal level (Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 2003).

Telescoping in on a single form of oppression can provide valuable information for understanding the particular historical contexts and contemporary manifestations of that oppression. Panning out to focus on the broader pattern of interlocking systems yields important knowledge about general features of oppression that cut across specific forms and about how different forms mutually reinforce each other. Focusing on the intersections where different forms of oppression meet in the lives of particular individuals can reveal the differential impacts of varying locations within the overall system of oppression.

Racism and sexism, for example, can be examined as mutually reinforcing systems that operate according to similar principles of social construction, categorization and hierarchy, normalization, hegemony, etc. However, race and gender also operate in particular and distinctive ways depending on historical context and normative social practices. Understanding the distinctive ways in which racism and sexism function can be helpful for determining how best to challenge each one at a particular point in time (Luft, 2009). For example, Luft argues that given the essentialism with which gender is currently viewed by large numbers of people and renewed debates about "innate" gender differences at this particular moment in our history, a decision to focus on deconstructing gender roles and tracing the interests behind them may be most effective. Whereas, in an era where color blindness is constantly invoked to deny or minimize the existence of racism, a focus on deconstructing race may inadvertently support claims that the U.S. is "post-racial" and "beyond racism." In this case, a decision to demonstrate the reality of "race" in terms of social outcomes (poverty, incarceration, disenfranchisement, etc.) may be more effective for challenging racism (Luft, 2009).

Valuable learning about how oppression operates can also be drawn from pinpointing what happens to individuals and groups who are differently situated at the intersections of multiple oppressions. For example, the experiences of transgender people who are also poor and of color sheds light on how class and race can interact with gender expression to render some individuals and groups more invisible and expendable than others who may also be oppressed. Focusing on poor women of color, or homeless lesbians and trans women, provides another example where attention to the unique impacts of violence toward particularly situated

women can provide a more nuanced understanding of the problem of gender violence. Such an intersectional approach to gender violence can reveal how strategies predicated on the experiences of white, middle class, heterosexual, and cisgender women may not address the particular problems and obstacles faced by poor women, women of color, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender women because of their different locations within intersecting forms of oppression (Cho, 2013).

For each form of oppression, we can be purposeful in looking at how it intersects with other forms:

> We challenge individuals to see interconnections by "Asking the other question." When I see something that looks racist, I ask, "Where is the patriarchy in this?" When I see something that looks sexist, I ask, "Where is the heterosexism in this?" When I see something that looks homophobic, I ask, "Where are the class interests in this?"
>
> (Matsuda, 1987, p. 1189)

Intersectionality operates at the level of identity, as well as the level of institutions and the overall system, in ways that are multiplicative (Wing, 2003), and simultaneous (Holvino, 2012). Individuals experience their lives based on their location along all dimensions of identity and thus may occupy positions of dominance and subordination at the same time (Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 2003). For example, an upper-class professional man who is African American (still a very small percentage of African Americans overall) may enjoy economic success and professional status conferred through being male, and class privilege and perhaps dominant language and citizenship privilege as an English-speaking native-born citizen, yet face limitations not endured by co-workers who are white. Despite economic and professional status and success, he may be threatened by police, unable to hail a taxi, and endure hateful epithets as he walks down the street (Ogletree, 2012). The constellation of identities that shape his consciousness and experience as an African American man, and his varying access to privilege, may fluctuate if he is light or dark skinned; Ivy League educated or a high school dropout; heterosexual, gay, or transgender; incarcerated or unemployed; or a tourist in South Africa, Brazil, or Europe, where his racial status will be differently defined.

From our perspective, no single form of oppression is the base for all others; all are connected and mutually constituted in a system that makes them possible. We find it useful to identify where and how different isms coalesce or diverge in particular historical, geographical, and institutional periods (Weber, 2010) in order to understand the "technologies of categorization and control" (Wacquant, 1997, p. 343) that operate to discipline human beings to accept injustice. While Chapters 5–10 each zero in on one form of oppression, they also point to the interconnections with other forms throughout their discussion and design.

In our approach, we argue for the explanatory and political value of identifying the

particular histories, geographies, and characteristics of specific forms of oppression as well as the intersections across isms that mutually reinforce them at both the systemic and individual levels. Focusing on one facet of a prism does not remove it from its broader context, but provides a way to highlight and focus in order to ground learning at a particular point in time.

Durable and Mutable

A final feature of oppression is its resilience and ability to shape-shift into new forms to prevail against challenges to it. The civil rights movement was successful in eliminating de jure segregation, but the system of racism evolved to create new ways to segregate and discriminate while calling itself "post racial." Obviously, overt discrimination still exists, but racism has also become more subtle and insidious. For example, Haney-Lopez (2014) examines how overt racist appeals from politicians that were more prevalent in the past have morphed into coded language and images ("dog whistle politics"). Veiled statements that link public goods such as health care and welfare, to race have been successful in getting white voters to support policies that favor the wealthiest few, even though it harms their own self-interest in gaining access to these services.

Consequences for All

Oppression has consequences for everyone. People in both marginalized and advantaged groups are dehumanized by oppression (Freire, 1970). Thus, a goal of social justice education is to engage all people in recognizing the terrible costs of maintaining systems of oppression. For example, when millions of Americans are homeless and hungry, those who are comfortable pay a social and moral price. The cost of enjoying plenty while others starve is the inability to view our society as just and see ourselves as decent people. Just as important, it also prevents a clear view of underlying structural problems in the economic system that ultimately make all people vulnerable in a changing international economy that disregards national boundaries or allegiances. The productive and creative contributions of people who are shut out of the system are lost to everyone. Rising violence and urban decay make it increasingly difficult for anyone to feel safe. Reduced social supports, limited affordable housing, and scarcities of food and potable water loom as a possible future for all who are not independently wealthy, particularly as people reach old age.

The impetus for change more often comes from those on the margins, since they tend to see more clearly the contradictions between myths and reality and usually have the most incentive to change (Collins, 1990; Freire, 1970; Hartsock, 1983; Harding, 1991).The "subjugated knowledge" of oppressed groups defines the world and possibilities for human existence differently and offers valuable alternative analyses and visions of what is possible (Collins,

1990; Wing, 2003). Cho argues that "looking to the bottom" is an inclusionary way to understand oppression because "restructuring the world according to those who are multiply disadvantaged will likely and logically mean that those who are singularly disadvantaged will also be unburdened" (Matsuda, 1987, p. 2012). Listening to and learning from the analyses and experiences of members of multiply marginalized groups can lead to a clearer understanding of how oppression operates, and can suggest more imaginative alternatives for socially just relationships and institutional policies.

For example, in a world controlled by and built to accommodate supposedly able-bodied people, those who want to challenge ableism must discern the institutional, legal, social, and educational patterns and practices, as well as individual biases and assumptions, that restrict full access and participation of all people. Those who have direct experience with ableism are likely to be more aware of the barriers and to have ideas about how to make institutions and physical environments more inclusive.

Those advantaged by the system also have an important role to play in joining with others to challenge oppression. They can expose the way advantage works from the inside and articulate the social, moral, and personal costs of maintaining privilege. Those in dominant groups can learn to see that they have an investment in changing the system by which they benefit, by recognizing they also pay a price (Goodman, 2011). Some argue this commitment comes through friendship (Spelman, 1988), others that it comes only through mutual struggle for common political ends (Mohanty, Russo, & Torres, 1991). Throughout human history, there have always been people from advantaged groups who used their power and position to actively fight against systems of oppression (Aptheker, 1993; Wigginton, 1992; Zinn, 2003). White abolitionists, middle- and upper-class anti-poverty crusaders, and men who supported women's rights are examples. Those who are advantaged are able to unmask the role dominants play in maintaining the system and articulate the high moral and societal cost of privileged status in an unequal society (Thompson, Schaefer, & Brod, 2003).

Working for Social Justice

Given that systems of domination saturate both the external world and our individual psyches, how do we challenge and change them? In a context where we are all implicated, where we cannot escape our social location, how do we find standpoints from which to act (Lewis, 1993)? A commitment to social justice requires a moral and ethical attitude toward equality and possibility, and a belief in the capacity of people to transform their world (Freire, 1970; Weiler, 1991). Oppression is never complete; it is always open to challenge, as is evident if we understand history and learn lessons from past movements for justice. The next section discusses concepts that have been developed and successfully used in the struggle for social

justice in the past. These legacies, together with the creativity and ingenuity of current struggles, provide a set of practices that we can build on to guide social justice work in the present.

Develop a Critical Consciousness

Freire created the notion of critical consciousness in his work to help Brazilian peasants become aware of the political and social patterns that enforced their oppression, rather than accept these conditions as fated or inevitable (1970). Critical consciousness meant working in solidarity with others to question, analyze, and challenge oppressive conditions in their lives rather than blame each other or fate. The goal of critical consciousness is to develop awareness or mindfulness of the social and political factors that create oppression, to analyze the patterns that sustain oppression and the interests it serves, and to take action to work democratically with others to reimagine and remake the world in the interest of all.

Critical consciousness connects the personal with the socio-political to understand both external systems of oppression and the ways they are internalized by individuals. Feminist consciousness-raising groups in the early 1970s sought to help women make these connections through examining patriarchal structures in the family and other institutions while exploring how women internalized patriarchal ideas and values as appropriate and/or inevitable. Through consciousness-raising groups, women collectively uncovered and deconstructed the ways that the system of patriarchy is reproduced inside women's consciousness as well as in external social institutions. In so doing, they challenged conventional assumptions about human nature, sexuality, family life, and gender roles and relations (Combahee River Collective, 1986; Evans, 1979; Firestone, 1970). Feminist practice also sought to create and enact new, more liberating ways of thinking and behaving as equals in society. Consciousness-raising processes are a powerful way to examine and critique normative assumptions and our own, often unconscious, investments in supporting them. Consciousness-raising processes have been fruitful for many oppressed groups seeking to raise awareness about their situation.

Deconstruct the Binaries

Gay and lesbian rights activists in the 1980s and 1990s exposed normative assumptions about family, love, relationships, and gender roles to analyze straight supremacy and heteronormativity (Gilreath, 2011). Queer and transgender scholars and activists question binary categories and assumptions of uniformity within any constructed category. The inadequacy of defining the experience of individuals and groups in simplistic binary terms is reflected in the work of bisexual and transgender people within feminist and gay/lesbian

movements who refuse the categories as well as their content (Butler, 2004) and experiment with multiple ways of expressing and enacting identities. Since oppression works through setting up dualistic frames that privilege some groups and exclude others, deconstructing the binaries and recognizing the individual and social complexities and variety they hide can be an important tool for change. Activists and educators in a range of social movements have analyzed how binary categories work to perpetuate oppression, while at the same time deconstructing and exploding categories that sort and rank people into either/or boxes (black/white, straight/gay, male/female, young/old, disabled/non-disabled). This experimentation with categories to push back against the binary categorizations through which oppression operates is evident in a range of social movements.

Draw on Counter-Narratives

Critical Race Theory (CRT) analyzes and challenges mainstream narratives in law, history, and popular culture that uphold the status quo (D. Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2013; Matsuda, 1996). Through counter-storytelling, CRT seeks to destabilize "stock stories" that valorize the legitimacy of dominant groups. Critical historical methods draw on counter-narratives to "demarginalize" (Davis & Wing, 2000) and center the roles that Native American people, working class people, African Americans, immigrants from various ethnic backgrounds, Latina/os, Asian Americans, people with disabilities, and women of all groups have played in challenging oppression (Fleischer & Zames, 2001; Lerner, 1986; Zinn, 2003, 2004). Such counter-narratives unearth suppressed and hidden stories of marginalized groups, including stories of their resistance to the status quo, and provide evidence as well as hope that oppressive circumstances can change through the efforts of human actors (L. A. Bell, 2010). Historical counter-narratives show, for example, how diverse coalitions organized to abolish slavery, extend suffrage to women, create unions and improve working conditions for laborers, challenge anti-immigrant policies, fight for Native sovereignty, and advocate for gay/lesbian and transgender rights.

A critical historical approach requires an understanding of history as not linear but rather multiple and simultaneous:

> The events and people we write about did not occur in isolation but in dialogue with a myriad of other people and events. In fact, at any given moment millions of people are all talking at once. As historians we try to isolate one conversation and to explore it, but the trick is then how to put that conversation in a context which makes evident its dialogue with so many others—how to make this one lyric stand alone and at the same time be in connection with all the other lyrics being sung.
>
> (Barkley-Brown, 1991, p. 2)

The counter-stories to the status quo developed within different social movements and inspire emerging social movements today. The civil rights movement continues to excite the imagination of people here and around the world who apply its lessons to an understanding of their particular situations and adapt its analyses and tactics to their own struggles for equality. Just as Native American, Asian American, Chicano, and Puerto Rican youth in the 1960s and 1970s styled themselves after African-American youth in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Black Panther Party (Marabel, 1984; Oboler, 1995; Okihiro,1994), young people today draw from and expand upon these images to inspire their own activism.

We can also learn from new counter-stories that emerge to build on, challenge, and reinvent older counter-stories. For example, building resistance through discovering and claiming a shared identity was a critical part of social movements following colonialism (Memmi, 1965). Emerging movements today draw from these stories, but they understand that identity politics has limitations that can prevent people from seeing dynamics across issues and communities and prevent effective cross-group understanding and coalition building (Guinier & Torres, 2002). As they work across multiple identities and projects, they fashion new counter-stories about how oppression works and how diverse coalitions can strategize to challenge the status quo.

As formerly marginalized or hidden historical stories are reclaimed, people in the present weave anew an understanding of the interconnections among struggles for justice. The more we know about the historical experiences and perspectives of diverse peoples, the more we are able to understand the interlocking systems that produce inequality. As importantly, we gain ideas and strategies for working with diverse others across coalitions in more effective, inclusive, and egalitarian ways (Bly & Wooten, 2012; Roberts & Jesudason, 2013).

Analyze Power

Another lesson from earlier social movements is the need to examine the dynamics of power and the interests it serves. Such analyses remind us to continually ask the questions, "In whose interest do systems operate?" and "Who benefits and who pays?" regarding prevailing practices. These questions help to expose hierarchical relationships and hidden advantages and penalties embedded in purportedly fair and neutral systems. They reveal how power operates through normalizing relations of domination by presenting certain ideas and practices as rational and self-evident, as part of the natural order. Once people begin to question what has previously been taken for granted, the way is open to imagine new possibilities and practices.

New Left movements of the 1960s drew on Marxist theory to shift the focus to the structural rather than individual factors that maintain oppressive economic and social

relations. They critique as anti-democratic normative assumptions that conflated democracy with capitalism and stigmatize alternative ways to arrange economic and social life. Grounded initially in anti-racist civil rights movements, the New Left critiqued the hypocrisy of espousing ideals of democracy and personal liberty while repressing democratic ideas. Their goal was to organize to hold accountable those in power by exposing hypocrisy and evasion in policies presented as fair and democratic but that obscured cynical self-interests (Bowles & Gintis, 1987).

These lessons were brought to life again in the Occupy Wall Street movement that galvanized thousands of people across the country and the world to challenge the dominance of Wall Street in government decision-making and government bailouts following the market crash of 2008. The Occupy movement illustrated the importance of connecting the dots across institutions to understand how power operates to maintain dominance under the guise of neutrality. It also provoked creative ideas about alternative possibilities to this system in both process and structure (Gitlin, 2012; van Gelder, 2011). More recently, a group called the "Hedge Clippers" is using public venues to expose and teach about how hedge funds use the money they gain from favored tax policies to buy political influence and shape public policy on education and other areas, in unaccountable and undemocratic ways that disguise as altruistic their self-serving interests.

Look for Interest Convergence

The notion of "interest convergence" (D. Bell, 1992) is another useful tool for analyzing how systems of oppression modulate, sometimes appearing to respond to charges of injustice when it serves their interest, but ultimately continuing to maintain dominance. For example, critical race theorists argue that racial integration of the armed forces during World War II was an instance of interest convergence (D. A. Bell, 1980). When anti-lynching and anti-Jim Crow agitation in the U.S. coincided with establishment fears that the Germans would use American racism to attack U.S. claims about democracy, these disparate interests converged to support desegregating the armed forces. The U.S. government could neutralize communist critiques while meeting the interests of anti-racism advocates for change. At the same time, racism restabilized through policies that reinforced segregation in housing and prevented black soldiers from using the G.I. Bill to purchase housing in newly built suburbs, where property values would grow and lay the basis for the future prosperity that whites were able to enjoy.

The concept of interest convergence can be useful for strategizing ways to take advantage of potential alignments of interest with groups we might otherwise oppose in order to move a particular change forward (Milner, 2008). At the same time, understanding interest convergence can help groups be realistic about the limits of such coalitions and prepare to

change tactics when different strategies are needed.

Make Global Connections

Transnational activists and scholars help us understand the ways that oppression is shaped by geographic and historical contexts and interactions across national borders. They offer an analysis of transnational capital and its impact on labor, migration, gender, and ethnic relations, and national development in different parts of the world (Dirlik, 1997; Mohanty, 2003; Sandoval, 2000). Global feminism (Mohanty, 2003), global critical race feminism (Davis & Wing, 2000), and transnational feminisms (Fernandes, 2013) highlight the leadership of women at the margins and focus on how to understand the shared and distinctive problems women face under post-colonial systems and U.S. imperialism as they identify local strategies and solutions to address their particular contexts (Dirlik, 1997).

A comparison of two immigrants to the U.S. from Uganda illustrates the insights that a transnational perspective can offer for understanding local conditions in different parts of the world. Purkayastha (2012) describes the situation as follows. The ancestors of both a black and an Indian immigrant may have lived in Uganda for generations and been expelled by the Amin dictatorship. Both immigrants may have suffered under gendered/racialized migration policies in the U.S. that impacted their arrival. However, the black Ugandan's experience of racism is likely to be similar to that faced by African Americans, while the Indian Ugandan is more likely to experience the racism faced by Muslims and "Muslim-looking" people. If they return to Uganda, they will encounter a different set of privileges and penalties in a black-majority country that privileges the black migrant. If they move to India, the reverse may occur, with the Indian Ugandan experiencing the privileges of the Indian majority, privileges that would not be extended to the black Ugandan. When the Indian Ugandan is Muslim or lower-caste Hindu, a different set of hierarchies would apply. Taking a global perspective enables us to be more thoughtful about how we design policies and organize coalitions to meet the diverse needs of individuals in different locations and contexts.

Build Coalitions and Solidarity

Because of the complexities and interconnections among different forms of inequality, we believe that eradicating oppression ultimately requires struggle against all its forms, and that coalitions among diverse people who can offer perspectives from their particular social locations provide the most promising potential for creating change. Working in collaboration with diverse groups is essential for building collective strength and developing strategies that draw on the energies, insights, and access to power of people who are differently positioned. Working at the intersections across groups and identities is an important coalitional strategy,

because it links processes of subordination/domination and prevents compartmentalizing issues (Cho, 2012). When one group fails to acknowledge the ideas and needs of other groups in a coalition, it only serves to strengthen the power relations that each is attempting to challenge. Thus, thinking and working across intersections can prevent working at cross-purposes:

> For example, when feminists fail to acknowledge the role that race played in the public response to the rape of the Central Park jogger, feminism contributes to the forces that produce disproportionate punishment for black men who rape white women, and when antiracists represent the case solely in terms of racial domination, they belittle the fact that women particularly, and all people generally, should be outraged by the gender violence the case represented.
>
> (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1282)

The Black Lives Matter movement against police brutality and the destruction of black lives illustrates the potential of a coalition of people from diverse groups working together as allies. African Americans, and other people of color, including queer people of color who have taken the lead in this movement, have forced U.S. society as a whole to confront the ugly truth of racism. White allies, such as the group Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ, www.showingupforracialjustice.org), work to mobilize support and commitment in white communities to pressure for change and participate in actions where laying white lives on the line is more likely to garner police protection and media attention.

As individuals and groups, our visions can only be partial. Coalitions bring together multiple ways of understanding the world and analyzing the oppressive structures within it. Specific skills of perspective taking, empathic listening, and self-reflection are critical. Furthermore, since all forms of oppression are interactional and co-constitutive with each other, alliances among people from diverse social locations and perspectives may perhaps be the only way to develop interventions muscular enough to challenge systemic oppression (Crenshaw, 2003; Roberts & Jesudason, 2013).

We take the position that everyone has a role to play in dismantling oppression and generating a vision for a more socially just future. Those who are marginalized take the lead in articulating an analysis of power from the vantage point of their particular geographic and social locations and contexts, but all of us need to develop the capacity for reflecting on our locations and recognizing the perspectives of others who are differently positioned.

> Reflexivity acknowledges the importance of power at the micro level of the self and our relationships with others, as well as the macro levels of society…to recognize multiple truths and a diversity of perspectives, while giving extra space to voices typically excluded.

(Hankivsky, 2014, p. 10)

Holvino (2012) argues for "simultaneity": making an effort to hold onto our multiple identities so that we can flexibly speak from our complex experiences and resist pressures to oversimplify identity. She urges us to build coalitions and alliances that go beyond goals of individual empowerment to focus on building a social justice movement.

Accountability and solidarity, while aspirational and philosophical ideals, also ask us to be concrete in our goals for working in coalition with others so we can be clear about where our commitments overlap and where they do not. Most coalition work is organized around concrete goals that members of different groups in a coalition agree upon, even as other issues and goals may conflict (McGrath, 2007). Being clear helps coalitions make pragmatic alliances and work together for a common end, even when members do not agree on other goals.

Follow the Leadership of Oppressed People

Listening to the voices of those at the margins and following their lead is another important practice for social justice. The disability rights movement slogan, "Nothing about us without us" (Charleton, 1998), affirms the principle that no decisions should be made without the full participation of those affected by the decision. Unless people from the subordinated group are central to defining, framing, developing, and leading responses to inequities and social problems, the same power dynamics that we are trying to change will be reproduced, and the solutions are likely to fail. For example, youth need to be involved with issues that affect their lives in schools and the community. Likewise, poor people need to name the issues and help set the agenda for addressing poverty-related concerns. The right to self-determination and autonomy has been a goal of all social justice movements from the start.

The benefits of following the lead of those who have been marginalized can be seen in the movement for gay rights. Until GLBTQ people organized to challenge heterosexism, assumptions of heterosexual privilege went mostly unchallenged and invisible in our society. Gay rights advocates began to expose social norms, rituals, language, and institutional rules and rewards that presume the existence of exclusively heterosexual feelings and relationships. They critiqued language and symbols of love, attraction, family, and sexual and emotional self-development that largely ignored the existence of gay, bisexual, transgender, and other possibilities of human potential. Now trans and queer-identified people question the questioners, raising new critiques of sexuality and gender that were not as visible in earlier movements. Their work showed how the regime of heterosexism operates not only to oppress gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people, but also to constrain and limit heterosexuals to narrowly gender-defined rules of behavior and options for self-expression as well.

Be an Accountable and Responsible Ally

Frequently, those from dominant groups, outside the communities they intend to help, come in with, and try to impose, pre-conceived ideas about what a community "needs." Such a stance reflects and reinforces unequal power relationships and a "savior" mentality. People in dominant groups must respectfully listen to how oppressed people define their own needs, work with them to support getting those needs met, and operate in solidarity with their organizations, efforts, and social movements (Kivel, 2006). It means ongoing action that demonstrates a sustained passion for and willingness to engage in social justice work over the long haul (Edwards, 2006). The decision about who to name as an ally is most credibly done by members of the oppressed group(s) within which one is in coalition (Edwards, 2006). Thus, allyship also requires humility, a willingness to listen and learn, and a commitment to do the work without expectation of reward or recognition (Goodman, 2011).

Social justice organizing is stronger when both those who benefit and those who are disadvantaged by a particular ism, or cluster of isms, are able to work together in a sustained way to create change. The term "ally" is often used to convey the position of those in the dominant group who work in coalition with oppressed others, as in white people being allies to people of color (Broido & Reason, 2005), but we believe people from all social groups and positions can be allies to each other. A person's motivation to act in support of social justice can range along a continuum from individual self-interest focused on "me," to relational self-interest that is mutual or shared "you and me," to interdependent self-interest focused on a broader "us" (Goodman, 2011). Allyship can be problematic when it stays at the level of individual self-interest and fails to move to a broader self-interest. As blogger Mia McKenzie of Black Girl Dangerous puts it:

> Allyship is not supposed to look like this, folks. It's not supposed to be about you. It's not supposed to be about your feelings. It's not supposed to be a way of glorifying yourself at the expense of the folks you claim to be an ally to. It's not supposed to be a *performance*. It's supposed to be a way of living your life that *doesn't* reinforce the same oppressive behaviors you're claiming to be against.
>
> (No More "Allies," Sept. 30, 2013, www.blackgirldangerous.org/2013/09/30/no-more-allies/#.Uk3lbYbDYqI.email)

We can recognize that individuals may be at different stages in awareness and thus be better or lesser prepared to be effective and reliable allies (Edwards, 2006).

This critique leads us to emphasize the importance for all people, particularly those in dominant groups, of being accountable and responsible to the others with whom they work in coalition. Accountability and responsibility connote mutuality in defining goals and actions, and answerability to those with whom we are collaborating. Another word for this is

solidarity.

Conclusion

As historical circumstances change and emerging social movements take up issues of oppression in the United States and throughout the world, new definitions and understandings will continue to evolve. Through highlighting the historical and contextual nature of this process, we hope to avoid the danger of reifying systems of oppression as static, or treating individuals as one-dimensional and unchanging. History illustrates both how tenacious and variable systems of oppression are, and how dynamic and creative we must continue to be to rise to the challenges they pose. The concepts and processes we present in this text are continuously evolving. We hope the work presented in this third edition will contribute to an ongoing dialogue about social justice education theory and practice in ways that can have positive impacts on our world.

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