

# A Revision of Social Work Practice: Conceptualising Cultural Trauma and the Role of Social Workers in South African Under-Resourced Communities

**Annaline Keet**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9638-0188>

Nelson Mandela University, South Africa

[Annaline.Keet@mandela.ac.za](mailto:Annaline.Keet@mandela.ac.za)

## Abstract

The experience of both historical and intergenerational trauma creates challenges for a large portion of South African communities. Poverty and inequality are the key drivers of violence, an issue affecting many South Africans. These issues present a challenge to social workers who work in under-resourced communities. The purpose of this article is to focus on the presence of social challenges in three communities, namely, Helenvale, Alexandra and Lavender Hill in South Africa from a point of historical disruptions manifesting in social problems. It broadens the lenses through which social workers view the challenges of service users, in turn creating the opportunity for social workers to develop more empathy through a lens of cultural and intergenerational trauma. Using a descriptive case study, the research draws on the profiles of the above communities. This is done through a document analysis of a sample of academic literature, public documents and news reports about the communities. The article looks at their historical formation and manifestations of cultural disruption through social ills resulting in ongoing exposure to trauma for community members. A thematic analysis was conducted, and themes were identified and strengthened through existing literature and theoretical perspectives on cultural and intergenerational trauma. These themes are (a) experience of forced removals or relocations, (b) manifestations of social problems, (c) exposure to intergenerational trauma, and (d) ongoing cumulative marginalisation.

**Keywords:** cultural trauma, intergenerational trauma, social work curriculum, social work



## Introduction

Many South Africans frequently experience high levels of trauma. These experiences occur amid unprecedented high levels of income inequality and unemployment (Alexander et al. 2013). Communities often respond to inequality in the form of unrest (Alexander et al. 2018), which is directed towards those who have accumulated wealth. However, the expression of anger in action through criminal activities is often channelled to those in proximity, the local community and the family (Kawachi, Kennedy, and Wilkinson 1999). Violence and crime are often associated with high levels of inequality in society (Pabayo, Molnar, and Kawachi 2014). This presents unique challenges to social workers operating within these contexts, and also to the relevant training of social work students.

This article argues for the inclusion of a theory of cultural trauma in the social work training and practice. It does this by contextualising the South African social context by drawing on the profiles of three South African communities with similar historical disruptions or formations, Helenvale, Alexandra and Lavender Hill. Examples of community exposure to ongoing trauma are provided via extracts from literature, news and other mass media reports. It further draws on the existing literature and theoretical perspectives on cultural and intergenerational trauma (see Eyerman 2001; Jabarouti and Mani 2014; Stamm et al. 2003; Törnquist-Plewa and Narvselius 2010; Trotter 2009) to argue that these topics should be foregrounded in training and practice to enable social workers to more effectively render services to distressed communities. Cultural trauma is located in a societal group's experience of historical trauma, whereas intergenerational trauma refers to the generational transmission of trauma along familial links (Mohatt et al. 2014).

Despite reports of a general decrease in crime statistics in South Africa, the country still has some of the highest levels of violent crime in the world (SACN 2017). Garbarino and Haslam (2005) reiterate that poverty and inequality are the key driving forces of violence, making South Africans especially vulnerable. Historical and ongoing structural inequalities continue to disproportionately locate large numbers of South African citizens in communities in which they are socially and economically vulnerable, and these entrenched inequalities have created enormous pressures for social redress (Todes and Turok 2018). Families, and also individuals are left with the struggle for survival against great odds, exposing them to recurring traumatisation. The formation of these vulnerable communities in the present day has its origins in a history of colonialism and apartheid that brought about huge disruption in South African communities (MacMaster 2010; Weeder 2006). This often carries a "cross-generational collective trauma" (Alexander 2001, 1) that is present across time and space (Stamm et al. 2003). Nicholas and McIntosh (2002) argue that people, and ultimately entire communities, carry their painful histories like scars which manifest in a web of social dysfunctions such as substance abuse, family and community violence and institutional

disruptions. All of these are indicators that the dignity of individuals and entire communities has been dislocated in some way.

Although the post-apartheid and democracy-centred political changes in South Africa brought about hope and dreams of improved social circumstances for many marginalised groups, Eagle (2015) reminds us that more than 20 years later, the circumstances of many people remain subpar. The deep and vivid trauma in the South African national psyche is intensified by the sad reality that there has been very little post-apartheid transformation in our socio-political and economic spheres (Gumede 2015).

The web of social dysfunction not only traumatises, but retraumatises specific communities, thereby placing a high burden on the social welfare system (Nicholas and McIntosh 2002; Omotoso and Koch 2018). In their work with vulnerable families, at-risk youths, older people, and people with disabilities, social workers often work among heavily traumatised members of communities. They also do this work while carrying extraordinarily high caseloads. The Service Delivery Model for Developmental Social Services views statutory work as a third level of intervention (Department of Social Development 2005). However, it is often the main strategies used when faced with people at risk in an under-resourced social welfare system. A trauma-informed social work practice can support social workers in these contexts.

### **Theoretical Context: Cultural Trauma and its Intergenerational Counterpart**

Mohatt et al. (2014) make the following distinctions between the terms historical trauma and intergenerational trauma. Both forms of trauma refer to wounds or suffering that is shared by a group and also many generations after that, with contemporary groups experiencing the trauma-related symptoms without having been present at past traumatising events. What is specific to intergenerational trauma, however, is that it refers to trauma that is transmitted across familial generations. Cultural trauma can therefore exist within the context of a larger group's experience of historical trauma, whereas intergenerational trauma refers specifically to that which is transmitted from one familial generation to another.

Alexander (2001) defines cultural trauma as “a collective memory, a form of remembrance that grounds the identity-formation of a people”. Through this cultural process, trauma is negotiated through various forms of interpretations. It links with the reformation of collective identity and the reworking of collective memory. Eyerman (2001) sees cultural trauma as rooted in an event or series of events without directly experiencing it. The experience is usually mediated via different communication platforms that involve a spatial and a temporal distance between the event and the experience.

Research done by Baxter (2011), Nicholas and McIntosh (2002), Stamm et al. (2003), Visser (2011; 2014), and Alexander (2001; 2004) takes the notion of trauma further and

explains the way in which a sense of historical misrecognition is located in the experience of cultural trauma. Fraser (2007) refers to this misrecognition as forms of injustice by which people are denied the right to interact on equal terms as institutionalised hierarchies of cultural value denied them any form of social standing. Wyngaard (2019) builds on this sense of historical misrecognition as he reflects on the narrated stories of people displaced by apartheid South Africa. He speaks about big and small acts of humiliation that caused harm to people's identity (Wyngaard 2019). Thus, cultural trauma is conceived as a process through which groups in society lose their identity, the sense of the meaning of their lives, and the perception that their social fabric has been torn apart.

For Stamm et al. (2003) the trauma and feelings of loss can be present across time and space, and their negative influences transferred across generations. Wyngaard (2019) speaks to the fact that the consequences of the Group Areas Act (South Africa 1950), and the Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents Act (South Africa 1952) had such a disruptive influence on people's lives. Black families were torn apart as working black men had to live in hostels in big cities while their families were not allowed to live with them. The Group Areas Act (South Africa 1950) meant that parents had to travel far every day to get to their place of employment, affecting the quality (and quantity) of parental supervision their children would receive when coming from school and, in turn, influencing the way in which families could spend time together.

Onwuachi-Willig (2016) says that cultural trauma is not born, but is rather a man-made, socially mediated process. It is also traumatic, as it is a shock to the routine of people affected by it. These changes brought about through apartheid legislation are indicators of a cultural trauma that is man-made. Onwuachi-Willig (2016) further indicates that three elements are usually present that allow cultural trauma to materialise. There is (a) a long-standing history of routine harm that a group learns to expect, (b) widespread media attention making people take note of the routine occurrence, and (c) public discourse about the meaning of routine harm, including governmental affirmation of subordinate groups' marginal status that reignites the consciousness of their second-class citizenship. For Adonis (2018), the magnitude of the trauma derails the population from its natural, projected historical course, resulting in a legacy of physical, social and economic disparities that persists across generations.

Nicholas and McIntosh (2002) remind us that the wounds left by historical events such as forced removals become visible through social dysfunctions such as alcoholism, drug abuse, domestic violence and crime. These are the signs of a deeply disrupted social identity. Mohatt et al. (2014) note that research done among the Canadian First Nations people shows a relationship between family histories of forced removals from families of origin and behavioural health challenges such as sexual violence, involvement in the child welfare system and drug abuse in later generations.

Historical disruptions such as the forced removals had deep social, economic and cultural consequences. Transitions into a more democratic society must thus recognise a holistic set of human rights violations (Arbour 2007; Haldemann and Kouassi 2014). Violations of civil and political rights are intrinsically linked to violations of economic, social and cultural rights (Arbour 2007) and the transitional justice that underpins this change should thus include the equitable distribution of resources in a post-conflict society. The histories of the three South African communities discussed in this study reflect the cultural trauma experienced by many other South African communities who experienced forced removals and social misrecognition through overcrowding and a lack of service delivery. It also reflects a transition into democracy that has not delivered sufficiently on its economic, social and cultural imperatives.

### **Forced Removals as a Culturally Traumatic Experience**

The relocation of large groups of people needs certain conditions for the transition to be positive. Weeder (2006) indicates that financial and political power aided displaced Europeans during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in creating a sense of place in South Africa, despite being a relocated population. The communities that were relocated to Helenvale, Alexandra and Lavender Hill lacked the financial and political conditions to create this sense of place for themselves. In fact, they were contained as subjects of the colonial state in an unequal relationship. Cross (2001) helps to unpack the impact of the colonial project as he draws from various fields such as Anthropology and Architectural History. These study fields view a sense of place as something created over time through habits and/or customs reinforced by what can be called a sense of recurring events. A sense of place allows for symbolic relationships between people to be formed giving affective meaning to a specific place.

Hashemmezhad, Heidari and Hoseini (2013) describe this sense of place as a container for cultural, social and individual relationships. For slaves of the same colonial era and also for indigenous people who had their spaces disrupted it was more difficult to develop a sense of place. Such marginalised groups are often squeezed out of the mainstream social and political life and silenced by history (Eze 2008), only to be presented to the world through the voices of others. This is a form of misrecognition according to Honneth (1996), which is enacted through a set of social relations that facilitates the moral experience of disrespect and statelessness (Staples 2012). Conventional descriptions of post-traumatic stress disorder may be insufficient to deal with the complexity of traumatic experiences in our communities in which cultural misrecognitions occurred (Bateman 2016).

### **Methodology**

This study is qualitative in nature and operates within an interpretive paradigm as it concerns itself with understanding the world from a subjective point of view (Gray 2009). The researcher used both a descriptive case study design (looking at the three

communities) and data collection through a document analysis (Bowen 2009). Bearing witness to past events, documents provide background information and also historical insight. Academic literature, public documents and news reports between 2000 and 2019 were sampled. The inclusion criteria were based on the ability to provide content on the historical formation of the identified communities through forced removals or relocations, the presence of cultural disruptions as they manifest through various social ills and the exposure of community members to recurring trauma as a result of ongoing crime and violence. Eighteen documents, including eight newspaper articles, six academic articles and five public documents, covering specific information about one of the three areas, were used. A thematic analysis was conducted (Frey, Botan, and Kreps 2000), searching for and engaging with data as it relates to the central focus of the research (Bowen 2009). Emerging themes were identified and strengthened by drawing on existing literature and theoretical perspectives on cultural and intergenerational trauma. These themes are (a) experiences of forced removals or relocations, (b) manifestations of social problems, (c) exposure to intergenerational trauma, and (d) ongoing cumulative marginalisation.

## **Community Profiles**

### *Helenvale, Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape*

Helenvale was created under the Group Areas Act (South Africa 1950) to move black people from places such as Korsten and Neave Township, which were designated for white people (Hendricks 2017). The housing was typical of the apartheid-style housing design in that it comprised units with two bedrooms, a kitchen, a lounge and an outside toilet. The semi-detached units were originally designed to accommodate two families per unit. However, the number of people who needed to be moved meant that each unit housed up to four families with two outside toilets at their disposal. Old Helenvale was initially built to accommodate approximately 6 000 people, but by 2014 it was housing almost 32 000 people who lived in its designated 38 streets (Hendricks 2017). For Sain (2017), Helenvale, in its current form, is a stark reminder of the architecture of apartheid where residents found themselves locked in a socio-economic trap predetermined by the colour of their skin. Located away from the vibrant central business district of Port Elizabeth, residents are enclosed in an environment in which gang activities dominate their daily life, and, as Sain (2017) indicates, there are low levels of trust in the police.

A 2016 joint research venture between the Helenvale community, the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, the Mandela Bay Development Agency and the German Development Bank found that the area has one of the lowest education attainment levels in the Port Elizabeth area, with the highest level of crime and a high level of victimisation at schools and homes (SPUU 2016). On average, there are 26 gang-related incidents every 4 months, 6 of which are mostly fatalities, thus creating a daily struggle for survival (Sain 2017; SPUU 2016). The homicide rate is twice the national average (SPUU 2016), the attempted murder rate is 4 times higher, and the assault and robbery rate 3 times higher. Drug and substance abuse, which appears to accommodate a gang-

driven economy, seems to be woven into the social fabric of the community (Mandela Bay Development Agency 2013; SPUU 2016). These statistics are also located within the broader context of the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropole in which 117 gang-related murders were recorded in the northern areas from January to May 2019 (ANA 2019).

### *Alexandra, Johannesburg, Gauteng*

Alexandra township is located in the north-eastern suburbs of Johannesburg and was established as an apartheid project (Wilson n.d.). Originally earmarked as a white suburb, Alexandra was considered too far from the centre of Johannesburg and in 1912 it was proclaimed a “Native Township” (Davie 2018; Matlapeng 2012; Wilson n.d.). In its initial formation, black people could buy and own land under a freehold title. This changed after 1913 when the Natives Land Act (South Africa 1913) prevented black people from owning land in the urban areas of South Africa. Consequently, many people in Alexandra continue to live in severe poverty. This is in stark contrast to the neighbouring suburb of Sandton, which is one of the wealthiest areas of Johannesburg. According to Nyapokoto (2014), a contributing factor to the poverty in Alexandra is the fact that from the onset the people resettled there were impoverished people. As far as South African townships are concerned, Alexandra is somewhat of an anomaly. Unlike many townships that are located far from urban centres, Alexandra is located at the centre of Johannesburg near main travelling routes. Like most townships, it is densely populated with approximately 350 000 people across 800 hectares (Roelfs et al. 2003; Wilson n.d.).

Until 1958, Alexandra was administered by a Health Committee that was relatively ineffective owing to a lack of funds. During that time, the Johannesburg City Council would not take responsibility for its development, nor for providing the necessary municipal services. The lack of investment resulted in neglect and living conditions deteriorated. To further compound the situation for the residents of the area, the period 1958 to 1973 saw a further cycle of forced removals of about 53 000 people to Soweto and only those who could prove that they worked in central Johannesburg were able to stay. Roelfs et al. (2003) highlight the way in which Alexandra, viewed as a labour pool, was saved from being demolished like Sophia Town, which was bulldozed to rubble with the purpose of creating a white settlement.

Wilson (n.d.) and Jansen (2017) report that Alexandra has a long history of poverty and overcrowded living conditions. It also has a high overall unemployment rate of about 32 per cent, with more unemployment among women than men (40% compared to 19%). School drop-out rates at secondary level are also common. According to Bonner and Nieftagodien (2008), children drop out of school because of poverty and the slow pace of learning in overcrowded classes, which contributes to substandard learning environments. Research conducted by Isserow and Everatt (2000) also found that the experience of crime remains a challenge for people living in Alexandra, and as Jansen (2017) indicates, the Alexandra Renewal Project implemented in 2001 was not able to deal with issues of crime successfully. The Alexandra inquiry conducted in 2019 reflects

ongoing unhappiness among residents that, despite the project, their daily experience of life in the township remains dire (Kekana 2019). Residents highlighted inherent corrupt processes in the project to contribute to its failure (Kekana 2019). The experiences of crime related to car hijacking, rape, housebreaking, murder and child abuse are among the most common for people living in the area, with women expressing their fear of sexual and criminal violence and families worrying about the safety of their young children (Isserow and Everatt 2000).

### *Lavender Hill, Cape Town, Western Cape*

Lavender Hill is located on the Cape Flats, an urban wasteland that was earmarked for the relocation of communities forcibly removed under the Group Areas Act (South Africa 1950), when Claremont, Windermere, Newlands, Plumstead, Simon's Town, Tramway Road and District Six were declared white areas (Bowers Du Toit 2014; Kanengoni 2016). Housing is congested and mostly apartment-styled, with limited access to recreational facilities. Trotter (2009) recounts that the process of forced removals created many emotional reactions in the communities, who felt that they were caught by surprise and were unprepared for this drastic change in their lives. Many people were left with feelings of hopelessness and resignation. Kanengoni (2016) reiterates that the Group Areas removals fragmented extended families and family networks, thus dissolving the social glue which existed before the removals.

Kanengoni (2016) identifies patterns of the socio-economic challenges in Lavender Hill. The area is characterised by poverty, high rates of unemployment, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, high school drop-out rates, gangsterism and crime. Domestic and community violence is part of the daily reality for people living in Lavender Hill. Mapham et al. (2004) report that many children have witnessed gang-related violence, resulting in them being more likely to also engage in such violence. Dysfunctional families are common, with frequent exposure to conflict, physical, emotional and sexual abuse (Kanengoni 2016). Such conditions provide fertile ground for gangsterism. Kinnes (2000) indicates that one of the most devastating effects of a low-skilled population with a high unemployment rate such as that of Lavender Hill, is that it results in the economic power lying largely in the hands of the gangs in that area. The social effects are detrimental. In a 2005 study conducted by Bowers (as quoted by Kanengoni 2016), a social worker is quoted as saying,

They [gangs] exploit the situation and where they would offer people money to buy electricity, to pay rent and in favour they will . . . just innocently ask the person 'Listen this is not everybody's business, but can you keep this parcel for me?' And that is how gangs get that kind of hold.

In a podcast where community members reflect on life in the Cape Flats, a Lavender Hill resident indicates that the residents are held hostage by the gangs operating in the area (Wyngaard 2019).

## Analysis

### **Experience of Forced Removals or Relocations**

All three communities were affected by the apartheid era's spatial engineering, where families were either forced to move from familiar spaces or coerced to do so through economic necessity (Kgatla 2013). Helenvale and Lavender Hill came into existence under the Group Areas Act (South Africa 1950) which saw large numbers of people forcefully removed into congested spaces (Bowers Du Toit 2014; Hendricks 2017; Kanengoni 2016) without the necessary preparations being made for these changes (Trotter 2009). Alexandra, which was found unsuitable as a white suburb, was, however, one of the few urban areas in which black South Africans could own land under the Land Act of 1913, but these rights were soon denied (Roelfs et al. 2003; Wilson n.d.). Alexandra also experienced the removal of large groups of people between 1958 and 1973, and was saved from demolition only because it was regarded as a labour pool (Roelfs et al. 2003). People lacked control over their relocations, and they lacked the financial and economic power to create a sense of home (Weeder 2006). This disempowerment is still seen today with congested living spaces, economic hardship and insufficient municipal services; a reality for these communities (see Kanengoni 2016; Kekana 2019; Sain 2017).

### **Cultural Trauma and Socio-Economic Entrapment**

Cultural trauma transmitted across generations increases people's stress and vulnerability (Andrasik 2018). These cultural trauma inflictions become visible through issues such as substance abuse, crime, interpersonal violence, anxiety and depression (Nicholas and McIntosh 2002). Significant parallels can be drawn between Alexandra, Helenvale and Lavender Hill with poverty, overcrowded housing conditions, high unemployment rates, high school drop-out rates, domestic and community violence, drug and substance abuse and gangsterism (Bowers Du Toit 2014; Hendricks 2017; Kanengoni 2016; Lorraine and Molapo 2014; Nyapokoto 2014; SPUU 2016; Wilson n.d.). People find themselves trapped in socio-economic hardship not of their own making (Sain 2017) and in this entrapment an environment in which the experience of disrespect and displacement is ongoing, is created (Staples 2012). Social workers must appreciate the complex nexus between poverty, oppression and trauma (Levenson 2017). The knowledge of trauma helps social workers respond to clients in ways that convey respect, compassion, honour and self-determination, and enables the rebuilding of healthy interpersonal skills and coping strategies (Levenson 2017).

### **Community Members' Intergenerational Exposure to Trauma**

Research indicates that the trauma of displacement, institutional racism, disenfranchised grief, shame and silence are mechanisms through which cultural trauma has been transmitted into families and communities (Hoosain 2013). Reports of crime and victimisation, gangsterism, gender-based violence, unemployment and low educational achievements are a lived reality in Helenvale, Alexandra and Lavender Hill, and social

conditions that people became accustomed to (Kanengoni 2016). Adonis (2018) is of the view that given the South African history of such trauma, intergenerational trauma transmission should be expected, yet is often treated as a secondary phenomenon, not receiving the same attention as the direct historical atrocities. Trauma reaches into our personal and societal psyche, depletes our physical health reserves, creates conditions which fuel a cycle of violence, creates barriers to learning for young people (especially those from poorer communities), and directly affects the rates of harmful addictions (Rogers 2015).

Data available from the three communities contain elements of these risk factors. Pynoos, Steinberg and Piacentini (1999) remind us of the magnitude of these risks. They argue that community and family violence interferes with young children's narrative consistency and thus their reading, writing and communication skills. Young people from marginalised communities have fewer buffers against exposure to trauma and are disproportionately at risk of negative life trajectories. These conditions keep the poor trapped in poverty and facilitate ongoing intergenerational traumatisation. Social workers play a key role responding to issues of substance abuse, gender-based violence, youths at risk and vulnerable families. Inevitably, this means that social workers work with the manifestations of cultural trauma in these communities.

### **Ongoing Cumulative Marginalisation**

Communities such as Helenvale, Alexandra and Lavender Hill have not seen significant social changes since the 1994 advent of democracy, and continue to experience forms of marginalisation. Singharoy (2010) indicates that sociologically, marginality can be understood in terms of non-participation, non-integration and the exclusion of sections of the population from several of the key activities of society. Both Lavender Hill and Helenvale are located far from the economic activities of the city (Sain 2017), and the three communities historically lack municipal investment (Roelfs et al. 2003). They continue to have high levels of exposure to crime (Kanengoni 2016; Kinnes 2000). They experience cumulative marginalisation that, according to Singharoy (2010), spatially locates them in environmentally degraded and poverty-stricken areas which serve to enhance their sense of powerlessness. Adonis (2018) warns that huge historical disruptions carry the risk of collective low self-esteem and powerlessness for communities, and therefore social work should be aware of this and work to eradicate it.

### **Concluding Remarks: Challenges and Opportunities for a Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice**

Social workers as professionals are challenged to rethink their understanding of structural injustices and social marginalisation if they are to make a significant contribution to the lived experiences of people in under-resourced communities. If so, they are better equipped to disrupt the cycle of retraumatisation and also the

intergenerational transmission of cultural trauma. Terms such as empowerment and liberation as captured in the global definition of social work (IFSW 2014), acknowledge that people's everyday challenges cannot be viewed outside of historical and institutional disempowerment and misrecognitions (Honneth 1996).

Despite a long history of activism in South Africa, the will to mobilise corrective actions regarding trauma is particularly weak in South Africa (Bateman 2016). Bateman (2016) is of the opinion that although people engage with daily reports on trauma, society fails to deal with it holistically as a national project or agenda. Bozalek (2004; 2010) argues that the social work profession may also have failed to effectively position itself in the field of cultural trauma and healing. Hoosain (2013) observes that although there is an increased focus from academics who write within the Apartheid Archives Project about intergenerational trauma resulting from apartheid, social workers currently seem to be absent in this group of thought leaders. However, South African social workers work in communities in which they face the re-inscription of trauma on communities through the symptoms of socio-economic crises and conditions (Bowman, Duncan, and Sonn 2010).

Coyle (2014) and Hope (as cited in Hoosain 2013) refer to the danger of social welfare organisations who work with the same families over different generations but fail to make a difference to the intergenerational nature of trauma. Failure to work in a trauma-informed social work practice can be very costly for a country as members of the same family often find themselves in the social welfare system across many generations. Giese (n.d.) indicates that although the White Paper on Social Welfare (South Africa 1997) set in motion the overhaul of the social welfare system to drive the developmental paradigm with a greater emphasis on preventive and early intervention services, a shortage of resources often means that the services in which authentic trauma work can take place are compromised. As a result, the system continues to lean towards statutory interventions and its social security mandate (Skhosana, Schenck, and Botha 2014; Strydom et al. 2017).

Hoosain (2013) draws on the work of Menzies (2007a; 2007b) and proposes a model to work with historically displaced communities in South Africa that recognises the imbalanced power relationship between social workers and service users, and that recognises the trauma and its manifestations within its own social context. She makes reference to strategies of a collective narrative practice to integrate the violations of the past into social discourse, to help people heal and to create counter-memories and counter-histories. Collective narrative practice, according to Denborough (2008), seeks to respond to groups and communities who have experienced significant social suffering within contexts in which traditional therapeutic methods may not be culturally resonant and possibly not very effective. Acknowledging trauma through collective narrative practice is likely to disrupt the transmission of trauma from generation to generation, and as Gobodo-Madikizela, Bubenzer and Oelofsen (2019) suggest, helps individuals and communities make sense of their experiences and heal.

Infusing cultural trauma and its intergenerational manifestations into social work training therefore seems to be essential conceptual tools for social work graduates when entering practice. In addition to this, collective narrative interventions give them the strategies to contribute to healing practices in their respective communities.

## References

- Adonis, C. K. 2018. "Generational Victimhood in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Perspectives of Descendants of Victims of Apartheid Era Gross Human Rights Violations." *International Review of Victimology* 24 (1): 47–65. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269758017732175>.
- Alexander, J. 2001. "Cultural Trauma and Collective Memory." In *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity*, edited by R. Eyermann. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Alexander, J. 2004. "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma." In *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, edited by J. C. Alexander, R. Eyerman, B. Giesen, N. J. Smelser, and P. Sztompka, 1–30. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Alexander, P., C. Ceruti, K. Motseke, M. Phadi, and K. Wale. 2013. *Class in Soweto*. Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
- Alexander, P., C. Runciman, T. Ngwane, B. Moloto, K. Mokgele, and N. van Staden. 2018. "Frequency and Turmoil: South Africa's Community Protests 2005–2017." *SA Crime Quarterly* 63. <https://doi.org/10.17159/2413-3108/2018/v0n63a3057>.
- ANA (*African News Agency*). 2019. "Gang Violence in Port Elizabeth: 117 Dead in Five Months Most of the Deaths Reported are Gunshot-Wound Related." *African New Agency*, 14 June 2019. <https://www.thesouthafrican.com/news/port-elizabeth-gang-violence-murder-rate-2019/>.
- Andrasik, M. 2018. "Historical Trauma and the Health and Wellbeing of Communities of Color." *Community Compass* 18 (1). Accessed 10 June 2020. <https://www.hvtn.org/en/community/community-compass/vol18-issue1/historical-trauma.html>.
- Arbour, L. 2007. "Economic and Social Justice for Societies in Transition." *International Law and Politics* 40 (1): 1–28.
- Bateman, C. 2016. "The Hidden Secret of South Africa's Trauma – And its Impact." *BizNews*, 14 December 2016. <http://www.biznews.com/health/2016/12/14/south-africa-trauma-impact>.
- Baxter, K. I. 2011. "Memory and Photography: Rethinking Postcolonial Trauma Studies." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 47 (1): 18–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2010.507930>.

- Bowen, G. A. 2009. "Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method." *Qualitative Research Journal* 9 (2): 27–40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>.
- Bonner, P., and N. Nieftagodien. 2008. *Alexandra, a History*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. <https://doi.org/10.18772/22008114808>.
- Bowers Du Toit, N. 2014. "Gangsterism on the Cape Flats: A Challenge to 'Engage the Powers'." *HTS Theological Studies* 70 (3): 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v70i3.2727>.
- Bowman, B., N. Duncan, and C. Sonn. 2010. "Editorial: Towards a Psychology of South Africa's Histories – Living with and through Apartheid Archive." *South African Journal of Psychology* 40 (4): 365–369. <https://doi.org/10.1177/008124631004000401>.
- Bozalek, V. 2004. "Recognition, Resources, Responsibilities: Using Students' Stories of Family to Renew the Social Work Curriculum." PhD thesis, University of Utrecht. <https://dspace.library.uu.nl/handle/1874/1153>.
- Bozalek, V. 2010. "The Effect of Institutional Racism on Student Family Circumstances: A Human Capabilities Perspective." *South African Journal of Psychology* 40 (4): 487–494. <https://doi.org/10.1177/008124631004000409>.
- Coyle, S. "Intergenerational Trauma – Legacies of Loss." *Social Work Today* 14 (3): 18.
- Cross, J. E. 2001. "What is a Sense of Place?" Paper presented at the 12th Headwater Conference, 2–4 November 2001, Western State University.
- Davie, L. 2018. "Why Alexandra Survived Apartheid." *Heritage Portal*, 2 February 2018. <http://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/why-alexandra-survived-apartheid>.
- Department of Social Development. 2005. *The Service Delivery Model for Developmental Social Services*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Denborough, D. 2008. *Collective Narrative Practice: Responding to Individuals, Groups, and Communities who have Experienced Trauma*. Adelaide: Dulwich Centre Publications.
- Eagle, G. 2015. "Crime, Fear and Continuous Traumatic Stress in South Africa: What Place Social Cohesion?" *PINS* 49: 83–98. <https://doi.org/10.17159/2309-8708/2015/n49a7>.
- Eyerman, R. 2001. *Cultural Trauma. Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511488788>.
- Eze, E. C. 2008. *Reason, Memory and Politics*. Pretoria: Unisa Press.
- Fraser, N. 2007. "Re-Framing Justice in a Globalizing World." In *(Mis)recognition, social inequality and social justice: Nancy Fraser and Pierre Bourdieu*, edited by T. Lovell, 17–35. Abingdon: Routledge.

- Frey, L., C. Botan, and G. Kreps. 2000. *Investigating Communication: An Introduction to Research Methods*. 2nd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Garbarino, J., and R. Haslam. 2005. "Lost Boys: Why Our Sons turn Violent and How we can Save Them." *Paediatrics and Child Health* 10 (8): 447–450.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/pch/10.8.447>.
- Giese, S. n.d. *Setting the Scene for Social Services: The Gap between Service Need and Delivery. (Promoting Access to Children's Entitlements)*. PART TWO: Children and Social Services.
- Gobodo-Madikizela, P., F. Bubenzer, and M. Oelofsen. 2019. *These are the Things that Sit with Us*. Johannesburg: Fanele.
- Gray, D. E. 2009. *Doing Research in the Real World*. London: Sage.
- Gumede, W. 2015. "South Africa must Confront the Roots of its Xenophobic Violence." *The Guardian*. Accessed 14 January 2019.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/apr/20/south-africa-xenophobic-violence-migrant-workers-apartheid>.
- Haldemann, F., and R. Kouassi. 2014. "Transitional Justice without Economic, Social and Cultural Rights?" In *Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in International Law. Contemporary Issues and Challenges*, edited by E. Riebel, G. Giacca and C. Golay, 156–171. London: Oxford Press.
- Hashemmezahad, H., A. A. Heidari, and P. M. Hoseini. 2013. "Sense of Place and Place Attachment". *International Journal of Architecture and Urban Development* 3 (1): 5–12.
- Hendricks, S. 2017. "Biography of a Vanished Community: South End, Port Elizabeth." PhD thesis, Stellenbosch University.
- Honneth, A. 1996. *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hoosain, S. 2013. "The Transmission of Intergenerational Trauma in Displaced Families." PhD thesis, University of the Western Cape. <http://hdl.handle.net/11394/3572>.
- IFSW (International Federation of Social Workers). 2014. "Global Definition of the Social Work." Accessed 7 March 2019. <https://www.ifsw.org/what-is-social-work/global-definition-of-social-work/>.
- Isserow, M., and D. Everatt. 2000. *'Determining our own Development'. A Community-Based Socio-Economic Profile of Alexandra*. Johannesburg: CASE.
- Jabarouti, R., and M. Mani. 2014. "From a Post-Traumatic Culture toward the Cultural Trauma of Post-9/11." *Advances in Language and Literary Studies* 5 (1).  
<https://doi.org/10.7575/aialc.all.v.5n.1p.157>.

- Jansen, E. 2017. "Violent Cities in Times of Peace. A Study on Reducing Criminal Violence in Post-War Urban Communities in South Africa." Master's thesis, Uppsala University.
- Kanengoni, M. 2016. "An Exploration of Lavender Hill Youth's Pathways to Employment." Master's dissertation, University of Cape Town.
- Kawachi, I., B. P. Kennedy, and R. G. Wilkinson. 1999. "Crime: Social Disorganization and Relative Deprivation." *Social Science and Medicine* 48 (6): 719–31. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536\(98\)00400-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(98)00400-6).
- Kekana, M. 2019. "Alex Inquiry: City of Joburg Refutes Residents' Claims." *Mail and Guardian*, 14 May 2019. <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-05-14-alex-inquiry-city-of-joburg-refutes-residents-claims>.
- Kgatla, S. T. 2013. "Forced Removals and Migration: A Theology of Resistance and Liberation in South Africa." *Missionalia* 41 (2): 120–132. <https://doi.org/10.7832/41-2-9>.
- Kinnes, I. 2000. *From Urban Street Gangs to Criminal Empires: The Changing Face of Gangs in the Western Cape*. Monograph No 48, European Union.
- Levenson, J. S. 2017. "Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice." *Social Work* 62 (2): 2–9. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swx001>.
- Lorraine, M. M., and R. Molapo. 2014. "South Africa's Challenges of Realising her Socio-Economic Rights." *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5 (27): 900–907. <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n27p900>.
- MacMaster, L. 2010. "In Search of a Family: The Challenge of Gangsterism to Faith Communities on the Cape Flats." PhD thesis, Stellenbosch University.
- Mandela Bay Development Agency. 2013. *2012/2013 Annual Report*. Accessed 1 February 2021. [http://www.nelsonmandelabay.gov.za/datarepository/documents/1Y66K\\_DRAFT%20Annual%20Report%202012-13.pdf](http://www.nelsonmandelabay.gov.za/datarepository/documents/1Y66K_DRAFT%20Annual%20Report%202012-13.pdf).
- Mapham, K., N. Lawless, M. Abbas, N. Ross-Thompson, and M. Duncan. 2004. "The Play and Leisure Profiles of Children in Lavender Hill." *South African Journal of Occupational Therapy* 34 (2): 7–12.
- Matlapeng, A. L. 2012. "Bommastandi of Alexandra Township." PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand.
- Menzies, P. 2007a. "Intergenerational Trauma from a Mental Health Perspective." *Native Social Work Journal* 7: 63–85.
- Menzies, P. 2007b. "Understanding Aboriginal Intergenerational Trauma from a Social Work Perspective." *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 2: 367–92.

- Mohatt, N. V., A. B. Thompson, N.D. Thai, and J. K. Tebes. 2014. "Historical Trauma as Public Narrative: A Conceptual Review of how History Impacts Present-Day Health." *Social Science and Medicine* 106: 128–136. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2014.01.043>.
- Nicholas, V., and A. McIntosh. 2002. "Lessons to be Learned from Ireland's Injuries." *Roots of Living Column*. Accessed 27 July 2019. [www.AlastairMcintosh.com/articles/2002-roots4-april.htm](http://www.AlastairMcintosh.com/articles/2002-roots4-april.htm).
- Nyapokoto, R. 2014. "The Road between Sandton and Alexandra Township: A Fanonian Approach to the Study of Poverty and Privilege in South Africa." Master's thesis, University of South Africa.
- Omotoso, K., and F. Koch. 2018. "Assessing Changes in Social Determinants of Health Inequalities in South Africa: A Decomposition Analysis." *International Journal for Equity in Health* 17 (181). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-018-0885-y>.
- Onwuachi-Willig, A. 2016. "The Trauma of the Routine: Lessons on Cultural Trauma from the Emmett Till Verdict." *Sociological Theory* 34 (4): 335–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0735275116679864>.
- Pabayo, R., B. E. Molnar, and I. Kawachi. 2014. "The Role of Neighborhood Income Inequality in Adolescent Aggression and Violence." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 55: 571–579. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2014.04.012>.
- Pynoos, R. S., A. M. Steinberg, and J. C. Piacentini. 1999. "A Developmental Psychopathology Model of Childhood Traumatic Stress and Intersection with Anxiety Disorders." *Biological Psychiatry* 46: 1542–54. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0006-3223\(99\)00262-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0006-3223(99)00262-0).
- Roelfs, M., V. Naidoo, M. Meyer, and J. Makalela. 2003. *Alexandra: A Case Study of Urban Renewal for the Presidential 10 Year Review Project*. Review by the Human Sciences Research Council (Democracy and Governance Programme) in association with Indlovo Link.
- Rogers, B. 2015. *Trauma and Resilience-Informed Solutions Institute of Southern Africa*. Proposal of a Trauma Activist; PTG-RR; Sept. 2015/14.
- SACN (South African Cities Network). 2017. *The State of Urban Safety in South Africa 2017*. Johannesburg: South African Cities Network. Accessed 1 February 2021. [https://www.sacities.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/SACN\\_State-of-Urban-Safety-2017-Flyer\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.sacities.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/SACN_State-of-Urban-Safety-2017-Flyer_FINAL.pdf).
- Sain, R. 2017. "The Place where no One is Safe and Trust does not Exist." *IOL News Eastern Cape*, 21 November 2017. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/eastern-cape/the-place-where-no-one-is-safe-and-trust-does-not-exist-12097959>.

- Skhosana, R., R. Schenck, and P. Botha. 2014. "Factors Enabling and Hampering Social Welfare Services Rendered to Street Children in Pretoria: Perspectives of Service Providers." *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk* 50 (2): 213–36. <https://doi.org/10.15270/50-2-396>.
- Singharoy, D. K. 2010. "Marginalization and the Marginalized: Reflections on the Relational-Cumulative Dynamics." In *Surviving against Odds: The Marginalized in a Globalizing World*, edited by D. Singharoy, 39–71. Delhi: Manohar.
- South Africa. 1913. *Natives Land Act, 1913 (Act No. 27 of 1913)*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- South Africa. 1950. *Group Areas Act, 1950 (Act No. 41 of 1950)*. Accessed 14 January 2019. [https://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/group\\_areas\\_act.pdf](https://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/group_areas_act.pdf).
- South Africa. 1952. *Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-Ordination of Documents) Act, 1952 (Act No. 67 of 1952)*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- South Africa. 1997. White Paper for Social Welfare. Pretoria: Department of Welfare. [https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis\\_document/201409/whitepaperonsocialwelfare0.pdf](https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/whitepaperonsocialwelfare0.pdf).
- SPUU (Safety and Peace through Urban Upgrading). 2016. "Lessons from Helenvale, Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, South Africa." Presentation to AFUS June 2016. Accessed 3 April 2019. <http://www.mile.org.za/AfricanForum/AFUS%202016%20Presentations/Day3-Lessons%20from%20Helenvale-NMB.pdf>.
- Stamm, B. H., I. V. Stamm, A. C. Hudnall, and C. Higson-Smith. 2003. "Considering a Theory of Cultural Trauma and Loss." *Journal of Loss and Trauma* 9: 89–111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15325020490255412>.
- Staples, K. 2012. "Statelessness and the Politics of Misrecognition." *Res Publica* 18 (1): 93–106. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11158-012-9188-0>.
- Strydom, M., G. Spolander, L. Engelbrecht, and L. Martin. 2017. "South African Child and Family Welfare Services: Changing Times or Business as Usual?" *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk* 53 (2): 145–64. <https://doi.org/10.15270/53-2-563>.
- Todes, A., and I. Turok. 2018. "Spatial Inequalities and Policies in South Africa: Place-Based or People-Centred?" *Progress in Planning* 123: 1–31. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.progress.2017.03.001>.
- Törnquist-Plewa, B., and E. Narvselius. 2010. "Cultural Trauma Theory and the Memory of Forced Migrations: An Example from Lviv." In *Flerstemte minner*, edited by A. Dessingué, K. Knutsen and A. E. Lakfoss Hansen, 35–52. Stavanger: Hertervig Akademisk.

- Trotter, H. 2009. "Trauma and Memory: The Impact of Apartheid-Era Forced Removals on Coloured Identity in Cape Town." In *Burdened by Race: Coloured Identities in Southern Africa*, edited by M. Adhikari. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.
- Visser, I. 2011. "Trauma Theory and Postcolonial Literary Studies." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 47 (3): 270–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2011.569378>.
- Visser, I. 2014. "Entanglement of Trauma: Relationality and Toni Morrison's Home." *Postcolonial Text* 8 (9): 1–21.
- Weeder, M. I. 2006. "The Place of Memory. A Reconstruction of District One, Cape Town. Before and After the Groups Areas Act." Master's thesis, University of the Western Cape.
- Wilson, M. n.d. *Alexandra Township and the Kopano Resource Centre. Background Report*. Report for UNESCO. Developing Open Learning Communities for Gender Equity with the Support of ICTS. Accessed 11 October 2018. <https://www.wits.ac.za/media/migration/files/cs-38933-fix/migrated-pdf/pdfs-5/unescoalexibkg.pdf>.
- Wyngaard, L. 2019. "The Truth about Life on the Cape Flats . . . by People who Live there." *Cape Talk 567 AM Podcast*, 11 July 2019. <http://www.capetalk.co.za/articles/354528/listen-the-truth-about-life-on-the-cape-flats-by-the-people-who-live-there>.