Using memory work as a decolonising pedagogy in a study on District Six's forced removal history: a case for epistemic justice

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Abstract

Post-apartheid South Africa created pedagogical spaces to redress apartheid injustices and suppressed ontologies as a necessary path towards epistemic justice. The post-apartheid history curriculum states that the 'study of history enables people to understand and evaluate how past human action has an impact on the present and how it influences the future'. 'Forced removals' is a common but under-utilised historical resource employable in the history classroom to connect the present with the past. The spatial, temporal, and psychological architecture of forced removals conceal intangible memory which has potential to become tangible, 'post-abyssal historical knowledge'. This article argues that epistemic marginalisation of historically oppressed communities can be ameliorated by employing 'emancipatory memory work'. Dominant epistemologies have privileged empiricism and rationalism over memory and introspection. To advance a fuller historiography of District Six, this article applies a critical memory work approach based on Schatzki's notion of memory as practice, Wenger's notion of 'community of practice' and Santo's 'post-abyssal knowledge'. Two separate focus group discussions were conducted with first-generation survivors of forced removals and third-generation grade 11 learners with ancestral origins in District Six. The study is informed by the question: what are the outcomes of a memory work approach when employed as pedagogy to decolonise the history curriculum? Based on a synthesis of memory themes, findings are co-constructed as 'post-abyssal historical knowledge'. In conclusion, suggestions are made to integrate memory work and forced removals as pedagogy towards decolonising the history curriculum.

Introduction

The year 2016 marked the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the declaration of District Six as a 'whites-only' area, coinciding with the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the 1996 post-apartheid constitution. An unresolved colonial-apartheid legacy that creates uncertainty for South Africans is the lack of social cohesion, which is manifested in contemporary

'spatial and racial apartheid'. After twenty years of democracy, Cape Town, for example, remains one of the most racially segregated cities. Spatial and racial apartheid is the outcome of land dispossession and economic segregation intensified through the implementation of the Native Land Act (1913) and the Group Areas Act (1950). The Native Land Act 27 of 1913 provided the cornerstone to promulgate legislation that allowed for the dispossession of land while the Population Registration Act and Group Areas Act classified people racially and forced them to settle in segregated townships. Consequently, the black population was forced to live in 'reserves' or 'townships'. Only 13 per cent of the total area of South Africa was reserved for blacks while 87 per cent of the remaining land was allocated for white ownership (Rugege, 2004). During the colonial-apartheid period, black South Africans were not only victims of land dispossession, they were also denied democratic citizenship and became invisible in the historiography of the country: an epistemic injustice. Their marginalisation was epitomised in decades of Eurocentric biased scholarship and evisceration in the academic curricula and textbooks (Fataar & Subreenduth, 2015). The 2015/16 #Rhodesmustfall movement emphasised the continuity of this epistemic alienation when students linked their petition for free and quality education with the demand for a 'decolonised curriculum' (The Salon, 2015, p. 6). Epistemic justice refers to the need to include marginal knowledges such as indigenous and community knowledges, which give meaning to their lives, as epistemologically valid (Fataar & Subreenduth, 2015). The purpose of this article is to demonstrate how memory work can be employed as a counter-hegemonic approach towards constructing a fuller historiographic archive to correct the epistemic injustice in the curriculum. To this end, District Six, a symbol of forced removals in South Africa, is appropriated as site ontology (Schatzki, Cetina & Van Savigny, 2001) and knowledge-creating community (Wenger, 1998), to restore the dignity and epistemicide committed against the historically oppressed.

Considering that the post-apartheid history curriculum states that the "study of history enables people to understand and evaluate how past human action has an impact on the present and how it influences the future" (Department of Basic Education (DoBE), 2011), this article is based on memory work conducted with forced removals survivors and a cohort of third-generation learners who shared District Six as ancestral home. As a historically oppressed community, former District Six residents often lack a sense of history and social cohesion due to subjugation and domination during the colonial-apartheid period. Odora Hoppers (2009) asserts that an act of

cognitive injustice is committed against historically oppressed communities when their knowledgeability as humans, is denied. Consequently, argues Fataar and Subreenduth (2015), for social justice to be advanced, cognitive injustice needs to be addressed. A further argument is made that modern western knowledge is abyssal thinking: an assertion of a hegemonic notion of knowledge through an exclusion and erasure of indigenous knowledge as 'knowledge on the other side of the line' (Santos, 2007; Fataar & Subreenduth, 2015). This article argues that memory work acknowledges that culture and memory have the potential to contribute towards the epistemological archive in a decolonised curriculum.

According to Bernecker (2010), memory can be declarative or non-declarative. Memory becomes declarative as 'episodic' when it is stored as spatial and temporal landmarks in the context of a particular event in the past. The experience of remembering involves a re-experiencing of events back in time. The subject 'locks' in his or her mind 'memory' as potential tangible knowledge, similar to an archive (Velthuizen, 2012). However, memory work with an emancipatory interest is not an uncritical and arbitrary acceptance of one person's subjective declaration of an event. Emancipatory memory work is rather a collective act of conscious ordering and arrangement of common meaningful experiences (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994). This study adopts a critical view of memory so that the outcome of memory-based knowledge is a co-creation of something new (Hating, 2016). Tucker (2017) claims that epistemology has distinguished at most, five basic sources of knowledge: empirical, from perception; a-priori, from reason; testimonial, from what other people say; self-knowledge, from introspection; and memorial, from remembering. The kind of knowledge retrieved from memory in this study is based on criteria such as coherence, independent memories, collaboration and colligation, which means the binding together of concepts (Tucker, 2017). Given the historically marginalised status of the participants and the relative absence of their voice in contemporary discourse, this memory-based study raises their suppressed knowledge to the level of memorialised knowledge, as an act of social justice.

In this study, former residents of District Six (over the age of 70) and a cohort of third-generation grade 11 learners form a 'memory community'. Learners reflected on intergenerational memories and became co-constructors of new knowledge transmitted to them by their parents and grandparents.

For the purpose of this article 'memory work' is understood to be "a labour of active and consciously giving order and meaning to the past" (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994, p.7). This article argues that historically oppressed communities possess tacit historical memory, which, through emancipated memory work can generate valid knowledge. The dominance of a Eurocentric perspective of knowledge and the arrogation of the marginalised as epistemologically insignificant prevented the development of a fuller and inclusive historiography to inform the school curriculum. Given the post-1994 shift in political power that restores the human dignity of all South Africans, new epistemological spaces have been created to remediate the cognitive injustice of the past. The research plan for this study is informed to answer the question: what knowledge claims can be constructed by adopting a memory work approach? Based on a synthesis of memory themes, findings are co-constructed as 'post-abyssal historical knowledge' which is embedded in the ontological experiences and subjectivities of the historically marginalised of District Six.

After this introductory section, the article unfolds as follows: a methodological note; District Six forced removals as site ontology; towards a conceptual model for emancipatory memory work; findings of the study: 'post-abyssal historical knowledge'; and in conclusion, some suggestions are presented on curriculum integration of forced removals and memory work with reference to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS).

Methodological note, data collection, and analysis

A small scale qualitative study investigates intergenerational memory construction of former residents and a group of high school learners. Two focus group discussions provided data for this study. A focus group discussion was conducted with eight former residents of District Six, all whom have experienced forced removals. The second focus group discussion was with eight grade 11 learners with their ancestral ties in District Six. The learners are all 'born frees', from Lentegeur Mitchell's Plain, Cape Town. The 'snow-ball' sampling technique was used to select former residents. This sampling technique is used in cases where the population is difficult to find or where the research interest is in an interconnected group of people (Maree, 2016, p. 198). The adult participants in this study shared the common experiences as ex-residents of District Six, and forced removal victims.

Learners were recruited by purposive sampling at a local high school. A special meeting was arranged with the school's history teacher to explain the purpose of the project and its relevance to the school curriculum. The teacher was requested to select learners based on specific criteria. The criteria for participation were that their family roots had to be from District Six and their parents or grandparents had to be victims of force removals. Both focus group data were transcribed and separately analysed by using the colour-code system to identify common phrases, expressions, and words to develop patterns in their responses (Gee, 2005, p. 115). As a memory-based study, the analysis of data was informed by giving attention to individual memories and the identification of similarities, before making a connection between them (Tucker, 2017). These emerging patterns were then framed into themes, which are presented as knowledge claims based on memories of force removals and life in District Six.

Memory practices are 'time-place bound' and Schatzki *et al.*'s (2001) notion of 'bundle arrangements' bridging 'time' and 'space' is useful to understand 'memory' as dynamic social practices. Two sets of themes were compared and synthesised to construct a common set of intergenerational memories organised as 'memory bundles' arranged across the District Six 'memory landscape'. Connecting memories of participants across the focus group discussions were of particular importance to identify authentic knowledge claims. Data were interpreted to arrive at findings, which were constructed as memorialised narratives: knowledge claims.

District Six forced removals as site ontology

'Forced removals' is a common black South African experience which is rich in pedagogical material that is relevant to CAPS and in particular to the contemporary history curriculum. Of particular interest of this study is a historical understanding of the perpetuation of spatial and racial apartheid in democratic South Africa, which is incompatible with the new 1996 Constitution's vision of an equalitarian, non-racial society (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The phenomenon of forced removals is not a 1948 apartheid aberration of the National Party government; it has a long history going back to the genesis of colonial land dispossession. In modern times, the more recent legislation during the colonial-apartheid period comes to mind (Mesthrie, 1994, p. 61). The 1913 Land Act and the Urban Areas Act of 1923

gave legislative sanction to uproot and forcibly remove people with impunity. After 1948, the Nationalist government intensified social and economic segregation with legislation such as the Group Areas Act of 1950, the Natives Resettlement Act of 1954, the Native Trust and Land Administration Act of 1952, 1963, 1965 and 1970 (Baldwin, 1975). Between 1960 and 1983, three and a half million black people had been affected by removals – a figure that does not incorporate influx control removals or those due to betterment schemes. One in five South Africans was a likely victim of forced removals (Abel, 2015, p.26). Due to the slow progress with regards to Land Restitution and compensation for victims of the Group Areas Act, the consequences of forced removals will remain a topical issue given people's frustration with the current 'market-led' approach to land reform (Abel, 2015). It seems that spatial and racial apartheid on the ground poses major challenges for social justice, political, and social cohesion.

Unlike in the rest of the world where forced removals took place for the establishment of military sites, border clearance or infrastructural schemes, most of removals in South Africa took place as a result of the policy of separate development. The Surplus People Project has established that group areas removals constitute the second largest single category of displacement, the largest being farm evictions (Platzky & Walker, 1985). For example, by the end of 1983, 2 331 white families, 82 859 coloured families and 39 892 Indian families had been victims of the Group Areas Act (South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), 1985, p. 468).

As a historical frame of reference, forced removals converge with past and present timelines. It integrates racial segregation and homeland policies, economic development, resistance to apartheid and the struggle for justice and human rights such as housing, education, health care and human dignity (Freund, 2007). In the light of enforced legislation that affected racial and spatially segregated population contours, forced removals have become a common South African experience to engage issues of space and time that are relevant in explaining the continuities between the democratic present and the apartheid-colonial past. As a proposed curriculum theme, forced removals have been widely experienced by most of the senior population. To provide context to this study, a brief history of District Six follows below.

About 200 years ago, Castle Bridge provided access over several canals into the legendary Hanover Street, which was the bottom entrance to District Six. Hence the District's unofficial name, 'Kanaaldorp'(Canal Village). The area

officially came into existence in the 19th century. Originally a settlement for 'free blacks' and emancipated slaves, the area was home to a vibrant community with the majority being 'coloured': descendants of the Khoi-Khoi, 'free blacks', and settlers. Over time, the area became known as 'Kanaladorp' which is derived from a Malay (the language spoken in Malaysia)word 'kanala' meaning 'please' (Davids, 2015). In local parlance, if someone asks for a favour and uses the word 'kanala', it invariably signals an appeal for help without compensation (Soudien, 2001). 'Kanala' has a social justice dimension to it, similar to Ubuntu, meaning – I am because you are! A response to 'kanala' cannot be negative, as it will deny your human dignity. A person in need must be shown compassion and care, which is an essential aspect of modern day living so much eroded during times of economic hardship. In Kanaladorp, nobody went hungry at meal times –'etenstyd' (Davids, 2015). Such was the 'spirit' of District Six: as an ethical and caring community.

According to Nasson (1990), District Six was known as an area with an identity and imagery rooted in a sense of socio-cultural community and communality. By the 20th century, the area was a cosmopolitan space where immigrant Jews, Britons and Italians lived 'cheek-by-jowl' with the majority of 'coloureds' and a trickle of Africans. The area was strewn with churches, mosques, schools, tenements, communal halls, cinemas and a library. Hanover Street was the main artery and business hub of District Six. These institutions became the defining markers of District Six's cosmopolitan culture. All this came to an end in the 1970s with the destruction of homes and institutions. Bulldozers razed District Six to the ground. The only remaining buildings were habitable houses, cottages and flats that were renovated for 'white' foreign immigrants, two churches (Moravian and St Marks) and three mosques (Gallilol Ragman, Zinatul Islam and Al-Azar) (Davids, 2015).

District Six was situated within walking distance of the Cape Town central business district. It was proclaimed a 'whites-only' area in 1966 when the majority of its 60 000 mixed-race residents were forcibly removed. Over a period of 20 years, its residents were forcibly resettled in Cape Flats townships such as Bridgetown, Hanover Park, Lavender Hill, Lotus River, Gatesville and Langa. In the late 1970s, Mitchell's Plain was unilaterally and unethically 'developed'. Some of the last residents were moved to Lentegeur, which is one of its many sections. During forced removals, memories of uncountable talented cultural enthusiasts were dislodged from their acquainted surroundings and removed to unfamiliar and often hostile

environments to 'start over again' (Davids, 2015). The epistemicide committed against District Six slowly receded subliminally, except for the dedication of a few activist initiatives such as the 'Hands of District Six' and later the District Six Museum that aimed to keep alive the memories of the injustices and to restore the dignity of the people.

The 50th anniversary of the District Six forced removals in 2016 casted attention back to the memories of the 1960s, a period known as the height of apartheid social engineering. As a political system, apartheid was basically a continuation of colonialism with a more vigorous ideological agenda to institutionalise segregation and racial inequality. Since 1994, the government began a process of reversing the legacy of the Land Act of 1913 in order to bring about a more equitable distribution of land through land reform (RSA, 2013, p. 1). For the entire history under colonial-apartheid rule, blacks never enjoyed equal citizenship in South Africa. Official history was mainly the triumphant narrative of white supremacy. Twenty years after democracy, the history taught at school is still largely taken from previous history texts and very little of the material is based on new sources. The reconstruction of an alternative historical narrative requires recognition of timeless themes such as citizenship denial and forced removals, which speak to and explain contemporary conditions. Forced removals and migrations provide the psychological and material ontological sites of memory to reconstruct content for a new national history. Needless to say, the physical, social and psychological landscape of South Africa conceals the scattered memories of the past in need of excavation. The integration of a pedagogical approach based on memory work and forced removals as historical frame of reference offers a way that connects the present with the past as part of a decolonised curriculum.

Today District Six is largely remembered by a diminishing number of senior citizens, who are now in their '70s and '80s. Many of these former residents can describe every nook and cranny that was once District Six. To them, District Six represents their history. I agree with the view of Nasson (1990, p.46) that the crucial material for the history of District Six are the perceptions and experiences of those who once lived there, not its past architecture or its bare landscape. Therefore, I will now argue how memory work can be employed as an authentic epistemological methodology to correct the cognitive injustice and epistemicide committed against this historically oppressed community. By using forced removals as historical frame of reference and District Six as historical ontological site, I suggest an

emancipatory memory work model as a theoretical approach towards a decolonised history curriculum and epistemic justice.

Emancipatory memory work: a conceptual model

Emancipatory memory work has at least three main characteristics, that justify its epistemic authority as a valid knowledge-creating approach. Memory work involves (1) 'a conscious process of ordering and meaning-making of the past' (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994), based on (2) a 'site ontology' (Schatzki, I, 2001) that provides the context for a 'community of practice' and collaborative action (Wenger, 1998; Mittendorff, Geijsel, De Laat 2006; Tucker, 2017) where collective exchanges of memory generate 3-) 'post-abyssal historical knowledge' (Fataar & Subreeduth, 2015) as culturally embedded knowledge (Odora Hoppers, 2009). This study will illustrate how an emancipated memory work approach integrates meaningful learning with the everyday cultural knowledge of learners as an empowering pedagogical experience.

I agree with Jansen (2009) that all knowledge is socially constructed and therefore never smooth, often interrupted, but always connecting generations. However, Jansen leaves unexplained the question around the concept of knowledge according to his 'knowledge in the blood'. According to Thomson (2010), although Jansen identifies pedagogical concepts such as transmission, relationality, mediation, and paradox , his explanation falls short of giving a theoretical basis to argue, for instance, why some memory/knowledge is transmitted while others are not. For this study, an emancipatory memory work approach employs a systematic theoretical and methodological framework as an active and conscious process that gives order and meaning to the past (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994). In this regard, emancipatory memory work can be distinguished from everyday popular memory that has not been subjected to vigorous processes of knowledge verification. In arranging meaningful events as memory, one focuses on the underlaying norms and cultural sensibilities that form the basis of both the structure and texture of remembrances (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994). A cautionary note to bear in mind is that memory ownership is both partly real and illusionary; however, it may also be a necessary myth for individuals and groups to sustain identity (Field, 2003, p. 7). Therefore, emancipatory memory work is neither mythical nor illusionary. It is a 'cogno-affective' activity that expounds the past in the materiality of a site ontology that provides context in which memories are

being made. Meaningful explanations are generated via the interaction between the subject and the site of memory in terms of the subject's 'sayings, doings and relationships' (Schatzki, *et al.*, 2001).

Emancipatory memory work is place-bound to a particular 'site ontology' which gives meaning to places and things through human activity arranged as social practices. Memory practices are those routine "doings and sayings" that produce collective memories in the sense of "collective shared representations of the past" (Schatzki, *et al.*, 2001, p.3). In the context of this study, District Six is remembered in a different time (present) as a historical narrative with reference to a shared 'site ontology' in the past. Memory architectures across spatial and temporal contexts are representations of the past expressed as 'bundles of memory arrangements' across a 'memory landscape'. In this study, memories from independent minds that show coherence and connections across time and space, become sources of new knowledge in the construction of a memorialised historical narrative of District Six. Encompassing the concept 'site ontology' is the participants' sharing in an economy of relationships and experiences in a 'community of practice' (CoP) (Wenger, 1998). Members of a community are informally bound by what they do together and by what they have learnt through participation. The shared activities are embedded in a historical and social context that gives structure and meaning to what they do. With this, CoPs develop their own mini-culture consisting of their own practices, routines, rituals, artefacts, symbols, stories and histories (Mittendorff *et al.*, 2006). Wenger (1998) argues that a CoP can be viewed as a unique combination of three fundamental elements: a domain of knowledge, that defines a set of issues, and creates a common ground and a sense of common identity; a community of people who fosters interactions and relationships based on mutual respect and trust; and a shared practice the community is developing with a set of frameworks, ideas, tools, information, styles, language, stories, and documents. In this study, the participants involved in the research are representatives of a community of practice based on the particular knowledge domain of the historical construction of District Six; a set of social relations that cement a sense of shared identity and community, and a shared sense of stories, making District Six as CoP an ideal social structure to share knowledge (Mittendorff e*t al*, 2006). In this study adults and learners share a common interest and identity connected to the memory of a place (District Six) and time (forced removals) involved in a 'knowledge creating community' (Velthuizen, 2012).

Emancipatory memory work generates 'post-abyssal knowledge' because it recognises processes of epistemicide and cognitive injustice which rendered indigenous knowledge as 'outside' the hegemonic modern western concept of knowledge (Fataar & Subreeduth, 2015). While abyssal knowledge separates the "knower" and academic knowledge, emancipatory memory work produces knowledge that recognises the 'author's role' in knowledge production. It rejects the 'null' epistemology – the idea that African teachers and students possess limited cognitive capacity (Fataar & Subreenduth, 2015). According to Field (2003), citing Foucault's Discipline and Punishment (1977), as emancipatory memory work is practiced in the context of post-apartheid South Africa's struggle for epistemological justice, it recognises that power produces knowledge, that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative construction of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute power relations at the same time. As a decolonising conceptual framework, Schatzki's (2001) site ontology intersects with time and space, which recognises the ex-residents as a CoP that possesses memories and experiences as potential sources of new knowledge.

To sum up, emancipatory memory work involves a conscious ordering of meaning making of the past, situated in a site ontology as CoP generating post-abyssal historical knowledge as a visible presence of the subaltern. The main findings of the study follow in the next section.

Forced-removal memory architectures: post-abyssal historical knowledge

An over-arching finding of this study is that an emancipated memory work approach generates 'post-abyssal historical knowledge' that enhances the existing historiographical archive of District Six. This approach is an ethical affirmation of the knowledge embodiment of participants. Post-abyssal historical knowledge is knowledge that is counter-hegemonic, inter-subjective and incorporates knowledge of the subjugated, the repressed and knowledge that has been discursively marginalised (Fataar & Subreenduth, 2015). In this study, the memory architectures of a historically oppressed community evolved into what Odora Hoppers (2009) recognises as "culturally embedded community knowledge". Post-abyssal historical knowledge recognises the cognitive justice in what community members know to be part of their culture

and lifestyles (Fataar & Subreeduth, 2015). Intergenerational memories are not only stored and retrieved experiences: they are also knowledge sources that are transmitted and become influential when young learners become the embodiment of the past in the present (Thomson, 2010).

In this study, at least five 'memory bundles' emerged from the memory architectures of District Six. They are: the socio-cultural ecology of District Six; trauma and pain; apartheid as unwanted inheritance; social cohesion and fractured communities; and breaking the cycle of poverty. These themes reflect a segment of the cultural and political episteme as new knowledge. A brief description of each theme is presented below.

The socio-cultural ecology of District Six

Former residents recall their childhood memories embedded in the ontology of District Six as a site of memory. They experienced a feeling of "*absence from home*", "*a scarred memory*" (adult focus-group transcription), their lives had been interrupted and suspended by forced removals. Residents remembered the schools that they attended and the teachers that made indelible impressions on their youthful lives. They expressed anger because they were separated from neighbours, family and friends. Participants were mainly from working class families and therefore their schooling was limited to the lower secondary grades. They had to enter the world of work to augment the income of the family. Participants' occupations were mainly menial: tailors, a bus driver, dress maker, seaman, and meter reader.

Former residents' knowledge about the geographical location of their homes, schools, mosques and churches were transmitted to the younger generations via their interaction and shared residence with grandparents. Learners remembered with excitement how their grandparents described where they lived, for example "*close to town*"; and "*near the Trafalgar High school*" (learner focus-group transcription). Learners remember the popular cultural food which their grandparents were used to, such as samosas, pies and koeksisters. These were not just delicacies they consumed, but they had interesting stories about who made the best and where these people lived. The producers of these snacks were 'home industries' in modern terms, as those people plied their trade to earn a living. Many of them were successful in their businesses. Some could afford to go on the pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi

Arabia after a long period of saving (adult focus-group transcription). Some of the local bakers had big contracts for weddings and community functions. A resident remembered the uniqueness of two such bakers who were sisters selling their products from the same house and the same kitchen but each had their own customers who preferred to support only one vendor and not the other. This is an example of the functional and respectful relations in the community.

Residents remembered the different cultural and sporting activities in which they participated. Rugby, soccer, cricket and netball were popular sports in District Six. They went swimming and mountain hiking because they were living near the mountain and the sea. A very common sport was flying racing pigeons. "*Almost every second house had a pigeon loft built on a roof in the back yard*" (adult-focus group transcription). One of the participants spoke about participating in national competitions and having had the most expensive racing pigeons. The popularity of racing pigeons is chronicled in the memoirs of a resident whose pigeons went back to their vacant place in District Six after a period of three months incubation in their new loft: symbolic of the cruelty and disruption of forced removals (Ebrahim, 2009).

Learners remembered with enthusiasm their grandparents' stories of the New Years' celebration and the minstrel street parades.They remember stories of the love for music and the Christmas and Malay choirs that paraded through the streets. "*My grandfather still takes the family to see the coons on New Year's Day*" (learner focus-group transcription). The iconic cinemas were popular leisure activities that exposed them to the American Hollywood culture and film stars. "*Many a local star was born in District Six*", (adult focus-group transcription). Learners learnt how crime and gangsterism differed historically. Crime and gangs were common observations in the discussion. Only one participant described how he was almost robbed. "*I was walking alone at night when someone apprehended me. But when he recognised my face and I recognised his face, he changed his mind and walked passed me. He was embarrassed because then I knew he was a skollie (gangster)*" (adult focus-group transcription). Learners spoke comparatively about their experiences of gangsterism and crime. Today, gangsterism and drug abuse are rampant in most townships while in District Six a sense of social cohesion was a living reality despite conditions of material deprivation, crime and gangsterism. Learners juxtaposed their sense of fear and insecurity with the sense of social cohesion and neighbourliness that the older generation remembers so fondly.

Learners grasped a cultural life of the older generation that was full of excitement and enjoyment. Their parents had exciting childhood experiences and as youth were involved in cultural and sporting activities: playing for clubs and attending church and mosque. The learners consider the cost of doing sport and the risk of becoming a victim of crime, given the distances they have to travel and the lack of facilities in townships. Despite living in a free and democratic society, learners seem to be experiencing a more restricted socio-cultural life than older generations.

Trauma and pain: "I can see the pain in their eyes when they speak about that time"

The victims of forced removals endured unimaginable psychological pain mostly unspoken of because of its traumatic effects: "*It's like uprooting a tree, you cut off its roots which give food and remove the soil which gives anchor and support. The tree may die*", commented a learner (learner focus-group transcription). When residents received their eviction letters, they experienced shock and disbelieve. Mesthrie 1994, p. 66) recorded the suffering of Tramway Street residents, many who had lost weight, suffered from insomnia and developed troubled dispositions. At least one member of this small community committed suicide (Mesthrie, 1994). The newspaper reported on the suicide committed by a resident of Tiervlei, John Joseph Bougaard whose body was brought down from a tree. A piece of brown paper was found in his coat pocket on which was written in red ink: "Group Areas is the cause of doing away with my life" (Mesthrie, 1994, p. 66). Trotter refers to suicide cases related to forced removals in Sea Point and Rondebosch: Residents preferred death to dispossession (Trotter, 2009, p. 51). He also related the story of a blind Red Hill resident who was forcibly removed to settle in Ocean View. He suffered a stroke a year later and died (Trotter, 2009, p. 51). Cecil McLean remembers returning from work one day in 1969 only to find that his family had been relocated to Mannenberg, a distant township he had never heard of before (Trotter, 2009, p. 51).

Similarly, former District Six residents spoke of old people who refused to move and vowed rather to die in their homes, which ironically happened to many. Former residents related their personal experiences and trauma that they vividly remember. When District Six was declared a 'whites-only' area, residents were traumatised: "*We could not accept it and were very*

disappointed"; "*We didn't want to leave*"; "*It was horrible and inconvenient. Travelling to work was costly and an economic burden*". "*We moved from place to place as the bulldozer demolished our homes*"; "*I didn't have money for a deposit (on a house) or money to move*"; "*We moved seven times before we settled*". "*Our family was split and scattered from each other*"; "*My father-in-law lent me R200 as deposit*" (adult focus-group discussion). "*When we moved to Hanover Park, I kept returning to stay with family in District Six until I had no place to stay and was forced back to Hanover Park*". All had sad stories to tell.

Unfortunately, the learners were not saved from these traumatic tales. They shared the sad memories of their grandparents' stories with others. "*You can see if the old people talk about it, they feel terrible and humiliated for the things they went through*" (learner focus-group transcript). Learners recall how they experienced the "fear" and "humiliation" that their grandparents related to them. A learner commented, "*I can see the pain in the eyes of my parents when they speak about those times*"; "*The pain is still alive*"; "*They experienced humiliation*" (learner focus-group transcription). These statements are similar to the "knowledge in the blood" to which Jansen (2009) referred: the transfer of direct memories that became indirect knowledge that influenced the perceptions and behaviour of learners despite them not having had those experiences. "*The pain reverberates in their voices when they speak about that time*", a learner commented (learner focus-group transcription).

In a time of democracy, learners found it difficult to imagine how their grandparents had to live under such oppressive conditions. Some of the learners (learner focus-group transcript) commented as follows: "*They were forced out. No negotiations took place, there was no option*"; "*It is not a nice thing to be forcefully removed from where you were born and grew up*"; "*Families were split and thrown into a big hole*".

Former residents recall the physical, emotional and social destruction that they experienced. Grandparents experienced the arrival of the bulldozers, the demolition of their homes and the destruction of the environment that was deeply embedded in their sense of being. They spoke about the split in their families and of being "on the move", in search of a home. Parents remembered their friends and neighbours from whom they were separated and the discomfort in resettlement in an alien and often hostile township. Some remembered old people committing suicide and others who would go back over weekends to "just look at their demolished houses". One resident related

the story of a neighbour who was crying everyday on his way to the train station and back from work because he could not adapt to the changes. "*Being uprooted and resettled in an unknown environment destabilised him psychologically*" (adult focus-group transcription).

While learners did not experience forced removals, the influence of images of violence and negative emotions were visible on their identities. Forced removals were violent: both physically and psychologically. Physically the violence was shown in the destruction of the environment, while psychologically the scars had been inscribed in their memories. Trauma stories of forced removals epitomise the fear, indignity and disrespect suffered at the hands of colonial-apartheid rule. While images of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that was conducted after 1994 displayed the brutality suffered by victims of apartheid, it seems that there is still much room for more grassroots healing to deal with the trauma and pain of forced removals. Unlike the pain of the victims of the holocaust suffered during the Second World War at the hands of Nazi Germany, the pain caused by forced removals remains largely unattended, suppressed, and ignored.

Apartheid: an unwanted inheritance

Forced removals left behind the most concrete effects of apartheid as people found themselves living in racially segregated and economically impoverished areas across South Africa. Although apartheid has been legally abolished, the effects of its ideology and racial segregation are still a reality for the vast majority of the historically oppressed population. Petty apartheid such as separate public amenities, beaches, entrances, trains and busses all seems absurd to the younger generation because they "enjoy the freedom of movement" which apartheid restricted. Learners saw the denial of these freedoms as injustices perpetrated against their parents and as having been committed against themselves.

While learners did not experience 'petty apartheid', they realised that the unfairness and inequality of the paradoxical past of their grandparents have been transferred to the present. "*We are suffering today*", lamented one learner (learner focus-group transcription). Hence, discourse of injustices as an outcome of the past come to mind as learners grasped how apartheid robbed them of equal opportunities and a brighter future. They comprehended

that they became the ultimate inheritors of injustice that were perpetrated against their parents and that they are the ultimate victims. Learners are more politically aware of their rights, having been born in a post-1994 South Africa, but they experience the material deprivation of oppression. "*We have inherited the injustices against our grandparents*", commented a learner (learner focus-group transcription).

Through intergenerational memory work learners tried to understand the reasons for apartheid's forced removals. They saw the reason for segregation as the greediness of whites. "*Europeans wanted everything for themselves*". "*They wanted to be close to town*". "*They wanted District Six's view of the sea and mountain*"; "*They were greedy*" (learner focus-group transcription). Learners realised that they would have been privileged if their grandparents had remained in District Six, "*near the city and under the mountains*" (learner focus-group transcription). While intergenerational memory kept alive knowledge of the past, it also transfers the emotions and pain of forced removals from generation to generation. As a means to overcome the unfair inheritance of the apartheid legacy, emancipatory memory work assists in understanding the injustices of the past by confronting it and prompting learners to strive for a better future.

Social cohesion and fractured communities

Former residents pride themselves in the sense of "community" they enjoyed in District Six. Responding to the question:"What do you tell your children about District Six?" they replied that they spoke about togetherness, good neighbourliness and respect towards others. "*We tell them about how to be respectful towards everyone, even if you don't know them*". "*There was great tolerance between Muslims and Christians and we used to help each other*". "*Muslims celebrated Christmas and Christians celebrated Eid with the Muslims*". "*There was no religious discrimination and the District was known as 'Kanaladorp' – the place where you cannot say no when asked for help, assistance or food*". "*We tell them that not everyone was poor and there were educated people living in District Six. They mentioned the principal (Sammy Frans), Dr Abrahams, a medical practitioner, outstanding sports people like the Abed brothers who went to play international cricket. Our neighbours' children all became professionals*", noted one of the residents. "*The former Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Western Cape was our neighbour in*

District Six and some of them immigrated to Canada" (adult focus-group transcription). Although the participants were mainly working class, the notion of different classes emerged in the discussion. The overwhelming discourse was that of a community with a shared network of social relations that gave meaning to their existence. It appears as if social class was not necessarily referred to in discriminatory ways.

The younger generation expressed a different sense of 'community'. The insecurity caused by crime, gangsterism and drugs today are major concerns to them and they do not share the same togetherness with their neighbours as their parents had in District Six. The cosmopolitanism that they heard about, for example, living with whites, Indians and Africans was not part of their upbringing. Their grandparents experienced the transition period when enforced racial segregation was institutionalised. Learners found themselves living in 'racially' homogenous communities that were legislated by the Group Areas Act (1950). Although learners are living in a non-racial democratic South Africa, their experiences of living with other 'races' remains a future imagination. Participating learners had a shared identity with regards to group origin and place, but comprehended the political influences of the past which entrap them as 'free' citizens in a different historical period. While the theory of nationhood and citizenship remain part of learners' vocabulary, they are restricted by the boundaries of living in separate communities that militates against the experience of what it means to be living in a non-racial society. Spatial and racial apartheid remain major stumbling blocks in the way of experiencing a sense of social cohesion both locally and nationally. While learners share a common class position, their spatial and racial schooling experiences deprive them of social interaction beyond their local boundaries. Their notion of community and social cohesion remain largely fractured by social segregation.

The cycle of poverty: past continuities in the present

A stated objective of history teaching is to develop a critical sense of history and to introduce interpretive skills so that learners may appreciate the law of cause and effect in relation to space and time (DoBE, 2011). Engaging the complexities of the present provides the cultural and pedagogical material for the immediate and future development of the learner. Vygotsky (1978, p.32) uses the concepts "scaffolding" and "zone of proximal development" which

allude to the socio-cultural context of the learner as the first steps towards deeper learning. Without engaging the background that gave rise to their conditions of oppression, learners will be at a deficit to transcend the imminent obstacles that stifle future growth and development.

Memory work is not linear in its logic but forces the learner to see knowledge from different vantage positions and therefore to recognise multiple perspectives of reality. Forced removals in District Six exposes the learners to diverse pathways to life against which they can interpret personal life circumstances, successes and failures. Given the negative experiences that forced removals produced, learners see their present working-class position as an outcome of their parents' past and a consequence of their deprived history and secon- and third-generation victimhood of apartheid. Learners lamented the overwhelming state of poverty and hardship experienced in their daily lives.

"*We are poor and still struggling. The pain is there because we could have been in a better position*". "*Our parents and grandparents went through hardship and had no privileges*". "*It was like taking away their future and traditions*" (learner focus-group transcription). Learners saw their present struggle as a continuation of their grandparents' deprivation under apartheid's forced removals. Learners remember the 'community spirit' in the memory of parents. Their grandparents were poor, but forced removals destroyed their future and their parents are still struggling to break the cycle of poverty. An emancipatory memory work approach became a useful pedagogy to demystify the cycle of poverty and assist learners to define their own futures.

Conclusion

In response to the research question: 'What are the outcomes of a memory work approach when employed as pedagogy to decolonise the history curriculum?', the findings support memory work as emancipatory and a good practice for knowledge production. The production of 'post-abyssal historical knowledge' is an overwhelming outcome of an emancipatory memory work approach. As stated previously, post-abyssal historical knowledge enhances the existing historiographical archive of District Six, because it brings to light previously silent voices. This approach is an ethical affirmation of the knowledge embodiment of participants. Post-abyssal historical knowledge is

counter-hegemonic and incorporates knowledge of the subjugated that have been discursively marginalised (Fataar & Subreenduth, 2015).

Notwithstanding the contested nature of memory as knowledge, this article argues that not all memory produces knowledge. Emancipatory memory work is grounded in an argument that all knowledge is socially constructed but that not all memory equals knowledge. This study demonstrates the emancipatory value of memory-based inquiry as a valid and reliable source of new knowledge, that was previously hidden and entangled in the consciousness of historically oppressed communities.

A clear set of verification criteria for authentic knowledge production determined the differentiation between memory as arbitrary knowledge and memory as valid epistemology. During the data analysis process and the synthesis of epistemic claims, caution was taken to ground memory work in a critical tradition by subjecting memory to stringent knowledge verification criteria. Unlike some sceptics of memory work who claim that a memory proposition is not verifiable (Bernecker, 2010) this article argues that emancipatory memory work can be employed as a knowledge generating source by excavating memories as tacit knowledge, as explained in the methodological and theoretical sections earlier. This study illustrates that the conceptual elements of an emancipatory memory work approach are based on a conscious process of ordering and meaning-making (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994) of the past in the context of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) while generating culturally embedded post-abyssal historical knowledge (Odora Hoppers, 2009; Santos, 2007). In the context of this study, as a valid epistemological source, memory-based investigations produced memorialised knowledge from remembrances that were subjected to stringent methodological and epistemological criteria of validation (Tucker, 2017), as explained in the conceptual model that provided the interpretive lens employed to generate "post –abyssal historical knowledge (Fataar & Subreenduth, 2015).

CAPS states that history is the study of change and development in society over time (DoBE, 2011). The study of history enables people to understand and evaluate how past human action influences both the present and the future. This article makes a case for the integration of forced removal experiences as a frame of reference to understand historical knowledge as required by the school history curriculum. This study shows that learners are rich in historical knowledge transmitted to them in informal living spaces:

through intergenerational communication. The research illustrates how a combination of local history and forced removals can benefit history not only as an academic discipline, but also as a source of relevant and authentic knowledge production and epistemic justice.

The incorporation of forced removals into the history classroom provides learning materials that promote the aims of history teaching (DoBE, 2011). Forced removals is particularly relevant to fulfil the requirement that learners should be able to understand the importance of heritage and conservation (DoBE, 2011). The current CAPS creates space in grade 9 for learners to do a compulsory research oral history component. Given the common experiences of forced removal across the country, learners can be encouraged to interview an elder in their family or in the community to relate their experiences. History teachers need to become creative and pay more attention to this part of the curriculum which intersects with so many of the prescribed content and competencies. A proliferation of projects that integrate forced removals and local history will place the subject and the learner where they belong: leading the decolonisation of the curriculum in a new pedagogical space. As a positive step towards epistemic justice, history educators need to pay urgent attention to the neglected forced removal memory archive that has a significant role to play in the revision of South African history.

Acknowledgment

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