In the Breath of Learning: Place-based social movements, Learning, and Prefiguration of Other Worlds

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract
Social movements have been and continue to be an integral part of the lifeworld as they create and promote conditions for the transformation of micro and macro aspects of socio-ecological relationships. From the vantage point of the present, we can argue that it is through the work and agitation of feminist, civil rights, LGBTQ, anti-colonial, socialist and environmentalist social movements (among others) that we have experienced socially just changes around the world. The study of social movements is therefore critical for learning about the knowledge-practices necessary to achieve socially just change.

This project sought to explore, understand and conceptualize the epistemic ecologies of place-based social movements whose work centers the construction of urgently needed life-affirming human knowledge-practices. Specifically, it sought to illuminate on the scarcely studied connections among learning, knowledge, and society, by examining the social construction of reality in the context of social movement action.
The flesh and blood of the project come from the work of social actors in Kufunda Learning Movement and my organizing with Ubuntu Learning Village. The study found that in these contexts, social movement actors are learning and constructing emancipatory knowledge-practices through their engagement with place-based social action. By means of learning through practice, reflection and embodiment, the actors produce and develop practices, skills, and processes that address ecological, political, social and economic relationships. In doing so, they produce subjectivities and critical capacities that enable Other social and political ecologies and societies to emerge. Beyond the learning by movement actors and people that interact with the movement, the study argues that these movements are proposals of counterhegemonic life-affirming realities. Ultimately, Kufunda and Ubuntu knowledge-practices are useful for the movements, the society within which the movements are doing work and the global community, to the extent that their knowledge-practices have analytic validity for social theory.
Acknowledgements

Gratitude to the source, the earth and the generation of ancestors from whom I inherited the wisdom to carry out this work. Many thanks to all my communities in different parts of the world from whose knowledge-practices I learnt a great deal. Many thanks to my friends and communities in Tkaronto. This document is a culmination of the many conversations we have over the years. Maita maita Shumba (Andrew Abraham) for the countless conversations and the good and challenging questions that have sharpened my way of being in the world. Maita maita Leslie F for the material support and moral encouragement that was instrumental in my staying the course. Many thanks to my friends at Kufunda Learning Village, the people of Mhondoro, Chegutu, Rusape, Zvimba and Ubuntu Learning Village for hosting me and teaching me so much through your words and actions. Your lived politics is the ultimate inspiration for this work. To Kudakwashe my son, I have no words for your patience and understanding as I spend countless hours on this project. Thanks for providing the soundtrack to this whole process. To my Olive Oil, you came into my life at the ‘right’ time. Thank you for the encouragement, love and care. To my Mwalimus (Teachers), Professor Portelli, Professor Wane and Professor Kumsaa, thank you for your guidance and wisdom. I am forever grateful for your support.
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CHAPTER 1: Introduction: It takes a village

Many people are conscientized\(^1\) and politicized through their experience of powerful movement mobilization which has inspired them, through experiences of solidarity or moments of conflict through which they have developed commitment, skills, and confidence. Indeed, some of the most radical critiques and understandings about our societies, our world and its dominant ideologies and power structures and visions of social change, emerge from those organizing spaces (Choudry, 2014b, p. 279).

Social movements research demonstrates that it is through the work and agitation of feminist, civil rights, LGBTQ, socialist, anti-colonial and environmentalist social movements (among others) that we have experienced socially just change (Cabral, 1973; Cohen, 1985; Touraine, 1985). The mechanism through which social movement actors and society become aware of what and how change needs to happen is through social movement learning\(^2\) (Kilgore, 1999). Social movement learning is even more critical in the current social, political and economic context (Mayo, 2012), especially with the recognition that learning from social movements has more impact on society than school learning (Finger, 1989). Hence, adult education scholars extended sociological studies of social movements to the learning aspects of movement activities in the late 1990s (Hall and

\(^1\) Conscientization (Conscientizacao) refers to learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to act against oppressive elements of reality (Paulo Freire, 2010, p.35)

\(^2\) Social movement learning is the learning by social movement actors and society from social movement activity (Hall and Turray, 2006). More expansively, it is a) informal learning occurring by persons who are part of any social movement; b) intentional learning that is stimulated by organized educational efforts of the social movements themselves; and c) formal and informal learning that takes place amongst the broad public, the citizens, because of the activities undertaken by the a given social movement (Hall, 2005)” in Hall (2007, p. 46).
Turray, 2006; Welton, 1993). Focusing specifically on protest movements, scholars have explored learning theory, the content of learning, pedagogy and societal implications of learning in social movements (Choudry, 2014, Kapoor, 2009; Kilgore, 1999; Walter, 2007; Welton, 1993).

Through learning in the context of social action, social movements produce holistic human knowledge, and learning from the organizational knowledge of social movements entails the study of a critical site of interaction among learning, knowledge, society and social change (Escobar, 2008; Holford, 1995; Welton, 1993). By means of learning through everyday knowledge-practices\(^3\) of organizing, resistance, reflection, and solidarity, progressive social movements produce new and distinct knowledges. They construct knowledges about the world as it is, as it might or should be; and about how to change it (Choudry, 2009, 2014, Conway, 2004, p. 56; Hall & Turray, 2006; Kapoor, 2009).

Nonetheless, social movement learning is a recent and under conceptualized notion (Hall & Turray, 2006) that requires further methodological and theoretical development. This is because the dynamics, politics, and richness of knowledge production in social movements is overlooked in literature and sometimes in movements themselves (Choudry and Kapoor, 2010). Where social movement learning has been studied, it has not gotten sustained attention (Sawchuk, 2007). Consequently, the broad theoretical, epistemic and practical value of learning from social action remains marginally explored (Ritchie, 2013).

\(^3\)Knowledge-practices departs from the abstract conceptualization of what is termed knowledge, to demonstrate that it is concrete, embodied, lived and situated (Casas-Cortes, Osterweil and Powell, 2008, p. 20. The hyphenated term was coined by Boaventura De Sousa Santos, who stated, “all social practices imply knowledge, and as such they are also knowledge-practices” (2005, p. 19). I find the term much more descriptive of the cultural constructions of social movement actors. Therefore, I use the term to speak to the inseparability of know how, know why and know to in social movement milieus.
Social movement learning is even more urgent in the current economic, social and political context (Hall, Clover, Crowther, and Scandrett, 2012; Mayo, 2012). Neoliberalism⁴, environmental destruction and further entrenchment of global coloniality mean that we need to figure out other modes of knowing and being if the world is to change. This project demonstrates that contemporary place-based social movements are critical sites to reflect on the epistemic and practical value of learning from social movements (Kapoor, 2009). Simultaneously, they are fertile grounds for discussions on the transmutation of knowledge-practices from the context of action into the academy, highlighting the potential productive connections between these spaces (Choudry and Kapoor, 2010).

To this end, the study draws upon two place-based social movements in Zimbabwe, Kufunda Learning Movement, and Ubuntu Learning Village, to explore learning through social action. The bulk of the voices employed in the study are from Kufunda, while Ubuntu provides autobiographical perspective on my involvement in social movements. Broadly, I investigate the question: What are the practices of place-based social movements and what are their implications for social change?

⁴Neoliberalism is described in the Handbook of Neoliberalism as, “The new political, economic and social arrangements within society that emphasize market relations, re-tasking the role of the state and individual responsibility. Most scholars tend to agree that neoliberalism is broadly defined as the extension of competitive markets into all area of life, including the economy, politics and society.”
From this broad question arise three sub-questions:

1. What are the knowledge-practices of Kufunda movement?

2. What are actors in the Kufunda movement learning through their knowledge-practices?

3. What are the implications and contributions of place-based social movements to local and global communities and theory?

I integrate knowledge-practices of movement actors based on my conversations with them and my observations of their practices, my own experiences, and voices in the literature to explore how actors in their daily micro-political knowledge-practices are utilizing learning to create life-affirming ways of being. Concretely, I weave together the following:

- Narratives from Kufunda Learning Movement in Zimbabwe
- Theoretical knowledges: learning theories; social movement theories; critical social theories, sociology of knowledge and studies on learning in social movements.
- Autobiographical narrative of building Ubuntu Learning Village.

I argue that Kufunda movement actors produce knowledge-practices through their daily micro-political actions which serve their emotional, psychological and physical sustenance. These knowledge-practices are critical in understanding the local context of Zimbabwe and the global context. Kufunda movement actor’s knowledges are especially significant because they are embodied. Their movement is distinct from that of protests, marches, ad-hoc lobby groups, where life and movement are distinct domains, that only support each other theoretically. Conceptualizing and understanding Kufundees as constructors of knowledge-practices suggests that a primary goal of studying social movements is the documentation of and engagement with
activist knowledges that are in turn important and useful for society at large (Casas-Cortes, Osterweil, & Powell, 2008).

1.1 Kufunda Learning Movement

The Kufunda movement was co-founded by Maaianne Knuth and her community that consists of Zimbabweans and international colleagues. Maaianne is of Zimbabwean and Danish background. From birth, she moved between Denmark and Zimbabwe. She describes herself as “a woman with roots on two continents, Africa and Europe. I am passionate about supporting people in coming together in more authentic and life-affirming ways than what is the norm in most of our dominant systems. I am the co-founder of Kufunda Learning Village, a centre dedicated to working with rural Zimbabweans as they discover their wealth and wisdom, for themselves, but also for people everywhere” (Knuth, 2017). Refusing to be influenced by typical media narratives of Africa as a place of suffering, dictatorship, hunger, and war, Maaianne acted with her knowledge and experience of a rich and vibrant Zimbabwe. She was also inspired by the Indigenous wisdom and beauty of people of rural Zimbabwe (Kufunda, 2016). In collaboration with the people from her rural village of Mhondoro and local people from villages and towns close to the Ruwa farm and the support of friends from around the world, the Kufunda movement began taking form in 2001. Maianne followed a dream to figure out the present and future with her community in place. In a letter to her friends in Harare, she writes:

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5 Kufunda is a Ndau and Manyika word that is both a gerund and an infinitive. The infinitive form of the word means ‘to learn’ or ‘to acquire information, practices, behaviours, values and skills.’ The gerund form names ‘the process of learning’.

6 In this text, Indigenous refers to people who have had long-term occupancy of a land, specifically in the context of Zimbabwe and Turtle Island, I mean pre-European colonization. Their contemporary knowledge-practices remain Indigenous on that basis.
I have a dream... We have a small farm of 327 acres 23 Kilometers south of Harare, which we bought in 1984 when our family moved to Zimbabwe (my mother returning after over 15 years abroad). On it we grow maize and groundnuts, cabbages and seedlings for sale, and milk for ourselves and the people in the surrounding area. My mother, sister and I hold a vision of something more for this to be a place where we do things with and for the people of Zimbabwe. Our dreams intertwine, and I hope to see them co-exist on the farm. For now, I have decided to get started. While I do not come with solutions or the way forward for sustainable community, I do come with the belief that together we can figure it out. The answers that people need are in their midst, and if we come together we can discover them (quoted in Wheatley & Frieze, 2011 p. 110). Maianne lives at the root Kufunda site in Ruwa, with her two children. She takes on various roles like other Kufundees and continues to learn individually and with others. Maianne travels around the world facilitating conversations and pollinating ideas between communities.
Image 1. In Circle at Kufunda Ruwa Site *Maianne facilitating a community gathering on the direction of the Kufunda Learning Village in Ruwa*

Kufunda is a movement for systemic, structural, community and individual change. Their approach to movement activity is grounded in practices of youth leadership, collective leadership, community engagement and building sustainable communities. They employ the lens of learning as both a philosophy of living and doing work and practice to achieve social change. The people in the Kufunda Movement network identify as Kufundees. Kufundee in this sense meaning learner and practitioner of learning. The philosophy of the movement is encapsulated in the saying Kufunda Kufunda Kufunda, which translates to “to have knowledge is to have learnt how to learn”. In the Kufunda network they say, “*We are learning to live the future now,*” signifying a praxis-based approach to their work that is rooted in daily life practices and relationships.
Many of us are involved in efforts of change in some way or another. In our organizations, families, communities, our country or region. Undoubtedly, our experience has left us questioning what is required to genuinely transform organizations, communities or systems. We are living that inquiry - and are engaged in learning from this place of participatory leadership about actually transforming community, civic structures and systems: Our aspiration and commitment is to move beyond episodes of enthusiasm or moments of illumination, to sustainable and on-going shift that can fundamentally transform our organizations and systems to being something that works in life-affirming ways with everyone involved (Kufunda, 2016).

The Kufunda movement is generative; it is driven by a collective drive to create resilient life-affirming systems that can rebound from turbulence by increasing diversity of foods, ideas, engaged people, and practices through seemingly small translocal actions that connect to each other (Wheatley and Frieze, 2011). Kufunda cultivates resiliency through a pre-figurative politics (Hardt, 2013), a practice in the now of the desired future. They hope to create communities that are reliant on their wisdom, resources and positive belief systems to sustain themselves. Wheatley and Frieze (2011), capture the movement goals of the Kufunda movement well:

There will be no handouts here. Kufunda has walked out on dependence on fertilizer and seeds, on aid and assistance on the belief that we do not have what we need and that we can’t find a way. They are experimenting with how to respond and adapt to their reality of their circumstances, and passing that learning on to hundreds of people who similarly struggle to free themselves from limiting beliefs (p. 115).

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7 Pre-figurative politics is an anarchist practice that in simple terms means doing in the now what one hopes to experience as reality in the future.
The realization of self-worth and the will to struggle to free themselves from limiting beliefs that Wheatley and Frieze (2011) are speaking to is akin to what Freire (2010) refers to when speaking about the path to freedom:

*In order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of their oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit but as a limiting situation which they can transform* (p. 49)

Kufunda is part of the global Translocal*8* Learning Communities (TLC) movement (Dunford, 2008 and Wheatley and Frieze, 2011), a place-based social movement whose overriding purpose is to create healthy and resilient communities from the grassroots (Wheatley and Frieze, 2011). TLCs are translocal in the sense that their day to day processes and practices are rooted in a physical place and relationships at a local level, while they simultaneously enact productive global assemblages (McFarlane, 2009). There is, however, resonance across the communities in the principles and values. Translocal Learning Communities share commonalities, such as a focus on autonomy, relationships, local land, culture, prefigurative politics, community-focused practice, experimental culture, and a commitment to learning with other place-based social movements.

In Zimbabwe, Kufundees do their work translocally as well. The contexts of Ruwa, Rusape, Chegutu, Zvimba, Glenview, Seke, and Chimanimani are similar in some respects and entirely

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*Translocal* represents what happens when people carry an idea from one place to another and set it loose in a new local environment, allowing it to emerge into something entirely different (Wheatley and Frieze, 2011, p.29). Dunford (2008) defines translocal networks or communities as those networks in which locally-based and grassroots oriented initiatives are connected across difference and distance. Translocal learning is counter to global coloniality in the sense that translocal learners do not promote universalist notions of global relations, but rather exchange stories, dreams and experiences. The term translocal also captures the diversity of communities at a local level; the understanding that there are multiple locals within locals. Communities are like the shells of an onion.

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different in others. The Ruwa site is an intentional eco-village, and the families that live at the site grow their food and work as consultants internationally on facilitation and learning, from which they earn financial resources. The Ruwa site is also rented to community organizations for meetings and conferences at a fee. Some of the families have small income generating projects such as jewelry, stone sculpturing, and selling of meats and fish that supports them. Kufundees dispersed in other local communities rely primarily on small-scale agriculture and animal-raising. Kufundee communities are also materially strengthened by a network of movement supporters from around the world. As the movement is still building systems for self-reliance, they currently rely on the government for some education, health, and social services. Being in the shell of the nation-state of Zimbabwe and depending on it for many services presents challenges for Kufundees. For example, when hyperinflation hit Zimbabwe beginning in 2008, Kufunda experienced severe economic hardships to the extent that some Kufundees left the Ruwa site and Zimbabwe altogether. The wave of outward migration also affected Kufundees in other communities. The economic challenges also created conflict within the movement as actors contested the efficacy and direction of the movement. Nonetheless, the Kufunda movement is alive and growing horizontally across Zimbabwe.
1.2 Ubuntu Learning Village

Image 2. Welcome to Ubuntu Learning Village

A mural depicting the work life at Ubuntu Learning Village. The mural faces the main entrance into the residential part of the village.

I began my university education at Trent University in September 2001. I had arrived on Turtle Island\(^9\) on September 22\(^{nd}\), 11 days after September 11. I remember carrying with me as little as possible from Zimbabwe for fear of being interrogated and possibly criminalized at the border.

\(^9\) Turtle Island is the anti-colonial name of the body of land colonially called North America. Many Indigenous nations (Iroquois, Anishinaabe and Lenape among other) nations have oral histories and creation stories that name the land Turtle Island. Naming is important, and reclaiming Indigenous stories through Indigenous names is especially urgent in a settler colonial system that feeds off discourses of amnesia.
The fear of USA reprisal had engulfed the whole globe, because even many miles from the World Trade Centre, we were anticipating a brutal response from the Bush government. The irony in all this is that I got to be on Turtle Island through the support of the USA embassy in Zimbabwe. They provided the resources that allowed me to apply to Trent University.

I landed in Peterborough in a state of fear and cautious excitement. While the fear had more to do with the palpable tensions in global politics, it also reflected the projections of cultural shock that were alive in my whole body. The excitement, on the other hand, highlighted hope; a sense of the potential to transcend severe living conditions that had been my norm from the moment of birth. I had, after all, landed in the ‘richest’ region of the entire planet; that also promised equal opportunity and acceptance for all.

My early experiences at Trent University affirmed projected stresses and fears. Reflecting now, I do believe that the fear and stress were not just minor emotional strain from environmental change, but the emotional wounds from accumulated and interlocking experiences of racism and classism in the dormitories, in public spaces and the classroom. I lived in a dormitory were 99% of the students were White. I have terrible memories of having all sorts of racist tropes deployed by many interlocutors in conversations. I shied away from going out, until the end of my first year when I had two friends who were less threatening than the majority. My only housemate who was Nigerian was a fundamentalist Christian who would not talk about his Africanness in any positive way. He found a way to fit by going to a local church, where he found people who were more open and accepting.

As time passed, I started attending meetings with other African students that broadened my community and learning experiences. These students were active in anti-racist and anti-colonial
movements. Through these social movement networks, I learned about the history of Turtle Island. I learned about the colonization of Turtle Island, enslavement of Africans and the racism in the general Peterborough area. In February 2002, I became actively involved in doing cultural presentations, dance, and music. I had broken out of my shell, and the fear that kept me depressed and isolated had turned into fertile rage. In my second year, I became more active in student politics, writing articles for a couple of student papers on issues of racism, queer politics, and international student experiences. One of the articles ended up with me in the Trent International Program Office, where I was rebuked and asked to be loyal since I was at Trent University on an International scholarship. The issue was I had written in an International student newspaper I co-founded that the Trent International Program did not put much effort in educating potential international students about the level of racism in their host community. That clipped my wings; I learned to be oppositional in quieter ways after that. I also learned that this is the way that power over disciplines.

I moved off-campus in my second year. That year I lived with an active supporter of the Zapatista movement, from whom I learned a great deal about the struggle in Chiapas and Zapatismo. Zapatista struggle deeply resonated with me, it reminded me of the liberation of many African spaces and particularly the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe in which my mother and father were active movement mobilizers. I became more and more interested in the struggles for land, in

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10 The Zapatista struggle was launched in 1994 by Indigenous and Mestizo peoples concerned by the nefarious infiltration of capitalist avarice in their lives. Appealing to the people of Mexico and others around the world, the movement promoted indigenization and construction of otherworlds. Their Zapatista mantra goes, “Otro mundo es posible”, another world is possible. The Zapatista struggle in Chiapas is a foundational motivation for this study. If I had it my way (Ethics approval was not too complicated) I would have gone to Chiapas to learn from Zapatista knowledge-practices. The Zapatista movement has inspired many place-based movements across the world including Kufunda and Ubuntu.
decolonization in general and in the struggles against settler colonialism on Turtle Island. I was also active in fundraising for the struggles in Grassy Narrows.

In 2003, I co-founded another student organization called the African Council at Trent (ACT), whose primary mandate was to support Indigenous African movements in their efforts to support their communities. I learned about Kufunda Learning Village then. I got in touch with the co-founder of Kufunda Maianne Knuth, and we exchanged emails. In 2009, I went to Zimbabwe where I visited Kufunda and was blown away by their work. I also traveled to Mhondoro a community that is connected to Kufunda and observed how the community was being re-energized by their relationship to Kufunda.

At the point of travel to Zimbabwe, I had left my job at Parkdale community health center, where I coordinated an HIV and Harm Reduction project, to pursue a Masters in Social Work. I had left my job because I wanted to learn more so that I can get into social service management. I was also actively involved in social movements in Toronto, some protest movements and some movements for community relationship building. When I graduated from my MSW, I worked at Woodgreen for a year. After that year I decided that my contribution to the world not be in traditional social work. It became clear to me that creating social movements that were grassroots and place-based could be the way of the present and the future. Kufunda Learning Village was a compelling demonstrative model.

I chose to not renew my contract at Woodgreen in 2011 and instead applied to do a Ph.D. at OISE. I intended to do a practical degree. What that meant was to study an active social movement, that I could visit and learn from, while at the same time building one. I had this thought that maybe my academic project would be practice-oriented and not a textual thesis. In the same
year before I got my acceptance letter, with the support of friends and family we bought land in the Serima area of Zimbabwe. When I got my acceptance letter in spring 2012, I made the journey to Zimbabwe to begin the work of building Ubuntu Learning Village.

I came up with the name Ubuntu Learning Village. Naming is important, and I wanted to signal our intention and hope in fostering a non-oppressive humanity. Ubuntu is a humanistic philosophy of the various nations of East, Central and Southern Africa. According to Broodryk (2002), “Ubuntu is an ancient African worldview based on the primary values of intense humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion and associated values, ensuring a happy and qualitative human community life in the spirit of family” (p. 52). The learning village part is to signify that we are a community that is learning our way into achieving our short-term and long-term objectives. We are also a community that is open to learning from others.

We finalized the administrative aspect of land transfer in August 2012. My father, my brother Tapiwa, Mai Kuda (my son’s mom), my son Kuda went to lay foundations. Three generations of family members looking to start a home for what we hoped would grow into a grassroots movement for community wellbeing and sustenance. At the writing of this thesis, the village has grown. Sixteen people live in Ubuntu permanently. It has become a hub for community gatherings and learning. We have 20 cows, many chickens, a mbira music band (Ubuntu Mbira Group), we have people from close by and far away (South Africa, Japan, the USA, England) visiting regularly. We have facilitated conversations in the community on health, HIV/aids, conflict resolution, gender, decolonization among others. We have established partnerships with other local movements such as Dzimbanhete Arts Interactions and Kufunda Learning Village. We are in the process of building an early childhood center centered on Indigenous Ubuntu knowledge,
arts, and play. To comply with a government law, we have registered as a charity, and we are in the process of registering as an educational institution.

I spend at least two months every year at Ubuntu. The village remains networked through WhatsApp groups. Every adult at the village has a cellphone that has WhatsApp. With WhatsApp, we have been able to organize ourselves from a distance. We make use of the groups function of WhatsApp for planning, updates, jokes and general communication. We have the Ubuntu residents group where we discuss issues about the overall vision of and the day to day happenings in the village. We also have a group for agriculture. This group is for the team that is responsible for food production. We also have a group for learning. The learning group is for the team that coordinates hosting of visitors, arranges workshops for Ubuntu residents, builds learning spaces, assess the learning needs of the village and makes recommendations on learning actions. Social media has played a significant role in allowing all Ubuntu actors to be a part of the daily goings of the movement while they are not physically in the village. It is a potent and useful organizing tool. At the time of writing, the people of Zimbabwe were organizing effective protests using WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter. This Flag and Tajamuka movements, for example, organized a successful stay away protest in June 2017. The massive rally on the 15th of November in solidarity with military action that saw Mugabe resign after 37 years was also organized via these platforms.

Whatsapp has allowed Ubuntu actors to continue organizing collectively despite the distance. The day to day grassroots work is where we are seeing much of our learning and connection to a more profound purpose of a community revitalizing the Ubuntu way in a challenging world.
1.3 Positioning

I am a male child of Dzodzerai and Simbisai. My totem is Moyo the heart of a cow, in the family of Chirandus. I speak Chikaranga, which is a language related to the family of languages of Eastern, Southern, and Central Africa. I was born in the land of the Gumbo (Cow leg clan) people, in Madhege Village, Gutu, Zimbabwe. We trace our ancestry to a place called Guruuswa (The land of long grass), which we believe is in what is present-day Tanzania, East Africa. Thus, our relations straddle across Southern, East, and Central Africa. My family believes in our connection to the ancestors. Ancestors speak to us through a living human person. Currently, we are still figuring out who that person is. It is normal that a family can go for ages without a spirit medium until that time the spirit world chooses one to appear. The spirit medium could be a person, a cow, or a place. This aspect of the Chivanhu spirituality is essential in grounding this thesis.
Figure 3. Madhege Village

Madhege Village is nestled in the middle of beautiful mountains. Human life is intimately intertwined with all nature in its rawness.

While I was raised on Chivanhu at home, my formal school occurred in the British colonial education system. I ended up here on Turtle Island because of this education. I currently reside on Tkaronto, the lands of the Huron-Wendat, Petun, Mississauga of New Credit, Anishinabek and Six Nations of the Grand River (Tuscarora, Mohawk, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga and Seneca nations), colonially named Toronto. I speak of myself, ancestors, spirits, land, non-human animals, because these are the relationships that I am a part of and that give me my identity. It is from this place as a munhu (human), and all the relationships in which I am implicated, that I speak of the urgency for a new global reality worth living for everyone.
I come to this research work having been raised with stories of the armed liberation struggles against European colonization in Africa. My mother and father met in the context of the armed struggle for Zimbabwe. They were both informers and community organizers on the side of the African majority. My mother specifically shared with me many stories of the war, songs and the trials and tribulations that came with it. Concepts such as race, nation, place, and borders were introduced to me at an early age. After going to school and observing my mom as a single mother until she passed on at a very young age as a sex worker, I started understanding the myth of flag independence, as neocolonialism, sexism, racism, and classism among many oppressions made our lives unbearable. Coming to Turtle Island opened more learnings around settler colonialism, the operations of global coloniality (Escobar, 2004; Quijano, 2007), and its concomitant international structures of violence, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, massive ecological destruction, and the prison industrial complex.

My life inventory of being oppressed by structures and relationships of colonization, classism, and racism include my role as an active participant in the oppression of others. Growing up in Zimbabwe as a straight, non-disabled and male person in a patriarchal cultural reality meant that I was given the little resources that were available to be the best person I could be. The benefits from this patriarchal theft came at the exploitation and subjugation of my mothers, aunts, sisters, and nieces. It also meant I was mostly guaranteed a higher level of physical and emotional safety that was not accorded to the marginalized in my community. I was taught to believe that this cultural construction and the theft that founded it was natural and therefore legitimate. I am still drawing on that theft in the present. Being on Turtle Island and on the cusp of earning a Doctorate has added a class dimension to the ways in which I benefit from theft. The work of unlearning and learning is, therefore, a fundamental part of my life.
Aside from purely nature-based catastrophes, human suffering emerges out of old and new ideas, structures, cultural forms and practices that are created and sustained by people. The same suffering can be stopped by people. In my short life, I have observed and learned about massive historical shifts that have happened because of human agency. Revolutionary decolonization\textsuperscript{11} in Africa, India, South America, Asia, anti-racist and anti-colonial struggles on Turtle Island, feminist movements across the globe, queer struggles, and ecological movements have produced momentous global transformations. Making sense of this suffering and proposing hopeful experiments for just social change inspire this endeavor.

1.4 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework: Decolonial Critical Theory

This transdisciplinary study addresses scholarly questions in macro-sociology, environmental studies, adult education, anti-colonial studies and social movement studies. The study, therefore, relies on an assemblage of ideas from these multiple scholarly contexts. Broadly, the study utilizes critical theory as an overarching theoretical lens. Critical theory seeks to identify, explain, and challenge dominant ideologies that perpetuate inequities and to expose the ways through which they represent themselves as natural (Brookfield, 2014). However, this iteration of critical theory espoused by Horkheimer and the Frankfurt school is theoretically inadequate. Mignolo (2007) argues:

\textit{Critical theory should now be taken further, to the point and project of de-linking and of being complementary with decolonization. That is, as the foundations of the non-Eurocentered diversality of an-other-paradigm}” Walter Mignolo, 2007, (pp. 484-486).

\textsuperscript{11} Decolonization
I name Mignolo’s iteration Decolonial Critical Theory since what he proposes is an engagement with Critical theory that is firmly rooted in decolonization politics.

This work is rooted in the knowledges, voices, observations, ideas, and praxis of the actors. Translocal movements such as Kufunda are forms of collective power that do not just challenge or reform the existing structural arrangements, but rather pre-figuratively project a new social order (Wheatley & Frieze, 2011). They are in essence contesting hegemonic ideas about the world to take control of the cultural field (Touraine, 1985). Decolonial Critical Theory allows us to understand social movement contestations as it centers knowledge-practices of actors in analyses of power, privilege, oppression, and exploitation. It takes into consideration all the levels of socio-political relationships; temporal (historical), Mundo (global), macro (structural), meso (cultural), and micro (individual). Decolonial Critical Theory is positive as it leads to thinking through proposals for socially just change. It forwards praxis (Freire, 1993) as an approach not only for responding to oppression and exploitation but for drawing from knowledges that come from pre-colonial histories and cultural productions (Cabral, 1973).

I also draw on new social movement theory (Touraine, 1985) to understand the relationship between movement actors and the social world, their cultural productions and the socio-political effect of their work (Welton, 1993). To explore learning (content, pedagogy, motivation, outcomes) in the movement, I bring into conversation concepts from social movement theories, social movement learning studies and learning theories. Specifically, I employ social constructivist theories such as situated learning, transformative learning and experiential learning theories to conceptualize the relationship between individual learning and the social environment (Kolb, 1981, 2004; Lave, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Mezirow, 1997).
Scholarly debates on learning, social movements, and learning in social movements have clarified my understanding of the rich connections among experience, learning, and change. Grounded in specific assumptions regarding what constitutes knowledge, learning theories are concerned mainly with two sets of concepts. The first concept of learning deals with the whatness of learning and incorporates issues such as the definition of learning, units of learning, and criteria for measurement of learning outcomes. The first concept leads to a descriptive theory of human learning. The second concept of learning pays attention to the methodology of learning, the roles of learning facilitators (teachers, mentors), the roles of learners, and the methods of sharing/constructing knowledge. The second concept leads to a prescriptive theory of learning, which in practice is an instructional theory. The concepts of pedagogy and learning are central to my understanding of learning in place-based social movements. In considering learning and social movement, it is important to regard learning as knowledge construction rather than acquisition (Bruner, 2004). Two crucial concepts in understanding collective learning in social movements are communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1994) and legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1994). Out of situated learning and experiential learning, concepts such as experience reflection, spirals of learning, learning to learn, and learning environments are all integral to understanding how individual actors learn.

Social movement theories are crucial in understanding the global level of conceptual relationships in my project. Classical movement theories were instrumental in contributing to the idea of units and levels of analysis of social movements, in the form of (1) the individual actor, the collective, and their mutual relationship; (2) the individual in relation to society and its institutions; and (3) the psychological and emotional aspects of humans’ search for freedom and agency. While Resource Mobilization perspectives underlined the importance of resources, solidarity, network
linkages in social movement efficacy, and tactics used by states and other institutions to control
and co-opt social movements, NSM theories shifted the analysis to the cultural production and
agency of the social movement actor. Influenced by the cultural turn in the social sciences, NSMs
steered social movement studies from structuralist to cultural approaches. The shift highlighted
issues such as local, grassroots politics, horizontal democratic structures and connections on
national or global levels, recentering the domain of civil society as loci of power, and the
importance of collective identities and the praxis of actors. Those who argued for a focus on
globally minded social movements expanded our conceptualization of relationships across global
space and the implications of the global dimensions of social action. Place-based theorists,
however, ask us to go back to the place and begin from there to understand global relationships
as well as construct other ways of relating across cultural and political delineations.

Social movement learning literature seeks to respond to Welton’s (1993) question that invites
scholars to look at the learning aspects of social movements. Scholars in this field have explored
the following: how can we study the learning aspect of social movements; how and what do people
learn from participating in social movements; and what do societies learn from the existence of
social movements. These three delineations correspond to methodologies of studying social
movements, content, and pedagogy in social movements and knowledge production. To
understand the individual and societal implications of social movement learning, scholars used
the constructivist notion of learning as knowledge production (Bruner, 2004), thereby connecting
the study of learning in social movements with its foundations in learning theory and sociology
of knowledge. The same concept of knowledge production also linked learning in social
movements with social movement theory and social justice education.

I lean on this conceptual assemblage to explore the work of Kufundees. I weave together the concept of knowledge-practices as defined by (Casas-Cortes, Osterweil, & Powell, 2008) and Habermas’ three learning domains (cognitive areas) in which human interest derive/produce knowledge to understand describe and analyze the knowledges produced by Kufundees. Additionally, I employ other ways of defining knowledge such as tacit, praxis, pedagogical (Conway, 2004) propositional, technical, and conceptual among others. In this move, I am suggesting that the definition of knowledge as a concept to shed light on human learning is contingent on context (place, time) and the ontological basis of the political project in which one is engaged. It is simultaneously a recognition that the multiplicity of activities, practices, and ideas that are enacted and proposed by the Kufunda movement cannot be analyzed using a single frame.

1.5 Rationale for Study

The theoretical, methodological, practical and ethical inspiration for the study of social action emanates out of my engagement with three bodies of knowledge: My own experience as a social movement actor in Canada and internationally; the study of the work of past and contemporary social movements, specifically anti-colonial movements on the African continent (Cabral, Fanon), in South America (Zapatista movement being a huge influence in this regard), North America and Asia: and many years of reading scholarly works that traverse social theory,
development studies, philosophy of education, adult education and sociology of knowledge among others. These influences have led me to seek engagement with social change from the perspective of social actors in a manner that bricolages multiple sources of knowledge. In thinking through a scholarly approach that imbricates the personal, sociological and theoretical, I found Arturo Escobar’s (2008) work with Indigenous and Black communities in the Pacific Region of Colombia to be groundbreaking. In this work, Escobar uses a series of nested frameworks to document the knowledges produced by Proceso de Comunidades Negras (PCN) in their quest to defend their land, culture, and ways of being. Escobar (2008) reads the knowledge produced by PCN in place as counter-hegemonic practices that pre-figure necessary otherworlds. PCN knowledges, Escobar (2008) argues, do not only challenge hegemonic notions of place, development, nature, and capital, but rather offer otherworldly conceptualizations that are critical in creating a world where many worlds can fit. My work considers Escobar’s foundational and extends it to explore the connections between learning, knowledge and social change.

Social movement learning emerged out of adult education’s recognition of the potential of the learning aspects of social movement action, for actors and the society at large and continues to be theorized in that discipline (Foley, 1999; Harley, 2012; Holford, 1995; Sawchak, 2010; Welton, 1993). Scholars in the field have used adult education theories to document and further theorize on informal, incidental and transformative learning in social movements (Foley, 1999). However, this extension has had its tensions. For example, social movement discourses and

12 Arturo Escobar (2008) and the World Social Forum (2001) make wide use of the terms otherworlds and world otherwise to refer to the possibility of non-Eurocentric understandings of ontology. I believe the term has its roots in Zapatismo (Otro mundo es posible), which argued that we can create other ways of being in this current reality. The fatalist doctrine that neoliberalism and coloniality are the only possible realities is not only false but dangerous. The notion of an otherworld/world otherwise also challenges the Marxist idea that we need a total revolution to construct new realities.
pedagogies have been appropriated into adult education in a manner that decontextualizes the knowledges they produce (Bevington and Dixon, 2005; Choudry, 2009). Choudry (2009) explains, “our understanding of the politics and processes of knowledge and theory construction within and by social movements is still limited, and that this knowledge and theory itself tends to be undervalued: ...even in many supposedly alternative milieus, voices, ideas – and, indeed, theories – produced by those actually engaged in social struggles are often ignored, rendered invisible, or overwritten with accounts by professionalized or academic experts” (p. 5).

In addition to these tensions, there are spatial, methodological and theoretical gaps in the field. Firstly, social movement learning has not engaged with studies of social movements in the global South. There is very few academic work (Foley, 1999; Walters, 1985) done regarding movements happening outside of North America (Kapoor, 2007). Kapoor argues that struggle such as those of Indigenous Adivasi peoples of India are marginalized in scholarly research. The same rings true for studies that focus on contemporary movements from the African continent.

Most social movement learning studies are not informed by the study of active social movements (Walter, 2007). Most rely on secondary data, newspaper reports or theoretical extrapolations. There is a need for studies that center progressive contemporary social movements. Choudry (2009, 2010, 2014), contends that there is a need for studies that are done by and for social movements actors. The work of Walter (2007) is an excellent example of fieldwork; however, it still uses the method of the voice (Dadusc, 2014) because Walter is not actively involved in the movement he studies. Kapoor (2009) and Choudry (2009, 2014) offer both fieldwork and the legitimacy of being involved in the movements of which they are a part. Responding to the increase in social movement relevant scholarship, they offer insight on how social movements and academic contexts can build alongside each other.
Because social movement learning has found a home in adult education, it has moved away from the sociological roots of social movement studies. The focus on individual learning and personal development (Foley, 1999; Kilgore, 1999) meant that the collective aspect of social movements got displaced together with issues of social justice. Most social movement learning scholars while they engage with the sociology of knowledge, by highlighting the knowledge production of social movements, they do not fully delve into the relationships between knowledge production and society. This work has been done by Conway (2005), who studied a social justice movement in Toronto. However, Conway (2005), does not speak to learning in these movements. A significant theoretical gap exists when a disjuncture is created between learning and knowledge production.

This project is of practical significance to actor networks of communities involved in the research. It is also intended to offer a political analysis by questioning assumptions around power, centering culture and place to the movements that are creating innovative spaces of 'refuge' on a global scale. This project also extends the spatial dimension of Escobar's (2008) groundbreaking work by bringing into intellectual reckoning practices and conversations taking place in Africa, India, and Mexico around social movement knowledge-practices.

The project intentionally focuses on Kufunda Learning Village and Ubuntu Learning Village, which are located in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe has complicated, recent, and ongoing experiences of liberation struggle and colonization. The aim is to add to the rich tradition of knowledge production with and for global south communities that challenge domination, while also highlighting and complicating single stories of oppression that further erase these communities' agency. It is through this global-local analytic that this study will contribute significantly to ongoing debates emanating out of sociology, cultural studies, indigenous studies, social movement and critical globalization studies.
1.6 Thesis structure

I draw upon three primary inspirations for the structure and form of the dissertation. The first is my experiences in rural Zimbabwe that included living in a small village, hard work as a farmer, and listening to oral stories, proverbs, and metaphors that were the foundational lens for moral conduct and functioned as a measure of wisdom and knowledge. The Chivanhu way shows up sometimes in clear forms as sayings, metaphors, languages and practices in the project and sometimes in subtle ways, embedded in theoretical and methodological frameworks. The second inspiration is the material work that I have been doing since 2012, the year I began my doctoral work. The work is building an eco-learning movement called Ubuntu Learning Village in Serima, Zimbabwe. I chose to use the metaphor of Kuvaka Dunhu (Building a Village) as sub-topic structure and muse for the thesis. The chapters following this introduction cite processes involved in the physical and ideological building of Ubuntu Learning Village. My own work of building Ubuntu Learning Village is presented in autobiographical narrative form, to provide a first voice to parallel the theoretical approach I take with Kufunda learning movement. In the narratives I combine descriptive and analytic elements that speaks to the themes of learning and social change. The third inspiration is the work of Kufunda learning movement. Kufundee work is presented in a more traditional academic style. It is from this work that I explicitly draw themes for analysis and connect to the assemblage of theories from which the project finds its theoretical scaffolds. I take this approach with the Kufunda part because their work is not my direct experience. I appear in the Kufunda movement more as a curious and intrigued observer and learner.

Chapter 2. Learning to Build from Others (Review of the Literature)

In this chapter, I learn from others who have written on issues of learning, social movements, and social movement learning. I examine the literature on learning theory, to understand how others
have understood learning. Working with these bodies of work, I suggest that learning for social change involves praxis, the relationship between learning and doing (Freire, 1993). I draw mostly from western literature, as I am situated here at this moment in time.

Chapter 3. The lay of the land (Methodology)

In the methodology chapter, I lay out my theoretical and practical approach to my research process. I introduce Ubuntu relational methodology as the pivot of a Third space (Chilisa, 2012) methodology that imbricates pan-Indigenous epistemologies and anti-oppressive western paradigms. The choice to write from this third-space reflects my own location and the scholarly conversation I am a part of on Turtle Island.

Chapter 4. Sharing the harvest from the Village fields (Research Findings)

Working with themes that have emerged from the voices listed in the Research questions section I share the voices of the Kufunda Learning Movement. I share in Kufundees own words what Kufunda is, what Kufundees are doing and learning, how they are learning, and the implications of the learning. This section is intended to facilitate readers’ understandings of the philosophy of the Kufunda movement, the actions that are connected to that philosophy, and the depth of knowledge-practices of the actors.

Chapter 5. The village circle reflection (Analysis)

Continuing from where I left off in Chapter 4, I sit in the circle for deep reflection on what this journey has meant and what learnings have emerged from the whole journey. I reflect on what has come from the sources, triangulating themes and creating theoretical directions that draw from the Kufunda movement. I make the argument that Kufunda can only be understood as a movement
that is both proposing and prototyping another world.

Chapter 6. *Village wisdom and the future (Concluding Remarks)*

In this chapter, I conclude by focusing on the implications of Kufunda’s work on social movement learning, methodologies and theories. I also offer recommendations on how their work could be useful in community-university relationships. Ultimately, this project offers a methodological and theoretical approach to the study of learning in social movements that is holistic by bringing into convergence an active social movement, learning theory, social movement and social movement learning theory and macro-sociological study of global relations. More importantly, the project centers the question of social justice change (Kilgore, 1999) in the context of global coloniality.
Chapter 2. Learning to Build from Others

I was born in a small village called Madhege, named after my great-great uncle the head of the clan of the area. It is a village in the sense that the people within it depend on each other for survival. While dwellings are divided, and fields and other economic activities such as hunting and gathering are done primarily on a nuclear family basis, the community comes together on many matters such as ceremony, celebration, work, and governance. There is a sense in Madhege that everyone is connected to each other and the environment. The connection is both material and spiritual. When it comes to matters of the rain, heat, drought and locust infestation, the village comes together, and on the side of the mountain will lay down tobacco and appeal to Gambe, the old spirit for intervention. Appealing to a higher spirit, when done in a communal manner signify transcendental connection.

It is in this village that I learned skills for physical sustenance, how to hunt, grow food, tend to animals, build houses, carve, mediate conflict, appreciate art, dance, and play drums among other things. It is in the same village that I also learned about human behavior, our ability to do good and our ability to cause harm and the complexity of being entangled in relationships. I learned Ubuntu here, the ideal and the reality. The ideal is living in harmony, with respect, justice, and care. Moreover, the reality is that of patriarchy, classism, ageism, ableism, impoverishment, abuse, some of which was justified within the Ubuntu framework. Like Mucina (2011) argues, to say Ubuntu is entirely positive would be telling a lie. What we can argue is that the ideal Ubuntu has much to offer to what can be achieved when humans put into practice anti-oppressive community life. It is from this ideal that we draw inspiration to live in the present and in the process pre-figure the future.
The learning to begin experimenting with a movement that is rooted in place and a specific cultural philosophy (Ubuntu) came over time, from different spaces, people, and spiritual inspiration. The story of my family and their involvement in the liberation struggle laid the foundations to appreciate issues of oppression and the need for human action to eliminate situations, systems, and relationships of domination. My mother as I have shared earlier was a community organizer, singer, and informer during the liberation struggle. My father was also an informer. My whole community of Madhege was active in the struggle in diverse ways. From feeding armed comrades to educating each other and to consoling others during times of loss.

The stories of the struggle were not beautiful stories. They are stories of suffering, of the revelation of an unrelenting global white supremacist doctrine in action on the bodies and lands of Black peoples. I lost many relatives in the war. Sometimes entire families were massacred in one instance. The colonial army torched lands at will; they poisoned rivers, they confiscated livestock to starve people and drive them away from their lands (Dutiro and Howard, 2007). All the fertile lands were reserved for white folks and their growing children or their dreams of future children.

In the spiritual-symbolic-cognitive-cultural realm, the church, schooling system, media and capitalist job relationships inculcated in Africans a self-hatred that continues in the present. The church priests were the colonial ground force tasked with excavating and purging any trace of African spirituality from everyone they encounter. In the process shifting spiritual dependence of Africans to white settlers. The schoolmasters and teachers were tasked with turning Africans into subservient followers of European practices. They intended to turn the internal landscape of every African into a hologram of whiteness. From mannerisms, desires, manners of dress, and manners of speech the African was supposed to mimic the British. To be clear, they were not supposed to
be like the British; they were to acquire these behaviors to the extent that they could become exploitable in the various imperialist industries the white settlers were rapidly developing. The media was saturated with white content, both as propaganda in praise of colonization, but also as a form of socialization. Capitalist labor exploitation played the role of dismantling families. In most instances, men were sent to mines and farms, where they could not be in their communities and families. In these spaces Africans worked in enslavement conditions; they were hit, shamed, starved and degraded. Capitalist labor exploitation shifted Africans’ valuation of themselves from Vanhu (people) to pennies in the pockets of the white boss and overseers. I am a product of this cultural production.

The colonial system did not die with flag independence. It lives in the land, in the bodies of those who survived it and those who came after it. Flag independence in many African spaces did not herald the dreams of peace and prosperity. The colonial structure that the British South Africa Company put in place remains intact, with Africans in positions that used to belong to white people where they bid for global corporations and western imperialist governments. Colonial structures were superimposed on oppressive structures already existing within African culture before the encounter with colonizers, such that the dynamics of gender, race, and class on the continent ossified further to the detriment of potential progressive politics.

Stories of the liberation struggle as told to me by my mother and my aunts became foundational to my social justice praxis. Coming to Turtle Island and learning more about this land, the parallels with Africa, brought a whole other awareness on the depth of global coloniality. I became friends with Anishinaabe elders in Curve Lake, with whom I shared stories of dispossession and the struggle for liberation. I recall vividly in one gathering one of the Elders said to us (a group of racialized students) if you are serious about struggle, how about doing that
work in your homelands. From then on, I began meditating on what I could be doing in Zimbabwe that was not charity but instead sets the foundations for a movement.

It is during these meditations with other students that we started the African Council at Trent. Our primary objective was to support African movements that promoted indigenous knowledges and ways of being with all life. Through research and the guidance of my mentor at the US embassy in Harare, we were directed to Kufunda Learning Village who at that time had set up a growing learning space in Ruwa and were also working in solidarity with the community of Mhondoro. I emailed Maianne the co-founder of Kufunda directly. Through online correspondence with Maianne, I learned a great deal about their model and their dreams. It was a beautiful model, non-violent, people-centered, translocal and transformative.

In early 2012, we agreed with our small team to send a couple of youth to Kufunda, to learn their philosophy and practice in the flesh. The youth became the foundations of the village. One of whom remains on the ground, while the other moved on. When we got to Serima to start building the village, we were received with Ubuntu from the people who surrounded us. Our closest neighbors welcomed us. Some took us around the area, showing us the land, the rivers, the sacred springs, and caves. They showed us medicines, fruits, and wood for working with. They lent us oxen for tilling the land. Their generosity was unparalleled. I recall a day when we had gone to look for poles for thatching our only structure at that time, dad, myself, my brother, came home exhausted, and at the kitchen door was a large sack of sweet potatoes. A neighbor had dropped it. They did not even leave a note. Even up today we do not know who that generous neighbor is. This was a valuable moral lesson that we continue to practice in the village. All those who come through do not pay anything. We gift what we have, and in doing so, we learn how to be in the world in a life-affirming manner. The learning continues.
In this chapter, I begin with an appreciative consideration of learning theories to understand concepts scholars have found useful in making sense of the complexity of human learning. I then explore theoretical traditions from the sociology of social movements. Finally, I examine the state of the field of social movement learning.

2.1 Learning Theories

Introduction

Learning theories reference paradigms that seek to historicize, categorize, conceptualize, and explain human learning. Most of the theories of learning are situated in developmental psychology, with their rhizomes extending to diverse disciplines such as adult education, social work, and counseling psychology, among others (Illeris, 2015; Grusec, 1992; Sichel, 1989). Learning theories focus on two broad aspects of learning, one descriptive and the other prescriptive: (1) The descriptive aspect focuses on the whatness of learning, which leads to abstract learning theory; and (2) the prescriptive aspect involves the practice of exchanging and sharing knowledge, which leads to instructional theory. Descriptive learning theory feeds into instructional theory and vice versa (Ertemer & Newby 2013). Learning theories are also grouped in terms of their ontological and epistemological assumptions. This categorization produces many groupings which cannot be attended to sufficiently in this project. However, the most referenced categories are a behaviorist, cognitivist, and social constructivist approaches. Under the constructivist group, I will also highlight, situated, experiential and transformative learning.

Behaviorism

Behaviourism follows a psychological approach to conceptualizing learning. Its central assumption is that human behavior can be externally controlled or modified (Ertemer & Newby,
Knowledge is, therefore, a repertoire of behavioral responses to environmental stimuli. Behaviorism equates learning with changes in either the form or frequency of observable performance. That is, learning is accomplished when a proper response is demonstrated following the presentation of a specific environmental stimulus (Ertemer & Newby, 2013, p. 48). Behaviorism assumes passive absorption of a predefined body of knowledge by the learner. Learning is promoted by repetition and positive and negative reinforcement. The learner is motivated to learn by external means, involving positive and negative reinforcement. There are definite roles for the teacher and student. Correct behavioral responses are transmitted by the teacher and absorbed by the students. The student is understood as an empty vessel, a tabula rasa, waiting to have knowledge filled in by an expert teacher. This theory promotes a banking model of education (Freire, 1993).

**Cognitivism**

Cognitivism equates learning with discrete changes among states of knowledge rather than with changes in the probability of responses (Ertemer & Newby, 2013). Knowledge systems of cognitive structures are actively constructed by learners based on pre-existing cognitive structures (Schunk, 1991). Cognitive theories focus on the conceptualization of learning processes and address issues of how information is received, organized, stored, and retrieved by the mind (Ertemer and Newby, 2013) Transfer of knowledge is a function of how information is stored in memory (Schunk, 1991). When a learner understands how to apply knowledge in different contexts, then transfer has occurred (Ertemer & Newby, 2013). Learning refers not so much to

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13 Paulo Freire (2010) describes the banking model of education as the treatment of learners as if they are empty vessels that are waiting to be filled by an authority (teacher). The banking model of education treats the learning process as a one-directional inputting process.
what learners do but to what they know and how they come to acquire knowledge (Bruner, 2004). Knowledge acquisition is described as a mental activity that entails internal coding and structuring by the learner. The learner is viewed as an active participant in the learning process (Ermeter & Newby, 2013). The teacher facilitates learning by providing an environment that promotes discovery, assimilation, and accommodation. Cognitivism is captured by Piaget’s (1964) definition of learning:

*In general, learning is provoked by situations- provoked by a psychological experimenter; or by a teacher, concerning some didactic point; or by an external situation. It is provoked, in general, as opposed to spontaneous. In addition, it is a limited process-limited to a single problem, or to a single structure* (Piaget, 1964, p. 176).

Cognitivism focuses on mental aspects of the learner, such that in essence it is psychologically focused and does not speak to the social circumstance of the process of learning (Cobb and Bowers, 1999).

*Social Constructivism*

Behavioral and Cognitive approaches to learning use psychological aspects of individuals as their units of analysis. Therefore, questions related to the relationships among individuals and social structures are not addressed by these approaches. Lave (1996) states that pursuing a social rather than a psychological theory of learning makes sense because of the relational nature of our existence. Limiting ourselves to psychological aspects of learning leads us to blame those marginalized for marginality (Lave, 1996).

Social constructivist theories of learning respond to and add to behaviorism and cognitivism. Constructivism states that learning is an active, contextualized process of constructing knowledge
rather than acquiring it (Bruner, 2004). Constructivism understands learning as the active process of knowledge creation and equates learning with creating meaning from experience (Bruner, 2004; Ertemer & Newby, 2013; Lave & Wenger, 1991). The constructivist view maintains that knowledge is situated and co-constructed within social contexts through interactions with knowledge communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As such, each person has a different interpretation and construction of knowledge processes (Lave, 1996). The learner is not a blank slate (tabula rasa) but brings past experiences and cultural factors to a situation (Freire, 1993; hooks, 1994). Learning, therefore, occurs when learners can make meaning from experience. That is, learning is meaning-making, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving (Freire, 1993; Lave & Wenger, 1991; and Lave, 1996). Learning is a function of the learner’s engagement with meaningful contexts and reading the word and the world (Freire, 1993). The learner in this process actively constructs knowledge from their situatedness. Learning goals and motives are determined both by learners and extrinsic rewards provided by knowledge communities (Lave, 1996; and Freire, 1993). Collaborative learning is guided by the teacher who takes the role of facilitator (Freire, 1993). Three specific learning paradigms from the constructivist group, situated learning, transformative learning, and experiential learning, speak directly to social movement learning.

Situated learning

Situated earning emanates from the work of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991). The major concepts that anchor situated theory are a community of practice and legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Lave, 1996; and Wenger, 1998). Communities of practice refer to all social bodies that constitute the environment in which someone engages in an activity. Legitimate peripheral participation refers to a group integration process through which new
members become an integral part of a community of practice. Arnseth (2008) argues that Lave and Wenger’s notion of practice is rooted in the work of Dewey’s (1998) notion of experience and Mead’s (1934) pragmatist theory of action and the neo-phenomenological tradition represented by social theorists. He argues that the way these theorists conceptualize experience as the experience of meaningfully structured situations is foundational for situated learning theory. The central assumption of situated learning is that learning is socially organized and happens in everyday activities within a socially constructed reality (Lave, 1996).

Situated learning theory posits learning as a process of interactive engagement with a community of practice through various stages culminating in learners mastering activities (Lave & Wenger 1991). Practice is understood as learning, and learning is participation: “learning as increasing participation in communities of practice concerns the whole person acting in the world” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 49). Contu and Willmott (2003) in Curnow (2013) state that “situated learning theory understands learning as ‘a pervasive, embodied activity involving the acquisition, maintenance, and transformation of knowledge through processes of social interaction” (p. 285). In situated learning, the learner takes the roles of both learner and facilitator of their learning. The community of practice also plays a facilitative role for the learner. In this formulation, learning is continuous, cumulative, and iterative. Lave and Wenger’s (1991) primary contribution is how they deploy the concept of practice to reformulate thinking and learning as constituted in the material world (Arnseth, 2008). Consequently, the orderliness and intelligibility of human affairs are conceived as pervasively relational and agency-driven (Arnseth, 2008).
Experiential Learning

Experiential learning theory is sometimes attributed to the work of Rousseau (Mulcahy, 1984), while some (Bower, 2015) ascribes it to the work of John Dewey. The theory, however, gets its naming and theoretical exposition in the work of Kolb (1981, 1984), who finds his inspiration in the cognitive work of Jean Piaget, Kurt Lewin’s action research, and John Dewey’s progressive education (Mittinnen, 2000). The basic premise of experiential learning theory posits that people learn from experience. Akin to Freirean praxis, experiential learning entails that learning is a process involving the negotiation of the interplay between action and reflection (Kolb, 1981). Kolb proposes a four-stage cycle of learning:

“In this cycle, immediate concrete experience is the basis for observation and reflection. The observations are assimilated into an idea or theory from which new implications for action can be deduced. These implications or hypotheses then serve as guides in acting to create new experiences. An effective learner needs four different capabilities: concrete experience (CE) skills, reflective observation (RO) skills, abstract conceptualization (AC) skills, and active experimentation (AE) skills. That is, he or she must be able to get involved fully, openly, and without bias in new experiences (CE), to reflect upon and interpret these experiences from different perspectives (RO), to create concepts that integrate these observations in logically sound theories (AC), and to use these theories to make decisions and solve problems (AE) leading to new experiences.” (Kolb & Lewis, undated).
The learning spiral embedded in the model is essential for “learning how to learn” (Kolb & Kolb, 2009). This is akin to Freire’s (2010) praxis, where experience informs cognitive processes, and cognitive processes inform action, and a continual cycle of reflection and action are set in motion.

*Transformative Learning*


Henderson (2002) makes a distinction between transformative learning theory and transformational change theory. Whereas transformative learning theory has its roots in adult learning theory and focuses on the cognitive learning processes of the adult individual, transformational change theory finds its origins in the social sciences, which examine the effect of social influences that are external to people (Henderson, 2002, p. 187). Hoggan (2016), argues that transformative learning theory is a meta-theory of processes that result in significant and irreversible changes in the way experience, conceptualizes, and interacts with the world. According to transformative learning theory, there are three aspects of learning that are critical to assessing the impacts of learning in an individual: depth, breadth, and relative stability. Depth refers to degrees of change, breath refers to the diversity of contexts in which change manifests,
and relative stability refers to the extent to which an individual can sustain transformation (Hoggan, 2016).

Social constructivism has its limitations. One of which is that it emphasizes the co-construction of knowledge without centering relations of power in human interaction. Additionally, social constructivism is steeped in Eurocentric understandings of what constitutes knowledge. By centering experience, it fails to consider the many ways of knowing that Indigenous African ways value. These include spiritual experiences and dreams among others.

2.3. Social Movement Theories

In the western canon, the existing paradigms of social movement studies can be traced to the work of Gustave Lebon (1895) at the turn of the 20th century (Cohen, 1985). Lebon popularized a predominantly psychological reading of collective protest behavior. His work was continued in the 1960s by Neil Smelser (1960) in the United States of America (Cohen, 1985). The approach of these scholars is known as the collective behavior paradigm (Travagliano, 2014) or the classical model (Cohen, 2005) or social-integration paradigm (Ramirez, 1981). Critiques of the classical model led to Resource Mobilization Theory, New Social Movements, Alter-globalization and Place-based social movements.

*The classical model*

The collective behavior paradigm relies heavily on Durkheim's notions of societal solidarity and anomie. Durkheim’s notion of solidarity posits society as, “a set of interconnected groups and individuals, interacting with one another in regular, patterned, and predictable ways” (Grabb, 1997, p. 70), glued together by a set of conventions amounting to morality. Durkheim understood morality as guidelines or rules that model human conduct in the field of interaction (Grabb, 1997).
Hence, the collective behavior paradigm is rooted in the idea that society and its constituent sub-units exist as more or less integrated, with set universal values serving as adhesive (Ramirez, 1981). When the seemingly cohesive system is strained individuals can either take an institutional or non-institutional approach to resolve the tensions. Institutional responses follow the rules set forth by the collective consciousness of the society, resulting in predictable changes, which maintain the solidarity of society. Non-institutional responses are not guided by existing social norms and are formed to meet undefined situations (Cohen, 1985). In Durkheim’s view, unstructured situations occur mainly because of anomic breakdowns in the division of labor (Graber, 1997) or breakdown either in the organs of social control or the adequacy of normative integration, due to structural changes (Cohen, 1983). Any change to this cohesive unit causes stress (anomic response) to the system, and due to strains, discontent, frustration, and aggression, individuals are compelled to participate in collective action (Ramirez, 1981 and Cohen, 1985). Because non-institutional responses tend to be conceptualized as irrational in this model, they are considered dangerous to the morality and consequently cohesion of society (Cohen, 1985; Ramirez, 1981; Wieviorka, 2005).

The classical approach contributed critical conceptual apparatuses to social movement analysis. The first is the idea of units and level of analysis of social movements, in the form of (1) the individual actor, the collective, and their mutual relationship. The second is the centrality of the individual in social action and their relationship to society and its institutions. The third is the psychological and emotional aspects of humans’ search for freedom.

However, the classical model takes an individualistic and hyper-psychological reading of social movement actors (Burgess, 1944). The classical model’s attribution of individual frustration as the critical motivation of collective action is too narrow and therefore limits our understanding of the
causes of social action (Tilly, 1973). Additionally, the focus upon the psychological state of the mass of potential movement supporters within a collectivity has been accompanied by the de-centering of processes through which persons and institutions from outside of specific collectivities become involved (Tilly, 1973). The movements of the 1960s and 1970s (for example, Civil Rights movements in the USA and class-based movements in Europe and the USA) were not responses to breakdowns in societal morality and cohesion, but involved concrete goals, clearly articulated general values and interests, and rational calculations of strategies (Cohen, 1985). It became clear that their collective action flows directly out of their central political processes instead of expressing momentarily heightened diffuse strains and discontents (Tilly, 1973). Given that ultimately classical approaches comprised sociological analyses of society or social systems and therefore inadequately represented work which centers social movements, they could not fully explain these emerging movements (Touraine, 1985).

Resource Mobilization Theory

In the USA, the work of Olson (1965) contributed significantly to the critique of the classical models and laid the foundations for the articulation of the Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT). RMT was further developed by Tilly (1973), McCarthy & Zald (1977), and Jenkins (1983). The RMT approach depends more on political, sociological, and economic theories than upon the social psychology of collective behavior (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Tilly, 1973). RMT maintains that collective action presupposes the development of independent sociopolitical spaces within civil society. RM theories were therefore founded on rejecting the emphasis on emotions and complaints, the use of psychological categories, and the focus on breakdown characteristic of the collective behavior models.
By emphasizing both societal support and constraint of social movement phenomena, RMT introduced concepts such as interests, opportunities, and strategy and their role in social action. RMT sought to answer the question: what are the specific environmental and political opportunities and resource conditions that give rise to collective action? The contributions of RMT theory to social movements analyses include (1) the importance of resource mobilization in social movement efficacy; (2) the importance of solidarity in the form of network linkages of social movements to other groups; (3) the reliance of movements upon external support for success; and (4) the need to understand tactics used by the state and its institutions to control or co-opt movements. Moreover, RMT’s historical approach accounts for the transformation of loci of power and corresponding changes in forms of collective action. This historical approach inherently presupposes the creation of new meanings, new organizations, new identities, and of a social space for these to appear (Cohen, 1985).

However, RMT regards the emergence of social movements as faits accomplis and only focuses on the manifest level of movement activity, namely, mobilization (Cohen, 1985). RMT prioritized strategy and organization, to the extent that it lost the actor and the collective in social movements (Touraine, 1985; Wieviorka, 2005). The focus on the strategic-instrumental action cannot account for the issue of origin and logic of group solidarity (Cohen, 1985). By dismissing the classical approach entirely, RMT also overlooked the psychological aspects of actors’ involvement in social movements. Cohen (1985) observes that “the critique of the collective-behavior tradition [has] thrown out the baby with the bathwater by excluding the analysis of values, norms, ideologies, projects, culture, and identity in other than instrumental terms” (p. 688). Touraine (1985) disputes the way the notion of resource mobilization has been used to transform the study of social movements into a study of strategies as if “actors were defined by their goals and not by
the social relationships and especially power relationships - in which they are involved” (p. 779). This notion of resource mobilization eliminates questions of meaning, promotes the separation of the process of resource mobilization from nature of social movement goals, and buries the social relationships of the actors (Cohen, 1985; Touraine, 1985). Additionally, RMT comes short in theorizing collective identity, consciousness, and solidarity. First, RMT does not clarify when and why shared characteristics become relevant for the mutual recognition of group members (Cohen, 1985).

Cohen (1985) also questions the absence of the theorization of norms, cultural production, and fields of action in RMT approaches. RMT does not focus on the relation between the rise of universalistic principles in new public spaces and new collective identities, determined by new norms and forms of associative life (Cohen, 1985). Additionally, RMT fails to analyze the meaning-making processes of collective actors as well the meanings of their collective political projects.

New Social Movements

With the emergence of other areas of contention, distinct from class or race struggles, such as the re-invigoration of feminist movements, anti-nuclear groups, and pacifist groups, that could not be fully understood through classical or RMT approaches, social movement theorists found the need for a new theoretical approach to understanding them (Wieviorka, 2005). Thus, the gaps observed in RMT necessitated the emergence of new social movements (NSM) approaches to social movement studies. The thrust for NSM approaches also emerged from the cultural turn, a substantive shift in society (what some call the move to post-modernism) and an analytic shift in the study of society in the social sciences and humanities, mostly exemplified by the rise of
cultural studies in the academy. The cultural turn signifies the centering of culture, meaning making, identity and other forms of culture in social movement studies (Wieviorka, 2005).

Whether through the reformation of existing cultural spaces or the creation of new cultural imaginary, new social movement theories characterize social movements as focusing on the cultural sphere. NSM methodology combined aspects of resources mobilization and cultural studies to articulate the place of the social movement actor in cultural production (Touraine, 1985). While both the classical model and RMT social movement had been understood as an ontological representation of societal dynamics, such that scholars were studying what is already out there rather than what they have constructed and named, NSM began by naming social movements as a constructed concept. A social movement is constructed in terms of levels of social life, organizational processes, political institutions, and cultural orientations (Touraine, 1985). Nonetheless, while the concept of social movement is a construction, it can be useful, “when it helps one to rediscover social actors where they have been buried beneath either structural Marxist or rationalist theories of strategies and decisions” (Touraine, 1985, p. 782).

The rationale for focusing on the actor is predicated on the idea that the social movement actor is a creator and product of culture: new social movements inaugurate a cultural subject (Touraine, 1985). Mostly, what is new about new social movements is that the notion of social movement is being applied to identities that have until now been unrepresented in social movement studies (Welton, 1993). Others prefer referring to this inflection of social movements as contemporary social movements (Cohen, 1985).

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14 I conceptualize cultural as material and symbolic human constructions following Amilcar Cabral (1973) in Return to the Source
Actors in NSMs actively strive to create democratically structured collectivities, pluralities of political actors, and action within civil society. In so doing, NSMs renew democratic political culture and introduce normative dimensions of social action into political life (Cohen, 1985). Therefore, NSMs combine defensive and reactive features of RMT, while not delineating themselves from external interventions or influences. However, they create and defend spaces for the creation of new identities and solidarities. NSMs brought critical dimensions to the study of social movements that include: (1) the move from structuralist to cultural approaches to social movement studies; (2) a focus on local, grassroots politics, and horizontal democratic structures and connections on national or global levels; (3) a recentering of the domain of civil society as loci of power; (4) democratization of everyday life; (5) emphasis on the importance of collective identities; and (6) reflexivity of actors and praxis (Cohen, 1985; Touraine, 1985, Welton, 1993).

Huber (1989) disputes the claim that NSMs are new. He posits that there is nothing new about NSMs because conflict and actions to address conflict are natural parts of many societies and are necessary for the development of society. He states that the so-called new social movements, including environmentalism, feminism, pacifism, and so on, are not new, but have been ongoing for at least two hundred years and that they play an essential role in processes of ongoing democratization and modernization.

Huber’s (1989) point is essential, considering that NSM theories focus on the ideological aspects of social movement, specifically on symbolic representation, meanings, and identities within structures of oppression. In other words, the creation that Touraine (1985) speaks to is not the creation that folds in its analysis Marxist dialectical materialism. Additionally, NSM definitions of culture create a false dichotomy between symbolic and material culture, in a manner that
confuses their mutual reproduction. Cabral\textsuperscript{15} (1973) and Fanon\textsuperscript{16} (1964) makes an urgent intervention by conceptualizing the political, economic, social, and symbolic systems of representation as all culture since they are a product of peoples’ relational creations.

\textit{Alter-globalization movements}

Due to the limitations of NSM and RMT frameworks, Wieviorka (2005) sees an opportunity for theorizing social movements using a different set of assumptions and concepts. He argues that “[t]he theoretical debate between political sociology, reducing collective action to its instrumental dimensions, and Tourainian sociology, which prioritizes the direction of action and its most significant meanings, is obviously not the only one to exhaust the possible definitions of the social movement” (Wieviorka, 2005, p. 2).

Wieviorka (2005) directs us to look at alter-globalization movements as alternative approaches to RTM and NSM. Globally sensitive movements are characterized by actors who articulate campaigns with a global vision. These movements may challenge inequalities, but not always and not necessarily. In \textit{Another World is Possible}\textsuperscript{17} David McNally (2002) concurs with Wieviorka (2005), arguing that anti-globalization movements have become the social movements of our moment. He cites the work of the Zapatista movement in Chiapas Mexico, the Seattle protests that shut down World Trade Organizations negotiations in 1999, and the protests by students and residents.

\textsuperscript{15} Cabral outlines his cultural theory in Return to the source and
\textsuperscript{16} Fanon talks about national culture and consciousness in the Wretched of the earth
\textsuperscript{17} McNally is invoking Zapatismo here. The Zapatistas expand on this by arguing that it is possible to have a world in which many worlds fit. To them this is not a theoretical dictum, they demonstrate it in their own movement. While the Western media has been quiet about the Zapatista movement, they continue to establish the most radical and progressive grassroots cultural structures. I am curious as to what studying learning in the Zapatista movement would yield.
workers in France as examples of globally minded social movements. This alter-globalization movement relies on self-mobilization and self-activity of thousands of people from below to challenge global neoliberalism and capitalism.

**Place-based and Translocal social movements**

However, Wieviorka's (2005) and McNally's (2002) conceptualization of global movements abstract these movements from place and do not interrogate the power dynamics among actors from different geographical locations. The Zapatista movement that Wieviorka (2005) and McNally (2002) claim as the inaugurators of this global social movement is rooted in a specific place, Chiapas, and is fighting for autonomy, as they critique global capitalist processes such as NAFTA, the World Bank, and IMF.

The globalist turn is conceptually productive, yet it also dichotomizes local and global in ways that potentially erase the local (Escobar, 2008; and Osterweil, 2005). Universalizing globalists ignore the local, cultural, and micro-political processes in which social movement are engaged (Osterweil, 2005). Strategically, “according to a ‘universalizing globalist’ perspective, effective resistance to neo-liberal capitalist globalization must come in the form of a united global movement that has moved beyond place-based and local struggles to occupy and constitute an alternative global space” (Osterweil, 2005, p. 26). A global analysis of social movements remains essential (Escobar, 2008; Osterweil, 2005), and ought to be conceptualized from the perspective of the political ecology of difference as it plays out in place (Escobar, 2008). Escobar (2001, 2008), justifies his place-based position by arguing that the globalization debate is fundamentally about the place of ontological difference in people's production of their own local lives. Social movements, especially those social movements that are rooted in place, land, and Indigenous
cultures and identities are actively responding to this ontological imperative and in the process, are producing alternatives to a globalization that promotes coloniality (Escobar, 2008). Osterweil (2005) calls this global-local approach place-based globalism.

These movements, such as PCN in Colombia actively produce knowledges that feed into the development and sustenance of the movement (Escobar, 2008). The knowledges they produce do not end within the boundaries of the movement, but they spill over into the cultural spaces which they are contesting. In *Walk Out Walk On*¹⁸, Wheatley & Frieze (2011) begin an exploration of the work of place-based globalists. *Walk out Walk On* is an ethnography of communities who are enacting change from the grassroots while rooted in global consciousness. In their own words, *Walk Out Walk On* is about, “seven communities around the world, seven very different cultures, all of which are experimenting with what it means to live the future now” (p. 3). These communities are Kufunda Learning Village in Zimbabwe, The Elos Institute in Brazil, Jourbet Park in South Africa, Shikshantar Institute for Re-thinking Education in India, Uniterra in Zapatista liberated territories in Chiapas, Mexico, Axladitsa-Avatakia in Greece, and the Berkana Institute in the United States of America. These are communities that have moved from dependency on centralized or state governments and institutions to self-sufficiency through community-based relational processes. Wheatley & Frieze (2011) define these communities as “healthy and resilient communities because they have learned to trust themselves to find their solutions and take control of their future...they take on big issues...food, economics, education, leadership and environmental challenges” (p. 7). The people who create these communities are

¹⁸ In 2015, I visited Shikshantar in Udaipur India. It is here that I learnt about the origins of the Walk Out Walk On concept. According to Manish Jain, the co-founder of Shikshantar, the phrase refers to people who dare to step out of ready-made ideas to create new ways of being in the world that are loving, caring and sustainable.
called walkouts who walk on because these movement actors have left established systems to test and explore new forms of living and organizing (Wheatley & Frieze, 2011). The walkouts who walk on do not do their work in local isolation; they build networks or meshworks on a global scale and utilize these networks or meshworks for learning and mutual support. Through regular learning journeys, inter-movement visits, gatherings in selected locations, the communities continue to learn from each other. They share what is working in their localities via websites, newsletters, and social media. This process of connecting on a global scale is called trans-localization and is articulated beautifully by Wheatley & Frieze (2011):

> Suppose that there are no universal solutions to global problems like poverty, hunger, or environmental destruction. Suppose that the kind of large-scale systems change that many of us have been yearning for emerges when local actions get connected globally-while preserving their deeply local culture, flavor, and form. What if people working on a local level were able to learn from one another, practice together, and share their knowledge-freely and fluidly-with communities anywhere? This is the nature of trans-local learning, and it happens when separate, local efforts connect with each other, then grow and transform as people exchange ideas that together give rise to new systems with greater impact and influence” (p. 28).

In practice, Translocal movements unite various theoretical strands in social movement theory. They show aspects of behavioral models, in their focus on individual motivations for action and emotional aspects of individual actors. They also speak to issues of resource mobilization, specifically the focus on local resources and the wisdom of local and indigenous knowledges. Additionally, they are a new/contemporary new social movement for they are inaugurating a new cultural ethos. Finally, they are a global movement in their practice of trans-localization and in
their thrust towards building global networks of knowledge practices, relationships, and reflections. Translocal movements also add the dimension of learning to social movement studies that are sorely missing in all the other theoretical traditions. Specifically, Kufunda Learning movement is situated in this epistemic complexity for their knowledge-practices are geared towards learning how to be in a new cultural, economic and political reality. To situate Translocal movements’ and Kufunda’s work in discourses of learning, I return to social movement learning scholarship as the foundation of this project.

2.4. Social Movement Learning

These learnings are significant and empowering. They are also incidental to or embedded in, the action taken by the activists… We are talking here about informal learning in social action, or to put it in a more political way, learning in the struggle. (Foley, 1999, p. 39)

Inspired by sociologists’ omission of learning in social movements, scholars in adult education began considering the relevance of social movement learning for adult education. Drawing on NSM theories it has been argued that social change happens through individual transformation and therefore there is need to pay sustained attention to the transformational aspects of adult learning in social movements (Bevington & Dixon, 2005; Finger, 1989; Welton, 1993). However, the foundations for current debates in social movement learning theory emanated from two critical questions: (1) “are New Social Movements (NSM), in our time, particularly privileged sites for the organization of enlightenment and emancipatory praxis?” and (2) what are adults learning from participating in new social movements? (Welton, 1993, p. 152). Social movement learning has become a critical pedagogical zone in the current social, political and economic context

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19 Even though social movement learning is theoretically a sociological concern and therefore should have been more rooted in sociology of social movements, it has grown out of and is being nurtured in adult education.
(Mayo, 2012), especially with the recognition that learning from social movements has more impact on society than school learning (Finger, 1989). Thus, adult education scholars have extended sociological studies of social movements to the learning aspects of movement action in the late 1990s (Hall and Turray, 2006; Welton, 1993). Focusing specifically on protest movements, scholars have explored learning theory, content of learning, pedagogy and societal implications of learning in social movements (Choudry, 2014, Kapoor, 2009; Kilgore, 1999; Walter, 2007; Welton, 1993).

Theorists argue that social movements produce holistic human knowledge. Specifically, learning in social movements has three knowledge-practice (Casas-Cortes, Osterweil, & Powell, 2008) dimensions: political, democratic and epistemological (Hall & Turray, 2006). Learning in social movements is political in the sense that it is a tool with which people pursue and gain political emancipation (Motta and Esteves, 2014; Hall, 2012; Hardt, 2013; Walter, 2007). Additionally, it is democratic because it promotes learning for all people, and epistemological as it opens people to learn from the whole of life (Finger, 1989; Hall, 2012; Hall & Turray, 2006; Steinklammer, 2012).

Consequently, the growing interest in life-long and life-wide learning has enlarged the conceptual field of social movement learning. Social movement learning scholars have examined: methodology of studying social movements; learning for social change and knowledge construction and production; and pedagogy in social movements (Finger, 1989; Freire, 1993; Hall, 2012; Kilgore, 1999; Kim, undated; Welton, 1993; Steinklammer, 2012). Social movement learning scholars have asked the following questions:

What is social movement learning?
How does learning happen in social movements?

What do people learn from social movements?

How does one go about studying learning in social movements?

What are the implications of social movement learning?

The foundational aspect of social movement learning theory pertains to the content of learning in the context of social action; it answers the question; what do people learn from social action? Learning from social action whether it is learning by individuals who are part of the movement, or individuals outside of it, or the collective movement or society, in general, is highly contextual (Conway, 2005; Escobar, 2008). What is common is that people learn concrete skills, processes, new ways of being and relating, about themselves, their sociopolitical condition, new information among others (Carter, 2013; Chovanec and Benitez, 2008; Escobar, 2008; Kapoor, 2009). For example, labor union members learn about their work-related entitlements such as fair compensation, healthy workplace environments, grievance processes among other issues (Carter, 2013). Community garden movements immerse their members in ideas around food security, environmental sustainability, community resilience, social justice and cultural identity (Walter, 2013). Adivasi communities in India learn about their land, the history of their peoples, the colonization of their lands and how to use their collective power to resist further colonization as well for decolonization (Kapoor, 2009).

Walter (2007) outlines the learning content within the Clayoquot Peace Camp (BC, Canada), which was started by Friends of Clayoquot Sound to protect the Clayoquot Sound rainforest from government-sanctioned clear-cutting. The first learning was the philosophy of the camp. The Peace Camp followed an Eco-feminist, non-violent, direct action approaches that, “were daily
articulated by protest leaders, were embodied in the structure and process of the Peace Camp and the blockades, and were constantly renewed with the arrival of new protesters” (Walter, 2007, p. 254). Walter (2007) observes:

The philosophy and practices of learning, education, and activism within the Peace Camp and blockades were key to its ability to provoke transformative learning, both individual and collective, on the part of protestors and the public at large. The conscientización of protestors within the movement was profound, exemplifying the educative-activism and transformative learning described by Clover (2002), Hall (2004), and others. As they participated in the Clayoquot Sound movement—in the Peace Camp, the blockades, the arrests, mass trials, jail time, rallies, boycotts, and beyond—protestors learned not only of the beauty and destruction of temperate rainforests but also of the converging interests and repressive powers of logging corporations, the provincial government and global markets, of the injustices of the legal system, and the dehumanization of prison life. They also realized their ability and power to bring about nonviolent social change from the grassroots up. Protesters learned to master, with their bodies, minds, and spirits, the many difficult processes of peaceful protest, consensus decision making, nonviolent conflict resolution, and civil disobedience, all the while testing and deepening their personal commitment to the movement (p. 260).

Another defining aspect of social movement learning pertains to methods and sites of learning. It answers the questions: How do people learn in the context of action? How do people learn from social movement activity? What aspects of social movements and the interactions between social movements and society are learning sites? What pedagogies do social movement actors employ in their learning activities?
Learning in and from social movements happens in diverse ways, incidental, informal, non-formal and structured, all in the context of action (Clover and Hall, 2000; Foley, 1999; Hall, 2012; Harley, 2012). Movement learning “can occur informally through participation or intentional educational interventions. The educational and organizational practices intertwine” (Walters, 2005, p. 55). The pedagogical approach to most social movement learning centers liberation and critique of hegemonic practices. Most social movement actors approach their learning and the learning of others from Gramscian notions of organic intellectuals and Freirean praxis (Harley, 2012). Pedagogy in social movements does not reference instructional theory, but rather a way of being in the struggle for social change.

Highlighting the movement toward conscious reflection and learning in the context of action, the Occupy movements zoned in on learning pedagogy, deep listening, and co-creation of educational spaces more than movements before them (Hall, 2012). In the Occupy movement, learning happened through formal, non-formal, and informal means; both structured and experiential education while at the site and outside the of the movement (Hall, 2012) takes place. The Occupy movement’s methods of education include People’s Assemblies, the role of space in the occupation, democratic facilitation methods for large-scale groups (the use of human microphones for example), the importance of listening, non-ideological discourse, and direct action (Personal Experience; October 2011; and Hall, 2012). The occupy movement also learns from movement intellectuals, theorists, and anarchist scholars, in building the narratives of the movement (Hall, 2012). People who were not part of the Occupy movement learned about the movement and the

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20 The concept of organic intellectuals is treated extensively in Antonio Gramsci’s Prison Notebooks
21 Freire defines Praxis as the ongoing relationship between action and reflection, the concept is found in the Pedagogy of the Oppressed
issues that they were confronting through social media such as Twitter (Gleason, 2013).

Employing her experience as a volunteer on organic farms in British Columbia Etmanski (2012) argues that the modern organic agriculture movement constitutes a legitimate counter-hegemonic social movement in the field of food production. In this movement, actors learn through experimentation and knowledge generation growing crops and rearing animals. Actors learn practical skills, knowledge, and culture through informal educational work, volunteer apprenticeships, and food activist networks. The environmental movement that emerged as Clayoquot Peace Camp educated its members, the Canadian state and provincial government and international supporters through direct action, the opening of wilderness trails, transnational media, protest music and art, traveling slide show presentations, and an international boycott of several multinational forest companies (Kranjc, 2001).

Indigenous and Black communities in the Colombian Pacific learn together about their entire life-worlds and how they change it through action. The actors in this context learn through song, poetry, workshops, participation in international forums, and community gatherings. They reclaim their spiritual ceremonies, and they develop skills to negotiate land reclamation with a resilient colonial government (Escobar, 2008). Kapoor's (2007) work with the Adivasi indigenous peoples of India shows that participants learn to challenge the colonization of their land and to reclaim their land through community gatherings. At community gatherings, the Adivasi learn from each other through post-mortem poetry, elder discourses, songs, and lamentations. Through collective struggle, actors become aware of their collective oppression and the possibilities of liberation. Learning within the movement helps to define the purpose of the movement and gives impetus for the struggle in the movement (Kapoor, 2007).
Since the field is still growing, massive, conceptual, theoretical and methodological gaps exist. These will be attended to in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

**Chapter 3. The lay of the land**

*The physical space we call Ubuntu Learning Village consists of about eighty hectares of mixed farmland and natural forest. We use six hectares of as space for dwellings and farmland. The other hectares consist of forest, grassland, one river and two streams. These house bees, many insects, snakes, rabbits, deer, mice, diverse birds and other lives. Cows, goats, and donkeys also live on the grass and trees from this forest.*

*The land is endowed with fertile soil, underground water, a natural cold-water spring, waterfalls, river fish, medicine and wild fruit. It is an entire autopoietic ecosystem. The land has its mysteries that we respect as sacred. For example, the spring on the land is a sacred site. It is not permitted by the spirits to use anything unnatural in the spring, to fence it, to collect the water for commercial purposes, to bath on the spot among other things. Some trees on the land are not to be cut for firewood, for example, Muchakata and Mubvamaropa. Under the Muchakata tree, we pay our respects to the ancestors. We offer our tobacco and beer made from red millet to our ancestors, and we speak our wishes and challenges. Mubvamaropa wood is used sparingly for sacred ceremony objects such as tsvimbo (knobkerry), bakatwa (small ax), ndiro (wooden plates) and gwariva (the wood piece of the mbira instrument). The forest has many medicinal plants that are sacred. The land itself is not to be worked on once a week on Chisi (a day of honoring the earth), in the Serima area that is a Thursday. On this day, no-one is supposed to till the land, use animals for labor or step in the fields.*
A few examples given above are intended to paint a picture of how the land at Ubuntu is worthy of high regard. In the western context discourses of environmentalism tend to dominate global conversations around human care for the earth. In our Indigenous ways, we are the earth; the earth is us, the earth cares for us as we care for it, this sense of mutual care is the soul of our spirituality. The history of human occupation of Ubuntu is long. However, I will offer a version as given to me by three elders from the Serima area. They break down the history into three phases: Indigenous, Colonial, and Second Indigenous phase22.

The Indigenous phase of the history suggests that the land formerly belonged to the people of the Moyo clan. It was the Moyo clan who gave some of these lands to Chirimuhanzu (Shumba---the Lion clan). Chirimuhanzu was a nephew of the Moyo chief of that time. The Moyo chief had been impressed by the bravery of his nephew. Especially his ability to ward off dangerous lions that were eating village cows. Then someone in the Chirimuhanzu family gave some of the lands to the Serima people of the Gushungo (womb clan). They were given this land after they had helped Chirimuhanzu protect their land against the invading Gumbo (Cow leg) clan. The Serima (Under the name Chief Chimhavi) people hold chieftaincy of the land at the time of writing. The Gumbo clan according to colonial government laws that apply to this present day remain stewards of the district of Gutu that covers Serima.

During the colonial period, the lands that were now under the stewardship of Chief Chimhavi (Serima) were partitioned into the arable and non-arable land. All the people who lived on the arable land were forced into reservations across the river Pokoteke, while the ‘good’ land was awarded to a member of a group of colonizers. According to one elder, the colonizers were

22 These are rough timelines. Human history is not that linear. The intention here is to speak to colonialism within a temporal structure that is not too abstract.
granted land by the strength of their horse. That is the colonizer would be asked to ride their horse in all four directions until their horse tire, and the distance covered by the horse would become their land. Every Indigenous African in that awarded land would then be moved to crowded sandy lands. If they tried to resist, they would be executed in public, demonstrating simultaneously to other potential resistors the consequences of such actions. The colonizers were called Vapambevhu (Conquerors of the Land).

The colonial landholders would also exploit the people in the reservations at will. They had an indentured labor system, locally called chibharo that saw Africans working and living in close to enslavement conditions. The white settler owned the whole new British economic system and ran it as a monopoly. They owned the schools, grocery stores, beer stores and farms. They would lend their workers beer, food, clothes at exorbitant rates. With a meager farm wage and debt, Africans were perpetually tied to the white settler monopoly and its system of extortion and exploitation. Colonial practices and their implications are to be found in these intimate micro-political details.

When Zimbabwe got flag independence, the land remained in the ownership of white farmers. At this point, the more extensive area where Ubuntu is located was called Fortress farm and was in the hold of a white settler by the name Erasmus who had inherited it from his father-in-law. In the year 2000 former liberation fighters and communities who had lost their land during the colonial people revolted against government laws that favored white private ownership at the expense of Indigenous collective ownership. One elder says that they organized themselves and reoccupied their ancestral lands. They set up temporary structures and started farming, disregarding the activities of Erasmus, who at this point did not have the support of colonial police and army. The Zimbabwean government of Mugabe was not happy and sent soldiers to destroy the camp. However, when the soldiers were gone, the villagers came back again. At that
point, the ZANU pf government had started giving in to the demands of the villagers and former
liberation fighters. It also happened to be the time when the government was facing its stiffest
electoral test since flag independence. They did not send back the soldiers. Instead, they co-opted
the land occupation movement and made the land issue their election platform.

Figure 4. Ubuntu open field

Open field at Ubuntu Learning Village in winter. The winters are dry, and all seems quiet and in
a needed state of rest.

The government eventually intervened by forcing occupants to divide the land into plots of thirty-
five-to forty-five hectares per family. Fortress Farm where Ubuntu is located divided into twenty-
one plots. When the land was cut up into pieces, Ubuntu was given to a man by the name Gava.
Gava was a former freedom fighter and army corporal in flag independent Zimbabwe. He was HIV positive. After a few years of living on the land, Gava’s health deteriorated. He could no longer work and needed funds to support his family and take care of himself. At this point, we were also looking for land. My family developed a relationship with the Gava family, and they transferred the land to us, with the understanding that it was going to continue to be open land for the community.

This land carries stories of Indigenous political ecologies of difference juxtaposed with stories of colonization, stories that intertwine beyond their manifestation on and construction of the land. Stories that provide a worldview for the work of Ubuntu Learning Village and the work that this dissertation is hopefully aiming to produce.

3.1 Research is a dirty word

“We cannot remove ourselves from our world in order to examine it” Shawn Wilson (2008) p.14

Knowledge “is produced through the interactions of people, and as all people are socially located (in their race, gender, ability, class identities, and so on) with biases, privileges, and differing power relations, so too is the creation of knowledge socially located, socially constructed” (Potts and Brown, 2005, p.261). At this juncture, dominant academic research theories and practices are founded on the culture, history, and philosophies of patriarchal Euro-Western thought (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008). Euro-Western conceptualizations of what counts as legitimate research have not only excluded but also in a seemingly contradictory but strategic process appropriated, denied, invisibilized and subjugated ways of knowing of oppressed peoples (Chilisa, 2012; Said, 1979). Epistemological practices rooted in the European scientific method inadvertently prescribe who can be a valid knower and what can be known (Kovach, 2005), they mark and police the borders of the whole enterprise of knowledge construction. Euro-western
thought continues to over-represent itself as the only source of meaning, as the only ontological reality (Shohat and Stam, 1994). In the field of knowledge creation and all academic disciplines, there is deep-seated epistemological oppression. These practices have meant that the processes of research are intrinsically tied to bio-political power that disciplines and governs researched bodies (Foucault, 1977).

To Indigenous peoples, colonized peoples, women, the impoverished, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ2S communities, Black people, research and the researcher(s) form assemblages of power that function to render them only objects of research (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 2012). For example, scientific research and its various spin-offs in the social sciences are implicated in ongoing processes of colonialism and imperialism, as knowledges about the colonized are collected, classified and represented by the west (Said 1979; Smith, 2012). Research served to initiate, justify and sustain colonialism and imperialism, by means of producing and naturalizing discourses of white nationalism in places such as Turtle Island, Aotera and Australia among others (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 2012). To the extent that to colonized peoples, “‘research,’ is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous worlds’ vocabulary” (Smith, 2012, p. 1).

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23 White nationalism appears in different forms that are all contextual. The rise of the right in Europe is one iteration. The entrenchment of white settler colonialism on Turtle Island for example is another. In the context of Turtle Island, White nationalism rather than being the rise of extreme racist politics, simply means the legal and normalized governance of Indigenous peoples by white settlers. It is the submerged part of the white supremacist iceberg.
Feminists have also inventoried the ways in which androcentric research has been deployed to center cis men and their needs, subjugate women, wherein positivist notions of quantification, objectivity, validity, and generalizability among others serve to smooth out gender differences, hide the agenda of the male researchers, deny the place of women’s experiences in knowledge construction and subjugate emotional knowing (bell hooks, 1994; Hesse-Biber, 2007; Moosa-Mitha, 2005). Eugenic research advocated for the elimination of people with disabilities, while current research in the medical paradigm promotes the understanding of disability as “a medical issue, a medical problem emerging from deviant anatomy” (Withers, 2012, p.12). LGBTIQ2S communities have also been at receiving end of research practices that pathologized and rendered them deviant people to be incarcerated in psychiatric units (Renn, 2010).

I am aware that as the initiator, interviewer, writer, and disseminator of this work, I carry immense amounts of power. The power of taking people’s voices and experiences and crafting them at will. I am aware that as researchers we tend to refuse to interrogate our processes of engaging in this long-standing tradition that is fraught with so much oppression and exploitation. Sometimes we tend to enjoy casting our critique to external-other researchers, while we spare ourselves the same critiques that are so relevant to how we engage in dynamics of knowledge construction. We also tend to permit ourselves to make mistakes that we do not accord to external-others. Fine (1994), puts this well “Traditional social sciences have stubbornly refused to interrogate how we as researchers create our texts...That we are human inventors of some questions and repressors of others, shapers of the very contexts we study, co-participants in our interviews, interpreters of others’ stories and narrators of our own, is sometimes rendered irrelevant to the texts we publish” (p.14). The oppressive foundations of Eurocentric research practices do not disappear because a
Black African man whose communities are grappling with racism and neo-colonialism\textsuperscript{24} is conducting the research. In fact, this identity can be exploited well, because the so-called insider researcher in some instances has the trust and the confidence of the people. Being trained and immersed in this tradition of research means I have practices that appear at the unconscious and embodied levels that subsume my intentionality. The unconscious and embodied is much harder to name and let alone undo. It is with this awareness that I wish to grapple with my positionality.

I believe that research can be conducted in a manner that does not mimic oppressive processes if it is shifted to be about and bear on liberatory practice (Smith, 2012; Absolom and Willet, 2004; Moosa-Mitha, 2005). The aims, processes, and outcomes of knowledge creation can be shifted from being stratagems for power over (Foucault, 1977) to being potent tools for decolonial and anti-oppressive praxis (Brown and Potts, 2005; Smith, 2012). I desire to research ways that challenge and undo exploitative processes of knowledge construction. I am inspired by Said’s (1994) words: “We need a different and innovative paradigm for humanistic research. Scholars can be frankly engaged in the politics and interests of the present -- with open eyes, rigorous analytical energy, and the decently social values of those who are concerned with the survival, neither of a disciplinary fiefdom or guild nor of a manipulative identity like ‘Indian’ or ‘America’, but with the improvement and non-coercive enhancement of life in a community struggling to exist among other communities. One must not minimize the inventive excavations required in this work (Said, 1994, p. 312).

\textbf{3.2 Post-colonial Indigenous Research Methodology: A Third Space Approach}

This project is predicated on the agency of Kufundees and myself as a scholar-movement actor. The questions I ask pertain to how people as creative agents are utilizing their power to imagine,

\textsuperscript{24} Neocolonialism is another way of saying global coloniality
prototype, and create a world they wish to be a part of. My questions also concern the social, economic, political, ecological, and ideological conditions that motivated the emergence of Kufunda movement. Additionally, I was interested in Kufundees’ experiences, feelings, knowledge, opinions, concepts, learning, and their behaviors in contexts of acting and creating. I was also interested in my reactions, experiences, and learnings as I interacted with people I met on my learning journey. I was curious about the possibility of combining experience and theory, moving between them, and delving into the dialogue between them. My hope is by learning from the experiential and analytic I could understand the connections between how people learn and their inclinations and capacities to act for just social change in the global context. In other words, my objectives for this research project are three:

1. To understand how geography, economics, globalization, and politics influence and affect learning and life in place;

2. To appreciate how movement actors, make sense of their experiences of learning in place; and

3. To conceptualize how place-based movement actors interact with all the levels of their lives and what learnings could emerge from those interactions regarding social change theory and practice.

To fully explore the question raised in the introduction, I bricolage critical theory, learning theory, social movement theory, social justice education theory, and the knowledges emerging from the work of social actors in place-based social movements. A single methodology that can accomplish this does not exist anywhere. I went back to my foundations in Indigenous Research Methodologies and drew upon the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Shawn Wilson’s (2008) *Research as
Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods, the edited collection Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous and Anti-oppressive approaches by Leslie Brown & Susan Strega (2005), and Bagele Chilisa’s (2012) Indigenous Research Methodologies. In addition to these texts, I completed diverse academic courses whose foci comprised Eurocentric research methodologies, both qualitative and quantitative. From which I borrow ideas incorporated into my methodological framework.

Ultimately, my methodological framework is what Bagele Chilisa (2012) calls post-colonial indigenous research methodology. This framework challenges western frameworks and offers alternative methods of conducting research that draws from indigenous knowledge systems and philosophies of formerly/presently colonized peoples (Chilisa, 2012). I use the term Indigenous to signify people around the world who are/have experienced colonialism. The Indigenous knowledges I draw upon include cultural practices from Southern Africa rooted in Ubuntu and learnings from Indigenous scholars from New Zealand and North America. What emerges is a cultural-integrative framework grounded in an Indigenous aesthetic of knowledge production based on relational integrity and accountability (Wilson, 2008), supported by learnings from socially just Eurocentric methodologies, a third-space methodology (Chilisa, 2012).

A post-colonial indigenous research methodology is relevant to this study for a diversity of reasons:

1. Kufunda and Ubuntu Learning Villages are in Zimbabwe, space formerly colonized by the British. These movements employ their own embodied cultural stories, myths, legends, art, music, philosophies, and rituals that can be understood using an indigenous relational paradigm.
2. Post-colonial indigenous methodology unearths/ highlights knowledges that were previously subjugated, enabling the researcher to close the knowledge gap that resulted from imperialism and colonialism; (Chilisa, 2012)

3. I can center the Colonized other, showing that the actors in these movements are the source of solutions to the challenges they face; New topics, themes, processes and categories of analysis that are not available in western research can be drawn from the actors; and research can be done respectfully and ethically which is beneficial to the communities involved (Chilisa, 2012)

Ubuntu Theory and Epistemology

Ubuntu Methodology (Chilisa, 2012; Mucina, 2011) is framework drawn from the Vantu/Abantu/Vanhu relational philosophies exemplified by the aphorism munhu munhu navanhu which translates loosely to: A person is a person because of people; A person is a person with people, or I am because you are. Ubuntu speaks to orality, African people, theory and epistemology (Mucina, 2011).

The Ubuntu framework can also be understood by teasing out the etymology of the word Ubuntu. I will employ ideas from Kinyarwanda philosopher Alex Kagame and my cultural knowledges from the Karanga people of Zimbabwe for explication. According to Alex Kagame, there are four facets in the African metaphysics: Muntu (man and woman); Kintu (dog and stone); Hantu (east and yesterday); and Kuntu (beauty and laughter) (Ntamushobora, 2007). In the Karanga metaphysics (Chivanhu/Ubuntu) there are four facets: munhu (singular munhu, many vanhu, human person); chinhu (non-human entity/person, plural zvinhu); dunhu (place/region, plural matunhu); and unhu (moral conduct). Ubuntu is the body of knowledge (traditional and contemporary), that speaks to the entirety of the relationships that are encapsulated in Karanga
metaphysics. This includes history, language, nature, land, human-persons, time, aesthetics, food, jurisprudence, ethics, and morality.

Collapsing the metaphysical categories of Karanga together with the metaphysical conceptualizations of Kagame, we have five philosophical pillars in the Ubuntu cosmology of ideas: time, space, persons (human and non-human), aesthetics, and movement, all of which are in relation with each other. Ubuntu research ethics and methodology are based on principles that recognize the relational implications of these philosophical pillars.

In brief, Ubuntu philosophy starts with the phenomenological position; I am because you are. This position communicates that self-reflection and meaning-making occur in a socio-relational world. As social beings, it is essential to understand that we make social meaning of our world through old meanings created by our ancestors. On the old meanings, we superimpose new meanings and, with parallel meanings of the new and old, we construct more meanings (Mucina, 2011, p. 80). Ubuntu is closely related to approaches to knowledge appreciation emanating out of Indigenous scholars on Turtle Island and Aotearoa (New Zealand). According to Wilson (2008), Indigenous ontology and epistemology are about relationships, to the extent that the distinction between ontology and epistemology becomes analytic because reality and knowledge are interconnected through the relationships we have with all that is. Awareness of truth or reality is in the process of relating to objects, not in the objects themselves (Wilson, 2008). An Indigenous approach to ontology and epistemology affirms that there are multiple realities and truths. This affirmation is significant because it opens the research process to multiple ways of seeking, understanding, and appreciating. Smith (2012) states that Kaupapa Maori methodology entails the collective understanding of the full entirety of Maori world that includes people and all their non-human relations. It also encompasses time, as it seeks to engage with Maori historiography in ways that
decolonize the Maori experience. Ubuntu is also both anti-colonial and decolonial and seeks to liberate African people (Chilisa, 2012; Mucina, 2011).

From the Indigenous-relational ontology and epistemology, Wilson (2008) derives methodology and axiology. He argues that an Indigenous axiology is based on the concept of relational accountability. Indigenous methodology entails that research processes ought to adhere to relational accountability, critical features of which include respect, reciprocity, and responsibility (Wilson, 2008). Notions such as validity, right or wrong, and statistical significance lose importance as being accountable to relations becomes pivotal in the research process (Wilson, 2008). Knowledge construction becomes less about seeking the truth, but rather about engaging with the messiness of being entangled in a milieu of relationships, essentially making the project of knowledge construction an endeavor to shed light on relationships and creating new relationships.

 Practically, Indigenous research entails the interweaving of stories of movement actors and the researcher producing new stories and visions (Chilisa, 2012). Indigenous research practices include storytelling, circles, song, poetry, spiritual quests, and dreams. They honor the substantial wisdom that exists in people and the earth. The work of the researcher is not to impose theory, organizing principles, or ideas from outside, but rather to act as a catalyst in surfacing what is already present and creating knowledge through this process. An indigenous inquiry centers the experiences of the researcher and the participants meaning that the researcher explores their relationship to the research process and the ideas they are exploring (Wilson, 2008). Using Indigenous research methods, I communicate my story of learning and building Ubuntu Learning Village throughout my research process.
Qualitative research (QR), methodologies are appropriate because they are intuitively designed to understand social phenomena in its natural environment and allows for a focus on meanings, experiences, and views of social movements (QRCA, 2015). Additionally, QR methodologies align with my approach of centering the knowledge-practices of social movement actors. QR methodologies provided ready-made approaches to interviews, interview question design, and sampling method that were complementary to Ubuntu methods.

QR methods have multiple advantages that align with my research question and relational methodology. Qualitative research methods offer the following advantages: (1) they allow for interactions of ideas from respondents; (2) they offer the researcher the opportunity to probe into answers and get at a depth of ideas offered by respondents; (3) the researcher has access to non-verbal communication; and (4) they allow an active process in which the researcher can try different ways of asking questions (Qualitative Research Consultants Association, 2015).

Ubuntu methods include visitations, participation, and physical observation. To build relationships with movement actors, I visited Kufunda on two occasions. This aspect is akin to ethnographic practice. I borrow from some ethnographic practices as they are congruent. Visitation, participation, and observation was integral as they (1) immersed me in the movement actors’ lives and enabled me to build relationships with them during the period of the study; (2) provided a rich source of visual data and helped to reveal unarticulated experiences; (3) captured behavior in the different contexts of everyday life; (4) placed a human face on voices through real-life stories; (5) allowed emotional behavior to be captured; and (6) by carrying out research
in the everyday life environments of participants they helped to identify discrepancies between what people say they do and what they actually do (Fetterman, 2008).

3.3 Research Design

Indigenous approaches to research are emergent and allow for a flexible design that lends itself to multiple contingent realities. In keeping with a third-space methodology, my QR design is an exploratory case study that seeks first-time knowledges of participants through the stories of the movement actors (Stake, 2000, p.437, in Kapoor, 2009). The case is somewhat bound to the villages involved in the Kufunda learning movement and my autobiographical journey. The case study approach I employ is descriptive to the extent of exploring the proposed research question without going for a thick description (Kapoor, 2009). The flexibility of my design is in its use of multiple methods and tailoring of voices collection based on the situation and what was considered ethical in the communities I visited. The protocol was contingent.
Research site

The mass of the voices which the project rely on comes from the Kufunda Learning Movement. My focus on the Kufunda Learning Movement is inspired by the relational aspect of Ubuntu methodology. Working with Kufunda as my case study made sense because of its situated practices in a specific context that is my own home. I have a considerable history of relationships with Kufunda’s work that goes back to 2003. Additionally, I have a deep connection to the Kufunda movement, borne of my involvement with Kufunda since 2004 and the deep relationships that have been cultivated as part of my work with the movement. As part of the mesh-work of translocal learning village builders, I find Kufundee work to be relevant to my work of building Ubuntu Learning Village in Zimbabwe. The situatedness of Kufunda is thickened by the cumulative matter from my relationships over time, such that it lends to the thesis my auto-biography- from memories of my life in Zimbabwe to auto-ethnographic material in the movement (Casas-Cortes, 2009).

Gathering Voices, Stories and Experiences

The voices and experiences of Kufundees were collected through many avenues. I spend at least forty-five days in the movement network. Thirty days of which I was at the Ruwa site. At the Ruwa site, I interacted with at least one hundred and fifty people. These included Kufundees young and old and visitors from within Zimbabwe and around the world. The other fifteen days I visited at least five communities that are part of the Kufunda network. I visited Chegutu, Mhondoro, Rusape, Zvimba, and Seke. I attended community gatherings and recorded the conversations, songs, and poetry. I also conducted group interviews and one on one interviews. In total, I attended at least 15 meetings, some of which I designed and facilitated. I conducted at least twenty, one on one, informal semi-structured interviews in the Kufunda the movement
of the recorded interviews, thirteen were with women, and seven were with men. The age range was from twenty years to sixty years. I was careful to prioritize the voices of women, mainly because their voices in these contexts are also subjugated. Additionally, they make most of the movement actors, making their work and wisdom central to movement mobilization and effectiveness.

I conducted some interviews in Shona, a language in which most people in the movement are comfortable. However, most people preferred to speak in English. I listened to people’s stories carefully, picking on the proverbs, sayings, myths, legends, cultural practices and symbols they employed in layering their stories. I found these were quite central to movement actors sense of themselves and their work. I also drew on principles of appreciative inquiry for developing interview questions and conducting interviews. I learned about appreciative inquiry in a workshop I attended at Kufunda Learning Village on the use of compelling questions in 2009. The hallmark of appreciative inquiry is framing of questions in a positive manner (Norum, 2008). Appreciative inquiry is in line with a relational approach that seeks to build upon what is working well while steering away from an oppositional or adversarial argumentative approach. Constructive critique is embraced. In line with my Indigenous approach, I used the questions as guides in conversations, not as fixed tools for collecting stories. Informal and semi-structured interviewing was appropriate in this context because they allowed for conversations to happen organically without an articulated agenda (Fetterman, 2008). After initial analysis, I found that I needed more thematic confirmation on some of the initial research questions. I emailed a list of questions (the same I had used as guides in the one on one interviews) to an additional 10 Kufundees, who were generous enough to respond.
Before I interviewed Kufundees, I observed or participated in activities in which they were involved and asked if they were open to talking with me. As a cultural practice in Zimbabwe, if you pass by people doing work, the expectation is that you join even if for a small period. In the rural areas, this is a standard cultural expectation. The same way people will feed a passerby. When they agreed, I discussed with each participant about consent and confidentiality, explaining fully that I will not use their real names, but that I cannot fully guarantee absolute confidentiality because the thesis is a public document. I closed voice collection when there was enough resonance in themes across voices.

The stories and experiences I present in the *Harvest from The Village Fields, The Circle of Deep Reflection and Conclusion* comes from the following sources:

1. Social movement, learning, and social movement learning theories
2. Semi-structured interviews with Kufundee and meeting conversations
3. My participation while in the movements networks recorded in field notes
4. Songs, proverbs, legends, myths, and poems from the movement actors
5. Written accounts from Kufunda Learning Village websites, monthly email updates
6. Auto-ethnographic material from my life in Zimbabwe and my work with Ubuntu Learning Village
Analysis

The analysis sections (chapters 4, 5, and 6) are made coherent through themes that I generated from my research and interview questions. I derived the research and interview questions using conceptual guidelines from the literature on social movements, social movement learning, and learning theories. I categorized the interview questions into five groups: Participant background, Practices, Knowledge construction, Learning and Socio-political effects (Appendix A). The responses to the interview questions naturally fitted into four themes. As other smaller themes emerged from the interviews and written sources, I employed a modified grounded theory (open, axial and selectivity coding) (Lippie, 2007) to find connections among them and the other broader themes. Areas of inquiry under consideration are (1) Kufundee practices; (2) Kufundee’s learning pedagogies; (3) the content of their individual and collective learning; and (4) the implications of these on Kufundees, the Kufunda movement, the local communities, and global communities. The inquiry seeks primarily to understand Kufundee relationships to themselves, their work, their local space and knowledge-practices, and their learning experiences and methods. It also seeks to shed light on contributions of Kufunda knowledge-practices to social movement learning theory.

Chapter 4. Harvests from the Village fields

Three practices represent and guide our work at Ubuntu Learning Village; Food Sovereignty, Healthy Communities and Art. It is via these sites of life that we engage in learning through doing, embodiment and reflection. Since 2012, we have grown our food and gathered foods from the forest. We grow corn, squash, melons, ground beans, peas, greens, millets, groundnuts, gourds, sunflowers and tomatoes among other foods. We gather cactus fruit and other fruits (Matamba, chakata, nhengeni,), a diverse variety of green vegetables and tree leaves. We grow our food
using Indigenous soil enriching methods (cow and chicken manure and leaves and grass manure) and natural rain. We consciously shifted to supporting the ecological stability of our land and be pro-active in reducing the ecological impacts of inorganic farming practices. Climate change has made it difficult for us to grow food as the rain patterns have changed dramatically. The rain has oscillated from too much rain to nothing at all in the last three years. We were fortunate to get financial support to install a solar water pump that will enable us to harness energy from the sun and access lots of underground water. We have also shifted to growing later in the season since the rainy season has also shifted. The rain season used to begin from September. Now it begins late October. We have also been planting a fruit forest. We are growing guavas, avocado, lemons, mulberry, banana, sugarcane, mango, and apple. Additionally, we care for chickens from whom we get eggs, meat, and manure. We also have cows for milk and manure.

We understand health through a holistic and natural lens; the health of the individual, body, mind, and spirit; health for the interpersonal, intra-community and inter-community scapes; health of the earth, the land, water, animals, trees, and crawlers. Healthy communities are achieved when all these elements are in harmony with each other, with the actions of each part enhancing the well being of the other elements. When we got to the land, some parts of it were burned, we used those parts for farming instead of cutting new areas that might have had better soil for agriculture. We are also learning to grow herbs and to identify healing plants in the forest. In fact, one of our young people has been getting visions in dreams that teach him properties of trees and their healing values. He has been offered a scholarship to study herbal medicine preservation at the Institute of Traditional Medicine in Toronto. We encourage the use of non-toxic materials in the house and refrain from buying packaged goods. We upcycle our human manure, using aborloo
technology. We build our houses from clay bricks, wood, and grass. We use as little as possible of materials that take years to decompose.

Figure 5. Ubuntu Arts

A mural representing the diverse arts that Ubuntu residents practice. Marimba, mbira, ngoma, hosho, dance, and song.

Art is the expression of our spiritual depth. It is the embodiment of our enduring communion with the genealogies of time, ancestry, and land. We practice spiritual dance, mbira music, song, and drumming. Currently, 12 people at the village play mbira, drum, and sing. We gather at night around the Dare (village court) and play into the wee hours of the morning. We sing about the land, our human relations, spirit, trees, water and all nature. We have songs for death,
relationships, journeying and all life events. We believe that when we play mbira, sing, dance, drum we are joining in the circle of ceremony that is always happening in the nyikadzimu (the space of the ancestors). Through these art forms, we connect to dreams and visions that offer guidance and wisdom. We also intentionally have ceremonies to will the rain (Mukwerera) before the beginning of the rain season. These ceremonies are done at the Chieftaincy level and led by Chief Serima. In February 2016, our crops were close to burning. It had not rained in about a month. We set about playing mbira and drums and sang and danced many nights away in prayer. We visually represented the prayers on one of our bedrooms.

Figure 6. Ongoing appeal for the rain to the rainmakers.

Our communion with Nehoreka (The ancestor connected to the element of water) was received, and we had good rains.
We are learning ways of being in the world that allow us to be abundant, that give us a sense of belonging to ourselves and our communities, that promote self-appreciation that is contingent on our contributions to our holistic relations. We are learning ways of being that support local communities to shift from externalizing their survival, but rather to own it as their responsibility and honor.

We have learned from the beautiful, fun and stressful. We have learned from beautiful interactions with our neighbors, from the trees and the land. We have learned from playing with each other, cooking for and with each other, working together in the fields, playing mbira together. We have also learned from the struggles that come with experimenting a new way that has no guarantees.

We have had a host of challenges and growing pains. We have processed conflicts that sometimes ended in physical confrontations at the village. Some Ubuntu residents have had tensions with the neighbors. Other foks have left the village in unceremonious circumstances. Our former administrator embezzled donated funds. We have struggled with understanding where we are going and doubted what we are doing. In all this we have learned to sit in circle, to resolve to use conversation as our solution. We have also learned that sitting in circle does not equalize power. In fact, it reveals its underbelly. We still believe that our relationships are the resolution. We are learning to be in relationship in an open, expansive and experimental manner. By doing all this, by trying things out, maybe we can get to taste the dream of being in harmony.

We are also connecting with and learning from others. Our friends at Kufunda have been an inspiration. At least five Ubuntu actors have gone for training in facilitation, community engagement, beekeeping, water harvesting, and herbal medicine. Kufundees have come to Ubuntu, to learn from what we are doing, get some seeds, peanuts, and millets. When I was researching Kufunda, I was accompanied by an Ubuntu youth, who was with me to see what I
was doing and be at Kufunda to learn from their work. We drove together in an Ubuntu CRV from Serima, a journey of about 5 hrs.

The drive from Harare to Ruwa was typical Zimbabwean driving: a well-maintained road with functioning street lights for 5 kilometers, that suddenly disintegrates into a chain of potholes and sometimes turns into incoherently crisscrossing dust roads. This pattern is a clear sign that motorists were responsible for developing the new roads, given that the authorities who are paid to do the work have their priorities elsewhere. Perhaps the roads are physical signs of an unsavory shifting political landscape in Zimbabwe. The forest ahead of us, though, told a different story.

As we drove slowly after crossing a treacherous-looking bridge, we could hear the dissonant music of branches continually scratching the sides of our old but steady Honda CRV. Hanging onto the thin dust road were branches of msasa (zebrawood) trees that swayed gently in the warm winds of early summer, showing off their broad leaves and spraying a gentle fragrance from racemes of green flowers. The scent instantly flooded my nose as we entered what felt like the beginning of a dense forest. We paused to take a deep breath and acknowledge the mysterious power that surrounded us. After what felt like ten minutes, we continued driving slowly, following the snake of dust that led us into potholes of all sizes. Suddenly, we were greeted by a dilapidated sign that read Kufunda Learning Village, directing us to turn left into even more stunning forest. We wound through the msasa aroma until we reached an open grassland that I later learned was a volleyball and soccer field. From here I could see intricately thatched buildings and my ears could not escape the sonorous sounds of children playing a familiar game. I instantly felt I was at home. Arriving at Kufunda somehow melted away all the thoughts about the political symbolism of the roads that took us there. The thick forest that hosted the people, their huts, the numerous
dogs, an herb garden and many chickens that roamed freely in the safety of grass and decomposing leaves provided a buffer from the chaos of the city of Harare. I was home, and everything about Kufunda made perfect sense.

4.1 The local context of the Kufunda Movement

In brief, the current context of Zimbabwe is informed by three overlapping historical epochs. The first epoch consists of the multiple histories of the Indigenous peoples of that land and their cultural productions. The second epoch is the colonial epoch, which on the surface seems to have overwhelmed the first epoch. The final epoch is the post-colonial epoch, the era of flag independence.

Present day Zimbabwe is constituted by a diversity of distinct and related clans and nations. About fourteen languages are spoken in Zimbabwe. Within each language group, there exist multiple dialects. Let’s take for example ChiShona which I speak. ChiShona has approximately five significant dialects (ChiNdau, ChiManyika, ChiKorekore, ChiZezuru, and ChiKaranga). These have their sub-dialects. Each language group and each dialect represents a group of people who sometimes have very distinct cultural practices and knowledge systems. There exists a diverse indigenous knowledge base in Zimbabwe.

These knowledges while subjugated, show up in diverse ways. Most Zimbabweans still live in rural areas and very much depend on the rural economy. The rural economy is centered on subsistence agriculture and gathering. In the rural areas knowledge about the land, the trees, ceremony, and Ubuntu continue to be employed in the service of human sustenance. Indigenous

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25 There are about fourteen languages spoken in Zimbabwe. Each language represents multiple communities, with diverse cultural practices. People have intermingled for ages and continue to create hybrid knowledge-practices.
knowledges that have been passed on orally, in practice and spiritually continue to be central to human survival even though they are not given their proper respect and acknowledgment.

Zimbabwe was formerly colonized by the British by means of Cecil John Rhodes’ business empire, the British South Africa Company. During its physical colonization by the British, it was called Rhodesia after Rhodes of course. While physical colonization of Zimbabwe began in 1890 and ended with flag independence in 1980, the effects of colonialism and ongoing neocolonialism (Sankara, 2007) continue to wreak havoc on all the scapes of Zimbabwean society (Shizha, 2006). As observed by Fanon (1961), “the arrival of the colonist signified syncretically the death of indigenous society, cultural lethargy, and petrification of the individual” p. 50. The picture Fanon paints is grimmer than the reality on the ground. Nonetheless, the problem of colonialism and neocolonialism has had a profoundly negative impact on the self-understanding, self-appreciation, and self-evaluation of Africans. The indigenous ways of being have been de-centered from everyday life through the concomitant white supremacist practice of elevating Eurocentric knowledges and devaluing indigenous knowledges in all areas of life.

Flag independence\textsuperscript{26} ushered in an era of neo-colonial politics, where African elites took over positions of former Whites in the colonial economic and political system. Capitalism became the dominant economic practice even though the rhetoric of the Mugabe government was Marxist (of course another western discourse). The economy took a massive downward spiral from 2000 until the inflation rate was in the Sextillions in 2008 (Wheatley and Frieze, 2011). Since then, there has

\textsuperscript{26} I use this term to denote the idea that Independence in most African countries was for the masses a symbolic gesture. In most cases the Black elite maintained colonial structures that supported them in looting public resources for their own benefit, while most of the people languish in impoverishing conditions. It also means that colonialism is not over as most African governments still answer to their former colonial masters in matters of local policy and law.
been a massive decline in the quality of life in Zimbabwe. The combined effects of food shortages, effects of HIV/AIDS, a rapidly collapsing education system, political tyranny, corruption and an air of resignation has seen the quality of life of many Zimbabwean severely compromised. In this abyss, steps in NGOs that are usually funded by foreign agencies such as USAID and CIDA among the most prominent. While these agencies are materially impacting the lives of Zimbabweans, they are also inscribing and continuing a colonial relationship that has had an inferiorizing consequence on Zimbabweans. Most Zimbabweans have had to understand and position themselves as perpetual beggars for survival. The Kufunda movement is drawing on the meeting points between the subjugated but living indigenous knowledges of Zimbabwe and enduring colonial discourses to facilitate cultural revitalization, renewal, and integration.

4.2 Kufunda: Cultivating a Trans-Local Learning Movement

*Our work is to help people remember what they know (Maianne Knuth)*

*Kufunda Movement Field*

Kufunda Movement activity manifests trans-locally in three ways. The first and root node is a physical site. The site is called Kufunda Learning Village and is in Ruwa, Zimbabwe, about a 30-minute drive from the center of Harare. Currently, there is a core group of 28 families that reside and organize at Kufunda Learning Village. This location acts as a central hub from which the Kufunda Learning Movement grows horizontally. At Kufunda Learning Village people revitalize ownership of their lives, recover wisdom, and develop their capacities in working with their local knowledges and deepening their resourcefulness (Kufunda, 2006). Kufunda integrates learning from the networks of friends around the world, creating a translocal practice and learning network that is grounded in local knowledges and practices. In addition to the educational processes for the Kufundees and community partners that are facilitated by the team of experienced Kufunda
facilitators, Kufunda hosts conversations and events by other organizations with similar visions and objectives.

In the words of one young Kufundee:

Mutamba: What is Kufunda Learning Village?

ENMU: a village where people come to learn, to learn by doing...to learn different projects, skills, leadership skills, how you develop your community, express your feelings...a place where people learn by doing...

On a typical day, the Ruwa site is vibrant with intergenerational life, work, conversations, and play. The full extent of the manifestation of the life at Kufunda Ruwa is undeniable. A male interviewee who came as a youth to the learning village eloquently describes Kufunda Learning Village:

Mutamba: What is Kufunda Learning Village?

ADGW: An Oasis of learning and where life is being practiced on the ground. Kufunda is practical showing the real life in how our fore-fathers (sic) used to live...as well as address the current situation. We are a living community that is (sic) living and leading what the future should be. It accommodates every culture, and it's intergenerational whereby every voice should be heard, all practices of life are being practiced on this land.

The descriptions of Kufunda above sums up a few crucial aspects of Kufunda knowledge practices. Kufundees center learning through practice. The practice that is referenced here is the practice of living as a community on the land. Kufundees draw on and ground themselves in the
cultural productions of their Indigenous heritage. They bring these knowledge-practices to facilitate change in the current context. Additionally, Kufundees prefigure a world that is open, inclusive and respectful of difference.

One vibrant Kufundee, whose principal role is facilitating the Youth Leadership Program and figuring out joyful and playful ways of learning sums up Kufunda Learning Village as a place to learn joyfully.

Mutamba: What is Kufunda Learning Village?

STDI: Kufunda as the name mean learning, it is a place of learning and inspiration. A place where people can discover themselves. A place where people can meet and talk despite their difference, religions, and anything that can make one separate themselves from the others. It’s a place where you are given space to share your Idea and be listened, a place where you can explore life and be able to make your decision it also build bridges across the world, it is a place where people from different cultures meet ‘A PLACE OF LEARNING HOW TO LEARN IN A JOYFUL WAY’

Another young Kufundee described Kufunda Learning Village as a place that disrupts the status quo, and facilitates unlearning the dominant modes of being and learning other ways through collaboration and co-creation:

Mutamba: What is Kufunda?

IRMU: Kufunda is like a hub if we would use today’s language. At the same being a community with a family that is willing to live in the world I believe we all dream of, a world Charles Eisenstein refers to as “the more beautiful world our hearts know is
possible” It is a place where everyone can come to unlearn the so-called normal ways being and learn how to be a learner again. This is a place where by people are breaking the myths of today’s dominant hierarchical system function today. It is a place of collaboration, co-creation, and listening and making sense of the individuals into the collective.

The second manifestation of the Kufunda Movement is the network of distinct communities across Zimbabwe that began organizing locally because of their relationship with Kufunda Learning Village. The villages are in Zvimba, Seke, Rusape, Mhondoro, Chipinge, Chimanimani, Gutu and Chegutu. Recently, the network has extended into urban areas in Glenview, Chitungwiza, and Nyeredzi Elementary School in Harare. The local Kufunda network is getting denser and denser as people build on the movement.

I traveled to Zvimba, Mhondoro, Chegutu, and Rusape as part of my research. In each community, we had a circle, where we heard what people were learning and how they were moving forward with their work. I also had conversations with some of the individual community members in the movement. At each village meeting, there were at least sixty people, most of whom women who had various roles within the community and movement. In Mhondoro, I interviewed a woman in her forties who had gone to Barefoot College in India to learn how to install and repair solar panels. Since then she has installed solar panels in the community of Mhondoro and has taught others how to do the same. Beyond fixing solar panels, she has become a community source of knowledge regarding renewable energy. She continues to be the primary community solar engineer and has trained two more women who act as assistants. Her experience has led her to commit to transforming women’s lives.
Mutamba: What have others learned through your experiences in India and being part of the Kufunda network?

MACH: Pandakadzoka kubva kuIndia, vadzimai vekukufunda vakatoona kuti pane zvavaizivawo, zvakavashingisa, vazhinji vanga vasina tariro yokuti semunhu une musha nemhuri, unokwanisa kusiya musha wako uchinotsvaka ruzivo (When I returned from India, women in the Kufunda network saw that they had the knowledge, which strengthened them. Many did not have hope of being able to leave your home to seek knowledge, being a woman with a family and a household to look after)

MACH is challenging the sexism that views women as belonging to the confines of the home by encouraging women to take on different challenges. She is also aware of that the responsibility for change lies in the behaviors of men in her village. She actively pushes men to change patriarchal ways of relating. She is promoting gender justice in her community.

A farmer in his early sixties from the Zvimba community who learned permaculture from the Ruwa site spoke about the significance of being in the Kufunda movement and the infiniteness of learning in the movement:

Mutamba: What have others learned through your experiences of being part of the Kufunda network?

MUZV: Unopihwa dzidziso, iwewo uchipawo zvaunazvo, kudzidzisana, hazvirevi kuti unongogamuchira chete. Tikasangana Rusape, Mhondoro, Chipinge, munoita zvakasiyana, munodzidzisana... (You receive learning, while you also give learning, it is learning with each other, it does not mean you just receive. When we meet with
communities from Rusape, Chipinge because we do different things we learn from each other)

Regarding the philosophy and approach to conceptualizing everything he does as learning, he gets very passionate:

MUZV: *I philosophize kusvika ndafa. Paunenge uchiita, nevana vako, mhuri vanenge vachiona...coming generation inenge yatove neruzivo...haichapinde muya muya munematambudziko nokuti yakakura ichiona zvakana...uyu ane vana four uyu four uyu4 kureva kuti ruzivo rwuri kupararira. Vana vanenge vachidzidzawo (This is the philosophy till I die. When you are doing it with your family, your children are watching, because of this, the coming generation will already have knowledge. They will not get into many problems because they would have grown seeing good things. If this person has four children, that has four, and the other one has four it means that knowledge has dispersed since the children will be learning too)

MUZV is active in all the communities. He acts as a pollinator. After successfully integrating organic farming into his practice, he has gone around Zimbabwe, sharing with others what he has learned. The practice of cross-pollination among communities brings the movement together, strengthening its various communities.

The third manifestation of the Kufunda movement is a growing global network of other translocal movements with which Kufunda shares ideas, practices, and collaborations. In fact, the Kufunda learning movement owes its emergence to the support of many friends from around the world. The global support included monetary contributions, training, and physical presence to build at the primary site in Ruwa. The Kufunda movement has collaborators and supporters on all the
continents and is connected to other learning movements such as Unitiera in Oaxaca, Mexico, Shikshantar Institute for Rethinking Education in Udaipur, India, Institute for Development Studies in Pakistan, Abhivyakti: Media for Development in Nashik, India, The Green House Project in Johannesburg, South Africa, Berkana Institute, Texas, US, The Elos Institute in Brazil, and Axladitsa-Avatakia in Greece. While at Kufunda in January 2016, I met people from Italy, Germany, England, USA, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Netherlands, Denmark, and Sweden. Kufunda has also expanded its network in the UK and Germany through its education initiatives in Zimbabwe.

Kufundees have learned facilitation practices from their global network. They have learned Art of Hosting, as a suite of facilitation practices from friends in the art of hosting communities around the world. They have also learned other community facilitation methodologies such as the OASIS game from the Elos institute in Brazil. Kufundees have traveled to India, the US, Brazil, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Sweden, and South Africa, to learn and share what they are learning.

The Kufunda elementary school, Nyeredzi, learned about a Waldorf educational approach from the relationship that Kufunda built with a German doctor who visited Kufunda. The Kufunda Elementary school re-configured the Waldorf approach to work with indigenous learning systems from rural Zimbabwe.

A Kufundee who has traveled to the Netherlands, Brazil, Mexico, and the US outlines how translocal practices enrich the work of Kufunda:

**ADGW:** Kufunda is a modern village, people come from other parts of the world, they share their culture and how they live, you also adopt their ways, we learn through circles, the way we live, our visitors, we look back at our own cultural history, we look at our history, inomboti chii, tichibatanidza, totora tsika dzedu, totora tsika dzevakauya,
tobatanidza, tosarudza kuti tinoda zvipi! chakanaka ndochandotora (we look at our history...what does it tell us, and we combine, we take our own culture, we take the culture of others, we combine, we choose what we need, we then take the good aspects)

Referencing the translocal visions of Kufunda, a female Kufundee describes Kufunda Learning Village as a

SIML: place one can be supported in identifying the gifts one had as for the whole world.

It is a place where people learn on how to respond to the need of life today and live that.

Kufundees view the world as profoundly connected and utilize these connections to learn and grow in their knowledge-practices. Trans-localization becomes both local and global practice, centered on the humility of respecting and learning from difference.

4.3 What do Kufundees do?

Kufundees engage in diverse activities at the root site in Ruwa and the local and global community. At the core, Kufunda movement practices are an imbrication of learning and doing. Learning grounds their ultimate objective of social change. Kufundees tend to hold many roles and possess multiple skills. The Kufunda website states that:

Some of us are working with permaculture and organic farming, others are working with health and nutrition and making good herbal remedies out of locally grown plants. Some are into eco-building, others into renewable energy, some are into working with children – and just about all of us are facilitators and hosts of learning and co-creation.

I asked the Kufundees I interviewed what they do. One particular young Kufundees’ response demonstrates the breath of knowledge-practices that each employ in the movement.
Mutamba: What do you do at Kufunda?

ENMA: I am an herbalist, I process herbs into medicine, I am part of the leadership programs, and I facilitate, I am a flow game practitioner, I do Art of Hosting, I work with youth in the community.

Kufundees’ work encompasses practices that are geared towards:

1. Physical sustenance and health

2. Ecological well-being

3. Learning

4. Movement building

Physical Sustenance and Health

Most Kufundees at the Ruwa site are permaculture practitioners. All older Kufundees have organic farming knowledge-practices from their experiences with Indigenous farming in Zimbabwe. With these knowledge-practices Kufundees grow local millets, mushrooms, fruit trees, and a variety of vegetables. Additionally, Kufundees gather indigenous fruits, mushrooms, teas, and vegetables from the forests. They also raise chickens for meat and eggs, pigs for meat, cows for manure and milk, and fish for sale and consumption. Apart from growing plants for consumption, Kufundees grow herbs for natural medicine. The Ruwa site has an herb lab where they process the herbs into various tinctures for different ailments. The herb garden itself is designed as a meditation sanctuary. It is embedded inside a naturally shaded area, with paths covered in grass traversing between a diverse selection of herbs that offer a calming aroma.
Ecological Wellbeing

The Kufunda movement practices are ecological in practice and teleology. Their practices signify an awareness of the local and global effects of climate change. Southern Africa has been hit heavily by climate change to the extent that rain patterns have changed dramatically. The effects have been devastating especially for many rural people that depend on natural rain for agriculture can no longer grow and harvest with certainty. This has forced many people to leave the rural areas, crowding city spaces that have a host of their socio-economic challenges. The motivation for Kufundees to address climate change is sincere and uncompromising. They have learned from local elders and their global friends on climate change, methods for addressing it and living in healthy relationship with the earth. Wheatley and Frieze (2011) write that Kufundees sat in circle with the elders of the surrounding communities to garner knowledge regarding sustainable ways of living and producing food:

_Not so long ago, the elders in Maianne’s village knew how to maintain a resilient food system—that is one that could absorb the disturbances of drought, war, and change and continue to feed the local population. As they sat in circle together, they described age-old agricultural practices that sustained their communities prior to the onset of the Green Revolution and Mugabe’s disastrous policies. In some of their ideas, you might hear the language of today’s so-called progressive sustainable agricultural practices. Place elements where they are best positioned to interact with each other—like planting marigolds with tomatoes to repel nematodes...[These] these are some of the principles attributed to permaculture, an approach to designing agricultural systems that take its lessons for natural ecologies and strives to make human communities self-sufficient...[Like] the traditional agricultural societies who sort to work with rather than
control nature, permaculture practitioners assume that we have much to learn from nature’s success in creating resilient systems that adapt to and recover from life’s inevitable disruptions (p. 114).

The Ruwa site is a clear demonstration of this wisdom in action. Any visitor to the site will think that they are in a forest. The whole village is enfolded in indigenous trees, grass and shrubs, interspaced with imported fruit trees. When Kufunda began, the space was not like this. It had been used as a farm by the previous landholder, who had clear cut it for commercial agriculture and animal pastures.

Kufundees learned indigenous methods of reforestation and planted the Musasa (Zebrwood) trees that are native to that area. They also learned about reforestation practices from their friends in India, Mexico, and South Africa. Enriched with these knowledge-practices, they began returning the land to its natural state. The effects are evidently heartwarming. The land is now vibrant with various trees, grasses, birds and other animals. In the middle of the summer, the diversity of leaves and flowers is striking. The process of re-naturalizing the Ruwa site was also a process of re-thinking human relationships to nature. A Kufundee reflects on his interaction with communities and their response to shared information about the profound relationship between humans and their environment:

ENMA: At Kufunda we have bush, and in some areas, there isn’t, when we shared knowledge that the bush is for you and for the next generation, maybe you should not cut them. After we shared that knowledge, people started to look at trees differently
When Kufundees successfully reforested the Ruwa site, they had the knowledge-practices to share with local communities and demonstrate that they can also reclaim their natural environments. In this manner, they promoted a relationship of care that decenter human dominance of other natures.

To Kufundees, human secretions are a source of food. To harness this powerful plant food, Kufundees built compost toilets or arborloos. The compost toilets are relatively simple technology, entirely accessible to build, and most importantly their construction requires natural resources. The arborloos look like little thatched houses that only fit one person at a time. The arborloos are clean, cool and hygienic. Wheatley and Frieze (2011, p. 111) give a vivid visual picture of the inside of the Kufunda arborloos with this description: “Inside a gentle breeze waft through the side walls, supplementing the built-in ventilation. The little room is spotless, cool and odorless.” Each used toilet becomes fertile ground to grow a tree, hence the name arborloo.

The arborloos play multiple roles at Kufunda. The first is that they provide a learning practice and site for sanitation systems. The dominant model of disposing of human excrement in Zimbabwe is the Blair toilet. The Blair toilet is a large concrete and brick structure, placed on a rectangular hole about eight meters deep. For many rural communities, this is costly to build. Moreover, it is useless when full. The arborloo is a very easy, inexpensive and efficient system. The second role of the arborloo is that they provide an opportunity for people to build a different relationship with their excrements. Rather than seeing human excrement as a hazard that needs to be hidden away from humans lest it causes diseases, the arborloo system asks humans to embrace their excrement as part of the natural cycle of life whose energy can be harnessed to contribute to life in the cycle. Finally, the arborloo is space for growing fruit. The use of arborloos is an intelligent design of space, natural upcycling of excrement and a generative intervention into human relationships with other natures.
Permaculture at Kufunda is a lens that guides how Kufundees design their homes, grow their food, care for the land and animals, and build relationships with each other and other communities. Kufundees use natural materials for building their dwellings and spaces of gathering. They use earth and long grass for constructing built-in environments. Kufundees utilize organic manure from cows and plants to grow food. Kufundees have learned to harness the power of the sun to power homes and small-scale machinery. Kufundees use solar energy for lights, cooking, powering electronics, and heating their showers.

Learning

As the name Kufunda loudly proclaims, Kufundees live learning. The summarized activities in the preceding section are all learning sites for Kufundees. What the Kufundees do as part of living, their creations and practices, are also areas in which they learn. Kufundees learn incidentally from their actions and interactions. Moreover, Kufundees design and deliver learning programs for Kufundees and visitors. This is captured in my dialogue with a Kufundee.

Mutamba: What do you do at Kufunda?

IRMU: My role is hosting and facilitate programmes, local and international visitors, I do some facilitation in the leadership programme and community outreach. I also do some of the maintenance work in the village and partly some communication work

The programs that he was referring to are geared toward local and international learners of all ages. He co-facilitates the Youth Leadership Program (YLP) at the Ruwa site. The YLP is a 6-month program that immerses youth in learning practical skills and processes for facilitating community engagement. Young people begin learning about themselves, building self-awareness, confidence, and reflection skills. They also learn concrete physical skills such as herb gardening,
beekeeping, mushroom growing, native vegetation restoration, building, farming local grains and crops, and carpentry and eco-building. As they learn these skills, they are simultaneously exposed to facilitation processes such as Art of Hosting, Flow Game, and OASIS, which they will use at the Ruwa site and in their communities. Some of the young people who have gone through the YLP stay at the Ruwa site, and others go back to their communities where they become leaders in the Kufunda network.

The Ruwa location also facilitates a month-long program specifically for young women; Young Women are Medicine (YWM). YWM responds to the unique experiences of women in the Zimbabwean context. Young Women are Medicine structured in the four elements, earth, water, fire, and air, with each element guiding a week of learning immersion. The description of YWM programme on the Kufunda website states:

This is a programme where together we return to the grace, the power and the pride in what it means to be a woman today. Connected to the Women are Medicine retreat, this is a programme to make the most of the gifts and strengths of women in Zimbabwe today. Our core assumption is that women are not a 'problem to be solved', but a gift to be embraced, and so we navigate the territory of the many challenges facing young women today from a place of discovering and recovering the innate strength and capacity that resides in each one - to be able to return more equipped to face those challenges from a place of calm confidence.

The challenges that women in Zimbabwe face straddle structural, communal and interpersonal levels. Zimbabwe remains a highly patriarchal society, in which women experience oppression and exploitation in many areas of life. While in the Ubuntu philosophy mothers are supposed to be respected and cherished, this is done with the understanding that in the home the father is the
head of the family. Colonialism also codified sexist Christian doctrine and British patriarchal culture extended this hierarchy to many areas of life, such as education, formal employment, and governance among others. Young women as expressed in the quote above are sometimes regarded as a burden or problem to be solved. There is so much shame associated with young women who are independent, challenge the status quo and have some formal education. There is a societal pressure for young women who do not get married as soon as they reach their early twenties. YWM seeks to bring young women from different parts of Zimbabwe to share experiences and build a movement of women who draw from their wisdom to shift relationships in which they are subjugated.

The Kufunda movement has also directed their efforts at learning for children. To that effect, they have set up early childhood development programs, a primary school, and a secondary school that is under construction at the Ruwa location. About this vision, one Kufundee states:

**IRMU:** *We now have the school...[how] should education for our children be, looking at the system that is there in schools, the education system separates, those who are aligned with the system are upheld while those who do not are downtrodden...[We] thought of having our own school, where we want to see what happens when children are being taught with love, where there is no corporal punishment... where a child is allowed to do what they want and are exposed to life skills...what will this produce.*

The Zimbabwean education system is the product of the British colonial apparatus whose aim was to shape Africans into subservient objects. In this power dynamic, the student is at the mercy of the teacher and the teacher’s desires. The student is not an autonomous being but a site of the teacher’s oppressive political projects. The education institution is designed and set up to facilitate
this colonial relationship. The curriculum and methods of teaching perform the same function. Unfortunately, flag independence did not shift this colonial relationship between the student and the teacher and between the student and the educational institution. It remains as vulgar as ever. When I went to school in Zimbabwe, I was hit, slapped, shamed and asked to work for teachers without compensation among other abusive experiences. And I was in the system’s view an excellent model of a student because I did well on the exams. The situation is much worse for students whose ways of learning do not fit the system. When the Kufundee speaks of space that is free of corporal punishment, that is centered on love, where a student’s autonomy is respected and cultivated, they are also speaking about shifting the colonial relationship embedded in the way people think about education and learning in Zimbabwe.

The Kufunda primary school is called Nyeredzi Primary School. It is now in its 5th year of operation. The school began as a partnership between Kufunda Learning Village and Nyeredzi Kindergarten. Their shared vision is - “to bring a different way of working and learning to children during their early years. We are inspired by the Waldorf philosophy and approach, which works with the inherent joy of learning, curiosity, and imagination of our young...[We] are currently the only Waldorf inspired school in Zimbabwe. We are dedicated to providing learning that enables the development of the whole child, stimulating their creativity and imagination while giving them a strong foundation in learning and knowledge for life” (Kufunda, 2016)

Describing the philosophy and pedagogy of Nyeredzi, the Kufunda website states:

*The basic design in the junior grades is to let the children’s imaginative power enter into the process of learning. Teaching of each subject is accompanied by images in stories, plays, painting and movement. Movement is part of the daily recipe and is a part of teaching each subject*
involving rhythmic stamping and counting, clapping, recitation of poems, and action rhymes. This helps children become active participants in the learning process, and for the learning process to be a full body experience. [Learning] the alphabet is also done with stories and verses. The letter B, for instance, stands for Bear, a big brown bear beautiful and bubbling with joy. They hear a story of a bear; they draw a bear, they offer their own rendition of the bear story. By the time they complete all their letters the students will have created their own alphabet book with their drawings and statements for each letter - and each one with a rich tapestry of stories behind it. [Handicrafts] are used to develop dexterity in the student’s fingers and to develop their concentration span. Class one and two children love the new practical skills. Many of them are knitting scarfs to keep themselves warm during the winter season. [Games] and music are central to the learning in Nyeredzi. Both make a deep impression on the children’s mood and well-being. [At] Kufunda the children are connecting to their own culture through weekly traditional dance classes. Each Friday the Kufunda children join the children at the town base for a day of arts, games, and music.

Nyeredzi means star. Indicating that all students are regarded as beautiful stars, who shine in their unique way to lighten life. Nyeredzi is a unique school, in the ways that have been described above and in the way students lead in their learning. It is also the only school that I know of in Zimbabwe that prioritizes indigenous cultures.

Kufunda has seeded early childhood centers in twelve communities across Zimbabwe. The preschools also make use of the Waldorf approach. According to their website, Kufunda Ruwa works in partnership with about 12 kindergartens, primarily located in rural communities. “Our work is focused on education of the caregivers. We teach the basics of the Waldorf approach to teacher
of young children, supporting them in helping the children learn in age-appropriate ways... Each year we host a week-long workshop with Waldorf resource people from our global network.

Kufunda early childhood centers are in themselves nodes that connect various aspects of the Kufunda networks. My early involvement with Kufunda was through the Kwari pre-school in Mhondoro. The pre-school site also functions as space where members of the community come to gather for various community events and meetings. During my community visits in the Kufunda movement, I also visited the pre-schools in Zvimba, Chegutu, and Rusape. The way the preschool teachers (members of the local community who have pre-existing relationships with the children they support) played and interacted with children was heartwarming. It was apparent that the children loved and were very comfortable with their teachers. It was beautiful to watch these unpaid teachers revolutionize learning from a place of deep love

Movement Building

From the outset, Kufunda’s work has been predicated on local community wellbeing and self-determination. Kufunda draws upon the knowledges of the local community and promotes the revitalization of indigenous practices for local self-reliance. Kufunda started building a network in Mhondoro, Maianne’s ancestral home, collaborating with people in Kwari Village to build a learning space for orphaned children. Beyond projects, they also build community structures for people to do community work to develop roads, maintain the environment, start herbal gardens, and engage in training for community conflict resolution. At the Ruwa location, Kufunda collaborated with neighbors in the construction of the village, by having local communities join in the facilitation of learning activities and other work. Since they began the Youth education program, Kufunda has created community networks in Zvimba, Rusape, Seke, Gutu, Glenview,
and Mhondoro. These hubs make a network of communities that share knowledges and practices and test them in the context of non-intentional village life. Kufunda has also partnered with other local groups, propagating learning in issues of conflict resolution and post-election healing.

The movement developing out of Kufunda is characterized by non-violence, self-appreciation, Indigenous knowledge revitalization, community self-reliance and resiliency and openness to learning. The Kufunda movement does not have champions that speak for them in the media. They do not have an avant-garde leadership that plays the role of intellectual guides. The people are the movement. The communities are the organic intellectuals. Their work speaks for them and to them. The movement is not directing its resources and energies towards fighting an adversary. They are employing their resources to the project of creating an otherworld. In that manner, they are re-orientating us to rethink what social movements could be.

4.4 What are Kufundees learning and what are the implications?

*Learning is a process, and it will never end*

Kufundees have learned and continue to learn about youth leadership, collective leadership, sustainable communities, and community engagement among other things. They learn various aspects of these broad issues as concrete practices, deep philosophies, processes, and strategies. Learning as signified by the motto Kufunda Kufunda Kufunda is both a way of acquiring skills, behaviors, and attitudes for the other-world. Moreover, it is simultaneously a philosophy of life.

*Practical Physical Skills*

Since 2001, Kufundees have been learning many skills for farming, building, carpentry, bee-keeping, food processing, jewelry making, and other tasks and processes. Using an open learning model, Kufundees expose themselves to all areas of learning that are needed to attend to the needs
of the individual and a self-sustaining community. A young female Kufundee based in Ruwa reflects on the breadth of her learning in this conversation

Mutamba: *What have you learned at Kufunda?*

ETCH: *At Kufunda I have also learnt practical things which is farming, herbs and mushroom farming and animal rearing. I have also learnt working with the community through the community work we always do and also how to host a group of people.*

The young woman’s reflection gives us a glimpse into the importance of connecting learning to sustenance. It shows us that Kufundees learn to take care of their physical needs in a self-determined manner. Additionally, because the farming happens in, with and for the community, they also learn to take care of the community. Organic farming asks the farmer to reflect on their place in the web of relationships of the natural world. By learning organic farming, Kufundees are also learning to gain life-affirming skills that enhance non-human life.

Kufundees in Mhondoro, Rusape, and Zvimba also spoke to their learnings on organic agriculture, compost toilet making, and general health practices, among other things. Asked how many years she has been part of the Kufunda movement, what she has learned since the beginning, and how her involvement has shifted her community, a grandmother in Zvimba explained:

*paane makore, rubatsiro rweruzivo, rwekushadisa maoko, ndikaendawo, ndinofarira hutsanana, nokubika, ndikaendawo kuworkshop yobika, vakadzidzisa zvemarborloo toilet, vanhu havakoshes toilet, vanhu vakagadzira, vakauya nechayedza kuvanhu (It

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27 Life-affirming in a political sense means ways of being and doing that enhance the ecological whole. This contrasts with neoliberalism and global coloniality which promotes exploitation of people and nature and therefore destroy lives. This is what Giorgio Agamben calls thanatopolitics; the use of politics of death to achieve political means.
has been many years. Support of knowledge to use my hands. When I went, because I love cleanliness and cooking food, I went to a cooking workshop (at Ruwa location). I learnt how to build arborloo toilet, and people made them here. People here did not see the importance of toilets, but Kufunda brought that awareness)

Another female Kufundee from the Mhondoro area responded to the question, “What have you learned by being part of the Kufunda movement?” by saying:

*Mabasa emaoko, kusona, ecological sanitation, matoilets asingabudisi mari, tikadzidza kurima kwepermaculture, tree planting, candle making, sandal making (Handwork, to make clothes, making arborloo toilets that do not waste money, farming using permaculture)*

All the Kufundees I interviewed valued learning skills that allow them to have control of their physical needs. Beyond that they have become a resource for their community, allowing the whole community to take care of itself.

*Processes*

An essential part of the Kufunda work is growing the movement through the facilitation of conversations that matter. Conversations that matter are conversations that are of importance to an individual, a family, or community. To be able to do this work, Kufundees learn facilitation techniques that allow them to host conversations at any scale and with anyone. Kufundees have facilitated conversations with young people in communities, elders, chiefs, and in the offices of politicians. A young Kufundee who has done facilitation around the globe speaks about his learnings:
What I have learnt being at Kufunda practically is how to be a facilitator meaning to hold space for conversations that allows safe space for individuals to speak, show up fully as themselves without feeling judged, be it conversations, creating together and all this happens in an appreciative inquiry, more importantly in a participatory way. I was exposed to methodologies that allow collective, participatory leadership like Art Of Hosting, Flow Game, Theory U, Oasis Game (Elos Institute) among many.

The facilitation work has helped communities learn to work together across political divides, which has brought communities together, encouraging community cooperation in some areas where partisan politics had taken root. I recall visiting a Kufundee gathering in Zvimba, as I conducted interviews. In the introductions to the gathering, the first thing that the moderator drew our attention to was the fact that the gathering was for the community and not for a political party. She reiterated a few times that no one could take advantage of the community gathering to campaign for any political party. In the audience was a ZANU PF (ruling party) councilor from the area. Zvimba is the home of Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe and is a ZANU PF stronghold. This is a significant transformation given the current political climate in which everyone is expected to sing the praises of Mugabe. By learning processes for gathering community in a participatory, inclusive and engaging manner Kufundees are supporting communities in their healing, their capacity to self-organize and ability to reflect on the inherent wisdom of the community.

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28 At the final editing of the dissertation, Robert Mugabe had been deposed from power by his former allies in the military. This was followed by massive demonstrations in Harare in support of the military coup. Kufundees took part in the demonstrations. The new government has pledged healing and reconciliation. Kufundees will definitively have a huge role to play in this process.
Self-awareness

A recurring theme in what Kufundees are learning revolves around reflection, self-awareness, and personal growth. Three of the young people who went through the Youth Leadership Program expressed experiencing massive shifts by being in the program. They all shared how they were transformed in their consciousness of the personal, the communal, and their places in the wider world.

One young Kufundee stated:

*After finishing school, I ask what I am going to do next. Should I write again (local examinations), should I do more schooling...At Kufunda, I learnt to say, I have skills myself, and with those skills, I can start doing something not focusing on that kind of education*

A Kufundee who has been in the Kufunda network since he was in elementary school, went through the YLP, and now resides at the Kufunda central site added:

*I have learnt how to listen, deeply with intention and full attention, listening to understand and support others to come to clarity with their own questions. I have learnt also to engage communities to co-create together and a lot of team building*

Another young female Kufundee who spoke passionately about learning self-knowledge, creating internal conditions for self-awareness and self-respect:

*I have learnt about myself so much, how to host myself, my passion and my talent. I have also been helped to rebuild my confidence, be able to talk from my heart and be myself.*
Another Kufundee from Mhondoro in her early sixties spoke about the self-awareness aspect of the learning in the Kufunda network. Specifically, she spoke about how individual self-awareness leads to collective community consciousness. When asked to talk about what her community has learned from being part of the Kufunda local movement, she states:

*Kusimudzirana, nekuvandudzirana, takawana ruzivo nezvimwe, ndaifu ga kuti vanhu vanogona kurarama vanhu vakafunda uya vane mari, ndakaona kuti neniwo ndinokwanisa kurarama ndichishandisa zvandiinazvo, uye ndisazvishiore, ndichizvidzikisira, ndizviona semunhu asina zvaanoziva, munhu we pasi, asi ndingozvitora kuti ndirimunhu anogona kurarama, nezvinhu zvakandikomberedza (To uplift each other, to encourage each other, we got knowledge and many other things. I used to think that only those who have gone to state schooling and those with money are the ones who will live fulfilling lives, but I have seen that even I can live using what I have. Also to not look down on myself, to not minimize myself, to not see myself as a person without knowledge, to not look at myself as a lowly person. However, to regard myself as a person that can live with what surrounds me

Another young Kufundee reflected deeply on his learnings around his deep connection and co-constitutive relationship with his community, and centering his projection of himself in the world in his heart:

*The other thing is now I know that I don’t need to be an individual to be successful, you always need others to support you. Only to remember that we can only live in the world by how we see ourselves in the world (seeing the world from within our hearts)*
A Kufundee who has been at Ruwa since the beginning of the movement spoke about learning the idea of authenticity and grounding oneself in feelings (the heart). She also spoke about the joy of this way of being in the world and the challenges of learning to practice such authenticity and grounding. She explained:

*I have learned that being myself and doing things from my heart is the key. You can find joy and live joyous life out of that. It’s challenging, but it’s a journey to your inner joy.*

Another young Kufundee in her early twenties highlighted the effect of self-awareness on surfacing her passion, skills, and confidence:

*I have learnt about myself so much, how to host myself, my passion and my talent. I have also been helped to rebuild my confidence, be able to talk from my heart and be myself.*

An older female Kufundee who joined the village since its inception spoke about how her learning has extended beyond herself into the community and to her understanding of gender-based oppression and her liberation:

*I start by knowing more about myself, especially on how to host myself and what are my talents. Through Kufunda I also learnt to empower other people around the globe especially women. Before I got the knowledge from Kufunda I was stagephobia and could not stand in front of people, I was also a woman of few words, but now it’s a thing of the past. Much thanks to Kufunda for all its knowledge and wisdom my own point of view my involvement at Kufunda is so vital in the sense that concerning renewable energy most of the women in my immediate community and world at large basically now know how to maintain solar panels n and install them in rural home set up through my assistance, more so I realize the power that is in me to motivate other women to work hard in a bid*
destroy the dependency syndrome\textsuperscript{29} which was created by our traditions and culture which saw women as of less value

The Kufundee above articulates a feminist politics that is rooted in reflections upon her experiences in the light of her being part of a movement, giving form to the feminist adage that the personal is political. Self-awareness in this way signifies having a sense of clarity regarding one’s strength, belief systems, areas that require change, skills, and potential, as well as understanding patterns that are connected to lived identities. Self-awareness is also relational in the sense that when people are aware and can reflect, they also understand how their actions and attitudes affect those around them.

\textsuperscript{29} The dependence syndrome she is taking about is the false idea that women are taken care by either their fathers or their husband in a heteronormative matrix. In practice, the opposite is true. But that false idea has given hetero-patriarchy its lifeblood.
4.5 How do Kufundees learn? Learning Philosophy and Methods

no-one is a teacher only; no-one is a learner only

Learning as a Pedagogical Concept

Kufundees practice doing and learning as concomitant activities. As in other social movement contexts learning in the Kufunda movement is practical, informal, and incidental and organized and intentional (Hall & Turray, 2006). The pedagogical practices in the movement are grounded in the idea of learning as a philosophy of constructing knowledge-practices. Beginning with the idea that Kufunda Kufunda Kufunda (to be learned is to have understood how to learn), Kufundees center their lives, interactions, and experiments as learning practices, with the objective of figuring out how to learn more as they usher in social change. In Chivanhu philosophy we say Kufunda hakuperi (Learning is infinite). Maianne described Kufunda as a place where: We come together to learn...[We]are living an inquiry...[We]are staying in the breath of learning.

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30 I employ pedagogy has a political term not methodology for instruction of children. In adult education, some theorists refer to adult learning as Andragogy. In theorizing about andragogy Knowles defines pedagogy as methods for teaching children. While indeed the etymology of pedagogy is methods for teaching children, the political reading of it as used by Freire and other critical educators is how I use it.
Figure 7. Pedagogy of mistakes

To Maianne learning is a philosophical lens in the sense that it is the rationale and the teleological objective for Kufundees’ engagement in social movement activities. Learning is understood as a means for achieving personal, communal and global change. Staying in the breath of learning suggests that the life of any society depends on its ability to maintain a vibrant culture of learning and unlearning. The same way a body’s continued survival hinges on breath. Maianne gives a
good example of what happens when learning philosophy ceases to drive the behaviors of Kufundees. When talking about some of the challenges that Kufunda has faced over the years, Maianne reflects:

*The times we have lost ourselves as a village is when we have forgotten that what’s at the center is learning...no-one is a teacher only; no-one is a learner only.... we come together to learn.... we need everyone.*

Maianne was reflecting on the fissures that emerge when movement actors depart from understanding themselves and the collective movement as learners, but rather perceive their work as the endpoint. With learning as the guiding philosophy, Kufundees are open to exploring, to making mistakes, to learning from mistakes, to try things out, and to experiment. Learning as philosophy organizes the movement as an open and ever-evolving collective that is adaptive and growing. The vibrancy of this practice is striking. I recall the first day I went to begin my residency for conducting interviews for this project and the conversations I had with Kufundees. From the onset, they were excited to learn from my experiences and to talk about their learning. Kufundees were passionate about learning and education.

In one such incidental gathering, I sat down with four Kufundees, with whom I had unrecorded conversations that moved between their work in Zimbabwe and their translocal activities. One of the Kufundees, a young man in his early twenties, talked about his visit to Sweden which lasted nine months. He had gone to do a Youth International Program (YIP). When I asked him about his experiences in the program, precisely what and how he had learned, the most striking thing he said was that he learned more from his conversations with other learners and guests, outside of class. He also felt that what he was supposed to learn based on the YIP curriculum and what he
learned were different because he made outside class conversations and the community work he was a part of his learning sites. I also shared my experiences of learning in academic contexts, my work in social movements on Turtle Island and building Ubuntu Learning Village. What was fascinating about these conversations was that they revolved around learning and the questions we asked each other had to do with learning. The learning that we spoke about was diverse, spanning skills, personal transformation, emotions, political struggles, identity, culture, and the environment. We spoke about these as sites of work and learning. That circle of five of us represented a microcosm of a learning society. It represented the transformative possibilities in having conversations whose questions are grounded in individual and collective learning.

**Horizontal learning and leadership**

Kufundees believe themselves to be learners who are learning in their work, their words, and their relationships. Additionally, Kufundees have confidence in everyone’s capacity to be both a learner and teacher. If one could be both a learner and a teacher, then one is also capable of taking a leadership role. Kufundees practice collective and horizontal leadership, where people take on various roles during their time in the movement. Collective leadership means that the entire collective of Kufunda takes the responsibility of directing the strategic vision of the movement. Kufundees do not have a select group of people who make long-term strategic decisions for the collective. There is a structure in which people take on different roles, and these are rotated on a

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31 The concept of learning society has been used in education policy to mean education for economic growth and global competitiveness. However, Kufundees propose a learning society as one that learns its way out of neoliberalism and capitalism.

32 Horizontal leadership happens when the flow of power in an organization is rhizomatic. People in the organization might have different roles but decision making is a shared responsibility. This does not necessarily pan out in practice as the examples of Kufunda and Ubuntu demonstrate. It is an ideal worth striving for.
regular basis. Horizontal leadership entails that there isn’t an institutionalized hierarchy in the leadership style. This does not mean that socially-determined structures that are in consequence hierarchical do not emerge. They are quite evident in the movement. The undoing of all these is central to the collective and individual learning of Kufundees. What resonated with many Kufundees is the freedom to learn what and how one desires. As one female Kufundee put it:

_Haufoswe, unoita zvepassion yako, pano hapana leader, tirimucircle tirivanhu vakafanana, use of circle inoita ataure asingatyi, kuchikoro vanemaleaders... pano hapana. Pano parinane nane, kuchikoro kune hierarchy, ukadzidza zvine hierarchy, hazviite pano tinozvishandira, handitye munhu, mashandire angu ipassion, hapana anonditevera, kuchikoro vanoti ita whether you like it or not. (You are not forced, you do as your passion dictates, here there is no leader, we are in a circle, we are equal people, to use the circle make it such that you speak without fear, at school, they have leaders, here there isn’t. Here it is much better, at school, there is a hierarchy, it does work here we work for ourselves, I am not afraid of a person, the way I work is about my passion, no one needs to follow me. At school they say do this, whether you like it or not)._  

As this Kufundee shows, horizontal leadership and learning build self-confidence, trust, and capacities. The absence of fear allows people to connect to their passions and skills for the benefit of individuals and the community. This Kufundee was also critical of the mainstream education system that in its method of delivering learning, hierarchies are naturalized, with the teacher and the school perched at the top of the hierarchy. The student is motivated to learn through coercive power over and fear of authority. Kufunda as a learning space models a new way that is safe for people to show up as their real self.
Kufundees consider joy a sacred aspect of what they do and how they learn. They remain joyful while engaging in their work. They also learn in playful ways, to the extent that play is integrated into all learning activities. All gatherings I was a part of began with games and ended with games or playful activities. Kufundees have a wealth of facilitation games for all group sizes and occasions. Additionally, Kufundees incorporate entertainment into their gatherings. For example, as a Mbira player, I ended up being the musician while in the Kufunda network, especially at the Ruwa site. At every gathering, I would be asked to play a song, which always ended up in dancing, singing, and ululation. In the evening, our hangouts consisted of mbira parties and dance, in which many of the people at Kufunda partook.

One manifestation of Kufundees’ movement towards centering play is their adoption of OASIS game. OASIS is a community engagement methodology developed by the Elos Institute in Brazil that is centered on using play to achieve concrete community objectives. The Elos institute website defines OASIS game as

“a community mobilization tool developed by Elos Institute to materialize collective dreams. The game involves players and communities, bringing together people from many different areas of society such as NGOs, local government, nearby businesses and the community itself. It was conceived to be applied at no cost and in a fully cooperative way so that, together, all participants can accomplish a common goal. The design of the Oasis Game strives to allow all players to be winners, without exception.”

Think of an Olympic race where each team competes to access resources to build a community center, where the community wins by having a community center. The philosophy of OASIS
game is aligned with Kufunda’s way of engaging in community work. The OASIS philosophy is captured in this quote: “The seed of transformation emerges through relationships and through shared dreams, that flow through the awareness of abundance and the appreciation of each one here and now and they manifest in collective action that nourishes beauty, joy, and pleasure to realize a better world for all” (Elos, 2017).

Employing the OASIS game methodology, Kufundees have built community centers in Seke and cleaned streets in Glenview. They are also facilitating the learning of the methodology to communities in Zimbabwe. When learning is playful, embodied and reflexive, everyone involved in it remains inspired.

_The land is my teacher_33

Some Kufundees spoke about the land on which they do their work as their first and foremost teacher. This way of relating to the land contrasts significantly with western capitalist ways of relating to the land. This view holds that land is a resource for human exploitation and is not a being that one can relate to or learn from. The Kufunda approach is in line with the Ubuntu way of conceptualizing the earth we live on as a being from which we survive and derive our knowledge. When I asked a Kufundee how she learned what she is practicing, she paused, reflecting deeply, and responded:

_-Kufunda’s land is my teacher. I would like to keep on learning to listen to it. What it teaches me always _

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33 This idea resonates with Leanne Simpson’s notion of Land as Pedagogy. She argues that stories of her people are not Indigenous unless if they come through the land.
Maianne responded to the same question by saying:

*Kufunda is alive...something about the land that is hard to explain: is embedded in this land, rocks, msasa trees, sandy soil and some people are having that deep connection with the land, others less, there is a rootedness that comes in that.... we been held.*

One Kufundee youth suggested the resiliency of community and the connection to land as modes of learning:

*Resilience and the richness that can only be found when you belong to a community, a family, spirituality and the wisdom that is in every one of us... in trees and everything in nature.*

By learning from the earth, Kufundees are speaking about reflecting on their connections with their physical location. Getting to know the soil, the trees, the grass, the animals, the flowers and everything else that is in their place. Learning from the land also means to them paying attention to how the land feeds everything that is on it. How everything that is on it live in relation to each other. How the land transforms with seasons, some trees shed leaves; some remain green, the grass turns white and shrivel. By paying attention to these details, one can understand how to be on earth in ways that are supportive of the earth’s natural processes. When the earth is understood, and that understanding informs what we do on it, all of it is taken care. Additionally, by observing how the earth takes care, we also learn to take care of each other, we learn to understand ourselves as an interdependent community.

*There is learning in doing*

Many Kufundees spoke about doing as critical to their learning practices. By putting into action, the knowledge-practices that were discussed earlier on, Kufundees are simultaneously learning.
Some of these learnings are entirely incidental, while some of the practices are intentionally put in place as learning experiments.

A young Kufundee from the Zvimba community who works mainly with the herbal medicine team, describing Kufunda, explained:

> It’s a village where people come to learn, to learn by doing...to learn different projects, skills, leadership skills, how you develop your community, express your feelings...place where people learn by doing...there is theory and then practice. I like to do these things and to practice, and I wanna learn and add to what I am doing right now...Its not just doing but there is learning in doing and am willing to learn more

This young Kufundee affirms a theme that is running through the entire life of Kufunda movement; that learning is at the center, it is a means and an end. One Kufundee spoke about the role of developing a personal practice and living it in her learning:

> Through personal practices. Giving myself time to explore who I am. Through participating in personal leadership programs and the most important thing has been practicing that and living it

By saying that doing is the way to learn is not suggesting that there are no other ways of learning. It is to suggest that the notion of praxis is inherent in the process of doing. That is if a learning lens is used to think through actions it inevitably means that reflection is taking place. The emphasis on doing in the Kufunda movement has more to do with decentering notions of knowing that are cognitively based. In some contexts, possession of information-know-what is regarded as more important than know-how. Kufunda practices turn this formulation upside down without creating a fissure between so-called theory and practice.
People have made learning possible

Kufundees spoke about how they learn from others, from within the Kufunda network trans-locally, and outside of it. As discussed earlier, most Kufundees have many skills and are amazing facilitators. They have formal programs for learning, internal community meetings where people have opportunities to reflect on their work, relationships, and areas of learning. There is much informal learning that happens in conversations when people are working in the fields, in the offices, in transit, during breakfast, lunch, dinner, and in other encounters. Kufundees also learn from people from around the world. Kufunde facilitation techniques, education practices, and farming techniques are a result of syncretic knowledge-practices from within Zimbabwe and outside. Being at Kufunda, even as a visitor, one is invited to share what they are willing to share.

I recall on Day Four of my residency at Kufunda in Ruwa; I was asked to be part of the design team for a two-day retreat. The process for designing the retreat was open to all. In the group, we had Kufundees, me, a few people from Europe and a couple from the US. We sat in circle, and the lead facilitator (Maianne) began the process by asking a few questions. They call them check-in questions: 1. Who are you? What are you? How are you feeling and what are you hoping for the next two days? The check in question was intended to get people to be present, as well as to get to know each other. After we all checked in, we collectively decided on what would be the purpose of the retreat, and we settled on harvesting what Kufunda has been learning over the years. To guide us in the process, we asked the following questions: what has been learned? How has this been learned? We then broke down the areas of discussion into themes: youth leadership, collective leadership, sustainable communities and community engagement.
When the Kufunda team invited me together with other guests from Zimbabwe, Italy, the UK, and the USA to contribute to a process that was about Kufunda’s learning, I was surprised by the openness. It is after I had been at Kufunda for a few more days that I learned this is a taken-for-granted practice, which seeks to maximize learning from Kufunda guests for the movement. It is both an appreciation of the guests as well as a way to invite them in. If you visit Kufunda once, you become a Kufundee for life.

Here is an example of an entry from my electronic notebook:

One Kufundee and Guest facilitated

-broke into groups of three harvesting stories

-Is the question in the photograph?

My group

-Solar in Mhondoro

-Learning to fix solar panels

-Community benefit

-Working with youth

-Making surrounding communities aware of Kufunda’s work

-Groups of three came together into groups of 6

-Shared themes and found common themes
- Larger groups came back together

- Group of six reported

- Lots was harvested by two people

- Check pictures (Graphic facilitation)

- A big conversation ensued after the issue of students failing in factory schools

- Are young people failures because they did not pass exams?

- Is it because of English

- Is it because of the purpose of education

- Is it the structure

- Break for lunch

- Will go into community work

The entry above shows how half of the day transpired regarding some of the content, processes, and questions that animated the conversations.

On my 17th day at Kufunda in Ruwa, I was invited to facilitate a conversation around some challenging issues that were going on in the village council at Ruwa. The challenges pertained to what I have alluded to earlier on around the idea that the absence of institutionalized hierarchy does not preclude the material reality of hierarchies formed by the different powers that people have in organizations based on what gets valued. Specifically, there was an issue of some
Kufundees deferring to Maianne to the extent that it started to feel like a burden of power to Maianne. She termed this the boss syndrome. Others also felt that good ideas were quashed if others proposed them. Other issues pertained to favoritism in the movement and unequal distribution of financial resources. I co-facilitated the conversations with a young woman from Italy. Extending the invitation for guests to be part of important conversations at Kufunda demonstrates how Kufundees are open to learning from others as much as they are open to giving to the world. A young Kufundee speaks about this openness:

Of course, our friends they always bring different ways of how they live and approach the change we all want to see, from their questions, ways of being we are inspired every day to learn something new.

The giving and receiving of learning reveals how Kufundees understand learning and knowledge creation as relational processes. First, relationships are in themselves areas of interaction through which knowledge-practices are produced. Secondly, relationships are made richer and strengthened through sharing and learning from among people and communities. We are in relation in as much as we are open to perceiving and absorbing the inventory of others’ life experiences. And finally, through strengthened relationships and learning from each other we can make our world, to construct it in ways that allow each of our stories to be part of this creation. A young Kufundee says this well:

Kufunda is a learning village whereby we believe everyone has something to offer. To the world, we offer the wealth of being a community and how to live sustainably from what is around us. Painting a picture of the possibility and beauty of social richness and
unlearning to learn again what it means to be human with others and whole that exists in our worlds.

Asked directly about how he learned, the same Kufundee went into more detail, expanding on approaches to learning and also offering methodologies that are employed in learning and participation in the Kufunda network:

Yes, people have made this learning possible by giving me space to step up into the areas of interest and passion. No limitation, I was invited to offer what I can and ask for what I need. Just by living at Kufunda as a community I was exposed to a lot of experienced people and moments. Like I said Kufunda is like a hub, whereby individuals are invited to step up from the area of their passion and being encouraged to see their lives as their work, meaning living from doing what makes our hearts sing. I was exposed to methodologies that allow collective, participatory leadership like Art of Hosting, Flow Game, Theory U, Oasis Game among many.

This demonstrated that Kufundees employ diverse methodologies to share skills and transmit values. They draw on these methodologies in all intentional learning gatherings and programmes.

*Intentional Learning and Facilitation Methodologies*

In addition to incidental learnings that emerge from being embedded in the milieu of social movement life, Kufundees create opportunities to learn from each other and their friends from around Zimbabwe and the world. Kufundees conduct workshops and training on topics that are of interest to the learning goals of individuals and Kufunda movements. Kufundees rely on a diversity of processes and methodologies for sharing knowledge-practices. They employ Ubuntu practices such as Dare (the Circle), Nhetembo (Poetry), Song (Nziyo), and Bira (Ceremony). They
also draw upon practices from their trans-local networks outside of Zimbabwe that include Art of Hosting and Harvesting Conversations that Matter (AoH), Flow Game, and Oasis game. All of these methods are rooted in learning philosophies that value collectivity, deep listening, and mutual learning. The philosophies embedded in the facilitation methods are integrated into Kufundee knowledge-practices.

Learning from discomfort and conflict\textsuperscript{34}

Social movements practically respond to conflicts within their socio-political ecology. Precisely, movements exist because actors have found something that needs to change, shift, be discarded or they see an opportunity for something radical to emerge. Just as they respond to these conflicts, they are also prone to conflict as movement actors differ in the way they relate to the world. Kufunda is not immune to this intra-movement conflict.

On day 17 of my field research, I was invited to facilitate a conversation on some challenges that Kufundees were going through. I co-facilitated the conversation with a young woman from Italy who was at the Ruwa site for an internship. We asked three questions to guide us in the process: What challenges are you personally facing and what challenges are you facing in relation to the village? What process can you imagine for working on these challenges? Some of the issues that Kufundees raised were:

\textsuperscript{34} All movements I have been a part had/have intra-movement conflict. My experiences with Ubuntu and Kufunda are the only ones where I have felt I have been able to make use of conflict for my own growth and the growth of the movement. There aren’t a lot of good movement models to learn about conflict transformation. There is so much learning in conflict, as conflict pinpoints where individuals and groups need to learn to grow.
**Communication:** Some Kufundees expressed that they had a hard time speaking their truth and sharing their ideas. They also identified low trust in their fellow Kufundees as a barrier to healthy communication.

**Power:** Connected to the issue of communication was power. Some Kufundees identified the existence of a hierarchal structure in the movement, even though the movement saw itself as practicing horizontal and collective leadership. The inverse of this was that some of the more vocal Kufundees who seemed to hold power expressed that there was an issue with the deference of responsibility and power that created a ‘boss’ syndrome. This had the consequence of hindering self-expression. Other Kufundees were not happy with how financial and other strategic decisions were concentrated in the Village Council and Finance Committee. The Village Council is the internal body that performs strategic functions for the Ruwa site. Some Kufundees suggested that the people in the Village Council and the Finance Committee withheld vital information, hindering the smooth functioning of the village. Some Kufundees voiced that some projects were allocated resources from the collective pot based on their connection with Kufundees on the Finance Committee.

**Honoring of all work:** Some felt that some roles and projects in the movement were perceived to be more important than others. That meant that other people’s input and labor in the movement was not recognized and fully appreciated.

**Changes versus Old expectations:** There was a sense that Kufunda Village was not moving with the changing circumstances within the village. For example, Kufundees in the village had grown, some had families, with older children. The needs of the families differed from the needs people
had before the Kufundees had families. There were also differing understandings of Kufunda’s principles and objectives between new and old Kufundees.

*Organizational Structures:* Some Kufundees felt that the Village Council was not working as intended. Additionally, sometimes there was conflict among the various teams such as hosting, facilitation, building, and herb groups that created unproductive intergroup tensions. Some of these tensions emanated from the differential resource allocation for group projects.

*Material Concerns:* Kufundees voiced their worries about resources to take care of their families. The village was not generating enough resources to allow people to take care of themselves adequately. This had the effect of people in the movement losing motivation.

The issues were raised in smaller groups, using world café facilitation method. We organized the groups based on who people felt fully comfortable with. The smaller groups provided space for people to speak openly and allowed for rich conversation. Each group had a designated harvester, who took note of the issues people brought forward. After the world café, the small groups came together and each harvester shared what came out of their group. In the larger group, my Italian co-facilitator and I took note of the core themes. Based on the themes, we asked the group to collectively heart storm how to resolve the tensions. We collectively came up with a plan to have a full village two-day retreat focusing on these challenges. The retreat was to be facilitated by an external facilitator. We ended up with a few questions that people carried into the retreat:

*Kufunda how do we learn? Things happen and get broken, confused. How do we get along with them and how do we learn from them?*

I left Ruwa before the retreat took place and therefore am not aware what came out of it. However, based on the process I co-facilitated, the Kufunda movement experiences intra-movement conflict akin to other movements. In many social movement contexts, conflict is regarded as harmful and
usually results in demise of movements. Kufunda’s approach to conflict transformation is simple and yet radical. As the questions above demonstrate, Kufundees acknowledge conflict as a natural part of shared work. In fact, conflict is desired as it surfaces tensions that need to be worked out. Rather than avoid conflict, or bury it in rhetoric of collective leadership, Kufundees seek out conversations that surfaces it. And beyond surfacing conflict Kufundees creatively design healthy ways of mediating conflict and transforming it into productive learning for the individuals and the collective. More importantly, the questions raised at the end signify the learning teleology of the Kufunda movement. The questions show that it is in the agonizing over these tensions that a learning philosophy is applied and in doing so individual and collective transformation takes place.
Chapter 5. The village circle for reflection

In the Serima area where Ubuntu is physically situated every Thursday of the week is a sacred day. This day is called Chisi. Chisi is set aside by the stewards of the land to give rest to land and the people. On this day, everyone is forbidden from doing any physical work that involves the land work. At Ubuntu, this day is also doubly sacred as the people in the village take time to reflect on the work, learning, challenges and future directions of the village. Our reflections happen in a circle we call Dare. A Dare is a space in a physical and relational sense where people discuss matters that are important to the community. In a Dare, the community resolves conflicts, plan, and hold ceremony for example. We have a specific process for conversations in the Dare. One person plays the role of the facilitator and note taker. The facilitation role is rotated among the adults in the village. The role of the facilitator is to craft the flow of conversation for that particular Dare, as well as ensuring that conversations are flowing during the Dare. The facilitator begins with a check in question. A check in question is intended to get those in the circle to be fully present. A typical check in question would be: how are you feeling in this moment? Alternatively, how did you arrive in the circle? Every person in the Dare responds to the question from their situatedness, while everyone listens without responding or reacting.

When check-in time is over, the facilitator moves the conversation on to more substantial discussions. Those in the circle share thoughts on whatever the facilitator brings into the conversation and add to the topics of discussion. The Dare gives us an opportunity to reflect on many issues, from hour to hour village matters, to the broader global objectives of the village. We strategize, we resolve conflicts, we practice intentional learning, we play music, and we tell stories.
In addition to the work that sustains the village, the Dare becomes a space where we zone in on the learnings to support the ongoing work and life of the village. It is where we derive theories around our movement work. It is also another site where we share our contributions to the movements.

In the Dare, we have talked about human relationships, our relationship to the land and all that is in it, ecological sanitation, organic farming, land, local and global politics, and historical issues. We have also processed conflicts within the village, confusions, transitions, and discomforts. The intention of the Dare is to create space to reflect collectively. Experience shows that the Dare does not automatically become a space where everyone shares openly and honestly. The process of building an authentic Dare is long-winded and emotionally complicated. Over time people at Ubuntu have developed an ability to reflect and share, but there is more learning in this regard.

The process of reflection in this context involves the individuals in the community asking questions around what, why, when, how, where and who of the movement work and refracting these to all levels of the existence. The sites of reflection include the internal, emotional-psychological, the relational on the local level, the communal level, the national situation, the global reality, the historical, from the contingency of being in a locality. Through these reflection processes, connections between thought and actions find more illumination. Processes of thinking, enactment of embodied knowledges and action are brought to bear on each other, producing knowledge practices that are materialized in the work of the movement. This process is what constitutes learning in the village. The learning in the village also involves unlearning. Unlearning cultural

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35 I am not certain whether this is a quote from someone, or I just made it up, here it goes; society remains unchanged because people have a hard time unlearning old habits more than they refuse
practices that are not in line with anti-oppressive Ubuntu. Unlearning is the other half of learning

5.1 Kufunda Kufunda: A pedagogy for another world

Kufunda and Social movement learning theory

This chapter continues the analysis of Kufunda’s movement work started in chapter four, with a keen focus on the theoretical connections among knowledge construction, learning and the construction of social reality. The analysis locates the Kufunda movement in scholarly conversations on social movement learning by exploring the following questions: What knowledge-practices are being constructed by Kufundees? What is the relationship between knowledge-practices and learning in the Kufunda movement? How do Kufunda knowledge-practices and learning shape reality?

Learning in and from social movements encapsulates an epistemological scape that links social movement learning to the sociology of knowledge and its implications (Holford, 1991). This aspect of social movement learning poses the question: What knowledges do social movements produce or construct and to what effect? When Hall and Clover (2005) defined social movement learning as learning by people involved in social movements and learning by people outside of social movements because of the actions or existence of social movements, they were pointing to two aspects of knowledge construction in social movements: (1) knowledge production for the social movement actors; and (2) knowledge production for the society at large. The first aspect concerns the micro level of social movement action, including the individual actors and content, motivations for, and outcomes of learning in social movements. The second aspect relates to the macro level of social theory, connecting collective action with paradigm shifts in local and global
to learn new ways. Unlearning is a critical part of the learning process. There is need for deconstruction in the process of construction.
relations. Social movements generate cognitive praxis (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991), and through struggle and experimentation, they produce critical knowledges for their membership, and society (Conway, 2005; Crowther, Hemi and Scandrett, 2012; Escobar, 2011). Ultimately, social movements are sites for enlightened and emancipatory praxis (Welton, 1993). The knowledges produced by progressive social movements affect all levels of society; they are holistic, practical, and tangible.

A critical aspect of social movement knowledge production is that it surfaces what Foucault (1979) called subjugated knowledges. One element of subjugated knowledges are those ways of knowing and being that is in the epistemological margins (Esteves-Motta, 2014) that effectively become counter-hegemonic. These margins comprise queer, racialized, gendered, Indigenous, colonized, disabled, impoverished peoples who are at the receiving end of interlocking oppressions. Collective action through social movement organizing brings these knowledges to the entire society, allowing for shifting of the cultural landscape. Social movement learning spaces are pedagogical conduits for people to learn that they need to resist as the practice of resistance must be learned (Steinklammer, 2012). Reflective practices in social movements allow actors to unlearn oppressors’ logic of hierarchy, power-over, and closure which often structure who is heard and who is silenced within movement practices (Motta Esteves, 2014). On a collective level, social movement learning is critical for the formation of moral identity (Sandlin & Walther, 2009). It is through a collective moral identity that social movements can sustain themselves beyond their

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36 By subjugated knowledges, Foucault referred to two bodies of knowledge, “the first is historical contents that have been buried or masked in functional coherences or formal systemizations and second is knowledges that have been disqualified as...insufficiently elaborated knowledges: naive knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientificity.” (2003, p. 7). I am invoking the second definition.
current membership (della Pota and Diani, 2006).

Drawing from learning in environmental justice movements in Scotland and India, Scandrett (2012) finds that these struggles are no longer peripheral but are legitimate contestations of the current ecological order. To this effect, Hall & Turray (2006) argue that social movement learning produces knowledges that challenge the dominant meaning systems or symbols of contemporary everyday life. Social movements contest ownership of specific social or political problems in the eyes of the public, “imposing their own interpretation on these” (Della Porta & Diani, 1999, p. 70). In the instances in which they are successful, social movements shift the ways people conceptualize and understand knowledges and relations of power (Hall & Turray, 2006).

Writing in the context of the Pacific region of Colombia, Escobar (2008), argues that PCN activists construct alternative knowledges about place, identity, capital, networks, and development. Etmanski (2012) documents the practical, technological, philosophical, political, psychological, gendered, and spiritual knowledge productions of the organic farming movement and argues that the movement is a credible source of education for social justice. Referencing the Transition Movement in the USA, Hardt (2013) states that through “deliberate application of permaculture principles, along with the more diffuse and implicit influences of complexity theory and other sources of inspiration, to designing an organizing model and a social movement, Transitioners are constructing knowledge about activism and social change, and redefining social movement efficacy” (Hardt, 2013, p. 15).

Ultimately, social movement learning theory illuminates on the assemblage of issues such as characteristics of learning in social action (Learning sites, learning content, pedagogy, unit of learning, learning facilitation), sociology of knowledge as it relates to social movement activity
as well as the individual, movement and societal implications of learning in action. The aspects of learning are not disconnected, they all form a loose aggregate of mutable and mutually reinforcing concepts that can only make sense if understood in their relationality.

**Kufunda as a movement**

Kufunda can be described in two ways. The first is that it is a learning movement for socio-cultural and ecological change. The second is that it is a socio-ecological movement that employs learning as its pedagogical lens for social movement action.

Kufunda is a socio-ecological movement in that its micro-practices of everyday life and the philosophies that ground the movement points to a body of work whose teleology is of creating life-affirming identities. A life-affirming identity entails a relational orientation in which the ecological whole is characterized as living and as capable of experiencing pain, joy, sorrow, desire and a whole range of emotions. This orientation behooves humans to put in the work required for the whole earth to remain positively alive and thriving. The socio-ecological frame captures the levels of human agency, the structures that humans construct, and the ontological reality of beingness. Kufunda movement employs their knowledge-practices to intervene in the norms, expectations and political and economic realities of their local and global contexts. Additionally, Kufundees intentional work involves building harmonious relationships with other beings of nature. And finally, Kufundees are constructing knowledge-practices that support the creation of and promotion of life-affirming identities.

The learning orientation of the movement manifests in three manners. Firstly, Kufunda offers educative experiences and programs to its members and the broader global community. Kufunda education takes the form of critical capacity building. When a Kufundee said that their work was
to help people remember what they know, what they meant was that they are facilitators of connecting people to their agency. This contrasts with educational philosophies of for example Aristotle and Plato, that advocated for people to be educated to fit predetermined positions in societal hierarchies (Noddings, 2007). With character education, the focus of education is instilling pre-scribed moral behaviors, leading to what Freire (1993) calls the banking model of education. Kufunda practices demonstrate that education is a social activity for individual and collective growth. It is in line with Dewey’s (1938) philosophy of education that is rooted in life experiences, where education is synonymous with growth in life (Dewey, 1938).

Kufundees facilitate learning on youth leadership, women’s leadership, collective leadership, how to build sustainable communities, and community engagement. Kufundees and guests learn specific, concrete practices in farming, human waste management, bee-keeping, eco-building construction among others. They also learn facilitation processes, such as Art of Hosting, OASIS and Flow Game.

Secondly, Kufunda as a collective movement identity is engaged in the process of learning. The collectivity of Kufunda, represented by the Ruwa site, the growing communities in rural Zimbabwe and the translocal collaborators around the world is learning through pre-figuratively engaging in the future world they hope to live in. Collectively, the movement is learning about movement strategy, growing horizontally and mobilizing resources for movement activities. They are learning how to engage in movement in the now, in a way that mirrors a world they want to create. They are learning how to connect with communities around them, how to collaborate with these communities in ways that enlarge the mass of people that are shifting into life-affirming relationships with the world. They are also learning about the local and global resources that are needed to sustain the movement and the people within it. The movement itself is simultaneously
a learning entity and a learning site.

The third is that Kufunda is pre-figuring the practices of a socio-ecologically engaged learning society. Kufunda’s practices demonstrate the idea of learning as the life-blood of any society. In fact, it was because of these conversations that Kufundees coined with the phrase Kufunda Kufunda Kufunda (Learning is to learn how to learn, or knowledge is learning how to learn). It is an emphasis on the centrality of learning to personal and community wellbeing. It is an acknowledgment that we are never complete, but always in a state of becoming. Moreover, Kufunda is a site of learning because it is central to the development of society through the production of social innovations and ideas, through knowledge creation, reformulation, and diffusion (Casas-Cortes, Osterweil, & Powell, 2008). The Kufunda movement is in practice prototyping a new paradigm of living that transcends the limitations of existing paradigms of reformation or capitulation. The new paradigm is post-capitalist, place-based, ecological, experimental and open. Escobar (2004) captures this critical move:

For some, an entirely new paradigm is not only needed but already on the rise. Others speak of the need for a new horizon of meaning for political struggle after the ebbing of the dream of national sovereignty through popular revolution. Still, others caution that since most alternative visions of the recent past—from national liberation to socialism—operated within a modernist framework, then the paradigms of the future have to steer carefully away from modern concepts (Escobar, 2004, p. 208).

The learning orientation of the Kufunda movement lends itself to this malleability through the spirit of openness and experimentation.
Learning and Unlearning in the Kufunda Movement

As suggested earlier Kufunda is a learning movement or a movement that deploys learning as its central philosophy. However, what is learning according to Kufundees? What aspects of learning are worthy of investigation and consideration? I found it useful for our discussion on learning in the Kufunda movement to recap some theoretical ideas from the field. The intention here is to draw on these ideas and locate the Kufundees’ views on learning in the larger theoretical conversations on learning. In the second chapter, I reviewed three broad theories of learning: behavioral, cognitivist and social constructivist. They are relevant not in the sense of imposing their ideological boundaries on how we can conceptualize social movement learning theories, but in how they can be interwoven with the learning paradigms coming out of social movement learning practices.

The behavioral approach to learning assumes that human behavior can be changed by exerting external force. Knowledge is assumed to be concrete information, outside the body of the learner, who is expected to internalize a pre-defined body of it passively. Learning is defined as observable changes in behavior (Ertemer & Newby, 2013, p. 48). The transfer of knowledge is facilitated by delivery of repeated cognitive messages using positive and negative reinforcement. The learner is motivated to learn externally by reward or punishment. Cognitivist approaches, on the other hand, define learning as changes among states of knowledge. They are mostly concerned with the practices or techniques geared towards understanding how information is received, organized, stored, and retrieved by the mind. Knowledge in this sense is a set of information packages, and learning would have occurred if the learner can apply that knowledge in various contexts. Whereas behavioral and cognitivist approaches are rooted in cognitive psychology, social constructivist models derive their assumptions and ideas from the socio-cultural field. Social constructivist
approaches viewed learning as a contextual and embodied social practice of knowledge production. Knowledge is assumed to emerge out of the milieu of human interaction; it is produced through them. Learning is the active process of knowledge creation and meaning-making from experience (Bruner, 2004; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Ertemer & Newby, 2013). Constructivists conceptualize knowledge as embedded in social relations and therefore context bound. Knowledge is what emerges from social relationships and consists of both the content of social-relational productions and the ideas that shape cultural reality; it is not an external object with an essential ontology (Berger and Luckmann, 1991)

The broader learning philosophy of the Kufunda movement aligns more with the social constructivist view. Specifically, Lave’s (1996) stipulations of situated learning theory: telos, learning mechanism and assumptions about subject-world relations and community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) are useful in explicating learning in the Kufunda movement. Telos speaks to the changes in learning states in the learner, learning mechanism speaks to how learning happens and subject-world relations implies the subject’s relationship with the social world. According to Lave (1996)

*The notion of telos seemed useful in turning the focus away from a vista of educational goals set by societal, cultural authorities, which would make teaching the precondition for learning. It encourages instead a focus on the trajectories of learners as they change. Learning mechanisms also seem obviously relevant to understanding how learning comes about. The centrality of assumptions about subject-world relations may seem less obvious. But different epistemologically-based theories depend on the variable answers to two questions: Where does reality lie (in the world or in the subject)? And how can we come to know it (depending on where "it" is)? And if one adopts the perspective proposed here, the subject-world relation is central*
also, though conceived differently. The question is, "how is the objective world socially constituted, as human beings are socially produced, in practice?" Rejecting the analytic philosophical distinction between persons and things, this question presupposes that social becoming is fundamental to all other social processes (Bernstein, 1971). Any way you look at it, subject-world relations are at the crux of differentiation of one theory of learning from another. (p. 156)

Lave (1996) makes a distinction between learning and teaching, suggesting that learning does not require teaching for it to take place. This distinction is important in understanding how learning happens in the Kufunda movement and other social movements. By learning mechanisms, Lave (1996) is speaking to the details of knowledge transfer, sharing and how knowledge is constructed. Additionally, Lave (1996) observes that assumptions about notions of truth and knowledge determine how we understand learning. We can also add that the assumptions we have about knowledge and truth also determine how we relate to the world. Kufundee practices provide a practical demonstration of this determinative relationship. Telos, mechanisms of learning and subject-world relations manifest in the Kufunda movement as a coherent body of knowledge-practices: a pedagogy for an otherworld.

Kufundees have a vision of a world that is constituted by multiple learning communities, that can in practice become a life-affirming learning society. They are driven by a dream of a world in which human potential is not constrained by repressive physical and ideological structures. The telos of learning in the Kufunda movement centers the transformation of human behaviors and attitudes. By means of acquiring life-affirming skills and practices, the individual can participate in the social realm as their best self. This individual is also aware of their connection with and

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37 Subject-world relations are also a central feature of Freire’s conscientization and praxis.
dependency on their whole environment. In that sense, their inter-subjective reality becomes the foundational criteria for being an ethical person in the world. This relational ontology is also a fundamental learning motivation. The individual’s behaviors, attitudes, and ideational processes are life-affirming if they are geared towards the care of the ecological whole.

The telos of learning is also about preparing individuals and communities to respond and adapt to changes in the eco-social field from a place of care, confidence, and self-appreciation. It is not about being the best permaculture practitioner, carpenter, herbalist or beekeeper. It is about belonging to a community of practice in a way that qualitatively enhances all involved. Given the fact that being in the world is being thrown in complexity; learning is infinite. The telos of learning ultimately ends up being about more learning for change to fit the moment. Asked what more he wanted to learn, a Kufundee who has been at the Ruwa site for about ten years said, “Kudzidza hakuperi (there is no ending to learning) I learn every day to suit the moment.”

While Lave (1996), suggests that learning mechanisms do not speak to techniques that facilitate learning, but rather about ways individuals participate in a community of practice and how that participation change, I posit that learning methods are essential to this participation process and form an integral component in the relationship between the individual and the collective (Kilgore, 1999). Kufundees become part of the community of practice of the Kufunda movement by participating as a collective body of knowledge-practices creators through specific processes that are integral to collective leadership. Facilitation of participation is accomplished through processes that aim to be non-hierarchical, playful and open.

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38 This Shona saying is typically used in contexts in which someone has learnt something new. The learner is almost acquiescing to the naturalness of the learning process. At the same time, the saying opens up the learner to more learning.
Kufundees also learn from each other and others outside the movement. They learn from the wisdom of the people that are present in the moment of doing and interacting. Kufundees learn from the land that surrounds them, they learn from its natural ecological processes and changes. The facilitated learning involves a lot of play, games, dance, and quizzes among other fun activities. Kufundees are aware that play is essential in learning, it brings a lightness and an awareness that work can be joyful and therefore fulfilling. Kufundees also learn for themselves and choose over time what they want to focus on, while at the same contingency dictate areas of learning.

Facilitation processes are an initial entry point into the movement and provide a sense of what it means to be in the movement. Kufundee facilitation processes engender feelings of being valued, heard and respected. Whether one is new, or old in the movement, one is made to become part of the community and have their knowledge affirmed. It can be argued that the continued participation of Kufundees in the movement is highly depended on facilitation methods and practices. That is the pedagogy for learning determines interest in remaining in the community of practice.

Kufunda movement learning entails the interaction of the whole body with the social and object field. Kufundees learn from their actions, reflections and the embodied knowledges they have from their lives and being part of the movement. The transformative metaphor of the head, the body and the heart (Hoggan, 2016) is appropriate in this instance, signifying that their pedagogical process transcends the cognitive limitations of Freirean praxis. Freirean (2000) praxis presumes that the site of learning in the context of action is not the action itself but the reflecting on the action. Cognition is essential here because Kufundees engage in both individual and collective reflection. However, they also learn and act out of the knowledges situated in their bodies and
their hearts: embodied knowledges. A focus on reflection ignores the capacity of the body to remember, to make neurological pathways that instinctively operate on their own. While the head speaks to the cognitive activity of reflection, the body speaks to doing, and embodying and the heart speak to the emotional and affective aspects of learning.

Learning in the Kufunda movement is not just about internalizing new ideas and knowledge practices, at its core is also the joint process of unlearning. Kufundees are practicing their work in a context that is laden with internal and external ideological structures. We have already seen that Kufundee pedagogy of another world is a response to the politics of subjugation of Indigenous knowledges; a critical site of resistance to global coloniality. Kufundees needed to unlearn the logic of global coloniality, to understand the need for another way. These logics, however, are not just cognitive, at the personal and interpersonal level they show up in ways that shake up the movement. They do not show up as both intentional behaviors and embodied behaviors. While the intentional aspects can be reflected upon because they tend to bare themselves to the community, it is the embodied aspects that provide a trying unlearning curve. Unlearning involves the process of moving away from an undesirable way of constructing knowledge-practices towards another way of constructing knowledge-practices. This process means that learning involves undoing embodied and cognitive practices.

With this approach to understanding the concept of knowledge and the telos of participation in pre-figuring social and ecological change, Kufunda’s movement work demonstrates that learning is a process of meaning-making and knowledge creation, production, embodiment, utilization and dissemination that is structured/contingent upon praxis for ecological and socio-cultural change. Their learning process is cumulative, iterative and open-ended. Learning, therefore, is non-summative. For a Kufundee learning has occurred when one has in an embodied sense figured out
how to connect word with action (Freire, 2000) for continuous learning for social change. That is why they say Kufunda Kufunda Kufunda, meaning that to have learned is to have internalized how to learn and unlearn: *to know is to know how to learn.*

The Kufunda conceptualization of learning is congruent with Dewey’s notion of education as growth. In Dewey's terms, growth meant developing possibilities for connections, and the purpose of education was more education, whereas education functions as both ends and means, and without a grand aim (Noddings, 2007, p. 27). In this argument, Dewey promotes an enterprise of learning that ensures that the educative experience has meaning in the here and now (Noddings, 2007). Dewey (2007) pre-figures Freire's praxis, though not in the context of struggle and outlines a philosophy of relationality that centers communication and co-construction of reality. Dewey argued that we do not begin with social values, but we construct them. He also argued that any culture transmits its values by immersing its young ones in experiences that inculcate the capability for communication to co-create. Students, for example, can only learn democratic life by being involved in learning that has democratic values and practices, not mere information about democracy. Student participation in democratic living is both an end and a means to the achievement of adult democratic life (Dewey, 1938). We see in Dewey’s notion of education the generative power of the tri-productive relationship between embodiment, reflection and doing. Kufunda Kufunda Kufunda means that learning is a critical iterative reflective process of engagement with knowledge-constitutive social relations. Kufunda Kufunda Kufunda also suggests that it is through learning and unlearning that knowledges are produced. Kufunda Kufunda Kufunda is a pedagogy that inspires openness to change through learning. It is in that spirit a pedagogy of an otherworld that is emerging in the shell of the status quo.
What we offer to the world is knowledge

As chapter four demonstrates, the daily micro-practices of the Kufundees are diverse and complex. Consistently evident in the learning movement is the creation, construction, modification, and diffusion of knowledge-practices for the movement and for the context in which the movement is enacting itself. By studying the embeddedness of knowledge in Kufunda social relations, that is knowledge being produced in dialogue, in the context of enacting change, in interaction, and how this knowledge is enacted in various localities, we can learn from Kufunda movement activity (Escobar, 2008). However, to fully understand the internal, local and global implications of Kufunda movement, their movement activities ought to be conceptualized as knowledge-practices (Casas-Cortes, Osterweil, and Powell, 2008) not just knowledges. The concept of knowledge-practices derives from the work of De Souza Santos (2005), who stated that “all social practices imply knowledge, and as such, they are knowledge practices” p. 19. Casas-Cortes, Osterweil, and Powell (2008) employed the concept in the context of social movements to signify the body of processes constituted by the creation, modification, and enactment of movement activity (Casas-Cortes, Osterweil, & Powell, 2008).

Kufundees root their knowledges-practices in an appreciation of themselves as historical agents with the power to change their world. Kufundees are cognizant of how political, social and ecological in which they are located as marginals do constrain their work. However, their dream relationship to the world is that of subjects not mere objects of historical circumstance (Freire, 2000). Kufundees’ individual and collective will to act for social change demonstrate they firmly believe they are capable of being creators of their realities. Thus, Kufundees conceptualize knowledge from an experiential standpoint and therefore take an embodied socio-relativist position in defining knowledge. Knowledge is understood within their reality as the body of
practices, processes, beliefs, and ideas that are employed in the movement in creating more learning. It refers to all the types and forms of knowledge: tacit, a priori, post priori, practical, propositional, conceptual, theoretical, spiritual, implicit, scientific, experiential, implicit and explicit. Because knowledge is practiced and created in the context of action and relationships, it becomes the productive relationship between know how and know to. This highlights that knowledge is situated in specific contexts, places, spaces, and practices. To understand Kufundee actions, one has to appreciate their location within specific spaces of the villages and communities they enact movement practice and the translocal networks they are a part of. The situatedness of Kufundee knowledges simultaneously affirms that their knowledges are relational. To know in the Kufunda way is to be in relation to the earth, other humans, and ideas (Wilson, 2008). If the Kufunda knowledges are revealed through the connections between space and practices, it necessarily means that Kufundee knowledges are embodied. In short, Kufunda movement knowledges are constructed, situated, embodied, and relational. Defining knowledge as contextual, constructed, situated, embodied and relational is to suggest that practices and knowledge are inherently co-definitive, co-producing, and intertwined. Consequently, conceptualizing the epistemic ecology of the Kufunda movement as knowledge-practices honors the relational inseparability between knowledge and practice.

Kufunda knowledge-practices are the concrete skills, ideas, stories, scientific practices, new paradigms of being, as well as different modes of analyses of relevant political and social conjuncture (Casas-Cortes, Osterweil, & Powell, 2008). Kufundees like other social movement actors are producing knowledge-practices that are useful to their movement and local and global society. Through the various manifestations of their movement, Kufundees produce and develop practices, skills, and processes that address the ecological whole as well as political, social and
economic structures and relationships. In doing so, they produce subjectivities and critical capacities, that, at their best, enable alternative social and political forms of organization, institutions, and societies to emerge (Casas-Cortes, Osterweil, & Powell, 2008). Ultimately, Kufunda knowledge-practices are useful for the movement itself, the society within which the movement is doing its work, the global community, and have analytic validity for social theory.

*Kufunda Epistemic Economy: There is knowing in doing*

Kufundees learn from living. Their context, sites, places, spaces of learning are their lives. The work gives its participants their physical, spiritual, psychological and emotional existence. When I suggested that to Kufunda knowledge is embodied, that meant it is lived; the corporeal is at stake. Their movement is distinct from that of protests, marches, ad-hoc lobby groups, where life and movement are distinct domains, that only support each other theoretically. To Kufundees movement work is life itself. This unity of movement and life produces unique knowledge-practices that cannot be found in de-linked protests. In being in life and being in the movement as an integrated practice, Kufundees generate knowledge-practices that are consistent with the necessities of being in the milieu of life in the present context.

*Knowledge-practices for physical sustenance*

By means of enacting daily practices of sustainable food production and gathering and eco-building, Kufundees produce work/instrumental/technological, knowledge-practices that are critical to their objective of sustaining themselves in an ecologically sound manner. Knowledge-practices of the world and the objects that allow humans to survive is essential for the Kufunda movement for their lives depend on it.

Kufunda’s organic farming consists of animal raising, bee-keeping, growing of local and other
grains, fish-farming, cow, chicken and pig raising, while ecological food gathering refers to practices in identifying and collecting fruits, leaves, flowers, bark, and sap from local forests. Organic farming has inspired Kufundees to gather information about the life and biology of plants and animals, relationships among them, and their relationship to the earth. They have also gathered information about plant health, medicinal and ecological qualities. Kufundees use this information to develop practices for growing healthy food, recover indigenous plants, care for all that constitutes the land and develop locally derived medicines. Their knowledge-practices of organic farming are a synthetic approach that brings together indigenous knowledge and know-how and knowledge-practices from, western science, guests, and other translocal communities. Kufundees have developed architectural knowledge-practices for building green homes and upcycling of human excretions. Their building walls are made from bricks from local clay, while roofs are made from thatched grass. The design allows for cool air in the hot months and warmth in the cold months of the year. Kufundees use compost toilets that upcycle human excretions into food for fruit trees.

Through repetition, experimentation, and observation, some of this work knowledge becomes technical, rendering it sharable with others. In fact, this is the area of learning that has allowed Kufundees to grow horizontally in Zimbabwe, as they share knowledge-practices that are useful for people’s daily lives. The exchange and dissemination of knowledge-practices for physical sustenance goes a long way in building relationships. In Karanga we say, ukama igasva hunozadziswa nokudya, meaning that relationships are half-complete without the act sharing of food.
Knowledge-practices for movement mobilization

Place-based social movements that actively practice the politics they wish to see in the world are made possible by physical space, people, and a consistent ethico-practical foundation. From the onset, the Kufunda movement has depended on relationships and a commitment to a set of organizational practices whose roots are consistent. At the Ruwa location, there is a total of 28 families who live there permanently, that is about on average 150 inter-generational individuals. The complexity of interaction in this small space is phenomenal. When we add the multiplicity of individuals in the villages that Kufundees collaborate with, we have another layer of relationships from which learning happens. Relational learning at the later level takes place through the difference in individuals and the localities through which the individuals do their work. Relationally produced practical knowledges enable understanding and intersubjectivity among Kufundees, building bonds and a stronger sense of shared purpose. Feelings of care, fairness, justice and community service emanate from these knowledge-practices. It is these intersubjective processes that inspire people to take up the movement in their locality but also to sustain the movement.

Movement mobilization also takes the form of various strategies of communication that the Kufunda movement employ in sharing their knowledge-practices and building relationships. The Ruwa site is curated and built in a way that is inviting and feels like home. Its physical arrangement and the sensual experience that it invokes inspires a healthy way of connecting to place and space. Beyond the Ruwa site, community engagement practices of the Kufunda movement in local villages centers the agency and knowledge-practices of local people. Kufundees from the Ruwa site do not perceive themselves as the vanguard of the whole movement. They are just a part, that plays its role in the broader struggle for life-affirming relationships.
Various Kufunda nodes in the network meet and flows of interaction, knowledge-practice sharing, and relationship building continue to sediment intersubjective connections. On the translocal level, Kufundees use their website and regular newsletters to communicate to the world that cannot be physically in Zimbabwe. Electronic media expands the web of relationships and grows the network on a global level. They are also able to connect with other movements in other parts of the world, creating in the process a more extensive network of translocal relationships.

**Knowledge-practices for inquiry**

Kufundees commit themselves to “staying in the breath of learning” through action and individual and collective reflection. Kufundees intentionally practice individual and collective reflection around their local and global context, work, ideas, processes, their place in the world and their understanding of their purpose. To practice individual reflection, Kufundees have tapped into one on one mentorship and facilitated processes. For collective reflection, Kufundees gather consistently and work with ideas from the art of hosting, oasis, and dare. These processes support Kufundees in having dialogue as a movement, that focus on movement needs, challenges, and directions. As shown in chapter four, Kufundees have developed an analysis of the world and have understood it as a space/place that requires change. They have learned that for this change to happen they need to change as individuals and as a community. Critical self-awareness allows Kufundees as individuals to grow in their consciousness. Whereas, collective awareness allows Kufunda as a movement to grow, and build deeper processes to encourage collective consciousness. The process of reflection moves the movement and individuals within it towards achieving goals of social change. Emancipatory knowledge is produced through this praxis. Conway (2004) drawing on Freire (2000) characterizes this more precisely as praxis knowledge, that is practices that elucidate the ongoing relationship between action and reflection, forging
conscientization and effective social movement politics. Choudry summarizes this well when he says “In the course of social and political struggles, it is through action that people create experiences from which they learn – the action is what educates, the doing, reflecting on the practice is the source of new ideas, and experiences of change however that is defined (Choudry, 2014, p. 284). The action and reflection dialectic extends beyond individual and collective identity formation. It is also reflected in Kufundees learning about the earth, food, local and global politics.

Kufundees are producing knowledge-practices that are relevant to topical issues in the current global moment. Questions about a just vision of the world, the future, and present of earthly life. Through their proposal of an otherworld, they burst the boundaries of not only movement thought, but also our imagination of what the world could be. They are a demonstration, a utopia-in-motion\(^{39}\), from which we can draw a whole new set of questions to bear on the state of global relationships.

5.2 Implications of Kufunda Knowledge-Practices

*The head, the body, and the heart: Community of Practice and Identity*

The pedagogy of an otherworld goes beyond mere methods of learning and participation in the production of knowledge-practices; it is a form of cultural politics (Conway, 2005), that actively contests interpretations in the social field (Kurzman, 2008, Touraine, 1985). The process through which individuals in the movement become conscientized to this contestation is meaning-making. Meaning-making entails human cognitive and normative processes of engaging with the world, that is perception and response (Kurzman, 2008). On a cognitive level, Kufundees acquire

\(^{39}\) Utopia tend to imply a distant place that is unachievable. By Utopia-in-motion, I am signifying that Kufunda’s knowledge are moving them in the direction of creating what would appear to outsiders as utopian. Whether they will reach there, that is to be seen, but for now, they are reaching out for it and that counts for a lot.

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counter-hegemonic knowledges through facilitated conversations that give them the critical discourses to engage with their context. In the process, they also form normative ideas about how they ought to be in the movement. Meaning-making also means collective contest of interpretation (Kurzman, 2008). On a collective level, these shared meanings become useful in how the movement frames itself, develops its strategies, forms its collective identity and achieves its teleological objectives (Polleta and Jasper, 2001; Kurzman, 2008). It is the collective meaning-making that is produced by and produces the pre-figuration of an otherworld.

A critical element of Kufundee meaning-making processes is identity. All the Kufundees I interviewed were unique in their way; they had different interests, styles, and many other idiosyncrasies. They showed up in the Kufunda movement as individuals, with their histories, cognitive processes, desires and ways of being that determined how they engage with other Kufundees. Additionally, they also drew on the collective vision of the movement, movement knowledge practices, and purposes.

Kufunda as a community produces a collective identity. Collective identity is an individual’s cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution. It is a perception of a shared status or relation, which may be imagined rather than experienced directly (Polleta and Jasper, 2001). Collective identity in Kufunda is not the quantitative sum of the individual differences of Kufundees. Collective identity emerges out of the Kufundees engagement with their pre-figurative praxis. It is forged from the co-construction of the movement by the movement actors.

Clearly, personal identities inform collective identities by means of individuals contributing to shaping the movement from their personal situatedness. Collective identity on the other hand
influences individual identity as movement actors align their behaviors, attitudes, ways of engaging and morals to those of the collective endeavor. These attributes are internalized, and sediment over time as individuals gain more attachment to and experience with the movement. In one interview, a Kufundee expressed how she changed many aspects of her as she became a central part of the movement. The mechanism through which the relationship between individual and collective identity takes form in the Kufunda movement is learning through a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Individuals learn collective identity in the process of carrying out their roles in the movement. The movement itself learns through the constructions of knowledges that its members put towards the sustenance and growth of the movement.

The learning orientation of the Kufunda movement also means that the Kufunda identity is not a fixed event, but an ever-evolving process. The narratives from Kufundees demonstrate that their practices are both learning sites and concrete actions. It is in this interaction between iterative learning and doing that catalytic knowledge-practices are produced that affirm salient features of the existing identity or shift identity. This iterative and cumulative learning maintains the movement, that is the knowledge practices are the nourishment that keeps the movement alive. This is akin to John Holst’s (2002) concept of “pedagogy of mobilization” which describes the learning inherent in the building and maintaining of a social movement (Choudry, 2014).

The collective identity of Kufunda manifests in the name of the movement, places of practice and in the knowledge-practices that give the name its materiality. Specifically, Kufundees describe Kufunda as a learning movement “… where people (sic) recover their sense of pride, wisdom, and capacity in working with their knowledge and deepening their resourcefulness” (Kufunda, 2016). Kufunda’s accumulated work in youth leadership, collective leadership, building sustainable communities and community engagement characterize this identity. What is evident
is that Kufundees show a determination to change their lives and the way society understands the world using a Do It Yourself, experimental and prefigurative approach to social change.

Kufunda collective identity also manifests as values that constitute a holistic and consistent body of ethics of care. Kufunda ethics of care manifests in practices of self-awareness, community responsibility, ecological sustainability and collective leadership. Kufundee’s ethic of care can be explained using a concept the Kufundees are fond of: hosting. The notion of hosting comes from Ubuntu culture, which asks the host to treat guests with the utmost care, love, and honor. In ChiKaranga we say, “Mushanyi ndiMambo,” meaning, a guest is the highest honor. Kufundees conceptualize hosting in two ways: hosting the self and hosting others. The first refers to the individuated process of self-reflection for unlearning, learning and self-care. This process enables the individual to build self-awareness, individual well-being, confidence, and humility. Individual change takes form through this process. The second refers to the role taken by a facilitator in the context of creating space for others to collectively create collaborative relationships. This aspect also references community engagement, facilitation of group conversations and the carrying of responsibility for social change.

The concept of collective identity illuminates on critical aspects of the Kufunda movement such as macro-historical issues of movement contexts, the motivation for individual movement participation, strategies of action and cultural effects of social movements (Polleta and Jasper, 2001). The co-founders of the movement were inspired by an emerging need for life-affirming ways of being, which was not reflected in the dominant culture. On a global level, they considered the catastrophic consequences of climate change, the capitalist economic system, and neoliberalism that is leaving people hungry and destitute as it fattens the bank accounts of a few. And locally, they considered the internalization of colonial narratives of failure and sensed a need
to do something concrete and culturally transformative. Using appreciative inquiry; a process of supporting communities in remembering what they know, they were connected to the wealth of Indigenous wisdom in the form of practices, stories, philosophies, and relationships. The positive historical-local context provided a basis for elevating local knowledges-practices as anchors for social movement practices.

Many Kufundees joined Kufunda through existing networks in their local communities where they were already engaged in community work. Others joined because they visited the Ruwa site and were inspired by the work that was taking place onsite. Many people I interviewed affirmed that they were motivated to become Kufundees by a sense of belonging they felt in the movement. Specifically, by being in a community that cares and in which their uniqueness was legitimized. While others suggested that they joined the movement because of the economic situation in Zimbabwe. They felt Kufunda provided an opportunity to support themselves and their families, using skills that would not be valued in the dominant economic culture. In this instance, an interplay between self-interest and moral inclination played a catalytic role, making it possible for the individual to simultaneously self-sustain and contribute to the collective vision of the movement.

The movement has also grown because of the community work that it centers. Traveling in the various local Kufunda communities, a sincere sense of attachment among the people to Kufunda Kufunda was palpable. For example, In Zvimba we were greeted by a group of singers who sang songs in praise of Kufunda and their work. The music told the story of Kufunda encouraging others to connect to the movement. In the music, the legend of the movement was etched and spread among the community.
The overarching teleological objective of Kufunda movement is primarily a learning society in which individuals and communities learn together to live sustainably, in harmony with themselves and the earth. This teleology is a proposal for ecological and social harmony. To achieve this, the Kufunda movement prefigures this future world by creating it and living it within the current world. Their strategy for action then is not demonstrations, protests and lobbying for changes in policy. It is not a confrontation against a physical opponent. Instead, they put into practice what they want to see as the future global reality. They foreground love and care and openness to learning. In the process, they produce material realities that function as other possibilities.

The places that identify as Kufunda places, specifically the communities of Ruwa, Mhondoro, Rusape, Zvimba, Chegutu, Seke, and Chimanimani among others, are evidence of the effectiveness of the movement regarding its strategy to grow horizontally. Growing on a horizontal scale means that Kufundees in the Ruwa site have not established themselves as the fulcrum of the movement, through which the other spaces do their work. Instead, using their work and their relationships, people in these localities have taken the movement up themselves and established centers of movement work in their spaces and places. The identity of Kufunda plays a catalytic role in this horizontal growth. In an environment that is economically and politically challenging, knowledge-practices that demonstrate valuing the self, confidence in one’s knowledge, fair valuation of knowledges, self-reliance backed up with a practice of sharing of skills and work collaboratively is a welcome cultural shift.

In what ways do we discern that individuals in the Kufunda movement are qualitatively manifesting the overall collective identity of Kufunda? How do we know that collective identity is emerging and is being sustained in the movement? As argued earlier, learning in a community of practice is the mechanism by which personal and collective identities construct each other. The
learning outcomes that demonstrate Kufundees construction of collective identity are akin to the three scapes of learning outcomes that were observed by Hogan (2016) in the context of transformative learning theory: depth, breadth, and relative stability:

*Depth refers to the impact of change, or the degree to which it affects any particular type of outcome (e.g., worldview, self, epistemology). A minor change in the way a person experiences, conceptualizes and interacts with the world is difficult to justify as being transformative. Breadth refers to the number of contexts in which a change is manifest. Learning is often contextual. When learning outcomes are restricted to only one context of a person’s life, then regardless of how impactful the learning is for that context, it should not qualify as transformative. The third criterion is relative stability. The very concept of transformation implies that a permanent change has occurred; it is irreversible. Two caveats to this notion of irreversibility are essential. First, regardless of how a person learns new ways of experiencing, conceptualizing, and interacting with the world, former ways are not miraculously forgotten. Old habits remain in our repertoire of meaning-making processes and may resurface from time to time as they are prompted by context or stress. Also, a person may likely experience future changes; transformation does not mean a person will never change again. Nevertheless, the criterion of relative stability emphasizes that a temporary change is inadequate to be considered transformative (p.71).*

On the individual level, Kufundees demonstrate depth, breadth and relative stability in their knowledge production, dissemination and retention. Kufundees embody deep knowledges at all scapes, the individual, the communal, the wider local, cultural and global. Kufundees have been building the movement for almost two decades. Judging from their history and their impact on the local level, they have been able to sustain themselves and remain effective. This is also noteworthy considering that they have also gone through challenges from within and outside the movement
and still managed to not only stay together but grow horizontally and translocally. Kufunda’s transformative pedagogy, characterized by depth, breadth and relative stability in practice has sustained the individuals in the movement as well as the movement, and in the process manifested a discernible collective identity. This also demonstrates that collective identity is produced over time through accumulated concrete knowledge-practices.

Identity also signals the forward-direction of the movement, allowing us to predict roughly the future trajectories of its intentions. As discussed earlier, Kufunda means both to have learned and the act of learning. The descriptor of Kufunda as space/place of learning signifies to Kufundees and their audiences the teleological intentions of the movement. People can make assumptions about what happens in the Kufunda movement, what their place could be and what kind of person should show up to interact with the movement. Kufunda collective identity offers in advance the guide with which people inside and outside ought to interact with the movement. Kufunda demonstrates that identity is not just a precondition for successful social movement mobilization, but a part of the process of mobilization (Polleta and Jasper, 2001). Put differently; collective identity signifies the accumulated body of knowledge-practices of the movement. This implies that collective identity is produced through knowledge-practice, knowledge-practices are also mutually produced by collective identity and learning is the operative mechanism in this relationship.
Helping communities to re(-)member what they know

The work of the Kufunda movement has had an immense effect on the individuals and communities of Zimbabwe. An earlier motivation for beginning this movement was to support rural communities who make up the majority of Zimbabwe in remembering their ways of knowing and doing. The ways of knowing that communities in Zvimba, Rusape, Mhondoro, Chimanimani, Gutu, Chegutu, and Seke are remembering and re-membering consisting of knowledge-practices around local healthy food, medicine, ways gathering and community, song, poetry, and ceremony. At the level of practice, individuals in these communities are actively re-evaluating their place in the world from the perspective of Indigenous difference. They do so by valorizing foods such as millets over corn, honey over cane sugar and herbal medicines over paracetamol. They also rely on methods of growing food that is caring for the earth such as the use of organic manure instead of popular chemical fertilizers.

Communities are also re-membering ways of community gathering that allow broad sharing of experiences and building community relationships. People are meeting in Dare’s where they converse as a community on health, education, conflict, and farming. They meet to plan community work towards building community centers, roads, waterways and local learning spaces for children. They also meet to connect with the ancestral world through ceremony and ritual. Ceremonies for the whole cycle of life (birth, growth, and death), rainmaking, honoring the earth, harvest, to fend off diseases and infestations are being revitalized.

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40 Remembering entails excavating memories in our minds and bodies. Re-membering means putting those memories, stories and myths into coherent narratives, rendering them useful. In the post-colonial context, these processes are crucial for the revitalization of subjugated knowledges.  
41 Spiritual colonization means that Indigenous ceremonies are being lost as people go to churches and Christian prophets.
Communities are also re-vitalizing Indigenous governance. Chiefs, community heads, and their supports are getting recognized as legitimate stewards of the land and culture. Recently, Kufunda facilitators from the Ruwa site have been in in-depth dialogue with the Chiefs in Zimbabwe, were they are affirming systems of local leadership and sharing learning on horizontal leadership and community engagement. The people in the community are getting more empowered as the Chiefs are taking on less hierarchical ways of leading and facilitating conversations. Indigenous governance is very localized and allows people to be involved in political life daily, as opposed to their peripheral involvement in state politics. The legitimization of Indigenous governance is a significant move towards transcending the colonial governance structure that strips people away from their right to engage in substantive political life.

In the cities Kufundees are pushing the conversations on learning and education, challenging factory schooling, banking model of learning and power relationships between teachers and learners. They reference their visions of communiversities⁴², whereby the community setting can become a local learning hub, that is fed by and feed the wisdom of co-learners.

I recall a time when I co-facilitated a conversation on education with a Kufundee in Harare, another of many experiences in which I witnessed the cultural power of Kufunda movement. After many conversations around education, especially in the Zimbabwean context, a Kufundee and I organized an event, where we screened the documentary Schooling the World: The white man's last burden. The event took place at local arts hub, the Book Cafe. We advertised the event via word of mouth and a few emails. The young Kufundee and I co-facilitated the discussion. When

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⁴² I learnt the term communiversity from Kufundees. I am not sure if they coined the term or borrowed it from another community. What it meant for them was affirming that their actions, programs, and processes had the intellectual rigour to deserve being considered a kind of versity. A versity that turns into community.
we showed up, the place was packed. In the audience were people from the American, Indian and German embassies. All of whom were engaged in the conversation on the coloniality of factory schooling. The discussion was lively, sincere and passionate. What was most interesting about the event was that the local Zimbabweans had so much to say about their experiences in the factory school system, even those who like myself had gotten through it with less difficulty. What was also interesting was the embassy employees were there not to defend this system but to learn about other possibilities. What emerged was instead of an argument about the pros and cons of factory schooling, it became about how we can collectively envision a learning society in which education takes the form of open co-learning not summative testing for employment. It is in this conversation I sensed the possibilities of a radical learning society and the global effects of Kufunda’s movement work.

Learning to live the future now: Prefiguration of an Otherworld

Kufundees are not directly confronting a targeted adversary; they are using pre-figuration contesting the dominant construction of the world that promotes individualism, neoliberalism, coloniality of all life (Escobar, 2008), capitalism and other forms of domination. Kufundees are producing new cultural patterns and in the process other-knowledges, and other moralities. In practice, Kufundees are offering a radical proposal of just and ecologically sustainable global relationships. Their work constitutes a model for just social and ecological change. Social in that they seek to intervene with ideas and practices that enhance interactions among humans. They are invested in making human relationships and interaction life-affirming. Their work is also intended to create healthy and resilient human-created structures and shift practices in existing structures. Equally, they are an environmental movement since their knowledge-practices promote life-affirming relationships between humans and their natural relations. The two characterizations of
social and ecological are not separate from each other, nor do they delineate practices that are carried in isolation of each other. They manifest as a coherent whole in how Kufundees live their lives, whether at the Ruwa learning site or in the networks of villages in rural Zimbabwe.

This proposal is captured in this quote from the Kufunda website:

*We are living that inquiry - and are engaged in learning from this place of participatory leadership about actually transforming community, civic structures, and systems. Our aspiration and commitment is to move beyond episodes of enthusiasm or moments of illumination, to sustainable and on-going shift that can fundamentally transform our organizations and systems to being something that works in life-affirming ways with everyone involved.* (Kufunda, 2017)

In the same excerpt, we also learn that Kufundees approach their work through the lens of learning. Meaning that they are engaging in social change as learners. They are learning about social change through a process of experimentation with action. Kufunda is a movement for social change, whose approach to social change is pre-figurative knowledge-practices. Kufundee knowledge-practices are both a pedagogy and a strategy. The Kufunda pedagogy continues to be practiced through reflective learning, action and embodied knowledge.

Kufunda knowledge-practices demonstrate that the pedagogical does not refer to a method of learning but rather a political project of struggle in which practices of learning are an intentional and necessary aspect (Motta and Eves, 2014). A pedagogy of transformation is an intentional intervention in the construction and shaping of knowledges and identities (Conway, 2005). The intellectual development of movement actors through learning becomes the capacity building necessary for the struggle. In Freirian terms, Kufundees are intentionally living the relationship
between subjectivity and objectivity, the intimate interdependence between action and the world (Freire, 2010). Having realized their ability to transform their situation through their agency and collective efforts, Kufundees are creating what Escobar (2008) calls a world-otherwise. This generative pedagogy produces a holistic and concrete world and is both a cultural and political endeavor. The holistic and concrete nature of this pedagogy is different from hegemonic understandings of learning or education.

The pedagogical in this sense cannot be confined to the narrow limits of hegemonic understandings of education, which alienates and separates the body from the mind, the classroom from the community, and the knower from the known. Rather, learning occurs in multiple spatialities, through multiple subjects and these knowing-subjects become creators of political agency, movement practices and imaginaries, and in some cases collective self-liberation (Motta and Esteves, 2014).

Thus, Kufunda movement pedagogy goes beyond reforming this world; they dare to step into the messy abyss of prefiguring a world-otherwise inside the world we know. It is a given that Kufundees do not exist outside of the global environment of rampant neoliberalism, neocolonialism and the local context of economic desperation and political uncertainty, they live within it. This world forms Kufunda in a determinative manner. It is a world from which they have learned how to live, from both its constraints and possibilities. However, they are not waiting for a new world to appear magically. They are living it, taking care of each other and the earth in the now. In living this way in the now, they are simultaneously taking care of the future. Put differently; their narrative is: a more life-affirming world is needed, and in fact, it is emerging. This emergence is in the now, and we can connect to it through learning. That learning while it is, for now, does not mean that we are neglecting the future. In fact, the future is urgent in the now,
and by attending to the now, the future is taken care of.

5.3 Learning emancipatory politics and social change

Learning in social movements is essential for the internal growth of the movement, as the movement reflects on its actions, purpose, success, and struggles. The same learning is also critical in the learning of society (Hall, 2009). The existence of movements, their grievances, the actions that model other possibilities and in the case of Kufunda prefiguring the other-world allow us to examine existing society. In this pre-figuring, Kufunda produces knowledge-practices relevant for the systematic analysis of the world and the paths to changing it (Cox and Fominaya, 2009; Escobar, 2008; Eyerman and Jamison, 1991). Kufundees produce knowledge-practices that are practical possibilities and theoretical directions for emancipatory politics and social change. On a larger scale, movements highlight new ways of seeing the world: in terms of class or patriarchy, of colonisation or neo-liberalism, of ecology and human rights (Cox and Fominaya, 2009, p.1). These knowledge-practices are uniquely privileged because they are constructed in the context of life, a corporeal politics. In prefiguring this other-world Kufundees are also producing knowledge-practices that have significance in ecological, cultural and political thought on a global level.

Rethinking local and translocal politics

Kufunda’s knowledge-practices are constructed primarily for the local context of Ruwa and other villages in Zimbabwe. It is in these contexts that we can observe both the material and discursive effects of the movement. However, Kufunda knowledge-practices have a bearing on global questions around emancipatory politics, strategies and visions. In the local context of Zimbabwe, the political has been dominated by state-centric partisan debates. To the extent that people in Zimbabwe understand emancipation as solely determined by access to control of government institutions. In this scenario, the agency of most people is limited to vote casting and promotion
of one’s party. The Kufunda intervention asks people to imagine a different kind of politics in which within the shell of the state, human agency can be as expansive as possible. Rather than depending on political parties for sustenance, education, health and other amenities, communities are inspired to create their structures to take care of their own. Discussions about politics, therefore, move from the state to the community. This approach is not anti-state in practice, it is inside-but-outside of the state political strategy. It is radical but non-oppositional, it is an other-politics that is rooted in Indigenous practices of self-determination.

Emancipatory political practice is also learned, the way hegemony is also a function of socialization, sedimentation, and internalization. What could be learned in this regard from Kufunda’s pre-figurative politics? To begin with, the prototyping of an otherworld is the pre-figuration of other political, economic and institutional realities, that is not necessarily an alternative or opposition to the existing reality. In this prefiguration, we get a concrete sense of what practicing for emancipation could feel and look like. This is simultaneously, an discursive intervention in ongoing debates around strategies for emancipation in western political theory that pits three strands of thought: the liberal approach that promotes reforming the state and using the organs of the state for political change, the radical state-centric approach that wishes to maintain state but radically transform its institutions and the radical civil society approach that centres change in the masses and without that state (Helliker, 2010, 2012). This conversation, however, tends to privilege debates between Marxists, Leninists, Gramscians, Liberals, Anarchists, while pushing to the margins Indigenous visions of other-worlds. These contemporary critiques of neoliberalism have imposed limitations on political thought and practice (Neocosmos, 2007). Kufundees pedagogy pushes, “beyond liberal and socialist political theory, it suggests that creation (of alternative ways of being) and destruction (of the oppressive and exploitative status
and the incidental and intentional learnings inherent in their movement work, Kufundees are creating and constructing urgently needed life-affirming knowledge-practices. In practice, the Kufunda movement is oriented towards the production of knowledge-practices, modeling of another ethics and consequently, the production of a new cultural practice. Even though Kufundees characterize their movement as non-political and they might not be understood by dominant theories of social movements as a ‘movement,’ they employ collective mobilization,
learning, and their knowledge-practices to bear on the political project of proposing and prototyping other eco-socio-cultural realities. Kufundees denaturalize and subvert oppressive realities and offer proposals for other ways of being through the construction and enactment of radical place-based knowledge-practices (Casas-Cortes, Osterweil, & Powell, 2008; Conway, 2005; Escobar, 2008). Radical here is understood as rooted and grounded in place and culture and therefore relatively stable and deeply transformative. I argue that Kufunda movement’s place-based location, focus on learning and holistic pre-figurative approach to socio-ecological change, uniquely positions them as a powerful movement against hegemony from which we can derive profound learnings.
Chapter Six: Village wisdom and the future

[Т]he most powerful, visionary dreams of a new society don’t come from little think tanks of smart people or out of the atomized, individualistic world of consumer capitalism, where raging against the status quo is simply the hip thing to do. Revolutionary dreams erupt out of political engagement; collective social movements are incubators of new knowledge. (Robin Kelley, 2002, p. 8)

This study investigated the epistemic ecologies of Kufunda, a place-based social movement (Escobar, 2008; Osterweil, 2001) whose work centers the construction of urgently needed life-affirming human knowledge-practices (Casas-Cortes, Osterweil, and Powell, 2008). Specially, the study illuminated on the connections among learning, knowledge-practices, and society, by examining the social construction of reality in the context of place-based social movement action. The project posed a broad question: What are the practices of place-based social movements and what are their implications for social change?

From this broad question arise three sub-questions:

1. What are the knowledge-practices of Kufunda movement?

2. What are actors in the Kufunda movement learning through their knowledge-practices?

3. What are the implications and contributions of place-based social movements to local and global communities and theory?

I began the study with two objectives. The first was to document the knowledge-practices of Kufunda Learning Village in Ruwa. I intended to document and analyze their learning practices and methodologies such as organic farming, community engagement, and facilitation. I had hypothesized that the extent of their ‘interesting work’ was learning methodologies as well as
revitalization of Indigenous practices in Zimbabwe. The second objective was to assess the economic development capacity of their work and develop a critique of the adoption of that developmental discourse by local Zimbabweans. I had assumed that Kufunda was another non-governmental organization carrying out neoliberal and neo-colonial ‘development work’ that did the work of further embedding rural communities into a debilitating dependency syndrome. My assumptions were shattered when during my field trip I began observing and interviewing Kufundees. Where I had expected to document learning processes, I was immersed in a whole world of complex philosophies of life and knowledge-practices. Where I had envisioned developing a critique of neoliberal development, I was exposed to knowledge-practices that prefigured an otherworld and a life-affirming learning society. The key findings of the study highlighted here are about the connection between learning, knowledge-practices and the creation of otherworlds as practised by Kufundees.

I learned that Kufunda exemplifies the social movement definition of Lofland’s (1996) that characterize social movements as “insurgent realities” that provide “collective challenges to mainstream conceptions of how society ought to be organized and how people ought to live” (p. 1). Kufundees can do their work that is distinct from many movements because they are not constrained by the reification of meta-social principles such as democracy, modernity, progress, and development for example (Touraine, 1985). Their creative and experimental work extends itself to all aspects of social and cultural life and into an emerging pre-figurative practice that extends imagination into a tangible form of practical politics. They are liberated by their pedagogy of learning: a philosophy that functions as an invitation to hosting the self and community to the never-ending process of becoming. This learning orientation is experimental, exploratory, creative and formative. Every experience engaged in this spirit of openness is meaningful as it is a learning
opportunity. As argued by Gibson-Graham (2008), “To treat something as a social experiment is to open to what it must teach us, very different from the critical task of assessing the ways in which it is good or bad, strong or weak, mainstream or alternative. It recognizes that what we are looking at is on its way to being something else and strategizes about how to participate in that process of becoming” (2008, p.628).

Additionally, Kufundees invite us to cast our intellectual practice to diachronist societal analysis. In this spirit, their characterization of ‘social movement’ speaks to the place of collective action in the contestations for existing discursive and material space in the socio-cultural field (Touraine, 1985). The concept of social movement, therefore, is not limited to demonstrations, protests and heightened but fleeting moments of agitation, but instead ought to reference the work of creating other-worlds. Since Kufundees are concretely and discursively not just reforming the social field, it is evident that they are in themselves a proposal of a legitimate otherworld (Escobar, 2008).

Moreover, I learned that Kufunda’s work is analytically useful to unravel ontological claims of hegemonic systems. Their work denaturalizes dominant systems that govern the world by exposing the oppressive status quo as human cultural productions. In other words, dominant knowledge-practices (Casas-Cortes, Osterweil, & Powell, 2008), are merely social movements that have congealed into hegemonic orders through genealogies of objectivation, compulsory imposition, socialization, and internalization. Kufunda’s work demonstrates a pedagogy of hope (Freire, 2000); counter-hegemonic cultural practices rooted in critical consciousness and practices to challenge, subvert and even replace oppressive systems.

And finally, I found out that Kufunda knowledge-practices are situated and embodied productions of complex exploratory and explanatory theories that have analytic validity in social movement
practice and scholarly conversations on human learning in social movements.

6.1 Implications on social movement learning theory

Social movement learning entails multiple pedagogical processes nested within the concept of learning in action (Hall and Clover, 2000; Hall and Turray, 2006). The first process pertains to the subject/unit of learning, answering the question, who learns from social movement activity? Individuals who are part of a social movement and those outside acquire knowledge-practices, and worldviews because of movement activity (Hall and Turray, 2006; Hall and Clover, 2000). Secondly, the movement, as a collective identity learns about movement mobilization and strategies overtime (Kilgore, 1999) and furthermore, societies in interaction with social movements learn from the actions of social movements (Walter, 2013). What makes Kufunda interesting is that it is not just a socio-cultural social movement but a self-defined learning movement. It is a learning movement in the sense that it intentionally frames itself such that consciously: individuals who are part of the movement become part of it because learning resonates with them, individuals who are outside of it are learning from its educational offerings, the diverse publics that interact with the movement are learning from its existence, and its work and the collective body of Kufundees is also learning. This aspect includes intra-learner matters such as motivation, commitment and emotional labour for learning.

The second element is concerned with the sites/providers, methods and methodology of learning. It answers the question: How do people learn in, with and from social movements? Kufunda practice is consistent with findings from other social movement contexts. Kufundees learn non-formally, informally, and incidentally. Kufundees learn non-formally through their own planned, organized, structured and facilitated programs. This learning is non-formal since its not accredited by any institution, rather, it is planned learning within a communiversity. Additionally, they learn
informally through their movement life experiences, knowledge-practice construction and ongoing interactions. Kufundees learn incidentally within non-formal and informal situations. The incidental learning is characterized as such because it is not reflective-oriented. Kufundees are mostly self-directed learners who endeavour to practice free choice learning. With free choice learning, the learner exercise some degree of self-determination in pursuing what, when, and how to learn (Falk, 2005). Kufunda count as their mentors the land (place/space), communities, spiritual inspiration, dreams and guests. Their methods of learning include facilitated processes such as Art of Hosting, OASIS, flow game, world café, open space technology and learning circles.

A third aspect of learning concerns the implication of social movement learning. The implications of social movements can be analyzed at the individual, communal, and global levels. At the individual level, the Kufunda movement highlights emotional, ideological, intellectual, and practice oriented transformation. At the communal and global levels, Kufundees show that changes in how people relate to each other and their natural enviroment are a crucial analytic category. Furthermore, this aspect concerns the critical issue of knowledge-practices construction.
Studying Kufunda movement demonstrated that learning in social movements is produced by the interaction of three key sites: Human action, learning, and knowledge-practices. A theory of social movement learning, therefore, ought to consider these conceptual signposts:

1. Human action: At the core of social movement activity is the active participation of a collective of people in the material and ideological construction of new realities (Cohen, 1983). Social movement arise because of the existence of conflicts generated by human practices (Touraine, 1985). Social movements become so because of the concreteness of the force they exert on social, ecological, economic and political fields. This force while collective in its full identity is a result of individuals putting together their whole bodily resources to the benefit of the collective. This force does not appear as an aggregate of each individual effort, rather it is felt. Two constitutive units of human activity are evident, the individual and the collective, they are both critical to our understanding of social movement learning. Kilgore (1999) makes an important contribution to this aspect of understanding learning in movement contexts. She argues for a theory of collective learning that centers the interaction between individual and group development in movement milieus. She employs individual and collective distinctions to give form to the interaction between individual and group development. Individual components consist of: identity, consciousness, sense of agency, sense of worthiness and sense of connectedness and group distinctions include collective identity, group consciousness, solidarity and organization (p. 191). These distinctions are evident in the Kufunda movement. What Kilgore (1999) is suggesting and what Kufunda movement shows is that the individual actor is a learner and the collective is also a learner. The learning of the individual and the group through doing is what gives social movement learning theory its foundational schematic and conceptual structures.
2. Place: The move towards ascribing all economic, political and social phenomena to globalization elides the significance of placeness in the construction of reality (Escobar, 2008; Osterweil, 2005). However, despite the delocalization of social, political and economic life, “…there is an embodiment and emplacement to human life that cannot be denied.” (Escobar, 2008, p. 30). All life is placed in one way or another, to the extent that all movements, no matter their universal appearances, happen in place. Place is constructed in three ways: the physical world (including built and natural objects, nonhuman and human others), the social world (including social, economic, political, race, class, gender and bureaucracy), and the realm of meaning (the ideas, values and beliefs that make up the forces of the mind) All movements, no matter their universal appearances, happen in place (Sack, 1993) in Haluza-Delay (2008). Writing in the context of Black and Indigenous movement in the Pacific Region of Colombia, Escobar (2008) conceptualize space as six distinct but interrelated historical processes, that consist of geological and biological formations, human knowledge-practices (knowing, doing, and being), process of capital accumulation, processes of incorporations of lands, regions, location into states and other politico-institutional arrangements, cultural-political practices of movements and their constructions of place, discourses and practices of technoscience. Escobar (2008) defines place as “engagement with and experience of a particular location with some measure of groundedness (however unstable), boundaries (however permeable) and connections to everyday life, even if its identity is constructed and never fixed (p.30).

Unequivocally, the ecology of social movement action is contingent upon place as place emerges out of the human intersubjective constructions of locations (Haluza-Delay, 2008). Learning is also context specific in the sense that the content of learning speaks about locations; is influenced by a measure of placeness and contribute to knowledge-practices in specific places. Social movement
action and learning happens in specific places that are both natural in an ontological sense and places that are socially constructed. Place-based considerations of social movement learning bring out ecological questions, the relationships and interactions between humans and the natural environment, local cultures and social, economic imaginaries that are distinct from globalizing hegemonic practices.

2. Learning and unlearning: Social movement learning pertains to the learning by actors in movements (collective and individual) and by society (Hall, 2009). Individual and collective learning by social movement actors can be fully understood by considering processes through which knowledge-practices are constructed on both the individual and collective level. These include specific characteristics of learning such as content, motivation, pedagogy, epistemological assumptions around knowledge, facilitation processes, the teleology of learning, forms of learning such as non-formal, incidental, intentional, and latent. And the unit of learning, individual and collective learning is also crucial in this analysis. Since learning in social movements takes all forms, and involves a variety of characteristics, it is wise to learn from all theories of learning, those emanating out of social movements and academic theories such as behavioral, cognitivist, social constructivist, experiential and situated among others. Each provides its nuance to human learning. Collective level of learning need group learning theories and Kilgore’s (1999) is a good starting point. Kufundees work shows that individual and collective learning are mutually constitutive: The learning of the individual is happening in the context of participating in collective situations. While the individual is learning, the collective is also learning, the individual and the collective are mutually producing each other. Additionally, learning must be understood as an active engagement with all of life: That is learning is an active process of producing and engaging with already existing knowledges through participation in a community of action.
Understanding these nuances is essential for thinking through information embodiment, distribution and the interactions between knowing and doing. To us who have a deep interest in social change, this all leads to how consciousness is stimulated and political identities are formed. In other words, how people learn to do social change. Just as hegemony is learned, its logic must be unlearned and the practices for social change must be learned. Ultimately, there is a social justice agenda to learning.

3. Knowledge-practices: In social movement contexts, the process of learning produces knowledge-practices that are employed in the continuation of social action and useful to the skill and cognitive development of social movement actors (Cox, Escobar, 2008; Kilgore, 1999). The learning in social action of any form doing, reflecting, remembering and embodying all produce knowledge-practices. The Kufunda movement shows that knowledge-practices are socially constructed: that is, they are situated, relational, embodied and locatable. Rather than speak of knowledge-production that seems to suggest the casting of movement actors’ doings and knowings as consumer products, we speak of knowledge-practices that tie doing and knowing as inseparable. The analysis of knowledge-practices consists of accounting for bodies of knowledge-practices, how these knowledge-practices emerge, communication of knowledge practices and the implications of those knowledge practices. In addition to drawing on movement actors’ own analysis of their knowledge-practices, additional work has been done in both the fields of sociology of knowledge, social movement learning and transformative learning that can guide us in this analysis.
6.2 Contributions to scholarly fields

The study finds resonance in growing conversations in social movement learning studies emanating out of adult education such that its implications might find more meaning in this context. However, the study situates itself in multiple disciplines and theoretical currents: social movement studies, critical globalization studies, critical theory, sociology of knowledge among others.

It is argued that the field of social movement learning is in its infancy (Chovanec, Lange and Ellis, 2008) and therefore empirically, methodologically and theoretically underdeveloped (Hall and Turray, 2006). This study situates itself in these conversations as one of a very few (Choudry and Kapoor’s work being some of the few) that:

a. Employs knowledge-practices from contemporary active social movement actors

b. Utilizes the voices and knowledge-practices of place-based actors

c. Draws on non-confrontational/non-protest movements

d. Blurs the boundaries between academic and activist knowledge practices and realities

e. Illuminates on the connections among learning, knowledge and the construction of social reality

f. Valorizes the epistemic constructions of actors in the global south, particularly Africa

Studying the knowledge-practices of Kufunda movement contributes to the theoretical, methodological and empirical nuances of the field.
Current debates in this emerging field are guided by frameworks from Marxist traditions (Sawchuk, 2007) and critical theories of Habermas, Gramsci, and Freire (Hall and Turray, 2006). Common among many studies is a post-structural critique of all forms of oppression that also center issues of social change and social justice as foundations for theoretical analysis of learning in social action (Chovanec, Lange and Ellis, 2008). Grounded in these theoretical foundations, social movement learning scholars have concerned themselves with the learning that takes place in social movements. They have focused on learning content, methods, outcomes and societal implications (Welton, 1993; Kilgore, 1999; Kapoor, 2007; Choudry, 2009, 2014; Walter, 2007).

These theoretical and conceptual foundations are very productive in that they have enabled a significant theoretical move from viewing social movements as promoters of societal disintegration to understanding them as potent sites of liberation (Welton, 1993). Beyond that, they are productive sites for knowledge-practices that supports human efforts for life-affirming behaviors. In the case of the marginalized global south, learning from social movements can move us from a sociology of subjugation to an affirmation of agency. Escobar (2004) states, “sociology of absences of subaltern knowledges to a politics of emergence of social movements; this requires examining contemporary social movements from the perspective of colonial difference” p. 210.

An area that requires further development and for which this study contributes significantly is the theoretical integration of learning theory and sociology of knowledge to conceptualize and understand the mechanisms of knowledge construction and social change in social movements. While some theorists employ the theory of knowledge of Habermas (Holford, 1995; Ayerman and Jamison, 1991; Welton, 1993) they do not delve into the connections between learning and
knowledge construction. In other words, there haven’t been many theoretical connections made between social movement learning and learning theory, aside from Kilgore’s (1999) collective identity theory of social movements. Drawing from social-cultural learning and contemporary social movement theories Kilgore (1999) developed a theory of collective learning/development that provided a framework for integrating both the cognitive and social aspects of learning in movement milieus. In her view, to fully understand learning in a social movement, we need to develop a theory of group learning, which collapses the false boundaries between sociology and psychology. In her formulation, the collective movement is taken as the unit of analysis without losing sight of individual contributions to the group learning process. The group and the individuals that comprise it are understood as learners. Her theory of collective learning, therefore, consists of Individual components such as individual identity, consciousness, sense of agency, sense of worthiness and sense of connectedness. Individual identity answers the question ‘Who am I.’ Collective components consist of concepts such as collective identity, group consciousness, solidarity, and organization. It asks: ‘Who are we?’ More importantly, because Kilgore’s theory allows us to focus on the productive interplay between individual and collective issues in social movements, it easily links social movement activity to issues of social justice and change. Kufunda’ knowledge-practices and their implications in collective and individual identity resonate with Kilgore’s argument. My critique of Kilgore (1999) is that she approaches her argument from a purely theoretical place, her theory is not affirmed by voices of social movement actors. Additionally, she delinks knowledge-practices from learning and social change in social movements. Escobar (2008) and Conway (2004) on the other hand take on the question of knowledge production in social movements in a productive manner. However, both do not explicitly speak to the learning aspect of social movements. This study demonstrates, using the
voices, and theories of Kufundees that learning is the process of production of knowledge-practices and it is these knowledge-practices in action that changes human behavior and society.

Additionally, those who have concerned themselves with knowledge construction in movements have concentrated on the issue of subaltern knowledge as always subjugated and therefore requiring to be liberated and position itself as oppositional to hegemony (Kapoor, 2009). This study, chooses to take on an appreciative approach that focuses on the specific processes of knowledge production which are bound up with social movement development: how movements generate agreed analyses of society, strategies and tactics, understandings of internal practice, and so on that are not necessarily in response to or oppositional to dominant narratives (Cox and Fominaya, 2009). This shift allows us to interrogate hegemony without centering it. It allows the knowledge-practices of social movement actors to lead conversations rather than the interpretations of theorists.

A growing number of social movements studies are focusing more and more on the knowledge-practices of social movements (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991). This is a theoretically productive shift; however, most studies focus on the content of knowledge production and then speculate on the effects of that knowledge. They come short on theorizing about the mechanisms through which that knowledge comes about and how that knowledge shapes new cultural practices and imaginaries. I believe this is a result of lack of detail, which can only come from engaging with contemporary social movement actors and their epistemic ecologies. The learning orientation of the Kufunda movement is useful for understanding and conceptualizing the theory of learning in social movements and in opening a dialogue with learning theories in formal institutional contexts.
Empirical

Most of the literature on social movement learning privileges social movements in the global North. From these movements, theorists construct universalist paradigms that act as meta-theories to bear on other contexts. It is only a handful of studies that focus on the global south (Escobar 2008; Kapoor, 2009; Walters, 2012) are primary examples. Even in these south studies, studies on African movements are few and far between.

Additionally, not many social movement theorists have explored non-confrontational movements. Just as social movements adhere to specific repertoires of protest, the field of social movement studies has a standard repertoire of recognition of protest: specific practices, such as demonstrations, are immediately indicative of the presence of social movements, while other practices are not necessarily associated with this category (Kurzman, 2008). To the extent that the concept of social movement itself has come to denote demonstrations, protests and temporary occupations. The Kufunda movement introduces spaces and practices that have not been considered movements. This conceptualization reconfigures our understanding of the political, disentangling it from the reductionist notion that the political is a fixed and pre-determined politico-institutional sphere (Casas-Cortes, Osterweil, & Powell, 2008).

If only protests, demonstrations and other ad-hoc public displays of counter-politics count as social movements, what kinds of analysis are produced about and for social change? What limitations do we put on the general project of imagining social change and its practices? Place-based, non-confrontational, ongoing constructions of other-worlds compel us to reconceptualize the category of social movement itself. Undoubtedly, all actions against hegemony are political, but are they all movements? I argue that this emanates from a theoretical limitation. Social
movement theorizing has been stuck in the reification of meta-ideas such as democracy and modernity for example. This has constrained the imagination of theorists in that all social movements are interpreted in that summative framework. Beyond the meta-concepts that govern western intellectual ideas, there is an otherworld from which we can learn a great deal. This world consists of place-based social movements whose micro-political practices are in themselves creations of other realities. Maybe we need to make distinctions between protests, lobbying groups, and social movements, where the validity criteria could be the extent to which the movement is changing cultural patterns, shifting modes of relating to the self and the natural environment in a concrete manner. Privileging Kufunda extended the empirical terrain of the field in the sense of bringing in knowledge-practices from a place-based, non-confrontational, socio-cultural, African movement.

Methodological

The theories and methodologies employed in social movement analysis have a bearing on the kinds of knowledges we produce. However, social movement studies tend to not engage in an explicit reflection on methodology and the consequences different research techniques and standpoints have on the analysis produced (Cox and Fominaya, 2009, p.7). The actions of social movements are political, and so is the interactions between academics and social movement actors. Research designs and implementation in the field tend to take three forms. The first is theoretical and draws upon social movement theories, social movements narratives in the media, and scholarly papers to theorize about learning through action. The second approach is more phenomenological and involves field studies in which academic scholars visit sites of social movement action, and observe and interview the social movement actors. The third approach combines theoretical, phenomenological, and practitioner approaches: activists themselves reflect
on their work and participation and draw theoretical conclusions. The common thread among these genres is that they all build on the growing interest in the theoretical relationships between learning, social movement action, and social change.

Welton’s (1993) work on social movement learning is representative of the first approach. Welton (1993) began by examining New Social Movement (NSM) theories, where he found that NSMs are different from old social movements (Marxist influenced and class-based) in that their goal was not to take over the state or to transform the system of production but rather to create “an autonomous and exuberant civil society, with economic consequences” (p. 153). Welton's (1993) approach to learning in social movements directly connects the actions, principles, and values of NSM actors to social change in both the physical and perceptual structures of society. Welton's (1993) approach clarifies Freire's notion of conscientization and signifies contexts of action as primary sites for conscientization.

Welton utilizes a purely theoretical approach in that he does not ground his work in the detailed study of active social movements. Furthermore, Welton (1993) does not speak directly to social movement actors. Instead, he relies on secondary data sources in the form of newspaper reports for social movements campaigns and actions. While his take on social movement actors is overwhelmingly positive, their voices remain muffled in macro theory.

It is not surprising that Walter (2007) bemoans the dearth of field research in adult education's engagement with social movement learning. Walter (2007) notes that while the incorporation of social movement learning into adult education has advanced over the last 20 years, there have been few empirical studies produced. Walter’s (2007) work follows an ethnographic approach, where he visited and studied a specific movement in British Columbia, Canada, called Clayoquot.
Peace Camp.

Walter begins by giving a brief history of the land, beginning with its Indigenous Tla-o-qui-aht, Ahousaht and Hesquiahat nationhood. The indigenous nations

were whale and seal hunters, canoe builders, salmon fishers, and harvesters of the marine and forest foods, medicines, and building materials. Many sacred sites, streams, hills, and pools are found throughout the islands and forests of the sound, part of the human ecological world inseparable from everyday life (Walter, 2007, p. 253).

Walter (2007) uses a decolonial approach, by historicizing the Land and speaking to disruption of the Indigenous nations' livelihood by European colonizers who continue to threaten the Indigenous nations’ existence and the ecosystem through clear-cutting. Walter (2007) goes on to offer an account the history of the Clayouqout Peace Camp, the composition of the actors (Settler and Indigenous), and the government response to the protest. Walter's (2007) methodology brings together macro- and micro-political conversations in the way social actors engage them. However, nowhere in Walter’s (2007) account do we observe the scholar’s involvement in the movement as an actor. This gap concerns scholar-activists Kapoor (2007) and Choudry (2009) who argue that academics appropriate the work of activists.

The third methodological approach involves knowledge production by what Hall (2012) calls activist scholars. The work of Frantz Fanon (1959, 1961, 1967, 1994) in the Algerian struggle against French colonization and the work of Amilcar Cabral (1963) during his leadership of PAIGC in Guinea and Cape Verde, among others, constitute historical works from which we can glean learnings from social movements from the perspectives of movement actors. Historical accounts of social movements are useful and continue to guide us. However, it is even more...
important to pay attention to contemporary active social movements. Choudry (2014) states, “there are many rich conceptual resources from earlier struggles which are relevant to thinking through today’s dilemmas, but there is also a danger of producing and reproducing formulaic approaches to change, and not attending to both the micro- and macro politics of the world we live in today (Choudry, 2014, p.284).

Contemporarily, the work of Dip Kapoor (2007), Aziz Choudry (2014), and Harsha Walia (2015) combine the authors’ experiences in current ongoing social movements producing frameworks that imbricate struggle knowledge and social theory. The significant strength of this approach is that it veers away from zookeeper research practices (Dadusc, 2013), and centers the activist scholar who is simultaneously historicizing the movement while creating knowledge for the movements of which they are a part. The scholar-activist is not, however, an innocent interpreter of their work. The activist scholar, like all researchers, is implicated in all the challenges that come with knowledge-construction. What is critical in the study of movements is the erasure of the boundaries of subject and object---moving away from cartesian and positivist modes of knowledge creation/recognition, to the methods of the body (Dadusc, 2013) because social movements are not just objects to be studied, but rather subjects of their own work (Powell, Cartas-Cortes and Osterweil, 2008).

6.3 Limitations of the study

The study sought to add to conversations around learning, social movement learning, social change. It employed a case study approach, and its analysis is based on this specific case. Attempting to be part of conversations that are global in theoretical orientation from a specific location has the downfall of stretching generalizability. This is a critique applicable to all research
endeavors and a difficult one to transcend. My suggestion for eliciting learning from this work is to still locate it in the specific place of the Kufunda learning movement, primarily because this work is about their labor.

In this study, I chose to take on a largely appreciative approach and therefore focus on the positive contributions that the movement is making. Tension and conflict have their lessons, and Kufundees know this and embrace this critically. For the internal learning of the movement, there is a need to do work focused on these issues.

I am writing from the location of someone who is involved in the movement, in a distant but still relevant capacity. I have been a part of Kufunda from a distance for many years and have close relationships with many people. This situatedness has its pitfalls. I wonder how Kufundees would respond to someone who is not a relation? I wonder what other conversations were avoided because of this relational proximity/distance? The rationale for studying a movement of which I was a part, was to contribute to the documentation of its work, and to offer reflections back to the movement. This work is better carried out by movement actors, not mere researchers (Dadusc, 2013). This is important, yet, there is still discomforting because the voice that is louder remains that of the author. Moreover, my own biases based on my location as a male academic located in the west still influence this work.

Theoretically, the work could have benefited from a much more rigorous theoretical consideration of its foundations. More could have been drawn from learning theory and critical theory. This is a time issue, and while this work ought to stand on its own as a complete project, it remains to its author a living document, whose ideas will find form in other writings. This is just the beginning.
6.4 Recommendations for more research

This study is a qualitative exploration of situated knowledge-practices in a specific spatial and temporal context. Its intention is to contribute to the historiography of the Kufunda movement. As such it is empirical but not scientific. Additionally, it offers novel understandings of social action and reconceptualises the notion of social movement itself, to center movement practices that are creating other socio-cultural realities. This is a significant empirical-theoretical shift, and many more studies of this orientation are urgently needed. There is need for more research projects whose focus are on social movements in Africa. Additionally, more work is required on place-based and non-confrontational movements.

A theoretical question arises around the interweaving of learning theory, social action, social theory, social change and social movements. While this study attempts to develop this framework, the framework requires way more enunciation than what I managed to accomplish.

A practical question the study poses is that of the relationship between activist knowledges and the institutionalized academy. The question can also be thought of as that of the relationship between the university as a contained space and life outside of it. The same questions extend to the debates centered on the rhetoric disjuncture between theory and practice. Research in the areas of how communities and the university can collaborate to build on the knowledges from both spaces is needed.

Institutional education with its profound historical constraints can adopt a community-engaged learning approach to learning from social movement actors. Many universities have community-based programs in the form of internships and other forms of practical learning. However, most of them do not integrate the life of the learner. This could be accomplished by having specific
programs that are geared towards social movement actors, where actors bring in their learnings, experiences into this community for knowledge sharing and exchange for movement action. The work that is produced in these interactions between academics and social movement actors is geared towards what’s relevant to the social movements that the actors in class are a part of.

6.5 Concluding Remarks

In this work I set out a theory of social movement learning that synthesizes sociology of knowledge, learning theory, social movement theory and macro-sociology. The idea was to analyze these using a practical example of a living political project that is putting into practice these ideas in a coherent manner. In this sense, it is an empirical but not scientific consideration of the role of human agency in constructing the world.

A major critique of social movement theory thus far is that knowledges produced by social movement actors are removed from their context and treated as objects for academic analysis. The actors themselves become objects of research rather than knowers. Their knowledges are appropriated to build theories, or extrapolated to other contexts. The contexts that give them form are ignored, or referenced without much dialogue between academics and social movement actors.

Kufunda learning movement is a social movement not in the sense that it is opposing an adversary, but rather because it is actively shaping the translocal-cultural politics of its membership and society. Kufunda signals a profound shift in social reality and is a site of practical experimentation, and innovation and of the production of new knowledges (Conway, 2004).

In addition to the implications of the Kufunda learning movement on the individual and collective identity of the Kufundees, their knowledge-practices have high validity for social theory. Their knowledge-practices have analytic validity in discussions about learning theory, social movement
theory, learning in social movements and social justice education. Ultimately, the knowledge practices of Kufundees demonstrate that social movement learning theory must be grounded in the interplay between knowledge-practices, learning and social context.
References


Denzin, N. K. (2009). The elephant in the living room: or extending the conversation about the politics of evidence. *Qualitative Research, 9*(2), 139–160.


Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Participant Background Survey Questions

What was your age in years at your last birthday?
What is your gender?
In which racialized group(s) do you identify yourself?
Where is your country of birth?
What is the highest level of formal schooling that you have completed?
How would you describe yourself?
How would you describe your education from childhood until now?
How would you describe Kufunda?

Praxis

What is your role/involvement with Kufunda, and what do you do at Kufunda?
Why do you do all of this?
How does your work at Kufunda affect other people in Kufunda?
How does your work at Kufunda affect people outside of Kufunda?

Knowledge Production and Education

What have you learned during your time at Kufunda?
How have you learned those things? What processes, structures, and people have made your learning possible, and how did they do this?
What do you want to learn at Kufunda?
What knowledge do you have that you share with others at Kufunda?
What knowledge does the Kufunda community offer and receive from other communities locally and globally?

Socio-Political Effects

Describe the history of Kufunda?
What resources does Kufunda have that allows it to sustain itself?
What resources does Kufunda need more of to sustain itself?
How is Kufunda affected by the local, state, and global political and economic context?

What current activities at Kufunda or anywhere else give you most hope that the work of Kufunda can and will grow stronger?
Appendix B: Letter to host at Kufunda Learning Village

Dear [Name]

My name is Rainos Mutamba, I am a PhD Candidate at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, under the supervision of Dr John Portelli.

I am interested in coming to visit Kufunda Learning Village, between January 2nd, 2016 and February 4th, 2016, to conduct interviews with participants at your learning village as part of my PhD thesis titled: Education in the Global Context: Social Change Learning and Pedagogy in Place-based Social Movements. My research endeavors to explore what and how people are learning in social movements like your learning village and its networks. I am convinced that being at your learning village will significantly enhance this work.

Attached is my research protocol for your consideration.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Rainos Mutamba
Appendix C: Consent Form

Project Title: Education in the Global Context: Social Change Learning and Pedagogy in Place-based Social Movements

I have read the Letter of Information and have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to the interview being recorded on an audio recording device ______

I understand that I will be participating in a study titled ‘Education in the Global Context: Social Change Learning and Pedagogy in Place-based Social Movements’. I understand that this means that I will be interviewed by the principal investigator, based on my knowledge on this topic.

I understand that my participation in the project is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time. I understand that every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the data now and in the future. Only the researcher will have access to the data. I understand that the information may be published in academic journals or books, or presented at academic conferences. I understand that I am entitled to a copy of the findings, should I be interested.

I understand that my responses will remain confidential. However, quotations from individual interviews may be used under a generic description, to substantiate findings. For example, a quotation may be attributed to a participant in the following manner: a ‘participant at learning village X said…’ Furthermore, I understand that I will be given the option of identifying myself by name, should I express consent to be identified in the study.

- I agree to be quoted by name ______

I do not wish to be quoted by name, but only under a generic description that will keep my identity confidential __________

I am aware that if I have any questions, concerns or complaints, I may contact the researcher, Rainos Mutamba (rainos.mutamba@mail.utoronto.ca) or 1-416-826 1252); or the faculty supervisor, Dr. John Portelli (jportelli@utoronto.ca)

Please keep a copy of this letter for your records.

I have read the above statements and freely consent to participate in this research.

Name: ___________________________

Date: ___________________________ Signature: ________________________