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Working Our Way Out of Privilege: Lessons from South Africa on Preparing White Americans for a National Transitional Justice Process

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This study utilized difference-in-differences analysis to determine likelihood of confidence in four major public institutions over three periods of time in South Africa and the United States, two prior to South Africa's transitional justice process and one after. Results indicate that Black South African confidence rose while White South African confidence dropped drastically. American confidence levels, for both races, remained relatively consistent over all three time periods. The drastic drop in White South African likelihood of confidence points to possible feelings of loss related to power and privilege. These results provide insight for social workers interested in addressing racial injustice in the United States, particularly for White social workers seeking to prepare White individuals for what a transitional justice process may look like and the resulting feelings of loss from the creation of a more equitable state.

"Every race has a soul, and the soul of that race finds expression in its institutions, and to kill those institutions is to kill the soul…No people can profit or be helped under institutions which are not the outcome of their own character." – Edward Blyden (1903)

Emmett Till, Addie Mae Collins, Eula Love, Trayvon Martin, Rekia Boyd, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Philando Castile. Say their names. See them. Remember them.

Racism runs through the very roots of the United States and all its public institutions (Duvernay, Averick, & Barrish, 2016; Fredrickson, 1981). While this fact is widely acknowledged, as a nation the United States has never addressed it nationally and publicly, as have other countries, such as South Africa after the fall of apartheid. The fact that the United States has not acknowledged its racist foundations has contributed to countless deaths such as the ones listed above (Duvernay, Averick, & Barrish, 2016). Several individuals and groups have called for a nationwide Truth and Reconciliation Commission to address racial injustice in the United States (Davis, 2016; Scott, 2014; The Truth Telling Project, n.d.), but this author has

found no empirical evidence comparing the circumstances in a country that has employed transitional justice initiatives to the climate in the United States to make a case for implementation within the United States.

The following study sought to look at confidence levels in public institutions in the United States and South Africa during and after the fall of apartheid to compare if there was a difference in the patterns of likelihood of confidence between racial subgroups of Blacks and Whites in the two nations after South Africa's implementation of its national process to address the harms committed by apartheid and colonization before it.

Literature Review

Whiteness

The concept of whiteness is something that scholars, particularly African American scholars, have been writing about for over a century. Wells (1893) highlighted the racialization of major institutions in her work, *Lynch Law*. Not only did she address the increasing record of lynchings of Black individuals throughout the country, she directly called out the link between White individuals and the foundations of a justice system, police force, and government that were unconcerned with the plight of Black individuals.

Du Bois (1920) continued the discussion of Whiteness by analyzing ways in which White individuals in Europe and the United States made Whiteness the norm. White culture, white dress, white language, and white skin were made to be the only right culture, right dress, right language, and right skin. White individuals used force to "other" the rest of the Black and Brown world to maintain the power and privilege that White individuals sought, both in their own countries and throughout the rest of the world that they colonized.

Fanon (1952) furthered the discussion of colonized, White institutions addressed by Wells (1893) and Du Bois (1920) from a psychological perspective. Fanon saw the institutions put in place by colonization as systems that brainwashed Black individuals to despise their (and others') Blackness and to accept Whiteness as the correct way of life. He spent the bulk of his career attempting to understand the psychology of Whiteness and colonization's effect on the Black psyche.

Many contemporary authors (Bonilla-Siva, 2017; Garner, 2017; Massey & Denton, 1993; Roediger, 2002; Wise, 2011) are clear that the United States remains a racialized country with Whiteness at its helm. The "new racism" or "colorblind racism" allows for the continued practice of racism with little to no direct racist language or action, creating deniability for White individuals seeking to uphold Whiteness and defensiveness amongst White individuals who believe themselves to be racially egalitarian. A 2017 Ipsos/Reuters/UVA poll indicated that 89% of respondents agreed that all races should be treated equally, yet 31% also felt that the United States needs to protect and preserve its White European heritage.

Whiteness and the ways in which whiteness harms have been written about by Christian leaders as well. The 2015 American Values Survey found that over 70% of White evangelical Protestants, mainline Protestants, and Catholics believed that police shootings of Black men were isolated incidents, while over 80% of Black Protestants and Black Americans in general believed they were indicative of larger structural issues (Jones, Cox, Cooper & Lienesch, 2015). Wallis (2015) argued that this points to a willingness by Christians to side with race before religion, a contradiction to the values of love, acceptance, and social justice.

Social Justice and Social Work

Social justice and inclusivity are at the core of the social work profession. All national and international professional social work organizations place the ultimate goals of social justice and inclusivity of all people in society, socially, economically, and politically, at the forefront of their work (Council on Social Work Education, 2016; International Federation of Social Workers, n.d.; National Association of Social Workers, n.d.).

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) defines social justice as "the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities," (n.p) and contends that social workers' ultimate goal is "to open the doors of access and opportunity for everyone, particularly those in greatest need" (NASW, n.d, n.p).

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) charges social workers with the task of promoting social justice on an individual and societal level, identifying five specific areas of practice: (a) challenging negative discrimination, (b) recognizing diversity, (c) distributing resources equitably, (d) challenging unjust policies and practices, and (e) working in solidarity (IFSW, n.d.).

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), responsible for developing the core requirements for the curriculum of social work programs in the United States, addresses the need for competency in human rights and social justice. It calls for social workers to,

> …understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected (CSWE, 2016, n.p).

Social justice is defined across the social work literature in a variety of ways. The essence of these definitions, however, comes down to some very basic ideas. For social justice to prevail in a society, all members of that society must have equal access to participation at a variety of levels. They must be recognized as citizens from civil, political, and social perspectives (Chapin, 2014; Jost & Kay, 2010; Marshall, 1950).

Definitions of social justice do not focus only on the individual. In addition to individuals having equal access to participation, institutions within a society must reflect the varied perspectives and needs of that society's citizens. Institutions must reflect the totality of the society within which they operate. Rawls (1971) argued, "Justice is the first virtue of social institutions…laws and institutions, no matter how efficient and well-arranged must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust" (p. 3).

Given the context of this journal, it would be negligent not to also acknowledge the roots of Christianity in the social justice aims of the profession. As Scales and Kelly (2011) highlight, despite an over-simplified division of secular and Christian influence in early social work institutions, Christianity has played a substantial role in the motivation of those who feel called to the social work profession and how they define needs, access, and justice for those they serve.

Transitional Justice

The practice of transitional justice is vast and application varies widely. Each usage of the framework is unique to a particular community's needs and situation. The boundaries of the transitional justice process are porous and interpretation of success is subjective (Roht-Arriaza & Mariezcurrena, 2006; van der Merwe, Baxter, & Chapman, 2009). This framework can be applied to address periods of transition at all levels of society, from the individual to the institution. It guides a process that is designed to be temporary, though the term, temporary, is used loosely and the initial transitional justice process can take many years (International Center for Transitional Justice, n.d.). Even after peace or reconciliation has been deemed to be achieved, the transition process continues for future generations of citizens, who may not have been directly impacted by the conflict but who must wrestle with how the aftermath has impacted their process of societal participation, for example, through the displacement, loss and/or traumatization of their parents ("The War as I See It," 2015).

Transitional justice has four major components: truth-seeking, criminal proceedings, reparations, and institutional reform. Each component serves separate purposes that together seek to achieve reconciliation for a nation and its people (Buckley-Zistel, 2014; ICTJ, n.d.; Roht-Arriaza, 2006). Each application of transitional justice depends on many factors, including (a) the conflictual situation that led to the need for transition, (b) the entity or entities who called for the transitional justice process (and their current status or power), (c) the administration of the process, and (d) the political and economic ties of the nation to other nation states, most importantly those with influence, such as the United States or members of the European Union.

Transitional Justice and Social Work

Androff (2010) made a strong case for learning about transitional justice in social work curriculum and practice. Social work is strongly committed to social justice, both for individuals and communities, and transitional justice provides a mechanism for social workers to become involved in addressing mass injustices. What is distinctive about Androff's position is the claim that social workers are uniquely prepared to look at injustice from the person-in-environment perspective. As a profession, social work acknowledges that while assessing state levels of violence or governmental stability is helpful, such an analysis does not get to the citizens of a community afflicted by violence or injustice.

Consonant with an emphasis on citizen voices, rather than macro indicators, Gibson (2004) identified the need to speak with average South African citizens about their experience with the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to assess if the people of South Africa felt that the process had created a more just society. However, as Androff (2010) critiqued, Gibson's assessment was still focused on whether the re-creation of the state was successful and did little to add to the understanding of whether the average South African felt their situation had improved.

Transitional Justice and Faith

Faith-based organizations and religious figures have played a substantial role in the implementation of transitional justice measures and peacebuilding efforts around the world. Religious traditions have been used to make a case against unjust practices and the ideas of peace, justice and accountability have led the way in ending conflict and transforming societies (Boesenecker & Vinjamuri, 2011; Katzenstein & Snyder, 2009; Philpott, 2007). Philpott (2007)

argues that the religious sector's outcry for reconciliation during and after conflict has deeply influenced the trajectory of transitional justice practices.

In South Africa, Archbishop Desmond Tutu played a leading role in the establishment of the formal Truth and Reconciliation Commission and made famous the indigenous practice of *ubuntu* (Boesenecker & Vinjamuri, 2011; Buckley-Zistel, 2014, Gibson, 2004). Mokgoro (1998) defines ubuntu as a philosophy for living in which individuals must be invested in the survival of the group or society in order for themselves to flourish and survive. Nussbaum (2003) adds, "Ubuntu is the capacity in African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and humanity in the interests of building and maintaining community with justice and mutual caring" (p.2). In South Africa, a combination of indigenous faith practices and the more broadly known Catholic Church, deeply influenced the response to the fall of apartheid.

This study seeks to empirically connect the dots between social work practice and our professional duty to social justice, the history of racial injustice in the United States and systems of whiteness, and transitional justice outcomes in South Africa. By utilizing data collected by the World Values Survey (WVS) from individual South Africans before and after their transitional justice process regarding their levels of confidence in public institutions, this study took a person-in-environment approach to policy analysis, built on the base aim of both transitional justice and social work: social justice for all citizens in society.

This study intended to answer one major research question:Is there a difference in confidence levels of White and Black South Africans and White and Black Americans in public institutions from two periods of time before the transitional justice
(TJ) period (including the early 1980s and early 1990s) to the post-TJ period (the early 2000s)?

Methods

Population

The study population includes adult (age 18 and over) South Africans prior to 1994, when the transitional justice process officially began, and adult South Africans in more recent years. It also includes adult Americans during similar time frames. Sampling procedures for the WVS in both countries were designed to maximize the degree to which responses from those countries' residents selected to participate would be representative of responses from country residents overall.

Data Source

The WVS contains information about attitudes and beliefs of people around the world on a variety of topics. Data have been collected in waves since 1981. Questionnaires are written originally in English and translated into a variety of languages suitable for the countries in which they are to be completed. To avoid errors in translation, questionnaires are translated back into English to ensure like meanings. Each participating country follows the sampling and surveying process set forth by the WVS Scientific Advisory Committee. Data are collected on a country-by-country basis. This process is a result of observations from the initial two waves of the WVS, which found substantial bias in question development and survey administration based on the Eurocentric partiality of the researchers. Future waves were conducted in a decentralized manner intentionally to lessen the Eurocentric bias (World Values Survey, n.d). The dataset for this proposed study will include only responses from South Africa and the United States.

For the WVS, samples are chosen using stratified, random sampling of the entire country's population over the age of 18 and must be a minimum size of 1,200. Once a nationally

representative sample has been identified, the Executive Committee of the World Values Survey sets a period of time for data collection, and uniform questionnaires are administered by in-country professional organizations using face-to-face interviews. In rare circumstances, other methods such as phone calls may be used, but these must be approved by the Executive Committee in consultation with the Scientific Advisory Committee in advance (World Values Survey, n.d.). The Executive Committee is comprised of seven members elected by the WVS General Assembly for six-year terms and two ex-officio members. They are responsible for the leadership and strategic planning of the organization. The Scientific Advisory Committee is comprised of ten members elected by the WVS General Assembly for six-year terms (World Values Survey, n.d).

Sample

Wave 1 of the WVS was administered in South Africa in 1982 and included 1,592 respondents, whereas Wave 1 of the WVS was administered in the United States in 1981 and included 2,325 respondents. Responses from Wave 1 are referred to as Time 1 in the study. Wave 2 of the WVS was administered in South Africa in 1990, four years prior to the beginning of its transitional justice process. The sample for Wave 2 in South Africa included 2,736 individuals. The United States did not participate in Wave 2 of the WVS, but was involved in Wave 3. Wave 3 data in the United States were collected in 1995 and included responses from 1,542 individuals. Responses from Wave 2 in South Africa and Wave 3 in the United States are referred to as Time 2 in the study.

To ensure that the entire policy implementation period in South Africa was captured, but comparison results were still relatively close in time to the policy period, Wave 5 was selected for the post-transitional justice period in South Africa. The same wave was used for comparison of outcomes in the United States. Wave 5 of the WVS was administered in South Africa in 2006 and included 2,988 participants. Surveys were administered in six different languages. Wave 5 was administered in 2006 in the United States to 1,249 individuals in questionnaires available in English and Spanish. These data are referred to as Time 3 in the study.

Responses from individuals in both countries which identified as a race other than Black or White were excluded from the study due to lack of comparable groups across countries and the researcher's interest in understanding confidence levels specifically for Blacks and Whites in both countries.

Data Analysis

The data that were analyzed from the WVS were responses to questions regarding confidence in public institutions, including the armed forces, the police, the government, and the justice system. These institutions were chosen based on the existing literature regarding institutional reform efforts targeted by the transitional justice process, as well as the availability of matching information between the South Africa and United States surveys.

To compare the responses of South Africans and Americans over time, difference-in-differences regressions were used. The difference-in-differences approach, popularized by Ashenfelter and Card (1985), has been used widely to assess changes over time based on policy in multi-location analysis (Imbens & Wooldridge, 2007). For example, Hu et al. (2016) used a difference-in-differences approach to assess whether changes to UK health policy influenced health inequalities by comparing the UK with a policy change, to Finland, the Netherlands, and Italy which did not implement policy change over the same period of time. Wei et al. (2015) used difference-in-differences modeling to assess changes in quality of primary care in two large

Chinese cities following changes to health care policy that took place first in one of these cities and then in the other.

Difference-in-differences analysis was used to estimate change by comparing data from Time 3 against responses in other time periods. The variable for Treatment Time acted as an interaction variable looking at treatment time period (i.e., Time 3 or 2006) and location (i.e., South Africa). The analysis also contained an interaction variable for Black*Treatment Time. The difference-in-differences strategy ensured that any unobserved factors remaining constant over time would not bias the estimates.

The analysis is represented by the formula below:

$$v = a + B_1 Country + B_2 Time1 + B_3 Time2 + B_4 TreatmentTime + B_5 Black + B_6 Black*TreatmentTime + B_7 Age$$

The key coefficient in this model is B_6, which is attached to the 3-way interaction of race, time, and place. This coefficient represents only Black South Africans in Time 3 (i.e., 2006), or those hypothesized to be positively affected by the TRC policy implementation.

The dependent variable, confidence in each institution, was represented as a binomial variable. Individuals reporting no or very little confidence in a particular institution were grouped together and represented by 0, or not having high confidence, while individuals reporting quite a lot or a great deal of confidence were grouped together and represented by 1, or having high confidence. The difference-in-differences analysis was conducted using binomial logistic regressions. Age was used as a control variable.

One drawback of difference-in-differences analysis is that it assumes both the treatment and comparison groups would have parallel experiences without the intervention. Given the long histories of racial injustice in the United States and South Africa, both by public institutions and individuals, I assume in this study that the United States and South Africa would have proceeded on similar paths without the introduction of the transitional justice framework and its recommended interventions.

Findings and Results

Sample Characteristics

Table 1 provides demographic information for race, sex, and age of respondents in both South Africa and the United States over all three time periods of inquiry. According to a representative from the WVS, there was an overrepresentation of Whites in the 1981 South African survey (Time 1), likely a result of the apartheid system, and the original data sets offered weights to account for this. However, because these data were merged with data from other times and another country, the weights were not usable. Other difference-in-differences studies have experienced similar issues with weights across times and between different sample populations (see Delaney & Kearney, 2016).

Table 1

Demographic Descriptives

	Time 1		Time 2		Time 3	
	South Africa	United States	South Africa	United States	South Africa	United States
Race						
Black	37.3% (595)	22.9% (533)	40.2% (1100)	11.5% (178)	69.4% (2073)	10.2% (127)
White	37.5% (597)	66.6% (1549)	45.2% (1236)	78.6% (1212)	17.4% (521)	73.8% (922)
Other	25.1% (400)	10.5% (243)	14.6% (400)	8% (124)	13.2% (394)	16% (200)
Sex						
Male	N/A	43.4% (1055)	46% (1258)	49.7% (766)	50% (1494)	50% (625)
Female	N/A	54.6% (1270)	54% (1478)	50.3% (776)	50% (1494)	50% (624)
Age						
Mean (SD)	37.2 (15)	40.3 (18.7)	37.8 (14.9)	48.3 (18)	38.8 (16.5)	47.9 (17)
N	1592	2325	2736	1542	2988	1249

Dependent variables in this study were individual reports of confidence in four major public institutions: the armed forces, the justice system, the police, and the government. Respondents could choose one of four responses regarding their confidence level: 1-no confidence at all, 2-not very much confidence, 3-quite a lot of confidence, or 4-a great deal of confidence. Table 2 illustrates confidence levels in each institution by country and race across all three time periods. It is important to note that the descriptive tables provide data for all four levels of confidence reported in the WVS, while the regressions combined the categories into a binomial variable, as discussed above.

Table 2

Confidence Level in Institution by Country and Racial Subgroup

|	Time 1				Time 2				Time 3			
	South Africa		United States		South Africa		United States		South Africa		United States	
	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White
Armed Forces												
A great deal	10.5%	53.6%	40.6%	33.9%	18.4%	40.1%	27.8%	34.6%	21.4%	9.1%	25.0%	38.1%
Quite a bit	12.0%	36.8%	35.7%	47.4%	32.3%	50.1%	52.1%	52.2%	45.2%	35.2%	40.0%	48.8%
Not very much	33.5%	6.8%	19.6%	16.1%	30.3%	8.8%	16.0%	11.3%	25.8%	40.7%	29.2%	11.5%
None at all	44.0%	2.9%	4.2$	2.5%	18.9%	1.0%	4.1%	1.9%	7.6%	15.0%	5.8%	1.6%
Police												
A great deal	11.2%	45.3%	30.0%	26.4%	25.2%	29.7%	14.6%	16.9%	23.0%	7.9%	7.5%	19.3%
Quite a bit	19.8%	43.9%	33.8%	51.3%	31.0%	53.4%	37.4%	57.1%	38.8%	38.8%	40.8%	59.6%
Not very much	31.2%	10.0%	32.1%	20.4%	26.6%	15.2%	37.4%	22.1%	25.8%	36.8%	38.3%	19.2%
None at all	37.8%	.8%	4.2%	2.0%	17.1%	1.7%	10.5%	3.9%	12.5%	16.5%	13.3%	1.9%
Justice System												
A great deal	24.7%	30.2%	27.4%	14.5%	31.3%	25.1%	9.5%	5.7%	27.1%	8.9%	3.4%	9.3%
Quite a bit	25.9%	51.9%	26.6%	37.1%	42.3%	53.0%	29.2%	28.9%	43.2%	36.7%	36.1%	51.8%
Not very much	25.3%	16.2%	39.4%	43.4%	18.7%	19.4%	48.8%	51.6%	21.9%	37.1%	47.9%	34.4%
None at all	24.1%	1.7%	6.6%	5.0%	7.7%	2.5%	12.5%	13.8%	7.8%	17.3%	12.6%	4.5%
Government												
A great deal	8.1%	27.0%	19.7%	12.3%	30.9%	17.0%	5.0%	2.8%	28.8%	6.5%	0.8%	1.4%
Quite a bit	16.1%	43.1%	27.7%	41.2%	35.1%	50.1%	21.1%	26.8%	45.6%	20.3%	13.3%	19.8%
Not very much	33.9%	22.5%	42.1%	40.8%	23.4%	26.7%	55.3%	57.2%	20.2%	48.5%	67.5%	65.1%
None at all	41.9%	7.4%	10.4%	5.6%	10.6%	6.2%	18.6%	13.1%	5.3%	24.7%	18.3%	13.8%

Results

The interaction of time, place, and race influenced individual levels of confidence in all four institutions examined at a statistically significant level (p<.001). Black South Africans during the treatment period (i.e., Time 3) saw large, positive effects on likelihood of high confidence in the armed forces, the police, the justice system, and the government. It seems, based on these results, that the change in both Black and White South African levels of

confidence post-apartheid did not happen by chance and are meaningful in considering application of similar interventions in the United States.

The discussion that follows focuses specifically on predicted probabilities of reporting a high level of confidence in each institution for hypothetical individuals at different moments in time, in different countries, and by racial subgroups. These predicted probabilities were determined using findings from the difference-in-differences regressions for each institution examined.[1]

Armed forces. As illustrated in Figure 1, predicted probabilities for the average-aged White American, suggest those reporting high confidence over the three time periods ranged from 86.5% (in Time 1) to 91% (in Time 2) and back down to 87.1% (in Time 3). In other words, there was not much change in the predicted probability of reporting high confidence in the armed forces for the average-aged White American over time. However, for the average-aged White South African, the predicted probability of having confidence in the armed forces was 78.3% in Time 1 and 85.3% in Time 2, but dropped to 42.7% in Time 3. Predicted probabilities for the average-aged Black South African steadily rose from 41.8% in Time 1, to 53.5% in Time 2, to 66.4% in Time 3.

Figure 1

Racial Subgroup Predicted Probabilities - Armed Forces
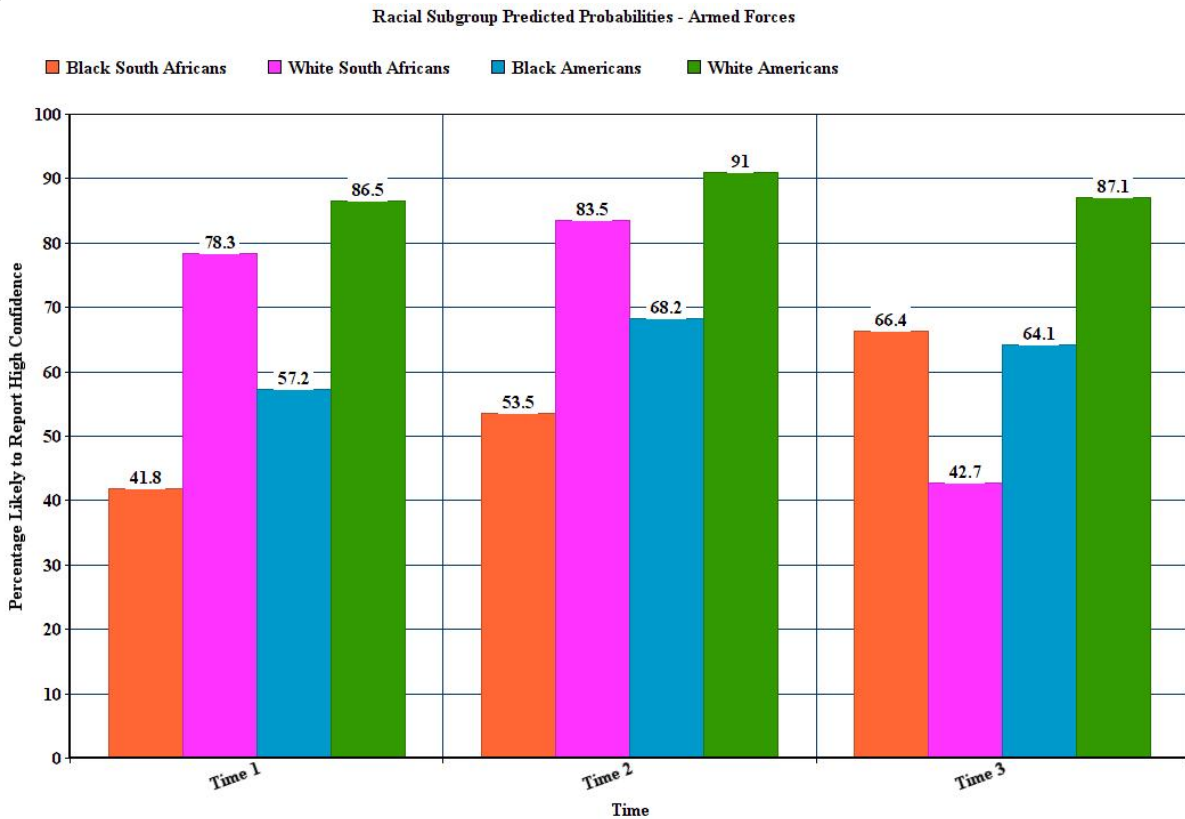
Police. There was very little change over time in predicted probabilities of high confidence in the police for the average-aged White and Black American, though there was, at each time period, about a 30-percentage-point difference between the probabilities for the two

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[1] Full regression results tables are available upon request to the author.

groups. In Time 1, the average-aged White American had a predicted probability of 79.2%, whereas the average-aged Black American was at 50.6%. In Time 3, these numbers shifted slightly to 78.4% and 49.4% respectively. It is also interesting to note that Black Americans had the lowest predicted probabilities of high confidence in the police in each of the three time periods compared to White Americas as well as Black and White South Africans.

Figure 2

Racial Subgroup Predicted Probabilities - Police
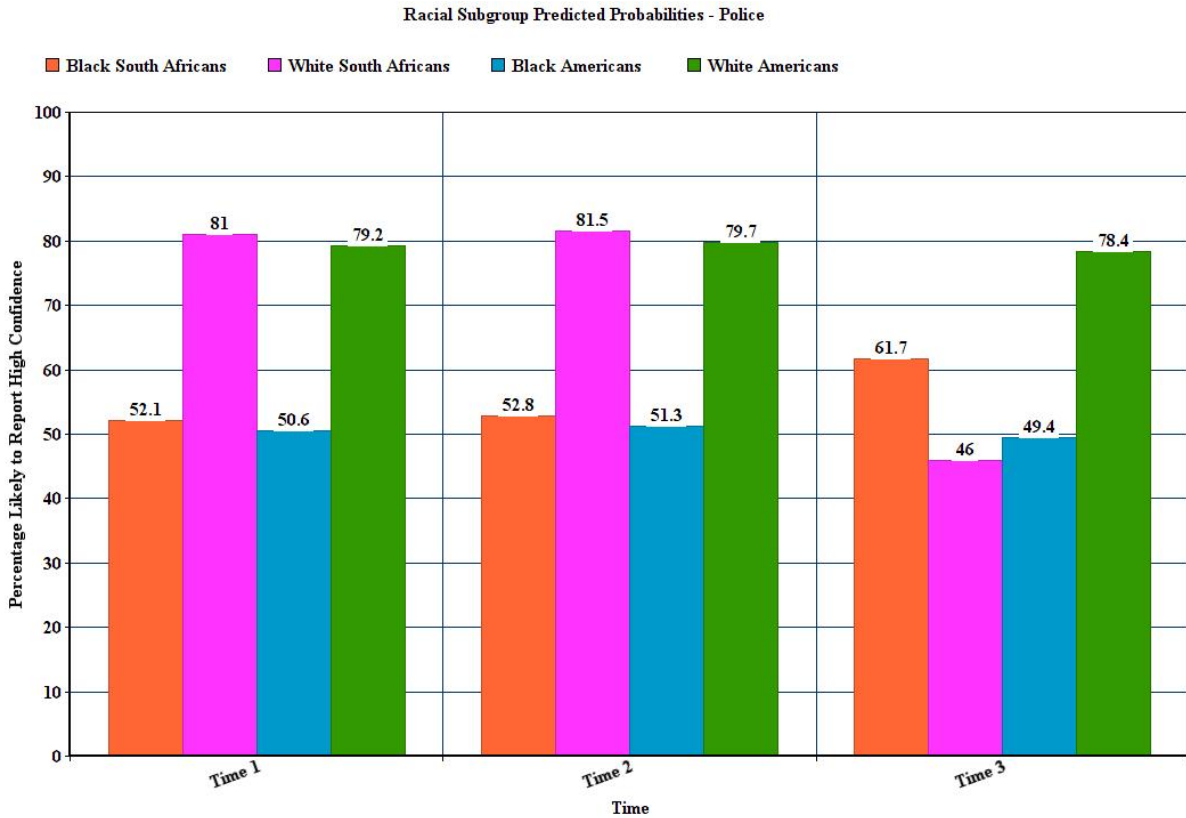
The predicted probabilities in South Africa tell a different story. An average-aged White South African in Time 1 had an 81% predicted probability of high confidence in the police while the average-aged Black South African had a 52% predicted probability. In Time 2, the probabilities remained roughly the same. However, in Time 3, the predicted probability for an average-aged White South African dropped to 46%, while the predicted probability for an average-aged Black South African increased to 61.7%. These results are indicated in the graph in Figure 2.

Justice system. Figure 3 illustrates that the likelihood of having high confidence in the justice system was about 30 percentage points higher for both the average-aged White and Black South African than it was for the average-aged White and Black American in Time 1 and Time 2. In Time 3, the predicted probability of confidence in the justice system rose about 10 percentage points for both the average-aged White and Black American, while the difference between the two groups remained relatively steady (Time 1: 49.1% vs. 41.8% and Time 3: 59.1% vs. 51.8%). However, in South Africa, the average-aged White person saw a drop of approximately 33 percentage points in predicted probability of high confidence in the justice system (Time 1=78.8%, Time 3=45.2%) while the average-aged Black individual's confidence

remained relatively steady over time (Time 1=72.5%, Time 2=67.7%, Time 3=70.7%). The most notable difference in these predicted probabilities was the drastic drop in likelihood of high confidence for the average-aged White South African from before and after the transitional justice period.

Figure 3
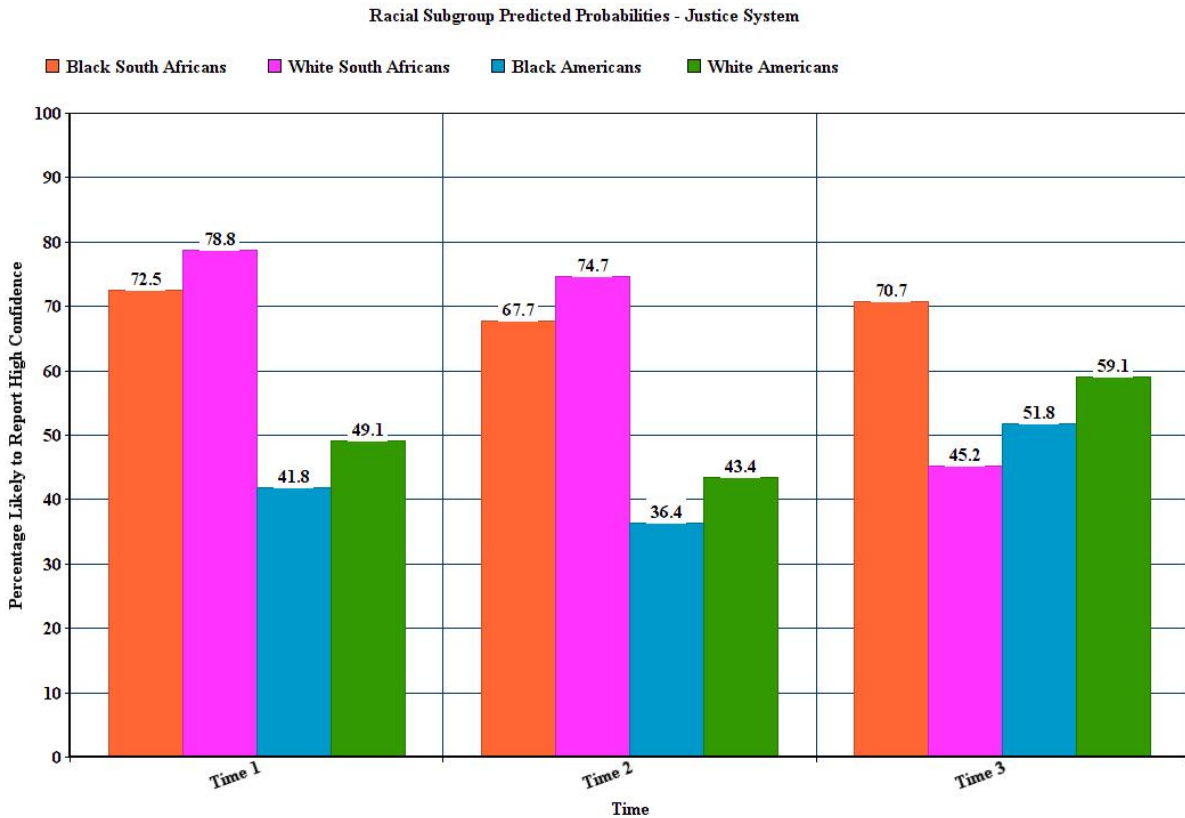
Government. The average-aged Black and White American's predicted probability of confidence in the government remained relatively steady in Time 1 (35.9% and 45.7% for Black and White Americans, respectively) and Time 2 (32.9% and 42.4% for Black and White Americans, respectively). However, in Time 3 predicted probabilities for high confidence dropped for both the average-aged Black and White American, to 14.7% and 20.6%, respectively. While the overall drop in confidence was large, the difference between the two groups remained relatively steady (Figure 4).

Figure 4

Racial Subgroup Predicted Probabilities - Government
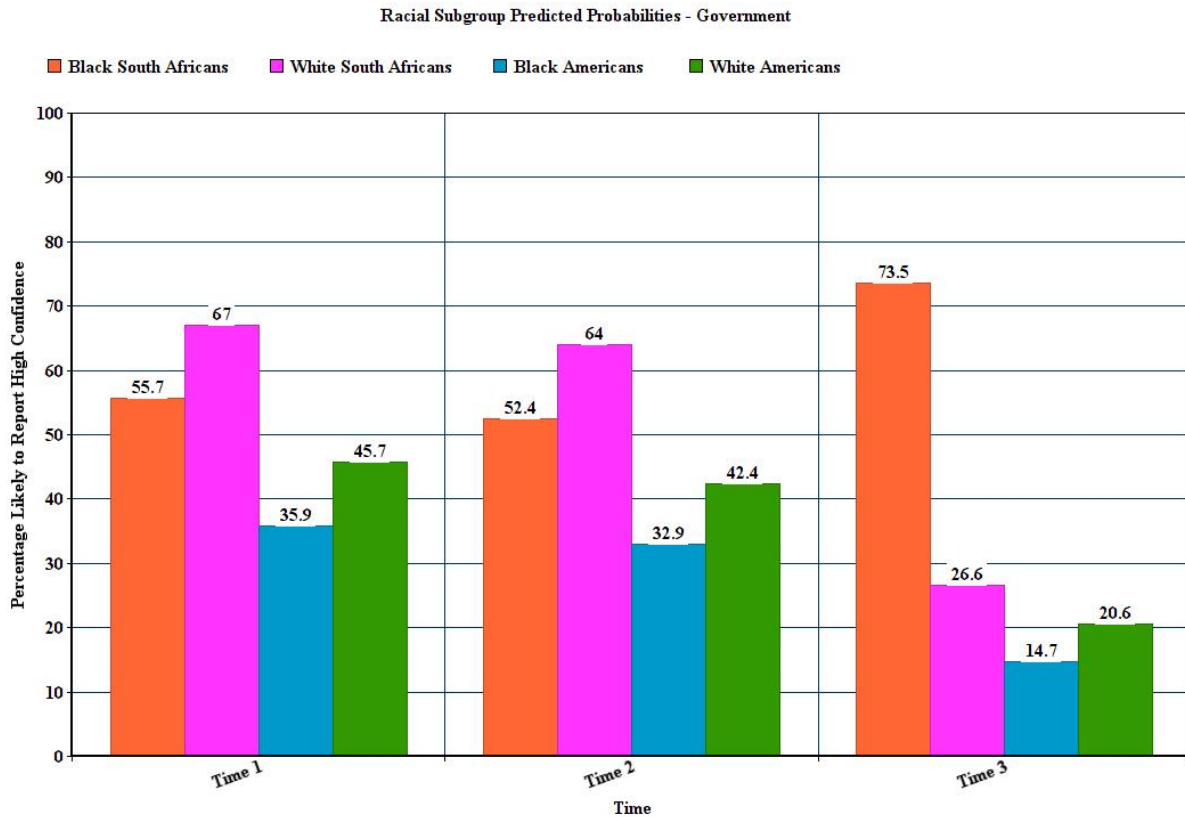
The probabilities for the average-aged Black and White South African showed similar patterns to the predicted probabilities for Americans in Time 1 and Time 2. The average-aged Black South African had a predicated probability of high confidence in the government of 55.7%, as compared to 67% for the average-aged White South African. In Time 2, the average-aged Black South African was at 52.4% and the average-aged White South African was at 64.0%.

During the treatment time (i.e., Time 3), these numbers changed both absolutely as well as in relation to one another. During Time 1 and Time 2, for both South Africa and the United States, the average-aged White individual had higher predicted probabilities for confidence in the government than did the average-aged Black individual. This pattern continued into Time 3 for Americans. However, in Time 3 in South Africa the average-aged Black individual's likelihood of having confidence in the government rose to 73.5%, while the predicted probability for the average-aged White individual dropped to 26.6%. The predicted probabilities illustrated a large drop in general for both the average-aged Black and White American, as well as for the average-aged White South African, while there was approximately a 20-percentage-point increase for the average-aged Black South African.

Discussion

The analyses of this study indicated a pattern between Black and White respondents in South Africa and the United States during Time 1 and Time 2, supporting the idea that attitudes in both countries, while not identical numerically, were traveling along parallel paths in terms of racial differences and likelihood of confidence in public institutions. However, the

implementation of transitional justice seems to have had a profound effect on confidence levels for both White and Black South Africans in Time 3.

One may note that the change in confidence for South Africa is obvious because the data comes from a time right after apartheid ended and it is that event which affected confidence levels for Black and White South Africans, not the implementation of the transitional justice process. This is a distinct possibility because there is no real way of teasing out the end of the apartheid era from the implementation of transitional justice efforts. However, I have strong doubts that this is true based on the following.

Even during apartheid, there were similar patterns in levels of confidence in public institutions between Blacks and Whites in both the United States and South Africa. For institutions except the armed forces and the police, predicted probabilities suggested that Black South Africans had *higher* likelihoods of confidence than did Black Americans, even while still under apartheid. Whites across the board had higher likelihoods of confidence in institutions than did Blacks *until* the implementation of transitional justice.

It is my contention that ending apartheid alone would not have changed the pattern of levels of confidence in institutions between Black and White South Africans. Ending the social structure of apartheid was a grand gesture to be sure, but without a national process to work towards transforming the ideology of racism, South Africa would be in much the same place as the United States is currently after having ended multiple racist social structures, such as slavery, Jim Crow, and segregation. I posit that it is the national effort of transitional justice, even with its flaws, that created the drastic changes in confidence in public institutions for both Black and White South Africans in Time 3.

Although generally an intervention that increases confidence in public institutions for marginalized and oppressed groups is helpful in creating a more just society, what cannot be ignored is the problematic drop in confidence for White South Africans. While there was nothing in this study to assess what may have caused the drop definitively, I suspect it was a combination of two factors. The racist system of apartheid created a structure within public institutions such that White South Africans received unearned privilege and benefits not afforded to other populations in South Africa at that time. The confidence levels reflected in the data may show not just higher likelihood for confidence, but an over-inflation of confidence among White South Africans during Time 1 and Time 2. This over-inflation of confidence and unearned privilege, challenged by the transitional justice attempts to deconstruct racist social structures and create a more equitable South Africa, may have left White South Africans feeling as though they were becoming the targets of discrimination and unfair treatment.

In his 2016 article, Boeskool uses an unknown individual's quote for his title: "When you are accustomed to privilege, equality feels like oppression." While apartheid as a system was officially in place for less than fifty years, it was born out of racist ideology that began the moment the Dutch colonized the area of Africa that would come to be the country of South Africa. My point here is that White individuals living in South Africa had an ingrained sense of superiority, not only individually, but one that was supported and enforced through all major public institutions. What Black South Africans viewed as discriminatory, oppressive, and a violation of human rights was seen by White South Africans as normative. So, without proper preparation for change, if what an individual feels is normal is actually an unrecognized or unacknowledged privilege afforded to them, removing that privilege may feel like a loss or an attack and may result in anger, fear, and some form of backlash.

Significance for Social Work

This study is significant to social work because it assesses a policy intervention, aimed at achieving a more just society, from a person-in-environment perspective. Social justice is at the core of what social workers aim to accomplish, and the long-lasting effects of racism and whiteness in the United States have crippled the chance for people of color to access resources and opportunities in the same way that White Americans are able to do. It also aims to fill a gap in the social work literature regarding the transitional justice framework and a national intervention for addressing racial injustice in the United States.

The results of this study point to some clear implications for social work practice, social policy, and research. The most salient finding from this study was not an increase in likelihood of Black South African confidence in public institutions post-transitional justice, but rather the substantial drop in likelihood of White South African confidence in public institutions. This drop suggests that the average White South African was unprepared for what post-apartheid South Africa would look like, which may have resulted in a rejection of the more egalitarian representations of public institutions.

This finding suggests that if social workers in the United States are committed to helping facilitate a similar national process, there must be substantial preparatory work done specifically in White America. This means first acknowledging how whiteness affects the individual social work practitioner and contributes to a social welfare system founded on a racist ideology.

Additionally, if the social work profession wants to be at the forefront of a national transformative process, we must become more involved in transitional justice and restorative justice movements. These movements call for those who have been harmed to be the central voice in change, which, despite what is taught in social work curriculua, often does not happen in practice, likely due to the overarching oppressive social welfare system within which we operate.

Lastly, as professionals, social workers must begin to work with a much more critical lens to create change within the institutions on which this country rests instead of operating within them and remaining complicit in a system that was not built to serve the vast majority of Americans. It is important to understand, as the results of this study imply, the eradication of an unjust social structure does little to change attitudes around likelihood of confidence if broader acknowledgements of wrongdoing and efforts to restructure do not accompany that eradication.

To be clear, this is not an easy task nor something that could immediately change. In South Africa, the social work profession struggled to reorganize under the post-apartheid government (Lombard, 2008a). One of the biggest critiques of the profession was that all South African social workers who existed at the time of apartheid's collapse were socialized and racialized under that system, regardless of the color of their skin. The challenge became re-envisioning a social welfare system when those attempting to re-envision were at the same time personally reconstructing their own understandings of South African society post-apartheid (Collins, 2013; Hölscher, 2008; Smith, 2008).

The White Paper on Social Welfare (Republic of South Africa, 1994) was a document written to redirect the social welfare profession to a system of developmental social welfare. Lombard (2008b) highlights the challenges in the first ten years after the white paper came out to properly define developmental social welfare as a rights-based approach to ensuring social justice and human dignity through the social work profession. Previously, the social welfare system required individuals to operate in and around a system that did not honor their human dignity (Abdullah, 2015; Lombard, 2008b; Smith, 2008).

The literature suggests that South Africa has made substantial strides in reorganizing professional social work and social work education programs to address the profession's complicity in apartheid, focus on the rights and strengths of those facing extreme inequality and poverty, and acknowledge the role of trauma in individual and community functioning. Despite these strides, South African social workers continue to fight the history of structural oppression and marginalization and remain on the path to a more just, rights-based profession (Abdullah, 2015; Collins, 2013; Hölscher, 2008; Lombard, 2008a; Lombard, 2008b; Smith, 2008

Significance for Christian Social Workers

There is a plethora of literature that suggests Christianity provides a clear and obvious path to reconciliation in a way that is unique and strong in conviction (Cleveland, 2013; Schreiter, 2015; Shore, 2016; Volf, 2010). Christians who are social workers have an added strength of understanding the concepts of reconciliation and forgiveness from deeply-held personal, religious convictions. The literature suggests that these convictions historically shaped much of what we know as current day social work (Scales & Kelly, 2011). From a theoretical perspective, it seems that Christians who are social workers may be uniquely prepared to initiate truth and transformation work in the United States.

However, many leaders in Christianity have called on White Christians to stop being controlled by partisan rhetoric while ignoring the messages of love and tolerance, set forth by scripture (Fletcher, 2017; Harvey, 2014; Jones, 2016; Tisby, 2019; Wallis, 2015). So, the implications for Christians who are social workers, particularly white Christians who are social workers, are quite the same as for white social workers in general, except with maybe a more explicit focus.

Given statistical evidence from polls that suggests overwhelming numbers of white Christians do not see the ways in which whiteness has blinded them to the racial injustices and broken institutions in this country (Jones et. al, 2015), the work must start at home. It must start in churches with white Christians talking to white Christians about ways in which the institution of religion is perpetuating systems of injustice in this country. It needs to breed preparation for a world that looks very different without the unearned power and privilege afforded by whiteness. It needs to address Christian complicity in the racial sins of our past and present. The unique training we receive as social workers has prepared us for these difficult conversations and the time to have them is now.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study, including my own biases, the fact that it was a secondary analysis which prevented controlling for several factors, and finally, the fact that race was reported by survey administrators' observations and not self-reported by respondents.

I recognize that reflexivity statements are traditionally not a part of quantitative research studies. However, my own experiences and beliefs influence how I decide to analyze and interpret data, even when these are quantitative data. Because of this, acknowledging my own biases as part of the limitations of this study is imperative. I was raised in a "colorblind" home and, while I believe that I have made great strides in understanding why that is a harmful perspective as opposed to a helpful one, those early life lessons undoubtedly seep into the ways in which I think about racial injustices and the ways in which I interpret the results of this study. Additionally, my emotional attachments to the people of color in my life, specifically my husband and my sons, affect deeply my hopes for what this study might be used for in the future.

Another limitation of this study is that it is a secondary analysis, which eliminates control of data collection or compilation. The over-representation of Whites in the South African surveys during Time 1 and Time 2 most certainly impacted this analysis to an extent. The over-representation of Whites was accounted for by the WVS with weights. Nonetheless, because by employing the DiD method I compiled data from multiple time periods and two countries, the weights were not usable, and therefore the over-representation was a factor in this analysis.

Related to this was the challenge of comparing two different countries over three time periods. The differences in how geographic regions were defined, meanings of population size in the context of geographic locations, and variations in levels of relative versus absolute poverty made it near impossible to create comparable categories between the countries. Changes to how this information was collected within countries from Time 1 to Time 2 to Time 3 further complicated these attempts and the only usable control variable available across all of the data was age.

The final consideration related to the dataset for this study, which became a major consideration, was the fact that the WVS did not ask respondents to self-identify their race and instead had the survey administrators respond to this question based on their own observations. From an ethical or moral standpoint, assigning a race to someone instead of asking how they identify is problematic. It also poses a potential problem in the analysis of how different racial subgroups reported on confidence levels if respondents were placed into the wrong group by survey administrators. As a counterpoint, the way in which people are seen by others most certainly influences how they are treated in society, so this limitation in terms of self-determination may actually provide a more precise picture of how these individuals have been treated within public institutions and therefore provide more insight into why they report the level of confidence that they do.

Lastly, there are limitations to estimations provided by difference-in-differences regressions. DiD methods assume that both the test and comparison countries will follow parallel paths and patterns without the introduction of the policy intervention. Except for trying to account for confounding variables, which was limited in this study due to the complicated nature of multiple times across two countries, there is no way to account for the impact that other policies or events had on the likelihood of individual confidence in public institutions.

Conclusion

Regarding this study, the lesson for social work is that when change does happen, those with power and privilege need to know what they have is unearned and be prepared to let go of it while coping with the fear, anxiety, and anger that may provoke. The systems-based foundation of social work primes us as professionals to be involved in the planning, implementation and maintenance of a national transitional justice process aimed at eradicating racial injustice and whiteness while transforming and rebuilding institutions to be more socially just and equitable.

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