

How to Rectify Structural Injustice: Power, Raised Consciousness, Norm Disruption

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Abstract

How do we rectify structural injustice? Iris Marion Young presents a Social Connection Model that states those who participate in social processes that produce injustice have a forward-looking responsibility to redress the resulting injustice. Within some philosophical discourse, however, there is a general consensus that SCM is not action-guiding and is overly demanding. To supplement Young's ideas, I explore Robin Zheng's Role-Ideal Model; Zheng fills some necessary gaps left by Young. My aim in this paper is to use Young's SCM and Zheng's RIM in tandem to create a more action-guiding and ameliorative project for structural injustice. I offer a structurally sensitive account of responsibility for disempowerment that avoids passively repeating domination. I establish a prefatory set of tasks that can be applied to all roles. These tasks are an expansion of the terms mentioned in Zheng Role-Ideal: "raised consciousness" and "boundary pushing."

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Every day, despite intention, we participate in reproducing structural injustices that cause the suffering of millions of people. In today's political and philosophic discourse, structural injustice has become a well-known topic. Many problems are now considered to be examples of structural injustice, including homelessness, sweatshops, climate change, racism, and sexism among other social, political, and economic injustices. Are we all to blame for these injustices or the suffering of the oppressed? How should we live when we are unable to avoid reproducing structural injustice? When the simple act of eating a meal, buying a garment or renting a home has tragic implications.

Iris Marion Young has offered the most comprehensive response to date. In *Responsibility for Justice* Young proposes her “Social Connection Model” in which persons who engage in structural processes that produce injustice have a forward-looking responsibility to redress the subsequent injustice by opposing the structures that create it. Young's theory responds to the ethical challenges of this era and offers a legitimate method of thinking about ethics regarding international and local injustices. Young highlights the role of political, economic, and social systems in causing injustice and theorizes the role of people in perpetuating systemic injustice, as well as everyone's responsibility to work to remedy it. The gaps left in Young's work provide the perfect opportunity to comprehensively resolve the question: what do we owe to one another?

The Case of Sandy

Iris Young begins “*Responsibility for Justice*” with a vignette of Sandy, a working mother seeking for, and failing to obtain, affordable housing to establish the complex idea of “structure.” This sets up her argument for who is responsible for this injustice and how we ought to think about accountability in the context of structural harms.

Sandy is a white single mother facing eviction from her home and must now look for affordable housing in a major city. She confronts the painful risk of homelessness due to the exorbitant cost of down payments and the fact that she has spent all of her finances on items required to keep her employment and raise her children.

“Sandy searches for two months, with the eviction deadline looming over her. Finally she settles for a one-bedroom apartment a forty-five-minute drive from her job—except when traffic is heavy. The apartment is smaller than she hoped she would have to settle for; the two children will sleep together in the bedroom and she will sleep on a foldout bed in the living room. There are no amenities such as a washer and dryer in the building or a (p.44) playground for the children. Sandy sees no other option but to take the apartment, and then faces one final hurdle: she needs to deposit three months' rent to secure the apartment. She has used all her savings for a down payment on the car, however. So she cannot rent the apartment, and having learned that this is a typical landlord policy, she now faces the prospect of homelessness”(Young 45).

Young explains that when we consider Sandy's overall circumstances, we can see that she is part of a vast network of societal forces working against her. Every real estate agent in the city is scouring the city for the highest offers. Landlords charge what they assume they can get away with in order to cover their expenses. Municipal government workers are attempting to strike a balance between the need for cheap housing and the requirement for economic growth and prosperity. Millions of individuals are unintentionally collaborating to construct the same system of rewards, motives, inequities, and impediments that ultimately displace Sandy and her children. Simply, Sandy suffers from structural or systemic injustice.

Following this housing market anecdote, Young gives a concise overview of some of the primary theoretical approaches to understanding what structure constitutes. She summarizes,

“Structures refer to the relation of social positions that condition the opportunities and life prospects of the persons located in those positions. This positioning occurs because of the way that actions and interactions reinforce the rules and resources available for other actions and interactions involving people in other structural positions—This mutually reinforcing process means that the positional relations and the way they condition individual lives are difficult to change(Young 2011: 6).

This allows her to define structural injustice clearly: “Structural injustices are harms that come to people as a result of structural processes in which many people participate” (Young 2011: 7).

Therefore, it is nearly impossible in today's social environment for a person to avoid becoming entangled in structures that produce injustice via their activities. When people act in everyday life, they rely on the enablements and limitations granted by their social positions, and in doing so, they often unknowingly reproduce the structural features presupposed by their acts. When we buy garments, for example, we simultaneously presume and replicate the structural processes of

the global garment industry; we participate in these processes. Plainly, our collective contribution to the preservation of systems generates morally undesirable outcomes through our activities. This is where we run into a problem: who is responsible for this outcome if no single agent intended it?

Consider the scenario of Sandy once more. We might accuse the landlords, real estate agents, and possibly even homeowners because their actions contribute to Sandy's hardships, but did they intend for this to happen? Generally, we can assume when individuals enter the housing market, it is not with the intention of making others homeless. In the case of Sandy, the agents denying her housing do not want Sandy, nor people like her to be homeless. They may be sympathetic and good people, but they are just functioning within the confines of a system of limits and incentives that they did not design. It appears that this system of limits and motivations, the structure, is the fault here, rather than any individual acting inside it. But how can a social system be held responsible? It is in responding to this inquiry that Young distinguishes two kinds of responsibility: forward and backward-looking.

The Liability Model

Conventionally, when assigning responsibility for a harm to an agent, we do it in a manner that entails looking back at the harm that they have produced. Young coins this the liability model. The classic liability model is defined by three characteristics. First, an actor is identified for the occurrence of a specific harm, either by causing it or by allowing it to occur. Once it is proven that the agent was neither pressured nor unaware, the wrongdoer is assigned responsibility and all others are absolved. Second, the action to which we attempt to assign blame is considered an outlier. The event of injustice is an undesirable departure from an

otherwise acceptable background condition—importantly, this implies that there exist background conditions we consider acceptable. Third, the harm for which responsibility is sought is complete and isolatable in time.

These characteristics suggest that the liability model is primarily backward-looking. To suggest that someone is responsible in this way is to imply that they are worthy of blame. Further, the model focuses on determining the aims, reasons, and effects of acts in order to assign reparation responsibilities. In this approach, responsibility is assigned to specific actors whose voluntary activities can be proven to be causally related to the events for which responsibility is sought. For example if Sandy arrived at her circumstances, because she was conned, mugged, or cheated out of all her assets. If the background conditions of incentives and sanctions present in the housing market did not exist. Blame would easily be prescribed to the individual accountable for her deprivation and they would be held responsible for remedying Sandy's dilemma.

Sandy's example, however, emphasizes these background conditions, and in doing so underlines the reality that the liability model is insufficient on its own to address systemic injustices, such as homelessness. The issue is with the background conditions. Young argues that when we identify instances of structural injustice, we are explicitly declaring that at least some of the typical and recognized background circumstances of action are not morally acceptable. In Sandy's case, we are acknowledging that Sandy's destitution at the hands of her community and government is morally unacceptable.

The unpleasant conditions in Sandy's case, however, are not the sole products of blameworthy actions. Young is firm in explaining that these conditions are mainly the product of a complex combination of acts and policies by individuals, corporate, and government agents. Activities and policies that most people consider normal and acceptable, if not necessary and

beneficial. A large number of individuals participate in the processes that result in Sandy's struggle, many of whom are unaware of the impact of their activities.

In the housing market: landlords have financial pressures that incentivize taking advantage of advantageous offers to sell properties that they have had trouble maintaining. Cities employ developers who wish to modernize them in order to attract corporate investment and improve their bond investor image. Wealthier professionals return to the city center to be closer to work and nightlife. Lower-income renters compete for units, leading to housing demand patterns that echo across the board in the form of rising rents. Each agent acts in their own best interests while adhering to current laws and societal conventions, and their combined activities result in some individuals being displaced and having difficulties obtaining adequate, affordable homes (Young 2011: 103).

According to Young, these individuals should not be blamed for this “Because the specific actions of each cannot be causally disentangled from structural processes to trace a specific aspect of the outcome. Presumably none intended the outcome, moreover, and many regret it. In my view, this means not that they should not be found responsible, but that they ought to be held responsible in a different sense”(Young 2011: 101).

Young argues if the liability model is used alone, or even emphasized in conceiving of responsibility, it will either unfairly absolve many agents of responsibility for taking action to address structural injustice, or it will blame people for things for which they are not to blame. Moreover, in Sandy’s case sanctioning specific individuals within these processes, such as landlords or government officials would not alleviate the problem of homelessness as long as that incentive system is in effect and sanction is not systematic. She states that while the liability model is an indispensable aspect of moral judgment,

“ it is inadequate for understanding and evaluating much about the relationship of individual actors to large scale social processes and structural injustices. It needs to be supplemented with a notion of responsibility that implicates persons in the effects of structural processes because they participate in the production and reproduction of those structures” (Young 20011: 10).

The Social Connection Model (SCM)

The liability model has to be complemented with a paradigm shift concerning responsibilities—forward-looking responsibility. Young borrows from Hannah Arendt's notion of political responsibility to make the case that all individuals who are part of social processes should be held responsible for structural injustice. Even if we cannot trace the outcome to our own particular actions that produce structural injustice in a direct causal chain we are members of the collective that produces it. On this account, she proposes a Social-Connection Model of responsibility. The SCM denotes our responsibility to the unjust structures we interact in. It requires taking collective political action in order to transform the structures. It is a new and separate type of obligation; a political responsibility for justice.

The fundamental features of the SCM model follow: first and foremost, it is inherently forward-looking. Responsibility does not suggest that we are at blame or guilty of a prior wrong; rather, it refers to agents acting in a morally right manner and ensuring that specific outcomes occur. Second, it urges individuals to avoid the behaviors and attitudes that are associated with the liability model. Agents are not expected to experience shame or remorse, and they are not supposed to face any societal penalties as a result of being held accountable. Third, Young claims that it creates a moral obligation to work with others to correct systemic inequities. These

responsibilities differ based on one's socioeconomic status. Those who gain from structural injustice, as well as those with a lot of social and political power, have a compelling incentive to fight it. Fourth, this responsibility is according to one's own parameters of connection, power, privilege, and interest. Therefore the more power, privilege and interest a person has in working against injustice the more they are compelled to by this model. Young, however, does not outline specific details on how one ought to collaborate with others in order to produce meaningful change. Similarly, she does not elaborate on what these different responsibilities would look like based on the intersection of one's power and privilege, leaving room for broad interpretations of her model. This ambiguity grants each individual the freedom to define their own means of collaboration and responsibility to fulfill their duty as they seem fit, regardless of whether their actions lead to meaningful consequences.

Young's model helps us to understand that we all share responsibility for rectifying structural injustice, because our actions contribute to the processes that create unjust outcomes, not because we are blameworthy. Our responsibility stems from our shared membership in a system of interdependent cooperative and competitive processes through which we seek advantages and strive to realize goals. Each of us expects justice from these systems, and others might rightfully make claims of justice against us. Per Young, "All who dwell within the structures must take responsibility for remedying injustices they cause—Responsibility in relation to injustice thus derives not from living under a common constitution, but rather from participating in the diverse institutional processes that produce structural injustice" (Young 2011: 105).

Gaps Left by the SCM

Young's Social Connection Model is valuable because it provides a comprehensive sense of individual responsibility to real-world injustice and takes into consideration institutional expressions of oppression and inequality. In doing so it has inspired serious discussion and secondary and novel research. Young's Social Connection Model has had far-reaching impacts past the field of philosophy but has also been deployed in conversations concerning global labor justice, structural racism, and public health.

Within some philosophical discourse, however, there is a general consensus that SCM is not action-guiding and is overly demanding (Barry & Macdonald, 2016; Hahn, 2009; Zheng, 2018) Neuhäuser (2014, p. 242). Young's model plainly holds that every individual is responsible for all structural injustices within the social systems they are a part of.

We can generally assume people want to be a part of fulfilling such a responsibility. Young however, does not articulate how demanding forward-looking responsibility ought to be nor how to ensure our actions are truly ameliorative towards injustice. We remain concerned with how we are to go about realizing this responsibility. Must this responsibility take priority over other responsibilities? Our standard of living? Happiness? Importantly, how can individual efforts lessen ongoing structural injustice while remaining a part of the structure? I will spend the next few paragraphs providing an example involving conditions that might limit the efforts of Young's SCM.

The Case of Mark

Consider an alternate example of a landlord, Mark. Mark is a Black husband and father of two. Following his father's passing, Mark inherited a property that was significantly appreciated. In the few years Mark has leased this property it has afforded him a comfortable lifestyle compared

to his humble lower-socioeconomic class upbringing; This has allowed him to purchase several other properties. Now as a member of the upper-middle class, he can afford all the necessities to take care of himself and his family.

Imagine, one morning Mark is informed of his complicated role in the struggle of people like Sandy. He is told this does not suggest that he is to blame for Sandy's situation. Moreover, no one feels any resentment or hatred for him being causally implicated. He only has a forward-looking responsibility to join with others in attempting to improve the general situation, whether by symbolic acts of resistance to the economic system or by altering the system itself. Mark, is now in a tricky situation because fulfilling his responsibility would ultimately require him to give up a role that socially and financially benefits him.

That afternoon he meets with Sandy, the struggling single mother facing potential homelessness, to show her the property. Mark is vaguely aware of Sandy's situation, he knows she does not have enough money to make a deposit on the apartment and, in fact, only has half; he has another potential renter meeting with him who has the deposit ready. Mark, therefore, with a heavy heart, decides to decline Sandy's offer and instead signs the apartment over to his more financially fortunate renter. As Young would argue, it would be difficult to assign blame to Mark. He is not the cause of her situation nor is he in control of the housing market.

Moreover, Mark may be justified in forgoing his forward-looking responsibility this time around because of his financial responsibility to his family as the provider. And what of Mark's responsibility to himself to maintain a social role that provides financial security, social status and the means to his happiness. Perhaps, it is understandable for Mark to not fulfill this duty then. However, it becomes more complicated if this scenario occurs again, and again. Amongst all landlords. Further, presume Mark never realizes his forward-looking responsibility by reason

of preoccupation with other social movements that directly affect him, like Black Lives Matter. Perhaps Mark spends his personal time organizing social movements to fight against racism, doing advocacy research, and reaching out to policymakers. Should Mark be relieved from his forward-looking responsibility to housing injustice then?

It is not hard to believe Young would also be dissatisfied with such a response from Mark. As she emphasizes throughout her writing on the subject, claims about responsibility are generally used—and she uses them herself—at least in part to persuade individuals to act in ways they should but might not otherwise. “the point is for all who contribute to processes producing unjust outcomes to work to transform those processes” (Young 2011: 105) she writes in an effort to develop a practical aspect of the SCM in the case of assertions about political responsibility to dismantle structural injustice. Nevertheless, Mark’s example sheds light on the nature of roles in creating and maintaining social structures. If Mark can be relieved of his forward-looking responsibility to injustice, can other landlords not make a similar case? If so we are left with a responsibility that goes unfulfilled.

Chapter 2

The Role-Ideal Model (RIM)

Several philosophers have sought to fill in the gaps in Young's late work. Robin Zheng is a leading figure in the SCM's discussion to date. Zheng acknowledges that the SCM appears to be an unrealizable burden for individuals to carry on their own. Zheng develops a supplemental model of responsibility, the Role Ideal Model (RIM), that holds individuals responsible for performing their unique roles with *raised consciousness*, a point she mentions but does not elaborate on. I will return to this point later in my discussion. The key advantage of Zheng's model is that it acknowledges the overly demanding and action-guiding concern by its brilliant response to the question: how can individuals be held responsible for this? Robin's emphasis on roles is a valuable addition to the literature on how to determine an individual's responsibility for structural injustice and it is exceedingly thought-provoking. I will first summarize Zheng's arguments and follow up with a discussion of why this model does not fully alleviate the flaws and shortcomings of the SCM.

Zheng defines roles as "the site where structure meets agency." The RIM takes on the issue of social reform head-on, given that social roles are often regarded to be the problem, or the reason why structural injustice endures. Therefore, there are moral obligations on all of us to use our unique roles across the system at any given time in order to create the circumstances for transformative change. That opportunity is located in the social roles we occupy: although social roles operate to perpetuate structures, the very traits that make that possible also convert them into instruments for transforming those structures.

Similar to Young SCM, Zheng's RIM does not replace the attributability model of responsibility and other structuralist methods. Rather, it assigns responsibility for structural

injustice while acknowledging that the institutions restrict all agents. The RIM departs from the SCM in that it bases responsibility on our pre-existing social roles rather than connection to structural injustice. Individuals are responsible in the accountability sense for fulfilling their social roles, where the expectations of each role spell out certain duties to be performed and certain sanctions to be incurred in the event of non-performance. In occupying a role, individuals acquire access to specific resources and in my role as "professor," for instance, I can gain entry into the university library, request an audience with the dean, inform my students what is the strongest argument against some view, and so on. I can do these things only because there already exists a bundle of expectations about what a "professor" is, such that it is intelligible and appropriate for me to act in these ways on these relationships"(Zheng 6).

All individuals assume multiple social roles, by means of their relationships, employment, citizenship, etc. Each role has predictive and normative expectations. These expectations are based on the "role-segments" of relationships that the role-holder has with others. There are corresponding kinds of behavior and attitudes for each role section. For example, "It is intelligible and appropriate for a teacher to instruct the student to perform academic exercises, feel concern when the work is poor, and so on" (Zheng 6). In the case of Mark, it is intelligible and appropriate for him to make any required repairs to ensure that the unit is reasonably safe and free of any potentially harmful or dangerous issues that the tenant may not be aware of.

Furthermore, the concept of a role-ideal is absolutely critical to the RIM. Zheng defines Role-Ideal as "For every social role R occupied by an individual P, a role-ideal is P's interpretation of how she could best satisfy the expectations constituting R based on P's own beliefs, values, commitments, abilities, and lived experience" (Zheng 8). Thus, playing a role is a

continual process of making an endless number of small judgments about how to play it, thereby aligning one's conduct with another's expectations and behavior at the same time that the other is adjusting their expectations and behavior with yours. The RIM differs from the SCM in that the SCM bases an individual's responsibility for structural injustice on their 'causal' connection to the injustice, whereas the RIM bases it on their reproduction of structural injustice via their social roles. In the form of role-ideals, the RIM also has a psychological and normative underpinning for moral responsibility for structural injustice. Even further, Robin claims that the RIM is better than the SCM because it is capable of addressing five practical-theoretical issues that the SCM faces.

First, how can individual actions produce structural change? On the SCM, structural change can only be implemented by communal action. But Young doesn't articulate much about how that might work in practice, apart from that it includes 'pressuring powerful agents.' Robin contends that this is a limited solution because powerful agents are likewise confined by systems and can only affect partial change, and it is an individualistic approach. Better answers can be found in the RIM. In the RIM, there is a sequence of demands that come with a role, but they may be modified. When all members in the system engage in "boundary-pushing" (another term Zheng does not detail) structural revolution is feasible. This can either 'pave the way for bigger ruptural shifts' or lead to a gradual change toward a new equilibrium.

Second, if I'm not doing anything wrong, why am I, as an individual, accountable for structural injustice? Individuals' duty on the SCM entails pressing powerful agents to act on their responsibilities since agents with varying degrees of power have more or less political responsibility. However, Robin contends that this is insufficient because people might continue to believe that it is up to others, not themselves, to create changes. All agents in all social

positions on the RIM are required to push the boundaries of their roles, and it is their responsibility to resist injustice since that is what it means to fulfill the role successfully.

Third, what actions should an individual take? Young proposes four "parameters of reasoning" for political responsibility: how much power, privilege, interest, or collective ability each individual has in connection to injustice should determine how they respond. However, from an intersectional viewpoint, an individual might be both oppressor and oppressed at the same time, resulting in varying degrees of power, privilege, interest, and collective capacity, making it difficult to determine how to respond. Each role on the RIM has a set of activities linked with it, making it more action-oriented.

Fourth, how much can an agent be held responsible for? Young's reasoning parameters do not indicate how much time or resources an individual should dedicate to fighting structural injustice. Conversely, according to the RIM Individuals must fulfill "all of their roles with a raised consciousness." Though this is demanding, it is also doable because the individual is already doing the work within their pre-existing roles.

Fifth, how can individuals be held accountable? While Young argues on the SCM that people cannot be condemned for failing to take up political duty or executing it in wrong ways, Zheng responds that each role on the RIM has a set of expectations, and if an agent fails to meet those expectations, they will face sanctions, superior mandates, or reminders. On the RIM, the issue of consequences is already embedded into the concept of a role, because occupying a role simply means being subject to internal and external expectations. Holding agents responsible for structural injustice, like the SCM, does not involve blaming or punishing them; rather, it involves assigning individuals with the responsibility of transforming the structure. Negative sanctions, which are often used to address suboptimal behavior, might be used if agents fail to contribute

appropriately. She gives the example of a teacher being urged or required to diversify a syllabus by others, whether or not she is to blame for not doing so earlier. This penalty is certainly appropriate to require of a "teacher" in order to improve her performance as a teacher, but it also requires the teacher to go beyond the status quo of what is now required of the role in order to contribute to wider structural reform.

Furthermore, a major strength of Zheng's work is that she acknowledges the problem of unjust roles. She states that the existence of these unjust roles on the RIM model do not mandate that an individual ought to continue to perform unjust actions. She states,

“For social roles are, as a general matter, contextually bound. There used to be chattel slave-owners, but now there are not. There was a time at which there was no such thing as “electricians” or “web designers,” but now there are. It is thus quite an unremarkable fact that roles enter and disappear from existence in flux with changing institutions, technology, culture, and fads. It might easily be the case, then, that to be “a good X” in some cases is to work to bring about the conditions under which Xs would no longer exist” (Zheng 2018).

In this case, Zheng answers some questions left unanswered in the SCM. What actions can fulfill our forward looking responsibility if we continue to participate in institutional processes and social structures? How can one fulfill their forward-looking obligation if your role contributes to the maintenance of the system?

Individuals who hold unjust social roles have the duty to create pressures that will either eliminate that social role or strategically leverage the role in “boundary-pushing ways.”

It would therefore seem, Zheng's RIM Model is more action-guiding for the case of Mark. Evidently, Mark can not be excused for his failure to fulfill his responsibility to Sandy and

people like Sandy because Mark, as a landlord, is in the best position to do so. Despite Mark's preoccupation with other social movements, his financial responsibilities, and his other social roles. He has the duty to use his role's distinctive resources and powers to reshape the structure. But what should Mark do? Where does he begin?

RIM Shortcomings

These lasting questions suggest further clarification is necessary in Zheng's model, particularly surrounding the third practical-theoretical issue in the SCM identified by Zheng: what actions should an individual take? While Zheng establishes that the RIM alleviates this concern because within her model each role has a set of activities linked with it, making it more action-oriented. Within RIM people can still avoid their responsibilities because role ideals are subjective. Therefore, one might establish a limited imagination and low standards for one's ideal role or have the wrong idea about what it means to be a "good" X; in this sense good means that one's actions are actually impacting and rectifying structural injustice and are not mere symbolic acts. For example, someone might argue that to be a good landlord within the RIM means that one simply treats all tenants with respect and does not discriminate against potential tenants. On the other hand, one might argue that there is no "good" way to be a landlord because landlords who acquire properties to rent out, reduce not just others' possibilities to own a home, but also limit housing supply and boost their profits at the expense of others. In this way, Zheng has not fully resolved the action-guiding challenge of individual forward looking responsibility for structural injustice. There is a clear discrepancy between what is good to do versus what is good for the ameliorative project surrounding structural injustice; I will coin this as what is "right" to

do. This is a concern because a practical model for rectifying structural injustice has to prioritize the impact of prescribed actions.

To illustrate the harm in doing what is “good” versus what is “right” we can take the example of the United State’s response to climate change, specifically the plastic problem. In recent years, governments and the private sector have joined forces to prohibit, ban, and limit single-use plastics all around the world. Whether an action is taken at the national or regional level, or even by small businesses, the goal is to drastically reduce plastic waste. It is believed that by accomplishing this, we would be able to reduce plastic waste in our seas and establish more sustainable, greener economies. Plastic straws have been singled out for ban due to the distinct environmental concern they cause. Nevertheless, these bans provide the impression that they solve the plastics pollution problem without any discussion of systemic remedies. As a society, we should think holistically not only about the actions we perform in our fight against structural injustice, but their impacts. We can not just ban straws—we must invest in alternatives. Likewise, the actions we take on in fulfilling our forward-looking responsibility must be solution-oriented investments. This involves acknowledging the question: What does it mean for individuals to perform roles well in the context of structural injustice? Does it mean donating money to the cause? Does it mean doing something simple like sharing an infographic on a trending social justice issue?

What are the resources necessary for resolving these shortcomings?

Some terms need further discussion in both the SCM and the RIM. Our concern here is the question: How can one's role be oriented towards rectifying structural injustice. Specifically, objectivity around justice, power, “raised consciousness” and “Boundary pushing.”

John Rawls offers a valuable theory of justice that will be helpful in the ameliorative project involving structural injustice; this theory is also employed by Young. In his discussion of justice—*Justice as Fairness*—Rawls articulated two basic principles governing political and economic institutions (Rawls 1993). These ideas together imply that society should be formed in such a way that its individuals have the greatest possible degree of liberty, restricted only by the premise that no one member's rights should infringe on the liberty of another. This principle focuses on equality. Rawls acknowledged that inequalities in society could not be entirely avoided. Inherited characteristics, socioeconomic class, personal drive, and even luck can contribute to inequalities. Nonetheless, Rawls argues that a just society should seek to minimize inequality in areas where it has control. Second, disparities – whether social or economic – can only be tolerated if it favors the disadvantaged. Finally, if there is such a beneficial inequality, it should not make it more difficult for individuals without resources to hold positions of influence, such as public office.

A practical theory to correct injustice must include these values of justice and equity. Moving forward I advance that we must shift from a sole focus on helping the poor and oppressed to include a focus on understanding the basis of their poverty and oppression and, as a result, examining and correcting asymmetrical power relationships. This approach appears straightforward, but it is difficult to implement in practice since privilege's normative nature makes oppression invisible. Members of these groups are unaware of the social benefits of their position or of their part in suppressing those who do not have access to them.

Power Dynamics-Relationships in the SCM + RIM

In their discussions, Young and Zheng affirm power is a major influence in the struggle to rectify structural injustice, however their focus is only on pressuring power agents to fulfill the responsibility. Power dynamics are the DNA, the necessary fabric that inspire, create and perpetuate all forms of structural injustice. Thus, it is necessary to dive deeper into the materiality of power in structural injustice in order to establish a plan to rectify it. Bourdieu's theory of practice and empirical study of the preservation of social group differentiation are useful in this context (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu's theory, in particular, characterizes society as a world of power relations in which those with privilege fight hard to retain their advantage and standing. In everyday life, competition for access to economic, social, and cultural capital is continually enacted in many ways across various sectors of activity (Bourdieu, 1984).

Asymmetrical power relationships prevent justice and liberty (Goodwin 2014). Liberty in this case is not only concerned with the availability of opportunities but also focuses on the structure of interpersonal social relationships. A person is considered free as long as she has control over her decisions and behaviors in social relationships. Disempowerment, on the other hand, refers to a power relationship that deprives an individual of this type of power. The ability of the empowered to arbitrarily interfere with the decisions of those who are disempowered characterizes the power imbalance between dominator and dominated.

Corporations, for example, exercise power over individuals. Say a high-tech firm decides to expand development into an area. In doing so it exacerbates existing inequalities: higher income may be unaffected, while lower-income earning individuals are driven out. Moreover, these power relationships are not bilateral. In a prejudiced society, the power and disempowerment of a dominating pair like a police officer and a Black civilian are entrenched in

societal institutions that are reinforced by numerous peripheral agents via their daily encounters. They form the power dyad as an imbalance relationship, whether intentionally or unconsciously. As a result, an explanation of dominance responsibility must shift focus away from the dominator's power and toward an examination of how dominance is socially created and perpetuated – and how individuals may rectify such relationship processes.

As a result, allocating responsibility for structural injustice purely on the basis of an individual's power or “pressuring powerful agents” is a normative error because it ignores what is normatively relevant about this situation: that there is a power imbalance. Even further, it also entails a practical error: by sheltering the normatively relevant power relations from inspection, these power connections are maintained rather than challenged. This is because emphasizing the ability to aid rather than an examination of power relations risks portraying dominators as generous benefactors and the dominated as poor people rather than victims of injustice. If we return to the example of Mark, while we might applaud Mark if he had decided to rent his property to Sandy despite her not being able to pay full price; this action does not ameliorate the homelessness problem. Moreover, this action while charitable only helps Sandy—and only in the short term.

Ameliorating injustice is not about charity. It is about justice. Justice in Sandy's case, along with the unhoused population is to not be in a position wherein she must be at the mercy of another person. Of course, Mark alone does not have the capacity to solve this issue. However, Mark's specific position grants him the authority to uplift and center Sandy and those in her position of disempowerment. In this case the “right” thing for Mark to do is to release himself from a role that disempowers others, or at the very least leverage his existing role to empower individuals who he by his role disempowers.

It is necessary to further expand Zheng's Role-Ideal Model and provide an account of how unique positions can be leveraged to disentangle the power structures that perpetuate systemic injustice.

Chapter 3

Task Assignment

In this chapter I offer a structurally sensitive account of responsibility for disempowerment that avoids passively repeating domination by building on parts of the Social Connection Model and Role Ideal Model. Moving forward I continue to propose using Young SCM and Zheng's RIM in conjunction. In doing so I aim to establish a prefatory set of tasks that can be applied to all roles. These tasks are expansion of the terms mentioned in Zheng Role-Ideal: "raised consciousness" and "boundary pushing". Raising consciousness I argue enables critical understanding of norms and ideologies that perpetuate injustice. By raising consciousness, individuals can identify whether one is empowered, disempowered or a peripheral agent in their various roles. Boundary pushing provides clarity on how exactly one ought to act to rectify injustice.

The aim of these tasks is to undermine asymmetric power structures and restructure social ties as relationships between persons of equal standing. As with other moral duties, the general framework may not be sufficient to identify precisely what an actor owes in a given circumstance, and duties that apply in general may be nullified in certain situations by elements of an agent's specific situation. Nonetheless, adopting these tasks may provide the impetus to reach the political goal of ameliorating the unjust damages that oppression imposes on the disadvantaged. A responsibility to resist structural injustice is simply a commitment to try to make the world a less oppressive place. As a result, I believe that, in general, we should prefer accounts of tasks that best serve this aim.

“Raised Consciousness”

Historically, and still now, consciousness-raising has been a viable form of political action. Consciousness-raising is both a concept and a technique with roots that may be traced back to 1960s feminism (Mills, A. J., Durepos, G., & Wiebe, E. (2010). It is inextricably linked to the theoretical statement that the "personal is political" among feminism. This indicates that what one individual experiences is a mirror of the societal structural order. Consciousness raising is an important strategy because justice and liberty can only be attained when “facts” and ideology are confronted critically; because you can not change a system you do not understand.

Given the widespread ideological and institutionalized ignorance surrounding various forms of injustice, one of the challenges in any domain is not just learning hard truths, but also understanding how to interpret such information in a practical manner (Freidman 1999). This is made more difficult by a lack of knowledge of how ideology, power, and language interact within the cultural realm to legitimate the present systems of incentives and penalties. This is related to one new development of the idea of epistemic injustice: hermeneutic injustice, defined as the lack of concepts required for the articulation of oppressed experiences (Fricker, 2006). Hermeneutic injustice refers to the unequal treatment of members of marginalized communities in interpretative practices and reasoning processes that underpin the formation of social meanings required to preserve social laws. Ignorance and closed-mindedness are essential values that promote institutional injustice. What drives this ignorance? Refusing to embrace reality on any issue that does not favor privileged interests. Fossil fuel corporations, for example, benefit from climate denial; billionaire benefactors benefit from tax-cut mysticism.

Moreover, there is a widening gap between knowledge and action. The ability to learn research and acquire knowledge has made it increasingly easier to know the implications of our

actions and the consequences of structural injustice. However, the ability to execute, take action, perform and deal with the resulting emotions is drastically underdeveloped and little guidance is offered. This is alarming because in the effort to disentangle injustice from social structures it is important for society to cultivate competence and confidence, what we might term collective prudence in pursuing transformative action. The lack of this prudential wisdom concerning how to act produces stagnation and passivity; individuals are in a continuance state of passive learning about injustice and failing to act. The two create arguments for collective and social action but people must respond to their responsibility individually, what is the practical argument on fulfilling these ideal roles.

In the SCM + RIM model raising consciousness is an ongoing task; it is an act of discovery and empowerment. People are meant to look beyond an individualistic approach to their problems by drawing on their own personal lived experiences to understand how their lives are linked through social practices. It is also an effective strategy in our ameliorative project for structural injustice because it reveals the intersection of various social issues and injustices. You become aware that the income inequality struggle is directly linked to the racial struggle, and that is directly linked to gender struggle, that to the housing struggle, and that to the education crisis and so forth. That the fight against one form of inequality also benefits the other.

In this process the virtues of honesty, curiosity, and courage have to be cultivated. Raising consciousness requires first that you are truthful about your privilege, power and emotions in regards to your lived experiences. Second, it requires that you seek out diverse and nuanced information, perspectives, and opinions. Third, the process is didactic in that it requires collaboration with others to come up with solutions to these political and social problems. A person should take note of where one is politically, economically, socially, and culturally situated

in a global context and pass the task forward. Making these analytical connections to the political nature of social injustice and oppression is formative in the process of bringing about social change.

Simply, raising consciousness is about fostering a habit of listening to and learning about the experiences of others, sharing one's own experiences and assessing the knowledge gained in the context of current social issues and the system of empowerment and disempowerment. The process involves asking the question: Where do I fit in all of this? Roles can place individuals in positions where they are either empowered, disempowered or peripheral agents. This is an idea proposed by Dorothea Gädeke in her research, *Who should fight domination?* I will be drawing on these terms to establish the tasks of positional identification.

Role Positions

Empowered Roles

As we learned in the case of Mark, those in empowered positions have a specific duty to rectify structural injustice, because it is in them who perpetuate and benefit from these systems. Roles in positions of empowerment are in a unique position to repair asymmetrical power relations, because they are the bearers of power and therefore privilege. Some examples of social empowered roles include men, wealthy individuals, heterosexuals, and White people. Empowered roles also include job positions such as CEOs and managers hold and can exercise power over their employees, similarly police officers over civilians, landlords over their tenants, etc. Losing one's privilege may be a powerful demotivator for those who have it leading to both intentional and unintentional forms of ignorance. For instance many White Americans are taught from a young age not to discuss race, making it difficult for them to properly contextualize racial

issues. It is necessary for individuals in an empowered position to be held politically accountable for reforming a dominating power structure and to share this responsibility with others who occupy positions within this power structure .

Exercising political responsibility with empowered roles requires a significant amount of self-reflection. To prevent unwittingly repeating power imbalances in the name of justice, one must become conscious of and undermine one's own place within systems of domination, including its identity-building components, mentalities, and implicit advantages.

Individuals in empowered roles also have the task of opting in and opting out of these roles. In the discussion of “unethical roles” there is much nuance needed in determining what roles are inherently immoral and should therefore only be opted out of. For the purpose of brevity, I will not argue for or against the idea that some roles should not exist; though I see research on this topic may provide more support necessary for theories concerning how to rectify structural injustice. However, roles that inherently perpetuate or uplift immoral and exploitative practices should be opted-out of. This is of course in circumstances where an individual has the liberty to do so and would not be disempowered at the hands of another. An obvious example is a slave owner, who chooses to opt-out of this role. Of course, those who are empowered have a great stake in maintaining the status quo so it is unlikely many will choose this route. This route is difficult, as it would require a person to give up their privilege, however my aim is not to develop a framework that is easy to follow, but rather one that is truly ameliorative. Moreover, I am not suggesting that individuals simply take on these task without taking the necessary steps to ensure their well being or happiness, I am simply making a case that those in empowered roles that are inherently harmful and disadvantage ought to take on the task of creating a short-term or long term plan to opt-out of the role

Some empowered roles, however, cannot be opted out of. Say a man in a patriarchal society. In this case, as well in the case of individuals who choose to not opt-out of roles where they are the empowered in a social power imbalance, these individuals seek to leverage their power to disrupt the status quo. Men for example might take on actions that center the concern of women.

Disempowered Roles

Certainly, when distributing tasks for the responsibility to empower the disadvantaged, the conversation must also involve and center the disadvantaged. In the SCM and RIM Young and Zheng both affirm that those who are disempowered by systems of injustice also have a political responsibility to fight injustice. Accordingly, this has led to criticism because there is a concern that this responsibility is overburdening for the people most impacted by structural injustice?

Young maintains that individuals disadvantaged by systemic injustices also have political responsibility for organizing collectively to overcome injustices. Afterall, “It is they who know the most about the harms they suffer, and thus it is up to them, though not them alone, to broadcast their situation and call it injustice” (Young 146). She states, victims of structural injustice, in particular, have a significant stake in dismantling injustice, and they must accept responsibility for doing so. She explains :“Factory workers often accept whatever wages they are offered and do not challenge their bosses' authority, for example, reinforcing their employers' efforts to squeeze more work out of them for less money. Even if they don't, victims of injustice should take some responsibility for challenging the structures that produce it”(Young 146). But, how is it that such a responsibility is not simply a further unfair burden on those who have already suffered under injustice?

Initially, Young's words come across as harsh. Accordingly, it may appear that holding those disadvantaged by the system accountable is completely inappropriate. They are, after all, sufferers of injustice. Why should they now be held responsible for their misfortunes? Does this not put an undue weight on them and, in the end, come off as victim-blaming (Gunnemyr 2020) (Gould, 2009) ? After all, they rely on the benevolence or indifference of the dominators, so they may not be able to do much anyhow. Moreover, the difficulty in assigning responsibility to those who are most disadvantaged stems from the fact that moral responsibilities appear to be all-things-considered duties that "ought to do." Identifying and assigning moral responsibilities allows us to recognize, first, the activities we are required to perform and, second, the situations when we have failed to do what we should have done. Yet, how can we fail to do what we are ethically obliged to do if the duty was not fairly imposed on us?

Despite these concerns I affirm that in the SCM +RIM people in disempowered positions have the specific duty to resist their oppression. To release the disadvantaged of any responsibility is a mistake because it marks the disadvantaged as passive victims of injustice with no forms of agency. In reality, the reproduction of dominating power is also dependent on the activities of those who are disempowered. For example, a sweatshop is only able to continue violating labor laws and treating its employees poorly if there is no one to speak up or call out these violations. Moreover, according to feminist standpoint epistemology, victims speaking about their experiences of oppression may be able to bring to light critical information regarding oppression's severity in ways that even sympathetic non-victims cannot. Think of movements such as #Metoo and Black Lives Matter. In the case of the former, the #MeToo movement revealed to Americans and people all around the world how pervasive sexual harassment, assault, and other forms of misbehavior are. As more survivors came forward, they realized they

were not alone. And those who had never given sexual harassment a second thought realized how deeply it had damaged their employees, children, parents, and friends. All of this has influenced how many Americans think about sexual misbehavior, as well as gender and power. Even further, study shows that Black Lives Matter protests shift public discourse as captured by social media and news reports (Okun Dunivin et al., 2022). Throughout the movement's existence, BLM protests have drastically increased the use of terminology linked with the BLM agenda. Longitudinal statistics demonstrate that phrases like "systemic racism" that denote the movement's conceptually different ideals get more attention during protest waves. Beyond severe, or "viral," times of widespread protest, these shocks have a significant influence. These findings suggest that BLM has been successful in using protests to influence long-term changes in how Americans think about racial inequity.

An account of forward-looking responsibility that strips those disadvantaged by structural injustice would therefore be one wherein the history of activism is not taken into consideration. The truth is, the struggle for justice has always been led by the victims of oppression. It was enslaved people after all who risked all for freedom by abandoning slave masters, coming uninvited into Union lines and offering their help as laborers, pioneers, guides and spies that led to the emancipation proclamation. It was women who made speeches, signed petitions, marched in parades and argued over and over again that women, like men, deserved all of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in the fight for women's suffrage. Those who have been the victims of injustice have always risen to the occasion to resist, and this is in part due to the reality that they need to be—after all “It is they who know the most about the harms they suffer, and thus it is up to them, though not them alone, to broadcast their situation and call it injustice.” In that sense Young is correct in assigning them responsibility.

Of course, it is important that within this forward-looking responsibility assignment I establish a guideline that protects the disadvantaged from taking on unfair tasks: this does not mean those disadvantaged should engage in extraordinarily costly acts of resistance. They, like everyone else, can participate in self-sacrifice. However, this form of resistance is typically considered superfluous rather than obligatory.

Peripheral Agents

Lastly, by virtue of having a place inside institutions of dominating power, peripheral agents share political responsibility for the oppression of the disadvantaged; they have the task to recognize and undermine their position of power or disempowerment rather than merely exploiting and so tacitly perpetuating it.

A peripheral agent or bystander can be: an individual is in position to stop or lessen the oppression without causing themselves much struggle; a person who profits in some way from the oppression; a person who is related by history or culture to the oppressed; or the oppressed appeal to them for support. A great example of a bystander within the SCM + RIM model is the role of a consumer within the fight against sweatshops. Consumers have a significant obligation to oppose this injustice because they are implicated in oppression of sweatshop laborers.

However, in terms of the power systems in question, bystanders do not always have a particularly powerful position. They just reproduce dominance by following established norms. They are, however, valuable partners in this struggle because they have no significant interests in sustaining the existing quo. And their support isn't just numerically significant: Social power relationships are fundamentally dependent on matched social behaviors that define them as power relationships. The influence of the advantaged will dwindle once these conventional activities are questioned, interrupted, or weakened. As a result, peripheral actors are expected to

analyze and disrupt the normalizing procedures that surround them. Even further the task of bystanders is to specifically work to center the voices of the disadvantaged because the norm is to keep their voices in the margin: to be a true ally. Peripheral agents must not only validate the lived experiences of those who are disadvantaged, but also allow them to lead the way in effecting change. This means making room for them, and instead of telling them what you believe they need, asking the disadvantaged what resources might help them.

I have now proposed the prefatory task of role identification: positioning oneself in regards to the power their various roles hold. All positions in this model have the responsibility to empower the disadvantaged. In the case of the empowered, this can be done either by opting out of harmful roles entirely or leveraging one's powers to uplift the disadvantaged. The disempowered have the duty to resist and speak up about their oppression. While peripheral agents have the duty to support and center the voices of the disadvantaged.

Intersections

When contemplating the responsibilities of all roles the primary task of raising consciousness is an important one because it creates an environment in which individuals are able to evaluate how they might be disempowered by one role, say the role of a woman in a patriarchal society, and empowered, the role of a White person in a racist society to leverage their source of empowerment. We should be cognizant of the ways in which these many forms of oppression may interact, as well as the extra trade-offs that victims of various types of intersectional oppression may be forced to undertake. After all, various forms of oppression commonly overlap, and a victim-duty account that overlooks this would make erroneous moral judgements about those disempowered while also providing inadequate action guidance.

Young articulates this point well in her affirmation, “Persons and institutions that are relatively privileged within structural processes have greater responsibilities than others to take actions to undermine injustice. As beneficiaries of the process, they have responsibilities. Their being privileged usually means, moreover, that they are able to change their habits or make extra efforts without suffering serious deprivation. (Young 145). For example, in the struggle for gender equality White woman may have distinct tasks when facing discrimination and harassment at work than an immigrant woman who is a victim of only one form of oppression and a disabled woman who experiences a different type of intersectional oppression.

Next I propose the task of performing non-normative behaviors within individual roles. I will use Zheng’s concept of boundary pushing as an umbrella term for these tasks. Here my aim is to develop an account of boundary pushing that resolves the question: how can we ensure that the empowered, disempowered and peripheral agents are doing the “right” thing, or their actions are in fact ameliorative?

Boundary Pushing

Boundary pushing is a necessary task by all individuals who are socially connected to structural injustice. Given, Zheng does not articulate what “boundary pushing is,” I will develop an action guiding definition that best fits her interpretation. This is the responsibility to act in ways that are contrary to oppressive norms. It has long been seen that structurally unfair systems of rules alter the beliefs, norms, and conventions that shape the cognitive systems of individuals who are entrenched in them. The struggle to rectify structural injustice is a struggle to disrupt the status quo. Boundary pushing are actions that establish new patterns of thinking and behavior

and have an ameliorative quality; they are intentionally non-normative activities meant to blur asymmetric power imbalances.

While all non-normative activity entails defying repressive norms, I will draw onto two distinct categories of non-normative behavior: counter normative and a-normative.

Counter-normative task involve behavior that directly opposes the principles at the core of a standard and a-normative task involve behavior that lies outside of a norm without directly contradicting or challenging the values at its heart. This option does not expressly promote elements that the norm condemns, but they do provide alternatives to the norm's restricted prescriptions. For instance, in the corporate world there is a norm to not openly discuss salaries because it is seen as taboo; a White male hiring-manager might behave counter-normatively by rejecting this norm completely and instead being transparent about wages and bonuses with all employees. On the other hand, a hiring-manager might respond a-normatively by setting salary benchmarks for different positions on his/her team, in this way he is not directly going against the status quo, but performing an action that empowers employees who would otherwise be disadvantaged because of those norms.

Individuals who are disadvantaged may not be able to participate in counter-normative behavior because they do not have the complete liberty to do so, in this case it is recommended that they perform a-normatively because by distorting the status quo they also limit the power normative social influence has on them. Moreover, individuals acting non-normatively call into question oppressive norms by leading lives that challenge those norms. As we've seen, civilized oppression standards are maintained in part by reinforcing expectations about how people will be treated and accepted. As the assumption rises that oppressed people will continue to accept their treatment, fewer and fewer choices become visible or available to them. When society is

structured in such a way that oppressive practices become the default, self-replicating choice, coercion and force are no longer necessary.

One approach to dismantling oppressive norms is participation in the organized large-scale collective action, which substitutes the oppressive norm with some other agreed-upon non-oppressive norm. Widespread non-normative behavior may weaken civilized oppression norms: as more victims act against the norm, the presumption that they will either receive or accept the treatment dictated by oppressive practice weakens, making it harder to persuade others that they will or should accept that treatment. A-normative and counter-normative conduct will behave differently in this regard. Because counter-normative conduct tries to directly question a particular norm, a large enough amount of uncoordinated counter-normative behavior might lead to coordinated collective action, with a new, non-oppressive norm taking its place. Conversely, because a-normative conduct is unconventional, widespread a-normative behavior would result in a scenario where no definitive norm exists. The obligation to be a non-normative individual, then, is to act in ways that defy exploitative norms when doing so will provide additional lifestyle alternatives within the social connection model. It is not a responsibility to change existing norms; rather, it is a responsibility to assist people in discovering new possibilities for themselves within the constraints that they face. Simply, it is a responsibility to construct alternative solutions.

The case of boycotting sweatshops provides compelling evidence for raising consciousness and non-normative behavior as a task necessary for rectifying injustice. In the first place, sweatshops are perpetuated by the norm of fast fashion. Within the discussion surrounding the ethics of corporations having sweatshops there is a pro-sweatshop movement that argues that working in sweatshop factories, no matter how poor the conditions are, is preferable to having no

job at all. This argument is supported by testimonials of disadvantaged labors from abroad who claim that they would rather work in what is now considered slave labor than remain jobless. It is difficult to hear these accounts and continue to demonize sweatshops. However, it is critical to read between the lines to determine the true meaning of "this job is better than no employment at all." This explanation stems not from workers' happiness with their existing working conditions, but from a lack of better choices. In this view, the argument should not be focused on sweatshops, but rather on how to improve working conditions in these countries as a whole.

Boycotting is a common norm among activists. However, by studying the issue of sweatshops with a raised consciousness, you begin to see that boycotts may not improve this particular problem in the long run, and are only a temporary remedy. Moreover boycotts may exacerbate the situation since corporations may opt to adjust for their lower earnings by lowering pay or enacting other employee-impacting actions. Boycotts are also, often, directed at a single corporation rather than the underlying problem in nations where sweatshops are prevalent. As a result, even in situations where this worked, such as with Nike, general working conditions in many developing nations do not improve or meet basic criteria. In light of this, it becomes clear that a new alternative to seeking justice is necessary.

A consumer, in their role as a bystander, might engage in boundary pushing by going against the norm of buying from these corporations by performing counter-normative behavior such as buying from local marketplaces in areas where there are sweatshops, thereby strengthening the economy of those who are disadvantaged. In this way boundary pushing has both a creative and intellectual dimension: it is necessary to be well-informed on the specific characteristic of injustice and flexible in the pursuit of how to rectify it.

Similarly, we can return to the example of Mark for the last time. Imagine, one morning Mark is informed of his complicated role in the struggle of people like Sandy. What is the “right” thing for Mark to do? Moreover, what might Sandy and other peripheral agents witnessing the housing problem do? The SCM+RIM model informs Mark that he ought to identify where he is positioned in this ecosystem of injustice, raise consciousness and perform non-normative actions to rectify this form of injustice. In identifying his position Mark may be disadvantaged in other roles, for example, his role as a Black man, however, he is still implicated in Sandy’s oppression because his role as a landlord put him in a position that disempowers others. By raising consciousness, i.e doing research on the housing problem in his area, speaking to other landlords about the problem, seeking out the opinions of people who had formerly been unhoused or experts on the issue; Mark may learn that marginalized groups, particularly Black people, are disproportionately represented in the unhoused population; that his fight against racial injustice need not proceed his other forward looking responsibility, but can occur in tandem. Through boundary pushing Mark is able to disrupt the normative behaviors exemplified by other landlords such as being highly profit driven. Moreover, normatively in the housing market the ideal tenant for many landlords is a single, non-smoking professional with no dependents and spotless employment/rental history; who can also pay sky-high rents on his or her own. When landlords do not challenge existing norms and instead operate in markets in which these “ideal” tenants are readily available, people who are currently homeless—or have ever been homeless—are at an extreme disadvantage. Mark, in following the SCM+ RIM model might push boundaries by working with community housing agencies and renting to homeless people or voluntarily renting at less than the market rent in a manner that does not overburden him financially.

On the other hand Sandy also has the unique duty of resisting her own oppression. Though difficult, Sandy ought to share her situation with others to inform the general public on the disparity she faces. Sandy may also collaborate with people who are also affected by the problem of homeless as well as powerful agents. Likewise, peripheral agents have the task of amplifying the voice of individuals like Sandy and centering current and former unhoused people in the discussion to solve the homelessness crisis.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have formed an analysis on Iris Marion Young's Social Connection Model and Robin Zheng's Role-Ideal Model. I affirm that using the two models in tandem, the SCM + RIM resolves the action-guiding and overly demanding problem. I propose that before we can provide actionable solutions, we must assign a preparatory task that considers asymmetric power dynamics within social roles so that individuals can identify whether they are empowered, disempowered, or peripheral agents. Individuals can leverage their roles to empower the disadvantaged. By the ongoing act of raising consciousness people are able to learn about the experiences of others, share their experiences and assess the knowledge gained in the context of current social issues and the system of empowerment and disempowerment. This process is also didactic in that it encourages collaborating with others to propose solutions to systemic issues. Finally, individuals are encouraged to perform boundary pushing activities. To rectify injustice people ought to reject unjust social norms, practices and beliefs and adopt counter normative and a-normative behaviors that disrupt these norms and thereby transform the structure in structurally unjust systems.

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