Recovery as Social Process II

- Announcements
- South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Lecture notes: Social aspects of recovery
Announcements

• Prof. Zurbriggen
  – Office hours Thurs 6/2 10:00-11:00am

• Final Exam Thurs 6/9
  – 9:00-11:00am
  – Bring green scantron (882-E)
South African TRC

• Truth and Reconciliation Commission in post-apartheid South Africa
• Goals: healing for country as well as individual survivors
• Focus more on restorative than retributive justice
  – healing and restoring individual and collective health through truth-telling
  – vs. punishment, revenge, retribution
• TRC had power to grant amnesty
Amnesty

• Amnesty granted only to those who
  – fully confessed (full disclosure of involvement in crimes)
  – showed that acts were politically motivated
    • crimes not committed for personal gain or out of personal, individualistic malice
  – showed that act was proportional to political goals pursued
  – Note: remorse or apology NOT required
Long Night's Journey into Day

• 4 stories
• WARNING
  – Descriptions of brutality, including beatings, murder
  – Some photographs of victims
Long Night's Journey into Day

• Watch for
  – power given back to victims? or were power dynamics recreated in proceedings?
  – what were perpetrator's motives for applying to TRC?
  – what is perpetrator's process of change?
  – what were goals or outcomes for survivors?
  – is need to understand greater than need for vengeance? Is truth more important than justice?
  – what is the role of forgiveness?
  – justification of violence as means to an end -- is this argument compelling?
TRC Judgment

• Eric Taylor
  – Decision in 1999; amnesty denied
    – "Because of the lacunas in the applicants' version (except De Kock) and the lack of details referred to above, we have reservations as to whether the requirement related to political objectives have been complied with.
    – "On the other hand, apart from De Kock, they have failed to disclose everything they know about the murders.
    – "In the result we are not satisfied that the applicants, but for De Kock, have complied with the requirements of the Act.
    – "Consequently the applications of Taylor, Lotz, Van Rensburg, Snyman, Van Zyl and Du Plessis for amnesty in respect of the murders of Matthew Goniwe, Sparrow Mkhonto, Fort Calata and Secelo Mhlauli together with all the other offences incidental to the commission of those offences are REFUSED."
TRC Judgment

• Robert McBride
  - 2001
  - Amnesty granted
    - "The Committee is satisfied that he has disclosed fully what his memory allows him to in the circumstances and all such activities were related to the political landscape of the relevant times."
    - "GRANTED amnesty in respect of all the offences"
Lecture

- Herman: Structured group therapy for survivors
- Staub: National programs
Group Therapy for Survivors

• Herman Ch. 11
• Different kinds of group work for different stages of recovery
  – structure and goals will differ at different stages
Stage 1: Safety

- Group work usually not appropriate immediately
- Wait 6 months to a year
- Earlier groups may be appropriate if one event affects many people simultaneously
Stage 2: Remembrance/Mourning

• Focus on story-telling and narratives
• Focus of group is on trauma, so composition of group is homogenous
• Herman & Shatzow treatment model
  – time-limited
  – focus on specific personal goals
  – requires active leadership by therapist
  – outcome: improvement in how survivor feels about self, but not necessarily in relationships with others
Stage 3: Reconnection

• Focus is now on present and future, not on past

• Structure is more like that of a "normal" or traditional psychotherapy group
  – so group process and transference may be important

• Homogeneity of membership not required
Staub (2006)

• Mass societal violence requires societal-level approaches to healing and reconciliation
  – individuals need psychological healing and transformation
  – national leaders, jurists shape policies
  – NGOs work with community groups
  – community groups
  – journalists and media
Individual Healing

- Healing individuals from past victimization trauma is probably necessary for societal-level reconciliation

- Recommendations
  - engage with painful memories in supportive space
  - reconnect with people, regain trust
  - empathy for self and others (by self and others)
Large-group Healing

• Testimonials and commemoration

• Some similar goals to individual approach
  – engage with painful memories, reconnect with others
  – but in larger setting

• Focus on pain/suffering but also on hope
Understanding Origins

- Staub has extensively studied origins of genocide and other violence.
- He believes that societies need to understand these origins to prevent future violence.
- Key: reverse devaluation of the other; begin process of humanization.
- Need to ensure that basic human needs are satisfied.
Healing for Perpetrators

- Staub discusses need for perpetrators, and bystanders, to heal
- Defenses (due to guilt and shame) will be strong
- Hearing stories of survivors often helpful
  - probably best if it’s not the stories of people they have perpetrated against
  - develops empathy
- Commemorate altruistic members of perpetrator group
Group Healing from Individual Trauma

- Sometimes an individual’s trauma impacts a larger group
- Memorials and testimonials (formal or informal) can help aid healing