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Towards a Theory of Education for Social Change: Exploring the Nexus between Transformational Education and the Capability Approach

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Abstract

Education generally is geared towards training the mind and getting the learner to acquire skills and knowledge needed in different sectors in society. However, if we agree that education is a public good, there is need to go beyond its conceptualisation from a utilitarian perspective of being instrumental to society's economic progress to an understanding of education as instrumental to realising individual's transformative capabilities and subsequently, social change. Education aimed at achieving social change should focus on not only subjecting learners to cognitive aspects but also getting them to be capacitated to become agents of social change and progress. Exploring this theme and theorising on some mechanics of realising education for social change is the focus of this article. The article adopts qualitative desktop method and utilises secondary data to theorise on realising education for social change, with a consideration of the nexus between two frameworks: Transformative Learning and the Capability Approach frameworks.

Keywords: education, higher education, social change, transformational learning, capability approach, values

1. Introduction

Generally, education is geared towards training the mind and getting the learner to acquire skills and knowledge needed in different sectors in society. According to the UNESCO [1] report on education, education is at the core of societies' effort to adapt to change and to transform from within. The centrality of education and its need in society are also acknowledged in the idea of education (in this case higher education) as a common or public good. Notably, the discourse on higher education as common/public good as can be garnered from some scholars ([2–5], etc.) has led to a conclusion that higher education can be conceptualised as a public good since it helps empower citizens to be economically efficient (amongst other utilities).

It can be inferred that the discourse on higher education as common good has been enshrouded in the utilitarian conceptualisation which understands development as economic growth and all aspects of society including education geared towards realising this. Consequently, higher education curriculum in most contemporary societies has focused mainly on learning that enhances the intellectual/cognitive faculties of individuals in society [6, 7].

However, if we agree that education is a public good, there is need to go beyond its conceptualisation from a utilitarian perspective of being instrumental to economic progress of society, to an understanding of education as instrumental to realising individual's transformative capabilities and subsequently, social change. On this, Chakraborty et al. ([8], p. 1) are of the view that 'education plays a very important role in moulding the character of an individual ... Education can initiate social change by bringing about changes in the outlook and attitude of people'. Notably, contemporary societies are faced with lots of issues which need to be addressed. These issues have been exacerbated by the fact that societies are rapidly industrialising and urbanising, necessitating a simultaneous change in human intellect to adapt to the changes in society [1, 8]. The rapidly changing society has also seen the rise in different social ills and is becoming increasingly morally bankrupt, as people lose their capacity to function as moral agents, who are supposed to be at the helm of realising a positively transformed society. Agreeably, every society needs individuals capacitated through education to fulfil a role in the economic sector and work environment, but they also must be equipped to be agents of social change through their ability to exude proper values, morality and ethics. As it stands it will seem that current forms of education are 'totally mechanized. It develops the cramming power of the students but curbs the individual thinking capability of the students' ([8], p. 1). But we are living in an ever-changing world hence 'education must also change ... this means moving beyond literacy and numeracy, to focus on learning environments and on new approaches to learning for greater justice, social equity and global solidarity' ([1], p. 3).

Hence, education aimed at achieving social change should focus on not only subjecting learners to cognitive aspects but also to get them to engage in other aspects of learning which can capacitate them to become agents of social change and progress. Exploring this theme and theorising on some mechanics of realising education for social change is the focus of this article. The article adopts qualitative desktop method and utilises secondary data to explore the nexus between two frameworks: Transformative Learning (TLF) and the Capability Approach frameworks (CA). The consideration is based on the premise that there may be a link between the understanding of the different components of the TLF and the CA in theorising about education for social change.

2. Theoretical/conceptual frameworks

2.1 Transformative learning framework

The TLF was proposed by Jack Mezirow in the late 1970s as a theory of adult learning. The framework defines how individuals develop by critically reflecting on their experiences and reconsidering previously held belief systems. This process over-time is geared towards changing the person's flawed perspectives of the world. For Mezirow ([9], p. 22), transformative learning is aimed at transforming 'problematic frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, reflective, open,

and emotionally able to change'. Hence, transformative learning is about transforming individual's worldviews and understanding how and what leads to this transformation in worldview. In other words, transformative learning summarily is an educational framework which involves the development of an individual's consciousness achieved by transforming the person's worldview and belief systems. It is education centring on expanding individuals' varied capacities through deliberate processes aimed at getting the learner to access symbolic contents in the subconscious and to critically interrogate fundamental premises on which previously held beliefs are grounded on [10]. Also, central to the TLF is the position that individuals modify their frames of references through engaging in critical reflection 'on their experiences, which in turn leads to a perspective transformation' ([11], p. 167). Furthermore, according to Mezirow, the process through which an individual's worldview is transformed (perspective transformation) follows through three dimensions including: psychological (transformation in thought), convictional (reconsideration of belief systems) and behavioural (transformation in lifestyle) (in [12]). Perspective transformation resulting in transformative learning is infrequent and usually is consequent on 'disorienting dilemma'. This is elicited by some major life crisis or consequent on build-up of transformations in meaning schemes of the individual over a period. Disorienting dilemmas can also occur in a learning context when educators provide space for learners to engage in new forms of critical thought.

Consequently, it can be inferred that there are some important concepts and components in the TLF. Centrally, 'meaning structures' (perspectives and schemes) are main components of the TLF. 'Meaning perspectives are defined as 'broad sets of predispositions resulting from psychocultural assumptions which determine the horizons of our expectations' [11]. Also, 'A meaning scheme is "the constellation of concept, belief, judgment, and feelings which shapes a particular interpretation' ([13], p. 223). Moreover, the concept of critical reflection is important to the TLF—it 'involves a critique of assumptions to determine whether the belief, often acquired through cultural assimilation in childhood, remains functional for us as adults' [11]. In critical reflection, the learner ponders on the ramifications of the problem and through it understands him/herself better.

Summarily, Mezirow sees transformative learning as the core of adult education pedagogy, in that education is aimed at enabling the individual to be an independent thinker. This is achieved through forms of education aimed at assisting the learner to 'negotiate his or her own values, meanings, and purpose rather than uncritically acting on those of others' ([14], p. 11). Transformative learning in the education setting translates to assisting learners to change their meaning schemes. In this, there is a rational interrogation of previously held assumptions and beliefs, 'it is within the arena of rational discourse that experience, and critical reflection are played out' ([15], p. 11). This is to say that through a rational discourse process, critical reflection develops in which experience and assumptions are interrogated resulting in the transformation of meaning schemes and structures. Hence the process of transformative learning 'is essentially rational and analytical' [14]). This view has resulted in some criticism of the transformative learning theory as being intellectual/rationally focused [16, 17].

As part of the effort to provide alternative viewpoint, some scholars have expanded on the TLF. Of note are the views of Robert Boyd and Paulo Freire. Transformation in Boyd's perspective is 'a fundamental change in one's personality involving conjointly the resolution of a personal dilemma and the expansion of consciousness resulting in greater personality integration' ([18], p. 459). Boyd's conception of transformative

education differs from Mezirow's understanding to the effect that unlike Mezirow's focus on rational conflicts, Boyd looks at the arising and resolution of conflicts in an individual's psyche and how these are transformed. Boyd's point of departure is based on an analytic psychology stance, in this 'instead of becoming more autonomous as Mezirow purports, the individual develops a greater interdependent relationship with and compassion for society' ([15], p. 14). Also, Boyd's understanding of transformative education goes beyond rational to other realms of the learner's life including spirituality. The purpose of transformative education includes aiding the learner to recognise their 'spirit'; 'that abiding within the person is a truth, a knowledge, which is not separate from socio-economic, political, and other cultural influences, but transcends them' ([19], p. 282).

On its own, Freire's philosophy takes as a point of departure the ontological position that human beings should be subjects rather than objects, and as such they are continually self-reflecting and working towards the transformation of their context to become more equitable. Differing from Mezirow's focus on individual transformation, Taylor ([15], p. 16) notes that 'Freire is much more concerned about a social transformation via the unveiling or demythologizing of reality by the oppressed through the awakening of their critical consciousness.' Hence, education does not serve a neutral purpose rather 'it either domesticates by imparting the values of the dominant group so that learners assume things are right the way they are, or liberates, allowing people to critically reflect upon their world and take action to change society towards a more equitable and just vision' ([16], p. 9). Also, just like Mezirow, critical reflection is important in transformational education, but contrastingly Freire understands this as enabling learners to become critically aware of their reality and to work towards their society's transformation. The individual's and society's transformations, according to Freire emancipatory perspective, are interlinked and cannot be separated from each other [15].

Against the above backdrop and together with the understanding of transformational learning as proposed by Mezirow et al., this article adopts the understanding of the framework as 'education that not only transfers knowledge, but also develops whole persons who influence communities and nations' ([20], p. 12). In this article, the views of Boyd and Freire are conjoined and allow us to see that education for social change should include efforts to transform the individual in a holistic way and to capacitate him/her to contribute to society's transformation.

2.2 Capability approach

The capability approach (CA) proposed by Amartyr Sen and Martha Nussbaum is a theory of development which recommends the move away from utilitarian/economic conception to an understanding of development that considers human development and well-being. It comprises two normative arguments which are: firstly, that people's freedom to achieve well-being is and should be of primary moral importance and secondly 'freedom to achieve wellbeing is to be understood in terms of people's capabilities which is their real opportunities to do and be what they have reason to value' [21]. According to the CA framework, freedom to achieve well-being concerns what people are able to do and be (functioning) which have consequence to the life they are able to lead. Essential to CA is a set of fundamental human capabilities which are important towards realising well-being and the good life. Also, according to the framework, social arrangements put in place to realise well-being should be based on the extent they help people to achieve functioning they value [22].

The CA comprises some ideas which are core concepts on which the framework is based, they include: Capability, Freedom, Functioning, Value and Agency. Capability refers to the different combinations of functioning, which an individual can achieve and from which the individual can choose from [23]. Freedom according to Sen ([24], p. 31) is taken to mean 'the real opportunity that we have to accomplish what we value.' Functioning is the different things an individual 'may value or have reason to value doing or being' ([25], p. 75). Functioning hence includes different states (beings—being nourished, being housed, being educated, being illiterate, etc.) of human beings and activities (doings—travelling, caring, voting, debating, eating, consuming, etc.) people are able to undertake [21]. On its own 'value' as a qualifier, which always follows the Capability conceptualisations, is not a unique capability approach concept but an essential condition used to evaluate the quality of life [23, 26]. Agency refers to 'someone who acts and brings about change, and whose achievements can be judged in terms of her own values and objectives, whether or not we assess them in terms of an external criterion as well' ([25], p. 19).

This article adopts the CA in its theorisation of education for social change in conjunction with the TLF. Important for this paper is the consideration of education as necessary towards enhancing individual capabilities and functioning. This should consider all aspects of learning that could be termed transformative and which grounds the life an individual would want to lead and which can impact on society's transformation.

2.3 Education for social change

Chakraborty et al. ([8], p. 1) defines social change as 'an alteration in the social order of a society.' Social change may hence constitute a positive and or negative modification in established *modus vivendi* of societies. In most instances though, the discourse on social change focuses on how societies adapt to increasing changes in its varied spaces. For example, increasing industrialisation, urbanisation and changes in human knowledge has notably necessitated that society transforms towards adapting to these changes. Chakraborty et al. ([8], p. 2) are also of the view that 'change means accepting new ideas leading to evolution and development.' This arguably could be geared towards moving society towards a positive response to perhaps a previously negative status quo. For Bhat ([27], p. 2), 'the term social change is used to indicate the changes that take place in human interactions and interrelations. Society is a web of social relationships and hence social change means change in the system of social relationships.' This changes the focus of the concept of social change from the macro society level of analysis to the individual level, focusing on how system of social relationships helps in realising society's transformation. This agrees with the view of Sharma and Monteiro ([28], p. 72) who understand social change as leading 'to transformation in thinking which in turn influences behaviour patterns in society. Social change is an alteration in the thought processes of individuals that drives social progress.' This conceptualisation obviously points to the utility of education as the engine of social change.

According to Chakraborty et al. ([8], p. 1) 'Education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform. It guides the children towards new values and assists the development of intelligence and increase the society potential for its own transformation.' For Sharma and Monteiro ([28], p. 72) 'education is the vital link that brings about social change and generates synergies to address the interconnectedness between sustainability, society and the environment. Education empowers society to

assume responsibility for sustainable living.’ These assertions help us to understand the real meaning of education for social change. It is understood that education is the engine of social progress and transformation—through education individuals are brought to understand their place in society and to acquire new ideals towards society’s progress and transformation. This needs the individual both child and adult to engage in learning that not only increases knowledge, but also education that helps the individual to become credible members of society. As such, education plays and should play a very crucial role in an individual’s character formation enabling him/her to help in realising society’s transformation and social change [8].

Bhat ([27], p. 19) notes that ‘the role of education as an agent or instrument of a social change and social development is widely recognized nowadays’. Education is as such understood as central to realising social transformation and change; ‘education is the root cause of social and cultural changes that takes place within the society’ ([8], p. 1). For Desjardins ([29], p. 239), ‘educational systems contain both transformative and reproductive elements.’ Through these systems, education is envisaged to play a crucial role towards both individual and social transformation. Education for social transformation then brings into limelight the need for the learner to improve him/herself through education and to use such improved capacity to become agents of social transformation. This vision hinges on how the individual views him/herself and his/her role as agency in society’s transformation.

Thus, realising education for society’s transformation is hinged on understanding the link between the need and freedom for the individual to achieve capabilities and perspective transformation. This, according to Sharma and Monteiro ([28], p. 72), ‘implies that educational processes and systems can transform perspectives and behaviour patterns, which in turn inculcates sustainable practices in all aspects of human life.’ Education as such is aimed at changing people’s behavioural patterns and worldview through curriculum which enhances individual freedom to achieve those different aspects of beings and doings, they have reason to value. This arguably speaks to the nexus between the Capability Approach and the Transformative Learning Framework.

3. Education for social change: Nexus between TLF and the CA

3.1 Placing the human being at the centre of concern

It can be argued that the TLF agrees with the CA with regard to the understanding of human beings as placed at the centre of society’s development debate. Notably, Paulo Freire understands education as aimed at the transformation of the human person conceived as a subject not as an object. In this the human person is seen as an end and not a means to an end (to use Kant’s words), and as such could become agents of society’s transformation having been equipped to do so through education that awakens the individual’s critical consciousness. Freire’s views could be better explained using Sartre’s [30] contrast between the being-itself (objects) and being-for-itself (humans). As a subject and end itself the human subject who engages in learning is treated as being-for-itself who according to Sartre is not full of itself (like being-in-itself). This being-for-itself is open to learning towards transforming the mind and consciousness. Education in this sense is understood as helping the subject towards reaching his/her full potential, and there is no limit since being-for-itself must *actuate* his own being.

The above could be linked to the CA which jettisons utilitarian economic conception of development to a focus on individual well-being. In the CA, individual well-being and human development are the focus; the CA 'concentrates on the capability expansion of each person (individual or group) according to their values' ([31], p. 376). Alkire and Deneulin ([32], p. 16) also note that 'to some, the idea that people should come first in social and economic processes appears a redundant truism. But development has long been sought and assessed in economic terms, with a particular focus on the annual growth of income per capita, instead of the consequences of this growth on the quality of people's lives.' It can be surmised that the objectification of human beings could be very much obtainable in a utilitarian system, whose focus is realising economic wealth. In these human beings become secondary and hence could be considered as means towards realising the ultimate end which is economic progress. The CA on its own takes improving the beings and doings of the individual as the priority and the effort is to put in policies and social arrangements to realise this [32]. It is here that the CA focus on individual well-being agrees with the view of TLF according to Freire that human beings should be subjects and not objects.

Hoffman ([33], p. 1) notes that 'the way we view education is challenged by the paradigm shift towards viewing development in less economic terms. The human being is placed at the centre of concerns, and sustainable and human development is presented in terms of enlarging people's choices'. Placing the human being at the centre of concern is important in realising education for social change. The role of education is seen as transformative and geared towards enabling the human subject to expand freedoms to achieve various valuable functioning. From both the perspectives of TLF and CA, the goal of education is to transform and realise the well-being of the individual as a human person. Education as such is geared towards bringing the individual to a greater level of well-being and to equip him/her with the necessary skills and habits to be able to act properly and to help in society's positive change. In this, as conceived by Freire [34], the individual should not be subjected to a form of *banking* education (an instrument of oppression), rather he/she is a subject with a mind who can be engaged in a dialogical education process towards achieving learning. This form of learning does not only help in transforming the person's perspectives and frames of reference (thereby improving beings) but helps the person to become a well-informed member of society, who acts in such a way that he/she also considers other members of society as subjects and not objects. However, to realise this there should be a complementary focus on improving educational structures in society that enable transformative learning [35]; there should be a systemic change of educational culture and to make it focus on realising people's potentials, considering the link between social, economic and environmental well-being factors ([28], p. 17).

3.2 TLF and CA views on education towards social change

Central to Mezirow's TLF is the position that individuals modify their frames of references by engaging in critical reflection and interrogation of previously held assumptions and beliefs. The process of transformation of individual worldview (perspective transformation) is achieved when there is change in thought, belief systems and lifestyle of the individual. In this explication, one can find another link between the TLF and the CA on education. It can be surmised that the transformation in the individual's frame of reference through learning allows the individual the freedom to go beyond possible limiting circumstances to pursue and achieve capabilities and the lives they have reason to value. The process of transformation of the mind through

education could be then interpreted as a process of expanding capabilities. Hence for Sen and Nussbaum, education constitutes a basic initial capacity which is instrumental to realising well-being, capabilities and the lives individuals have reason to value [6, 36, 37]. Scheimer ([38], p. 172) also affirms this and further is of the view that 'If implemented successfully, education can thus contribute to reaching well-being and quality of life.'

Moreover, in explicating CA's view on education, Hoffman ([33], p. 1) notes that 'the role of education as regards the Capability Approach is multiple and complex... education is referred to as foundational to other capabilities. However,...one can also argue that learning that stops at the level of providing only basic reading and writing skills would be insufficient to advance sustainable development.' From this assertion, we can infer another possible link between the CA and the TLF view on education. Here education is understood as the fulcrum on which other capabilities hinge. As already noted, for Sen [24], education is a basic capability—it is an aspect of the major being and doings central to realising individual well-being. Education is not seen here only as a way of getting the individual to read and write but as a way of helping them to expand their capabilities. This is also the aim of transformational education in the sense that the focus is on getting the individual to engage in critical reflection towards perspective transformation [14, 39]. This transformation is deeper than being able to read and write, it points to an understanding that education has a deeper utility which centres on the transformation of the individual's whole being. The transformation is also about realising emancipation of individuals and collectives through education understood as conscientisation and as enabling people's freedom to achieved capabilities ([29], p. 239). Hence, Hoffman ([33], p. 1) assert that 'In order to fully expand the substantive freedom of people to live the life they value and to enhance their real choices, education can and should be more than only foundational to other capabilities.'

Furthermore, O'Sullivan et al. ([40], p. 3) understand transformative learning as involving 'experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world.' It can then be surmised that individual's transformation as proposed by TLF could lead to the CA understanding of functioning as being. In this education that seeks to get the individual to change frames of references is seen as helping the individual to assume a transformed state of being in which a previously incapacitating state is improved through education. This is substantiated by the understanding of the TLF that learning is and should be geared towards a shift in consciousness and towards realising an enduring alteration of individual's way of being and worldview. According to Boyd's perspective 'transformation is a fundamental change in one's personality involving conjointly the resolution of a personal dilemma and the expansion of consciousness resulting in greater personality integration' ([18], p. 459). From this assertion, we can also infer a possible link between the TLF and the CA - a change in one's personality involving the resolution of the individual's quandary (thus expanding the person's consciousness) could be construed as enhancing an individuals' functioning. Notably, the resolution of personal dilemmas and expanding consciousness should lead to greater personality integration. This is functioning as construed by Nussbaum (2000 cited in [41]) who is of the view that functioning is at the centre of fully human life. Relatedly, it can be noted that transformative learning focuses on the transformation of individual's worldviews. Transformative learning as such 'aims at developing a holistic worldview and deep realisation and coherence of the purpose, direction, values, choices and actions of

one's life' ([7], p. 180). This includes the transformation of the conception of how an individual understands his/her being in the world and the understanding of the fundamentals of his/her well-being.

Summarily, transformative learning which hugely promotes critical reflection of previously held assumptions and interpretations promotes transformative capability. Transformative capability denotes the capacity of the individual to learn, innovate and engender apposite change [6]. Transforming an individual's worldview becomes enhancing functioning when we consider that according to the TLF 'Learning focuses around understanding the connections between humans, nature, society and the economy with an aim to develop solutions for our sustainability challenges and making a sustainable world real while learning' ([7], p. 180). When this happens, we can understand that there is a substantial change in the functioning (doings but more so beings) of the individual. In this sense, education is holistic and not only enhances the capabilities of the individual but also the freedom to achieve various valuable functioning in society. 'The individual becomes aware of her role in society and how her actions (or lack of action) perpetuate the current social order. Understanding the role that the individual has in the social fibre, is key to igniting the change' ([42], p. 24). For Schugurensky ([35], p. 63) 'transformative learning is really transformative when critical reflection and social action are part of the same process.'

As noted by Chakraborty et al. [8], education is central to social change and social progress and reform as it guides individuals towards new standards and helps in the development of intelligence needed to increase society's potential to transform. Thus, enhancing people's capabilities through education is and should be ultimately aimed at society's transformation and social change. Here also the aim is not only in transforming individual experiences but enhancing transformation of social structures, institutions and social relationships [27]. This can only be possible when education adopts a multidimensional and interdisciplinary approach [33, 42]. It actually demands a re-imagination of the educational process 'so that learners could experience humanness, autonomous thinking and genuine transformation from inside out as ably suggested by Mezirow in his transformative learning for adults' ([43], p. 17). This is where the TLF also agrees with the CA understanding of education—education is conceptualised by the CA to consider the relationship between teaching, learning and human development [33]. This notably relates to the TLF aim to achieve perspective transformation through a teaching and learning process aimed at critical reflection, perspective transformation and human development. In this, learning is not only seen as focusing on cognitive elements but goes beyond this to consider other approaches aimed at enhancing individual's substantive freedom to achieve capabilities. Only when this becomes a reality that the individual could be said to have been equipped through education to contribute towards the progress of society.

3.3 TLF and CA views on 'values' and education for social change

According to Poolman ([31], p. 320), 'the CA has been hailed for successfully reintegrating values and beliefs into development...so that people can define their own flourishing.' The need to realise individual's values or 'the life an individual has reason to value' is another point in which the TLF and the CA framework dovetails. It is argued that transformative learning is aimed at helping an individual to realise the life he/she has reason to value. Mezirow ([14], p. 11) agrees that transformative education is geared towards enabling the individual 'negotiate his or her own values, meanings, and purpose rather than uncritically acting on those of others.' This aim of

transformative learning can be related to the CA focus on evaluating well-being and development policies based on the life which an individual has reason to value. On this, Walker [44] rightly notes that the capability concept 'reason to value' is crucial since it focuses attention on individual's considered and informed choices. The life which an individual has reason to value is hence at the core of the CA and is a condition that must be met for there to be a true enhancement of the functioning of the individual in society. As such, the 'freedom to achieve well-being is to be understood in terms of people's capabilities, that is, their real opportunities to do and be what they have reason to value' [21]. This can be achieved through transformational learning process which could help in the negotiation of individual's value systems, meanings and purposes. As such education should be aimed at equipping people with not only knowledge and skills but values necessary for sustainable human development and living a capable, confident, healthy and productive life in accord with nature and social values [45].

The ability of an individual to exercise freedom is facilitated by values which themselves are influenced by public and social discussions and exchanges [25, 38]. For Sherman ([36], p. 10), 'value, from the CA perspective, is primarily concerned with advancement of the human condition. To live a life of value, or a life that one has reason to value, opportunities or substantive freedoms must be secured for individuals that allow them to make reflective and informed choices.' This is where the TLF's views becomes relevant, in that through the effort to engage the individual in critical reflection, there can develop the ability of the individual to make informed choices. It is envisaged that the individual comes to realise the real opportunities to negotiate values, meanings and purposes as proposed by the TLF. Simsek ([46], p. 201) agree that transformative learning 'is the kind of learning that results in a fundamental change in our worldview as a consequence of shifting from mindless or unquestioning acceptance of available information to reflective and conscious learning experiences that bring about true emancipation.' Bringing about true emancipation could be interpreted in CA's perspective which focuses on the effort to realise individual's functioning, well-being and the life he/she has reason to value [29].

Furthermore, according to Mezirow ([14], p. 11), 'Transformative learning in the education setting translates to assisting learners to change their meaning schemes (beliefs, attitudes, and emotional responses) through education.' This assertion allows us to understand that perhaps contrary to criticism of the TLF framework as being only intellectual focused [17], the framework encompasses aspects which help in the effort to realise true functioning and the life an individual has reason to value, by the incorporation of the emotional and affective aspects of learning. This is achieved through the process of reviewing old assumptions and ways of understanding experience through critical reflection [6]. This could mean helping the individual through a transformative learning process to improve his/her value systems—empowering 'individuals to change their perspectives and habit of minds (understanding of what is "right" or "wrong")' ([47], p. 64). Also, through this educational process the individual's meaning schemes are transformed leading to well-being, capability enhancement and subsequently social change. Hence, Sharma and Monteiro ([28], p. 72) is of the view that 'to address the challenges faced by global communities, educational systems can transform values, attitudes and behaviour patterns to actuate social change.'

Negotiating learner's values, meanings and purposes as envisioned by the TLF translates to engaging in education aimed at a change in the meaning perspectives

of the learner. It should be noted that 'education is a major instrument in initiating social adaptation by bringing about a change in outlook and attitude of man. It can bring about a change in the pattern of social relationships and thereby...cause social changes' ([28], p. 72). This can be achieved through a conscious effort to design education curriculum that balances between knowledge acquisition and the formation of values, attitudes and patterns of social relationships. As noted by Laininen ([7], p. 180), 'In a rapidly changing world, the role of the curriculum must also be reconsidered. Instead of its common use as a collection of often outdated knowledge, it should be a tool for organising learning opportunities in which education, learning and the latest scientific knowledge converge around making real-life changes in the environment and society.'

Aristotle understands education's principal mission as geared towards the production of good and virtuous citizens for the city state. Quality transformative education activates human development and formation of learner's character building it up to be of value to society—it ignites inner transformation enabling the individual to acquire skills necessary for social responsibility ([43], p. 14). Allowing the learner space and time or putting in place a learning environment through which he/she can engage in learning about social responsibility, ethical, religious, spiritual and emotional elements is important. It is through this that education becomes transformative and can play a central role towards social change. The learner can become a true agent of social change when he/she has been equipped through a transformative learning process to engage extra-curricular and extra-cognitive elements towards a behavioural change. Herlo ([6], p. 118) affirms that 'Transformative capability involves creating an educational focus, beyond an emphasis solely on knowledge and understanding, towards competence, using methodologies that engage the whole-person and transformative approaches to learning.' According to Sharma and Monteiro ([28], p. 72) 'education is a process which brings about behavioural changes in society, which enables every individual to effectively participate in the activities of society and to make positive contribution to the progress of society.' In this light, Dewey envisages that through education individual's become the best possible human beings and equipping 'young people with the skills to shape their own morals' ([42], p. 19). It is here that the vision of the CA on the role of education as helping to enhance individual's capabilities becomes central.

Moreover, it is granted that the process of education is mostly cognitive, but it can also involve encounters that facilitate spiritual and emotional dimensions 'to equip learners with higher order capabilities to respond effectively to complexity, uncertainty and change' ([6], p. 119). For Laininen ([7], p. 181), 'the cognitive competences can be seen as tools by which we can shape the clay of knowledge and create something new out of it. Our values and attitudes determine how we choose our clay and what we will shape from it.... education for a sustainable future must have a strong reflective value dimension included.' Hence, Hoffman ([33], p. 2) is of the view that 'education needs to take into account the inter-relatedness of teaching, learning, and human development.' As such, the role of education to realise enhanced capabilities should include not only the cognitive but other human development aspects—education should thus be integrative, incorporating into cognitive learning, other aspects that can capacitate the individual towards progressive personal change and progressive social change ([40], p. 23). Boyd also notes that transformation involves an essential change in an individual's personality in which there is a resolution of personal dilemma and development of the person's perceptions leading to better personality

integration (in [17]), calling for extra-intellectual sources [48]. This means that the content of education should include those aspects of beings and doings the individual has reason to value which may include acquiring morals, ethics, faith and spirituality. Hence, it is advised that education should be holistic and not only focused on the head ignoring the rest of the aspects of human existence. As such, Miller ([49], p. 97) is of the view that education should include the spiritual perspective;

From a spiritual perspective, learning does not just involve the intellect...it includes every aspect of our being including the physical, emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual. These aspects are interconnected; we cannot compartmentalize learning...unless the development of the mind and body goes hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul, the former alone would prove to be a poor lopsided affair.

O'Sullivan et al. ([40], p. 10) rightly note that 'contemporary education today suffers deeply by its eclipse of the spiritual dimension of our world and universe... in a world economy governed by the profit motive, there is no place for the cultivation and nourishment of the spiritual life.' Consequently, it is the reality that even though there exists more capabilities, choice and freedoms in developed countries than ever before, these countries still experience prolonged and widespread feelings of stress, fatigue, depression and other mental health problems [7, 50]. Laininen ([7], p. 179) further asserts that 'our modern society is also suffering from a vanishing understanding of what makes life meaningful to which the consumer-centred wellbeing paradigm has been unable to provide a solution.' O'Sullivan et al. ([40], p. 24) agree with this and further note that 'all notion of communal life and values and government responsibility outside the support of economic "growth" is fast disappearing.' It can be agreed that to find a sustainable solution to these problems and thus transform society from these maladies, there is role for education that is transformative in nature which considers values. Chakraborty et al. [8] for example agree that protecting, preserving and promoting what the authors call 'eternal values' which are of moral and spiritual nature, is one of the functions of education. Notably, 'values, especially those that concerning defining a meaningful life, cannot be taught directly. Instead, learners should be provided experiences that touch their emotions—and lead them to the springs of their intrinsic values' ([7], p. 182).

Hence as part of the process of capacitating learners, transformative learning envisages considering education as a spiritual venture inculcating in the learner the sense of the sacred which embraces all aspects of the TLF [40]. Perhaps it is here that the role that religion and its networks/affiliates can play in education becomes relevant and needs to be interrogated. Religion and faith-networks are known to encapsulate moral, ethical, spiritual and faith elements which can ignite inner transformation [51], the realisation of behavioural change and the individual's true functioning, well-being, and the life he/she has reason to value. Realising education for social change needs the re-invigoration of spirituality and encouraging students who participate in religious/spiritual extra-curricular activities at higher education campuses. It is then important to assess learner's involvement in extra-curricular and extra-cognitive activities such as attending to issues of faith by going to churches, mosques and other faith groups on campus. The effort will be to understand how these groups, their activities and teachings help learners to achieve transformative education and subsequently realise enhanced functioning and the lives they have reasons to value.

3.4 TLF, agency and education for social change

The CA conceptualises agency as central to realising people's capabilities. Agency is linked to the freedom an individual has to pursue whatever goals or values he/she conceives as important [52]. Agency emphasises on what human beings are able to do in order to realise well-being and as such people 'can be agents of change through both individual action and collective action' ([53], p. 12). Human agency rather than organisational agency is seen as central to realising capabilities—agency is understood in the sense that the individual can be the agent of realising his/her own well-being [22]. But Sen also conceptualises agency as 'someone who acts and brings about change, and whose achievements can be judged in terms of her own values and objectives, whether or not we assess them in terms of some external criteria as well' ([25], p. 19).

To achieve social change, individual capacities need to be enhanced through an education process that helps create engaged citizens [42]. From Mezirow's [14] presentation on the TLF, it can be inferred that the role of the teacher as an agent is to afford learners space to engage in discourse, which also includes helping him/her to assess his/her beliefs, feelings and values [48]. It is the duty of the teacher to put together a pedagogy that allows the creation of engaged citizens, who are capacitated to contribute to society's transformation. Dewey and Freire's understanding of education pedagogy allows us to see the role of the teacher as agency towards enhancing capabilities. For Dewey and Freire, traditional model of education sees the role of the teacher and that of the learner as completely opposite. In this model, the teacher is seen as the authority and a know-it-all, who transmits knowledge to the learner. For Dewey, education is not about a teacher trying to pour knowledge into empty heads of learners—it is 'not an affair of "telling" and being told, but an active and constructive process' (in [42], p. 20). Also as already noted, for Freire [34], the role of the teacher in education is to engage the learner in a dialogical form of education which does not follow the *banking* method that considers the learner as a bucket to be filled up. This agrees with CA understanding of Agency which does not limit the individual freedom to pursue his/her proper functioning and well-being. It can be surmised that *banking* education which Freire criticises does not allow the individual freedom to pursue his/her enhanced capabilities, functioning and well-being. *Banking* education does not allow perspective transformation by not allowing the individual the opportunity to engage in critical reflection.

The teacher as agency should lead in the effort to realise education for social change. The teacher should be the fulcrum on which the effort to realise learner's enhanced capabilities and transformation hinges. Notably, transformative learning cannot be assured except the teacher affords the learner opportunity to learn transformatively [54]. Sharma and Monteiro ([28], p. 72) agrees that 'educators are responsible for transforming communities and initiating social change.' The role of the educator here is to get the student to freely pursue the education which he/she has reason to value. Bhat ([27], p. 18) notes that 'it is desirable for each individual to have that education which best suits his capacities. The development of such a genuinely educative society calls for the continuous adaptation of our educational institutions to the needs of its members.' Chakraborty et al. ([8], p. 8) also agree that 'education should be imparted according to the own interest of the child. The whole personality of the child is developed physically, intellectually, morally, socially, aesthetically and spiritually. He is recognized in the society.' Realising this means subscribing to

a pedagogy that allows the student independent critical reflection towards perspective transformation. It rather exalts a pedagogy which could be seen as parallel to the Socratic *Elenchus* method of getting the student to engage in critical thinking. The *Elenchus* pedagogy is about dialogue, and according to Cranton [48], transformative learning envisages a pedagogy that encourages dialogue in which both the educator and the learner participate equally in discourse. This translates to the TLF's view of the role of the teacher as that of facilitating the process of critical engagement towards knowledge reconstitution 'and changing of people's thinking and behaviour' ([55], p. 4). Establishing this could help in realising the CA vision that people should be given the freedom to shape their destiny instead of being passive recipients of external agency efforts [56]. Also, this could enable the learner become agents of social change as he/she acquires the capacity to self-transform and to think and work towards social transformation and participate fully in their communities [57]. This is what Laininen ([7], p. 182) understands as 'fostering change agency' in which individuals are nurtured to be able to 'generate change in the different roles or phases of their lives.' Hence, any effort to realise education for social change should take into consideration the role of the teacher as agency and the role of the learner as future agency.

Furthermore, realising transformative education aimed at perspective transformation and enhancing individual's capabilities and well-being towards social change should require the input of other actors besides the role of the teacher in the formal education setup. Notably, in society's varied arena, there is need to assess the efforts of different social forces as agency (in collaboration or in contestation) engaged in projects aimed at individual and society's development [26, 58]. Their role as active agents of course should be assessed in terms of what they are able to do in line with their conception of the good and values [52, 59, 60]. This allows us to further comprehend the agency role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), NGOs and Faith-based networks in realising transformative learning towards enhancing learner's capabilities, functioning and social change. Notably, as Sen [25] envisages, the achievements of someone (agent) who acts and brings about transformation can be assessed in terms of the person's values and objectives. Hence, the success of CSOs, NGOs and Faith-based networks in helping to realise education for social change would be based on and assessed in terms of how such agencies' values and objectives help individuals to achieve transformation that can enable them to positively be future agents of society's transformation.

4. Conclusion

According to Sharma and Monteiro ([28], p. 73), 'Transformative learning occurs when individuals change their frames of reference by critically reflecting on their assumptions and beliefs and consciously making and implementing plans that bring about new ways of defining their worlds.' When this happens, it could be said that the individual has acquired the opportunity freedom to pursue and achieve various valuable functioning (doings and beings) as conceptualised by the CA. Perhaps this is the first instance where the views of the TLF and CA on the utility of education are linked. The effort in this article has been to delineate some other notable linkages of the two frameworks towards theorising about and conceptualising education for social change. Education for social change based on the views of the TLF and the CA hence is targeted at helping the learner achieve transformative capabilities, which underscores the capacity of the individual to learn, innovate and engender apposite


change in society. It is education which not only targets the mind and cognitive abilities but the totality of the learner's life considering mental, spiritual, moral and ethical faculties. This form of education leads to well-being and trains the learner to be capable of leading the life they value, which may include becoming themselves agents of social change. This demands agency that is focused on allowing the learner the space and time to engage in critical reflection towards perspective transformation and the realisation of enhanced capabilities and the life an individual has reason to value.

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