

Readers' Theater as Public Pedagogy: Putting Culture into Motion to Foster Dialogue, Democracy and Understanding about Somali Immigrants in Maine

Kimberly Huisman¹

This paper focuses on a research project with Somali immigrants in Maine and examines how one aspect of the project—a readers' theater performance—bridges theory and action to foster dialogue, democracy, and understanding about the complex issues of immigration, race, and religion. This paper proceeds in four sections. The first section provides some background about Somali immigration to Maine. This is followed by a discussion about how the readers' theater project is situated within three intersecting theoretical paradigms—those on participatory action research, performance ethnography, and critical pedagogy. The next section details the processes that led to the development and implementation of the script. The paper concludes by discussing how the readers' theater project is a form of transformative, public pedagogy that bridges theory and action to promote social justice. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: http://www.transformativestudies.org ©2009 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]*

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¹ **Kimberly Huisman**, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Maine. Along with three other faculty members at the University of Maine, she developed a collaborative, interdisciplinary research project in the Somali immigrant community in Maine called the Somali Narrative Project (SNP). The SNP is a community-based project that includes students and community members. She teaches several courses about diversity and inequality including “Social Inequality,” Immigration, Women & Society, and “Deviance and Social Control.” **Acknowledgements:** The author gratefully acknowledges the Somali students and community members who have participated in the Somali Narrative Project. She also wishes to thank the following people for their comments on the paper: Kristin Langellier, Mazie Hough, Carol Toner, Claire Renzetti, Amy Blackstone, and the reviewers and editor at *Theory in Action*. Address correspondence to: Kimberly A. Huisman, Department of Sociology, 5728 Fernald Hall, Room 209, University of Maine, Orono, ME 04469-5728; tel: 207. 581.2361; e-mail: Kim.Huisman@umit.maine.edu.