Knowledge Meals, Research Relationships, and Postqualitative Offerings: Enacting Langar (a Sikh Tradition of a Shared Meal) as Pedagogy of Doctoral Supervision

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Abstract

In research, particularly within the pedagogies of doctoral supervision, the significance of relational experiences is less explored and understood. Such relational aspects determine the nature and quality of the doctoral research output and are a crucial element of successful doctoral completions. A conscious assessment, estimation and management of the vulnerable sensibilities surrounding these relations fosters a deeper insight into the way student-researchers and supervisors experience their doctoral journeys. In this paper, to feature the importance of these relational experiences and to accentuate ideas and concepts for pedagogical change, my co-authors and I forsake the repetitious and employ Langar - a Sikh cultural practice of congregational cooking and consumption of a shared meal as a postqualitative methodological alternative. We utilise the innovative insights of Langar to reflect on our own research experiences and demonstrate the complexities of ‘becoming’ researchers to explicate how a sometimes-distant cultural practice could induce a shift in our research thinking. In context of methodological approaches, and within an educational framework, we argue that such a shift may instil freshness into the way doctoral journeys and cognate supervision pedagogies are viewed, navigated, and experienced. Methodological innovation, we submit, may occasion pedagogical transformation.

Keywords

postqualitative, research relationships, research thinking, sikh langar, supervision pedagogies

Doctoral tracks are arduous undertakings (Hodgson, 2020) entailing multiple challenges, particularly associated with the research relationships between supervisors and student-researchers (Johnston & Broda, 1996). Doctoral supervision remains a “complex and demanding pedagogical practice” (Rawlinson & Pillay, 2014, p. 283) involving a variety of academic and interpersonal skills (Bitzer, 2007). Doctoral tracks are like “academic rites of passage” (Amran & Ibrahim, 2012, p. 528) that student-researchers and supervisors concomitantly navigate and encounter novel experiences for both (Deconinck, 2015). The vulnerabilities surrounding research relationships are crucial in moulding the nature and quality of doctoral research output. A thoughtful recognition, estimation, and management of encountered vulnerabilities effects the way supervisors and student-researchers’ experience their doctoral journeys. Despite ongoing debate concerning the nature of doctoral supervision (de Lange et al., 2011), the significance of relational experiences in supervision pedagogies is less explored and underappreciated.

To highlight the vitality of relational experiences in pedagogies of supervision and to illuminate ideas and concepts for pedagogical transformation through a postqualitative initiative, in this paper, my co-researchers/authors (also my PhD supervisors) and I eschew the mundane and adopt a transformative approach, employing a methodological Lens of

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Langar - a Sikh cultural practice of shared cooking and consumption (Bertolani et al., 2021). In so doing, we resist replication of templated methodological frameworks and kindle our curiosity of exploring new ways of knowing and knowledge building. The primary curiosities that drive our engagement are: how do we understand the import of the relational in doctoral supervision? Corollary to that, is what can the use of an innovative approach based on a different cultural model contribute to thinking about doctoral supervision? To achieve this, we “resist by disallowing dominant, mainstream interpretations of who we are …” (Patterson et al., 2016, p. 58) and focus on the relational experience(s) of our own PhD journeys to capture our reflections of being researchers who are committed to notions of ‘becoming’ – a Deleuze (1983) idea representing constant change and innovation; a process of unending shifting and mutation that defies stability, and permanency.

In what follows, we argue that relational aspects of doctoral work are a key determinant of successful doctoral completion (Cornér et al., 2017; David, 2020) and delineate entangled vulnerabilities within doctoral pedagogical praxis, a chimeric space of relational negotiations (Fataar, 2005; Waghid, 2007). We unravel this entwinement to elucidate how a sometimes-distant cultural tradition like Langar could afford a practice which values such relationality. Previously we have explored the possibilities of emulating Langar as an alternative and postqualitative site of knowledge creation and methodological footprint (Singh et al., 2021). In the current piece, we further the functional aspect of Langar and test its methodological footprint (Singh et al., 2021). In the current piece, we further the functional aspect of Langar and test its methodological potential to act as a tool of doctoral pedagogical supervision.

We define and critically reflect on the various components of Langar to share how ‘we’ as a research commune experienced our ongoing PhD journey. Communes are intentional communities of like-minded people (Kunz, 2020) who share common “values, beliefs, interests, ideologies … or living spaces” (Singh et al., 2021, p. 3) and voluntarily come together to realise common goals (Rubin et al., 2019) through collective decision making and shared responsibility (Roberts, 1971). To contextualise, we unfurl the current discussion in multiple layers and enkindle our curiosities by moving back and forth between ideas, experiences, narratives, notions, and concepts. These unfurlings are punctuated by our individual and collective author voices and offer insight into how we as a research commune came to be ‘as and where’ we presently are in our research journeys. We locate our underpinning notions of ‘becoming’, postqualitative, and Langar, knitting them up with insights, narratives, ideas, and experiences to forge a difference understood as the nourishment of Langar. We then illuminate what this difference of Langar nourishment is and explicate how it may advance research thinking to transform pedagogical supervision. Via our own research reflections, we elucidate how Langar enabled and empowered our research identities to be nurtured, feeding knowledge creation and research training. All this curled in the entanglements of ‘becoming’ (Deleuze, 1983).

**Becoming**

‘Becoming’ is a complex notion; a never-ending cycle of continuity and change, without origin or destination (Deleuze, 1983). As a process of emerging contestations that are ceaselessly enmeshed in environments and relationships, ‘becoming’ repeatedly makes, unmakes, and remakes itself to become a product of its own processual advancement (Deleuze, 1994). The only reality of ‘becoming’ is the process of ‘becoming’ itself (Deleuze, 1983; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; May, 2003). In ‘becoming’, “there is no is, only a series of ands, multiplicity” (Kerasovitis, 2020, p. 58). Such state of inbetweenness fosters experimentation and change (Jackson, 2017). We stretch ‘becoming’ beyond Deleuzian confines and include everything associated with change, progression, and evolution. To and for us, ‘becoming’ is an endless sequence that moves within and between the ruptures of on-going processuality (Singh et al., 2022) hosting therein unlimited and new yet-to-be-realised possibilities. We utilise this newness to explore the postqualitative.

**Postqualitative**

I recall being tentative about notions of postqualitative inquiry. Jane and I talked at length about my philosophical values and perspectives, and whilst my own research practices to this point were embedded within a qualitative paradigm, I was curious about a different lens to look at the world (and my research) through (Damien).

Defining postqualitative is complex. A lucid answer to the question, what is postqualitative is still awaited and may never arrive (St. Pierre, 2013) because postqualitative is formless and structureless (St. Pierre, 2019). It indicates a shift in thinking about how knowledge is approached and how our interactions with the outside world are understood (Østern et al., 2021). Generally, postqualitative can be comprehended as an assortment of some negative definitions and in philosophy, negative definitions are good starting points (St. Pierre, 2019). As an innovative way of approaching research, postqualitative implies a fluid, imaginative, and creative countenance and must remain hazy and blurred (Braidotti, 2019). Postqualitative can be a stance, viewpoint, perspective, or approach that moves away from qualitative traditions (Østern et al., 2021) seeking newness in research thinking and praxis. It can be “no-thing, any-thing, and everything” (Bodén & Gunnarsson, 2021, p. 5).

Postqualitative abandons traditional knowing of ways and wanders into unexplored domains that cradle curiosities and host unexploited possibilities (St. Pierre, 2018). Postqualitative has no prototypes and is not created intentionally. Forsaking repetition and eschewing linearity, it is always arriving (St. Pierre, 2019). In creating knowledge, postqualitative evades “old procedures” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 129), tends openness (Kerasovitis, 2020), and welcomes novelty. The entire idea of
postqualitative is to build different knowledge by different mediums (Lather, 2013). This is realised through the formulation of a truth which establishes some form of an outcome but is not able to precisely define it in advance (Rajchman, 2000)). This is analogous to dance improvisation where the process of creation is not in the medium of realisation but is in the dance itself, in that very moment of its existence it has no past or future but only the now (Sheets-Johnstone, 1981). Postqualitative is a research practice that has no set methodologies, methods, research designs or templates (St. Pierre, 2019). It is a form of resistance (St. Pierre, 2014) that engenders new ways of knowing and thinking about knowing; a “product of the desire for a new kind of knowledge” (Kerasovitis, 2020, p. 65).

We argue that Langar as pedagogy for doctoral supervision can inspire transformation in less explored research relationships. Through our own research experiences, we elucidate how Langar ferments a change in our thinking about, our own ‘research thinking’ and the nature of corresponding research relationships within supervision pedagogies. This fermentation nurtured an alternative view of how knowledge can be collaboratively created via a shared research practice that seeks nourishment in both the process and product of a PhD. We argue that if viewed through a Langar lens, research thinking and research relationships within supervision pedagogies can be ‘researched’ to foster understandings that forsake the normative and adopt the disruptive.

**Langar**

Langar is an epitome of openness. A cradle of virtues. A platform of inclusion, acceptance, and acknowledgement. A practice that furthers equality and promotes equity. Something that blurs hierarchies and diffuses boundaries. A medium that cherishes respect, trust, equity, and empathy. A tradition of sharing and caring. A lens that views everyone as equal. A cradle of nourishment. (Collective Voice).

Langar is a Sikh cultural practice of collective cooking and consumption of a shared meal that is co-cooked by volunteers, “utilizing produce given freely by the congregation, served in a spirit of convivial togetherness to all without distinction” (Zavos, 2020, p. 103). It is a “gift of the Sikh Gurus not to the Sikhs alone but to the entire world” (Neki, 1994, p. 8). The term Langar has different genealogical connotations. In Sanskrit it means analgargh or room of cooking (Pandey & Pandey, 2018) and in Persian it means anchor or almshouse (Fenech & McLeod, 2014) set up to provision the requirements of the poor and needful, especially travellers (Kaur, 2016). With time, Langar has become tantamount to the idea of a free communal kitchen. The origins of Langar are traceable in the early years of Sikh religious history (Desjardins & Desjardins, 2009).

**Origins of Langar**

Social inequality, exclusion, and prejudice were ingrained in the social fabric of 14th century India. Society was highly stratified, based on caste, religion, and occupation. Preferential treatment and discriminatory practices permeated everyday life. Caste, religion, and occupation constrained access to places of worship and public gatherings. These restrictions infiltrated standards of commensality (McLeod, 1997). Brahmanical views of purity and pollution, forbade upper and lower castes individuals to socialise freely (Madan, 1986). All were not deemed equal.

Guru Nanak, the founding Sikh guru, upended this outlook. He espoused that all are equal (Innes, 2021), propagating ideas of equality and egalitarianism (Fieldhouse, 2017). Pursuing social justice, the Guru envisioned an equal society and introduced institutionalised Langar where everyone could freely congregate to cook, consume, and enjoy a shared meal (McLeod, 1989). This idea of collective commensality (Desjardins & Desjardins, 2009) extended the greater Sikh ideals (McLeod, 1997). This free inter-dining (McLeod, 1989) directly challenged Brahmanical beliefs of purity, pollution, and exclusivism (Luthra, 2022; Madan, 1986). Langar was ideologically mobilised as a medium of social transformation (Fieldhouse, 2017), becoming a tool of social liberation (Hawley, 2014).

Post Guru Nanak, the religious seat progressed through nine successors, each endowing the evolving Sikh character with ideals, attributes, and virtues. The second and third Sikh Gurus (Guru Angad Dev and Guru Amar Dass), popularised Langar (Kaur, 2016), enhancing its primacy in Sikh identity (McLeod, 1989). Under the patronage of the sixth Sikh Guru Arjan Dev, Langar flowered (Kaur, 2016). Langar remains vital to Sikh religio-cultural identity (Zavos, 2020), viewing everyone as equal and expected to eat together (Kaur 2020). To this sense and spirit, Langar offers a shared meal as philosophical symbol of unifying communal attitudes and blurring social disparities (Fieldhouse, 2017).

Originally Langar meals were hosted within the place of assembly or Dharamsala (Hawley, 2014). Such common-places are known as the Gurudwara – “doorway to the guru” (Murphy, 2013, p. 7) or the house of grace like the modern version of the Sikh temple (Fenech & McLeod, 2014). Over time, these assemblies have spread to private houses and other social occasions. The meal can now be congregated beyond the temple bounds if the spirit and intention of the meal accord with traditional Langar beliefs and values. Effectively, every Sikh household’s kitchen can be a form of Langar (Neki, 1994). On the surface, contemporary Langar is a free meal that physically and spiritually nourishes its consumer. Below, it is a complex constitution of many philosophical dimensions and social functionalities.
Shaping Langar

Langar has no set design or structure and constitutes both tangible and intangible components. We broadly categorise these into three main dimensions: philosophical, procedural, and transformational. This categorisation is not traditional but designed to offer readers context and clarity. Philosophically, Langar is informed by and cascades out of broader Sikh ethos. Primarily, it incorporates ideals of equality, respect (Khalsa-Baker, 2019), selfless service, charity, and hospitality (Singh, 2018). Realising these ideals infuses the spirit of Langar with virtues of inclusion, acceptance, and acknowledgement of others. Langar rejects inequality, blurs boundaries, dissolves hierarchies and furthers inclusivity. This philosophy promotes openness, collaboration, sharing, and communal nutrition, allowing us to recognise, accept, and internalise the values, ideas, and presence of others. Langar philosophy encourages democratic thinking at individual and community levels, moulding ensuing actions (Singh et al., 2021).

Sangat, Sewa, and Offerings

Langar is very simple process that comprises three core elements. First, Sangat or consortium of volunteers (Fenech & McLeod, 2014) who converge to render Niksham Sewa – selfless service (Singh, 1994) or Seva (Kaur, 2020), the second central element and a “constitutive aspect of Sikh subjectivity” (Murphy, 2004, p. 362). Third is Offerings or contributions, made voluntarily towards the preparation of shared meals (Hawley, 2014; Singh, 1989). These offerings include provisioning groceries, fuel and water, cooking, serving, dishwashing, and/or cleaning premises (Neki, 1994; Singh, 1994). Alternatively, offerors congregate as Sangat to offer Sewa towards the preparation, distribution, consumption, and nourishment of a shared meal. The salience of Langar is that its participation through Sewa and Offerings is not restricted to Sikh members alone but is open to all irrespective of cast, creed, or socio-economic status (Singh, 1994).

Without design or order Langar Offerors are free to join and exit any activity at any time. Apart from a few norms that must be observed, there are not many restrictions or requirements. Before entering the Langar premises, heads should be covered with a clean cloth, shoes removed, and hands washed. The tangible procedure of Langar is simple but the intangible connotations are deep. These simple tasks are interdependent but independent of one another in a complex way. Each activity works towards the final meal, but they are not linear. Simultaneously synchronous and parallel, each stand-alone task culminates in the meal’s preparation, consumption, or conclusion. Each activity is thus both a means and an end. Volunteers can simply take part in one activity and then seek nourishment, terminating their involvement there. Everyone can contribute (in whatever manner) and eat (or not eat). It may appear to outsiders as a straightforward flow of activities, but closer examination reveals that it is deeply complicated and chasmic.

Resistance and transformation in Langar

The powers of Langar are two-fold: resistive and transformational. Langar became more than a commensal practice of sharing food. It was a site of social, political, and cultural resistance, a locus of contest and negotiation (Hawley, 2014). Langar was a provocative socio-cultural prototype that the Sikh gurus crafted to challenge the prevalent inequities. These resistive powers engendered transformational prowess, defying the status quo, seeking change, and enabling transformation.

The philosophy and process of Langar opened closed places to add new social, political, and cultural dimensions. Langar eradicated boundaries and interrupted hierarchies to empower everyone as equal. It offered practical and ideational choice and freedom. As inquirers, we analogise this to Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of a map that can be opened, removed, modified, reversed, or re-worked by individuals, groups and other forces of nature. Langar is alike – open, modifiable, and re-workable. Individuals can enter and exit at any time, at any point, in any aspect. They may give and/or take.

Langar affords nourishment

The entire purpose of Langar is physical and spiritual nourishment. One may feel nourished by taking, or by giving; sometimes by both. One may not rejoice the fruits of their own offerings. They are left for someone else to nourish. What is important is the spirit of participation via the making the offering.

Means are goals. Goals are means. Processes become ends. Ends become processes. Mediums become products. Products become mediums. There are no boundaries. No demarcations. Only co-existence. Sharing. Acceptance. Respect. Trust. Honesty. It is all open, acceptable. Supple. Fluid. The relational sensibilities of give and take is Langar. (Collective Voice)

The liminalities between give and take are nurseries of nourishment. We transfer this to research and kindle curiosities to seek intellectual, scholarly nourishment:

Of many curiosities that linger, the one we delve here is how do we come to be as and where we are now in our academic and research journeys. Put otherwise, we seek the formation and shape of our own views on research. What do we bring to the pedagogies of supervision? As we began to observe our curiosities, the assumed, the unfamiliar and the flamorous emerge. (Collective Voice)

Pedagogical Capital: Research thinking, aspirations, expectations, and relationships

When we step into researching our research supervision, we bring ‘pedagogical capital’ that is an accumulation of our life experiences, both enriching and burdensome. We confine our research thinking to how we, as researchers, think about
research and endeavour to understand how and why it becomes the way we see it to be. Research thinking is not a uni-dimensional, purely analytical, hypotheses-based, and outcome-oriented phenomenon (Smythe, 2005). It is a much more complex notion, not separate or individualised processes. Actually, “thinking-as-research and research-as-thinking” (Smythe, 2005, p. 245) are concomitant and intertwined. They inform, impact, and mould each other.

Creating knowledge, research and its praxis are set in norms and traditions which tame us (researchers) to learn ways of finding and knowing that produce a research output, eligible to be counted as knowledge filtered through system, objectivity, and scientism. This research-thinking framework is largely procedural and adherence-focused. Such thinking pivots around understanding and appreciating variables that are tangible, measurable, and concretised in repetition and normativeness. However, research thinking also includes intangible and non-transactional components such as the vulnerabilities and the subtle sensibilities of researcher relationships.

But is it only thinking that we carry into our pedagogies, inquired Jane? Not exactly, said I. We also carry research aspirations. Yes, that is correct, said Jane. What about expectations, Damien exclaimed! Of course, them as well. We set an aspiration towards something and then we have expectations towards their realisation don’t we, remarked Jane. Yes, we do, nodded Damien and me. These are closely entangled but less explored within research frameworks, let us unwind. (Collective Voice).

Unequivocally, research aspirations are the reasons for undertaking research projects by both research student and supervisor. In this context, several questions arise. For example, what drives a student to initiate a PhD journey? What is the intended attainment? Here, I reflect.

My working-class Sikh background presented a passion for education that led to immigration from India to Australia. As a diasporic re-settler, I am fashioned by the encounters of my shifting culturalities and professions and like many others, I navigate the resettlement maze to confront and live many hierarchies, both professional and cultural. In this wayfinding, I straddle multiple hyphens and struggle to find myself. The drive to better myself and my family and the quest to approximate the complexities of my hyphenated being led me to the doors of the academy. (Kanwar).

Within pedagogies of supervision, supervisors also harbour aspirations. Jane offers.

Your work interested me. You interested me. I am swayed by that which captures my attention. At times this is unanticipated. Our first essay into supervisee/supervisory space was a small-scale project that was intriguing. I like being intrigued and I like learning new things. We didn’t start as post qual. We started as qual. At that time, I too was qual. Encountering your original other very post qual supervisor was a maelstrom I needed to wrangle. In other research I ventured into the post qual. Your research was moving this way and I found you had a curiosity like me to explore and reflect. I find I like the post qual turn. It suits me. I don’t do this with everyone but when I can I enjoy splashing about and seeing what unfolds.

At this point, Damien shares.

Essentially, I had not overtly considered my supervision pedagogy. I was new to academia but had a long history of leadership within school-based contexts. I remember arriving at the academy and being perplexed by the ridged focus on output often at the expense of growth and learning. This seemed absurd to me in a university context. I was concerned by the discourse which inspired fear into doctoral students – and was determined to locate myself on supervision teams that had a focus on growth and learning.

The considerable “individual and public investment that feeds into PhD education creates expectations” (The Group of Eight (TGOE, 2013, p. 23) which are an important element of the pedagogical capital held by student and supervisor end (Madan, 2021) and set personally and institutionally. Personal reckonings by research students and supervisors shape what each thinks the other should be doing as part of their doctoral initiative. This is framed in institutional rules and guidelines that map a pathway for the how and what of doctoral enterprises. When research aspirations, expectations, and thinking start to mingle, among other things, supervision pedagogies engender research relationships.

The significance of relationships within supervision pedagogies cannot be over-emphasised and are associated with multitudinous expectations and responsibilities that are critical in establishing a sound foundation for transforming a student researcher into an independent researcher/academic (Madan, 2021). As a “rite of passage to the scholarly life” (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p. 138) doctoral progression assumes student researchers will learn and acquire certain scholarly attributes (Hodgson, 2020) such as competence and critical knowledge application (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2019; TGOE, 2013). The process of developing of an understanding of its meaning is not an automatic or self-evident process. It is a system of relation building where both the student researcher and the supervisors play an important role in fostering such understanding (Peelo, 2011). Next,

We excite our curiosity to understand how research is generally done to how it can be done, differently and divergently. To understand how do pedagogies of supervision function. (Collective Voice)

The Turn and Churn of Doctoral Progressions

Doctoral tracks mostly seem a quasi-industrial, ‘turn and churn’ that is pre-carved, procedure-inclined, output-oriented, and inorganic. We dismember this well-established process to
We do not ascribe individual voice, because we all bring, take, capital and offer our Langar conversation of commune. Here, stories (Ingold, 2013). In our kitchen, we unfold the stories of process of production and consumption. Food materials and entering the kitchen: Our offerings to Langar

The Meal: Enacting the Commune

We enkindle our curiosity of how research can be done rather than how it is done. We chase our wonders and wanderings of a transformational pedagogy of supervision that are Langar-like. We seek to transform and be transformed as researchers. This curiosity leads us to our postqualitative kitchen where we forego the repetitive and enter our kitchen to cook knowledge meals. (Collective Voice)

Entering the kitchen: Our offerings to Langar

Food materials and “their properties flow, mix, and mutate in the process of production and consumption” (Zavos, 2020, p. 112) and describing these evolutions is like narrating their stories (Ingold, 2013). In our kitchen, we unfold the stories of flow, mix, and mutation of the components of pedagogical capital and offer our Langar conversation of commune. Here, we do not ascribe individual voice, because we all bring, take, make, and consume the offerings between us. It is apt that this becomes the narrative we offer in a paper about this approach. In Langar-like way, we select the processes and portions that create the meal. We bring our experiences, education, research thinking, expectations, and aspirations. But as Langar offers, we bring more. We bring three voices coming together (our offerings) to understand that doctoral supervision is driven by a pedagogy of commitment and responsibility that emphasises relationships between individuals and community building. This ethically responsible pedagogy demands trust, respect, empathy (Buirski, 2021) and honesty.

Trust is the fabric that undergirds the functioning of our social relationships (Weiss et al., 2021) that require cooperation and interdependence (Zaltman & Moorman, 1988). Trust is the willingness to rely on someone outside of our own self in whom we harbour confidence (Moorman et al., 1992). Trust also represents the hope that people we engage with in our social lives are competent and reliable. In scholastic inquiry, to determine rigor and measure scientism, the notion of trust is widely explored as it builds into the ‘trustworthiness’ of the research texture and output. The intangibilities of trust which inform research relationships (Nethsinghe & Southcott, 2015) are less probed. The non-transactional aspects of research interactions fabricate a research texture whose validity and legitimacy are beyond the parameters of scientism, objectivity, and distant researching.

We intentionally hyphenate trust-worthiness as these notions constantly interact to reinforce and substantiate each other. Trust amongst co-researchers is assigned on the assumed and estimated worthiness of the other. Concurrently, we trust the other to be worthy. Together, these are tightly entwined and closely interlaced. This is less common in research relationships within supervision pedagogies contained in the echelons of hierarchy and defined, classified, and determined by varying positionalities. We reflect, Langar teaches us to trust the ability, honesty and the integrity of other volunteers who are co-preparing and participating in the concurrent and co-ordinated yet independent activities of Langar. There are no written rules but only understandings between volunteers that are often unsaid, subtle and not enforced. For instance, the cohort that does the cutting may not be cooking. Yet they do their best to perform their task diligently and trust often unknown others turn something they have cut into sizeable chunks, into a sumptuous meal for everyone to share. Similarly, the ones who cook are relying on the conscientiousness of others in preparing the ingredients of the meal. (Collective Voice)

Trust warrants and ensues respect, a basic human principle that ensures minimal consideration to every single individual (Benn, 2007) and is significant in fostering fruitful pedagogical relationships (Buirski, 2020). In our view, every stakeholder in research deserves to be respected for who they are and what they bring. Acknowledging each other’s capacities and limitations eventuates mutual respect which lies at
the heart of supervision pedagogies and network (Gill & Burnard, 2013). Langar affords such respect. Offerors do not judge the offerings of others.

We also bring to Langar empathy, which is instrumental in relationship building within supervision pedagogies, determining the nature of responses in our social interactions (Duffy et al., 2018). Empathetic understanding enables the identification of feelings, attitudes, and thoughts of the other (Buirski, 2020) supporting positive and healthy research relationships. With empathy we can engage with the other’s situation, expanding our view of their thinking and evolving bigger pictures that intensify understandings. This enhances cordiality in the interpersonal and professional aspects of doctoral relationships. In an entwined manner, these virtues are intensified by the enactment of Langar which heightens what we bring and offers it back. This is a pedagogical conspicuousness that Langar affords and enables. Here, we ask ourselves, how does a Research Langar function and how are Langar ideals, philosophical values and virtues practised. (Collective Voice)

**Cooking together**

Generally, research projects are an assortment of sequences that are ambitious but templated and managed. Conventionally, the interactions between the research student and supervisors are transactional. Student work is appraised, supervisor feedback given and then incorporated into the research project. It is a kind of “you ask, I tell, you do, and I check” trajectory. This traditional and hierarchical approach to supervisory pedagogy is defined by positionalities – a research supervisor occupies the centrality of expert furnishing critique on the student’s work (Parker, 2009). This remains the norm until completion of the thesis.

Initially, we were cast in the same dye but soon sought a different way. Finding Langar catalysed change. We eschewed the hierarchically determined processes and positions to inhabit a complex co-creative sequence wherein we evolved a collective understanding of the goals and aspirations, working conjointly yet independently to contribute. A pedagogy of supervision understood as Langar is fundamentally different encompassing,

sequences composed of zigzagged and multi-directional rhythms and not systems. These rhythms are open, supple, and non-hierarchical. They seek curiosity and effectuate transformation. The boundaries are softer, permeable, and negotiable. Input is suggestive and consensual. The practice is shared and co-creative. As a research cohort, all three of us began to see each other in this light. Though in an implied manner the structure of hierarchy between us is still present but it is more to satisfy the requirements of the institutional structure that we are a part of. At the outset we are a team where I am a student researcher who is being supervised by both my co-authors in the capacity of primary and associate supervisor. Nevertheless, this is not the only interleaving that binds us. Beneath the procedural imprint of institutional structure, we are people, curious about the world, and committed to being part of a research commune where we collectively espouse a shared research practice and create knowledge, all the while valuing not just the writing outputs from each other, but the research contributions in their multifactorial guises. (Collective Voice)

**Building the commune**

In our virtual meal enactment, we congregate as Sangat (commune) and render Sewa (service). Work, activities, sequences, responsibilities, and accountability are not prescribed. Rather they are subscribed. There is no delegation, but abrogation. To this spirit, some Langar sequences are shifted away from normative activities. For instance, core thinking, generally a different norm and an individual duty in traditional supervision practice, becomes more expansive and inclusive an enterprise. Though experience is highly cherished and respected in our Langar commune, ideational offerings are respectfully accepted from every offeror (irrespective of the experience and positionality) and are not established in hierarchies of position. In a commune workstyle, together we cut, chop, and chunk ideas. We then combine, stir and cook these ingredients to create the offered meal of knowledge. Afterwards we tidy up, saving leftovers for another meal.

Feedback is accordant. Critiques are welcomed, accepted, and relished. Work is ascribed (not prescribed) to intrigue engagement not completion. Honesty amongst and between offerors is expected and observed. Opportunities of ideational exchange and offerings are created in what we term as ‘Langar Conversations’ in which regular dialogue seeks input and appraisal. All contributions or offerings are respected and respectfully valued. For instance, in research language, various dimensions of knowledge creation including core thinking, ideas, literature searches, library works, chapter drafts, article designs and so forth are consensually taken up. Some bring ideas, others bring experiences. Some offer insights, others offer concepts. One cuts, others wash. Some blend. Others stir. This is an inclusive exercise. Everyone is involved in giving or taking. Everything emerges from trust. Progress is assessed, democratically and concordantly. Incomplete tasks are managed, collectively and amenably. Limitations are acknowledged, openly and freely. There is room for empathy. In every possible way. We locate our thoughts,

We recall our first supervision meetings. We were being nourished by the ingredients of postqualitative inquiry, but only had dawning ideas how to mix, chop or cook them, let along how to consume them. The safe commune let us ask questions about the ingredients of postqualitative inquiry… why chop it this way, why add this flavour, why cook it for this long? These metaphorical questions built our confidence to stepping into what we could
offer. Part of the Langar tradition was appreciation of small offers that were woven into the meal of knowledge. This built our confidence and increased our curiosity. We began to offer more, and we began to apprentice ourselves into the cooking of the meal of knowledge served as publication outputs. Without overtly realizing, Langar as a meal of knowledge had encouraged us into a philosophical tradition that was to some unfamiliar, but that welcomed our contributions, offering time and space to reflect, building confidence, and reaching culminations of trust, empathy, honesty, engagement, and inclusivity. (Collective Voice).

As offerors of a Langar pedagogy, we perform charity. We serve the commune, ourselves, and each other. Knowledge meals are prepared and offered as tastings or savourings, for everyone to nourish, in parts or full. Within and beyond the commune.

We excite the curiosity around final Langar offerings to share the delicacies that its enactment extends for all of us to share and nourish. (Collective Voice)

The Final Offering: Tastings, savourings, digestings

There is an aura surrounding Langar sequences which is transferred to food and, in turn, to the consumer, improving their capacity to embrace new ways of being and enabling an understanding of food production and consumption as transactional spaces (Zavos, 2020). Being producers and consumers of knowledge, we spread the aura of Langar over supervisory pedagogical spaces, re-searching our own research thinking, and advancing an opportunity for others to re-search it. In our offerings, we extend a fresh perspective as we reflect,

Langar encourages flexibility and negotiability which encourages an equality of agentic practices. It defies hierarchies and systems which traditionally constrain curiosity and wonder, given the finite nature of the doctorate per se. Langar opens the closed structure of the pedagogies of supervision to build safer and softer boundaries that allow openness of thought, ideas, and suggestion. Langar inspires diversity of agency to let things and people be. It weaves diversity into the warp and weft of a fabric of consistency. (Collective Voice)

As Langar offerors, we step away from methodological silos (Creely & Southcott, 2020) to embrace the challenge of unravelling our own research thinking, which is often taken for granted, rarely seen as what it is and how it came to be (Smythe, 2005). By passing our thinking through a Langar lens, we illuminate the transformational aspects of research relationships within supervision pedagogies experienced in our research journey.

Kamler & Thomson (2014) illuminate the complex tangle of emotional work that is the doctorate and point towards the enmeshed nature of supervision pedagogies by centre staging notions and issues surrounding identity development of students turning scholars. With Langar, we are encouraged by the shared and collective research learning experiences that happen organically and in embodied ways in the supervision of doctoral learning and identity development not only for student researchers but also for the supervisors.

Many traditional supervision models exhibit a one-way dependency relationship implying unequal power relationships (de Lange et al., 2011) and there is a dominant narrative defining the relationships between student-researcher and supervisor (Johnston & Broda, 2006). Informed by a ‘me telling you trajectory’, traditional doctoral pedagogies follow a systematic/skills-based pathway and fall short of highlighting the nourishment that an intriguing relationality (within the pedagogy of supervision) does or may offer. The employment of Langar describes how the hierarchies and asymmetrical power relations working in traditional supervision ‘models’ can be interrupted to kindle new ways of knowing and knowledge building. To inspire diversity of agency, and to dismantle hierarchies of power and position- alities, Langar engages a “diffusion of authority to avoid the idea that knowledge rests with a particular individual” (Parker, 2009, p. 45). This helps to recognise how the diversity of experiences (tacit knowledge) is critical for disrupting the linearity of traditional supervision in embodied ways.

The question arises of what counts as a PhD and what purpose it is said to fulfill (Hodgson, 2020, p. 54), both for student-researchers and the supervisors. According to Mowbray and Halse (2010), the purpose of a contemporary PhD is plagued with “epistemological ambiguities” (p. 653), particularly in the context of a recent push for graduates to have employability skills beyond the academy and into industry and government. Literature focuses more on the processuality of PhD, seen as a 3-year engagement interspersed with punctuational milestones. This does not answer the questions of what it means to be a PhD student, supervisor, or both.

Largely, literature deems PhD as a product attained through a systematic unravelling of the doctoral maze and does not touch upon the curious, exploratory, non-hierarchical, and innovative components of the PhD Traditional visions of supervision pedagogies consider PhD as a product yielding practice that views graduate students as “product-oriented outputs” (Pillay, 2020, p. 102). To be effective and exploratory, supervision pedagogies warrant a shared understanding of both process and product of doctoral undertakings (Hair, 2006; Rawlinson & Pillay, 2014). Langar expands this viewpoint to emphasise the significance of the PhD process not solely as an outcome driven medium but as product by itself. In Langar terminology, we posit that the two-fold notion of nourishment. One, in the PhD process leading to completion that enables employability. Two, in nourishing the PhD process as a product and nourishing that experience as an end (in and by itself) that culminates and subsumes into the ultimate PhD experience and goal of knowledge creation. It is in
this space that ‘becoming’ researchers (research students and supervisors) and their research thinking undergoes many changes.

As an antidote to positivist influences on the head-only PhD pathway, Langar inspires a head and heart approach. Transformation requires both aspects to meet in a common space. By inspiring a head and heart approach, What Langar teaches us is that in this relational reciprocity of supervision pedagogy, students are not the only ones who become. In this shared research practice, the supervisors become too. Langar digs deeper into the “Thinking of Supervision Pedagogy” to suggest an alternate practice that is shared and co-creative. We determine how this thinking is evolved and shaped by a multitude of tightly entwined variables.

Along with evidence of published works in reputable journals and a synthesis of critical self-assessment by students, excellent PhDs are deemed to exhibit creativity (Mullins & Kiley, 2010). By diffusing authority, Langar furthers creativity. Supervision is key to providing the space for the reflexive academic development that PhD study demands, and it is the supervisor’s role to facilitate this journey. This requires an effective and robust supervision pedagogy (Kumar & Stracke, 2007). We posit that the evolution of an effective/robust It is an entwined, multi-dimensional and a complex process in which both student-researchers and supervisors concurrently step onto a path of becoming researchers’ on which it is not only the supervisors who chisel student-researchers into expert Masters but it is also the other way around where students mould the Masters into learners as well. Langar makes this plausible.

As opposed to the current views, Langar as pedagogy empowers PhD as a process rather than a product where nourishment is sought towards knowledge creation in which the process of making becomes a part of the product itself. With Langar, we tap into the complex vulnerabilities that surround the relational aspects of the supervision pedagogies and strive to understand the progression of multifarious identity formation within doctoral work.

Literature reveals a variety of supervisory management styles and frameworks that are in place to enhance and facilitate effective supervision pedagogies. Gatefield (2005) outlines a structure versus support model delineating a multitude of impacting variables and their role in the formation and functioning of such supervision styles. Also, Chopra et al. (2016) and Vaughn et al. (2017) have conceptualised alternative doctoral supervision models that provide deep insight into the functioning of supervision pedagogies. We acknowledge the contributions of these works towards evolving doctoral supervision and concur with Lee (2010) to postulate that supervision pedagogies are not simple but complex, entwined, and transformational interactions. The scope of their understanding, in our view, is not simplistically limited to and determined by management styles because in a Langar context, supervision pedagogies are not purely and solely a matter of effective transactional management of procedural pedagogic affairs. It is a deeper and tangled evolution of philosophical ideas, notions, life experiences, skills, and networks that set-in transformation at multiple levels.

Literature sheds light on the influence that supervisors yield onto to research relationships and student progress. Madan (2021) cautions against a generic, universal and one-size-fits-all pedagogical approach in doctoral supervision and suggests considering individualised and contextual factors that shape pedagogical specificities. In that lieu, notions of collective or co-supervision have been put forward (Niselle & Duncan, 2008; Taylor, 2014) that are sensitive to and considerate of isolated sensitivities and vouch for more open, thoughtful, and collaborative pedagogical frameworks. Parker (2009) with her Scholarly Writing Group model suggested the advantages of community approaches in doctoral learning experience including enhanced confidence, better networks, greater empathy, and lack of hierarchy. Fullagar et al. (2017) have postqualitatively featured the complexities of doctoral supervision as a disruptive process of becoming. In their work, they mobilised collaborative writing as a rhizomatic practice by creating a democratic learning space through an ‘electronic writing’ forum that challenges the current master and apprentice model of knowledge transmission.

Understandings of doctoral supervision remain fluid and evolving with writers offering different perspectives, often underscored by varying culturally based ontologies and epistemologies. de Lange et al. (2011) devised a cohort model of doctoral supervision that cherished efforts of collective understanding and highlighted the identity shifts that research-students experience as they change from novice practitioners to expert scholars. This cohort model established a community learning practice where supervisors are not treated as master (Johnson et al., 2000) but agents of change who create a socially just world (Engeström, 1999). Likewise, Greenwood (2020) applies a Maori inspired metaphor of a relational Map to gauge the experiences of international doctoral students in New Zealand and shares her own on-going critical reflections of being a doctoral supervisor. She appraises the continuing protocols and discourses around doctoral supervision that are vitalised by hegemonic research etiquettes. Greenwood disrupts the dominant pedagogical assumptions in the way knowledge is approached, calling for a re-alignment of positionalities that fostered community learning – a safe learning space that supervisors and student-researchers can build together.

The kitchen metaphor we use to apply Langar’s legacy has served as a centre of social and political resistance in various cultural and historical contexts (Singh et al., 2021). Citing instances from the American antebellum era, Davis (1999) traces the Kitchen Legacy of African American women plantation slaves who redefined their kitchen space to exercise power and de-center the foundation of black authority. She employed the Kitchen Legacy to transform the role of African American women in American scholarship and redefine the practise of a white male-dominated academy. Lately,
Wynter-Hoyte et al. (2020) appointed a kitchen technique to investigate the experiences of black female service instructors working in predominantly white urban cohorts.

We extend and intensify these approaches in Langar that inspires doctoral work as a relational curiosity to kindle literal, intellectual, and metaphoric nourishment as growth which is more than the enhancement of pedagogical efficacy. It is a shift in our conception of research which energises us to think about learning and knowledge creation as a sequence in which people interact with each other and the problem to inspire the contribution they make towards a problem, particularly knowledge building. Langar stimulates complexity through simplicity and focuses on the nourishment of a PhD

The traditional PhD is a deliberate practice of hierarchical supervision. Even the language is inherently hierarchical – supervisors supervise a PhD Langar dismantles the hierarchy of positions to inspire a sense of contribution that each person in a doctoral context makes towards different activities in the same sequence or same activities in a different sequence. In Langar, supervisors do not ‘supervise’, all become students. Contributions are conceived, washed, cut, transformed in a more respectful and equal manner. We submit how Langar contributes to explore the non-hierarchical and sharing aspects of a PhD which remain less probed. By emphasising both on the process and product of a PhD initiative, Langar enkindles the questions of what knowledge is and what we as researchers, consider knowledge to be. Moreover, Langar foregrounds the challenges of collaborative learning between student and supervisors. It also challenges pervasive transactional models of academic work that include supervision in varied ways. Jane and Damien as appointed supervisors recognise that Langar requires a great deal of time and energy, possibly far more than ‘official’ time allocations, but this engagement affords us opportunities for nourishment as researchers and as supervisors. Our postqualitative kitchen and Langar engagements keep us refreshed and nourished.

We do not offer this meal to denigrate other research methodologies or belittle their significance. As qualitative now post-qualitative researchers we all come from within the academy and in this discussion, we continue to look within seeking another way. With Langar, we highlight the need to deepen our understanding of the complexity of becoming researchers and the implications for supervisors/advisors, university mentors, and higher education policymakers and coordinators/facilitators of doctoral education programs.

We do not aim to override traditions and diminish their value. Rather, as postqualitative inquirers, we speak of diversity in the sense of recognising the uniqueness of the individual and offer the shared meal as a heuristic device to induce a shift in research thinking about supervision practice and becoming researchers. This may eventually transform supervisory pedagogical thinking and praxis. We do not offer to inculcate or impose Langar per se but offer possibilities that others may choose to explore based on their own experiences, cultural frames, and understandings. We offer a possibility of a different way that may intrigue others to locate their own. We accept that in their own ‘becoming’, readers can be resistant or be open to transformation and take ideas that resonate best for them. Our Langar insights are invitational for others who are open to alternatives.

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