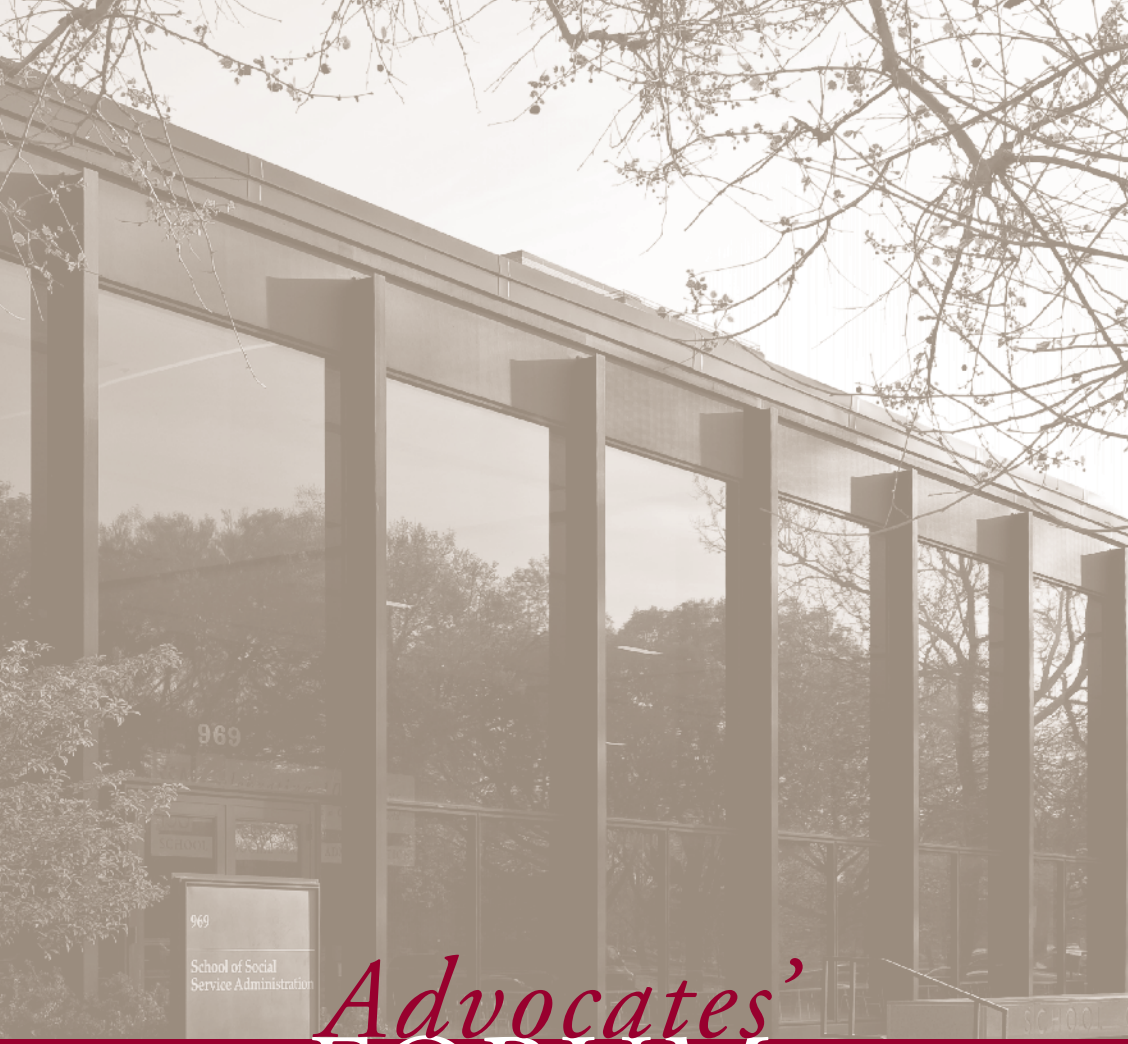

Advocates' FORUM

2010

A PUBLICATION BY STUDENTS OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATION

Advocates' FORUM

2010

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Advocates' Forum is an academic journal that explores implications of clinical social work practice, social issues, administration, and public policies linked to the social work profession. The Editorial Board of *Advocates' Forum* seeks to provide a medium through which SSA students can contribute to public thinking about social welfare and policy in theory and practice. Above all, *Advocates' Forum* will serve to encourage and facilitate an open, scholarly exchange of ideas among individuals working toward the shared goal of a more just and humane society.

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Advocates' Forum is published by the students of the School of Social Service Administration (SSA) at The University of Chicago. Submissions to the journal are selected by the editorial board from works submitted by SSA students and edited in an extensive revision process with the authors' permission. Responsibility for the accuracy of information contained in written submissions rests solely with the author. Views expressed within each article belong to the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial board, the School of Social Service Administration, or The University of Chicago. All inquiries and submissions should be directed to:

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ON THE COVER

The University of Chicago
School of Social Service Administration
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FROM THE EDITORS

For most in the field of social welfare, the past year proved particularly challenging. People who had never before relied on social services came through agency doors due to unemployment, financial uncertainty, and hardship. Many working in the field saw budget cuts significantly reduce service provision at the very time the need for services had increased.

In this time of adversity, however, students at the School for Social Service Administration only deepened their commitment to social welfare. This issue of *Advocates' Forum* highlights this commitment and showcases the School's traditions of responding to pressing social issues and promoting social justice. The articles in this issue demonstrate the innovative and thoughtful ways in which all of us here think critically about and address community needs and challenges in the field.

This year's issue of *Advocates' Forum* presents seven articles that demonstrate the range of that thinking. There are three articles that focus on this urgent problem, yet each examines it in a different context and suggests new intervention strategies accordingly. Two articles present contrasting critical visions of policy-making and its implementation. The final two articles delve into the philosophy of the human experience, one with an emphasis on healing and the other suggesting ways to measure how people acclimate to new social environments.

Ursula Wagner's article "Standing STRONG against Gender-Based Violence," examines all forms of violence disproportionately affecting women and girls, and assesses current intervention strategies. Ursula proposes an innovative intervention model that addresses gaps in existing intervention models, considering both the individual and the larger systems within which the individual functions.

In "American Orthodox Jewish Women and Domestic Violence: An Intervention Design," Meredith Blackman also highlights the social problem of domestic violence against women. She discusses the unique cultural and religious challenges to respond effectively to the needs of the Orthodox community. Meredith's proposed intervention strategy is based on her own experience and research within the community.

Madeline Brigell examines gender-based violence across two national contexts in her article, "Participatory Theater and the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence." Madeline's article illustrates how theater-based violence prevention models from Latin America have impacted and influenced prevention strategies for teens in the United States. The article also discusses important cultural implications of program design and suggests the need for continued research in this area.

In "Suffering, Relatedness and Transformation," Ruth Domrzalski connects philosophic principles of the human experience to the core social work tenets of empathy, attunement and responsiveness. Her article draws on the thinking of the twentieth-century philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, in particular his theory of ethical responsiveness. She does this to inform the social work practitioner's use of the therapeutic relationship in understanding pain and suffering.

Dina Drankus' article, "Indicators of Acculturation: A Bilinear, Multidimensional Approach," suggests use of a clinical instrument to assess a client's level of social acculturation. This article is particularly timely in light of the rapidly changing demographics of many U.S. communities.

In "Animal Product Consumption as a Social Problem: Framing, Mobilization and Agenda Setting," Betsy Rubenstein uses the vegan/vegetarian movement to illustrate the framing techniques used by advocates to position issues as relevant social problems and set corresponding agendas for change.

Finally, in "Landscaping Neo-Liberalism: The Weed and Seed Strategy," Julie Garfield re-examines a federal initiative to improve socioeconomic conditions in poor urban neighborhoods by removing criminals and implementing programming. She raises questions about the program's outcomes and argues that this piece of social policy sabotages its own goal by privileging capitalist development, re-enforcing small-scale social spending, and contributing o the mass incarceration of the US prison system.

In a year of increased hardships for those needing services and those who provide them, SSA students responded by applying rigorous examination and original thinking to key issues. The work in this volume demonstrates their effort to think in an informed and creative way in order to be more effective in our quest for social justice. It also typifies the students' commitment to the changing face of the social service landscape, on an individual, community, and even international level.

We sincerely thank our faculty and staff, our advisor, Associate Professor Virginia Parks, and our dean, Jeanne C. Marsh, for their guidance and leadership. Fifteen years ago, Dean Marsh started the *Advocates' Forum* with a small, dedicated group of students. This June, she will step down from her third term as dean and we wish her the best as she begins her sabbatical. We look forward to the next issue with our new dean, Neil B. Guterman, and are proud to present the 2010 issue of *Advocates' Forum.*

Jennifer E. Baker
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AMERICAN ORTHODOX JEWISH WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: AN INTERVENTION DESIGN

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Abstract

Orthodox Jewish women who experience domestic violence face unique challenges when seeking aid and assistance. This paper presents an intervention design developed to help these women and their husbands cease their patterns of violence. Both rabbis and social workers are involved in this process, which includes strategies to reduce enactments with male authority figures and the use of therapeutic metaphor, all within a framework of the Orthodox Jewish tradition. In the intervention design presented, the larger Orthodox community is encouraged to participate in helping these women by making their synagogues into places of safety and tolerance.

While there are between five and six million Jews in the United States, or 1.7%-2.2% of the country's population, only about 600,000 people in all of North America consider themselves Orthodox Jews as of 2009, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Orthodox Jews comprise a highly religious sect that follows the most literal interpretations of ancient Jewish laws (Steinmetz and Haj-Yahia 2006). Because they tend to live in closed communities (Hurst and Mott 2006), they are nearly invisible to the larger population. Therefore, the developmental issues and service needs that affect this small population are generally unknown in social work practice. For example, Chicago has no particular intervention ready for Orthodox Jewish women suffering the effects of domestic violence. But the unique life experiences of this small group of women demand special attention, for they are not only survivors of violence, but survivors with a unique developmental history. This paper presents an intervention strategy designed for women in this community.

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WOMEN AND JEWISH ORTHODOXY

Jewish people pride themselves on having harmonious, violence-free relationships and since Orthodox Judaism encourages men to be stable and rational, spousal abuse is not recognized as an issue (Steinmetz and Haj-Yahia 2006). Although Orthodox Judaism has moved in a slightly more egalitarian direction (Hurst and Mott 2006), most women born into Orthodox Jewish families begin their lives with a specific script defining what it means to be a woman: the social and religious realms belong to the man, whereas the hearth and home are the realms of women. According to Jewish law, known as *Halakha*, women are not allowed to engage in religious leadership roles and are to perform the tasks that maintain the family's health and happiness, and to support the growth of the children.

They may study the Torah and the Talmud, the Jewish holy texts, but there are few avenues for Orthodox women to assert their opinions about what they read (Rich 2002). Men write, read, and interpret the rules of Judaism and women are subject to the interpretations of their fathers, rabbis, and husbands. Some progressive Orthodox synagogues have found some limited ways to expand the role for women in religious life, but practices such as an all-women's Torah study group are typically met with disapproval by the ultra-Orthodox community.

Of particular interest in relation to the issue of domestic violence is that the Jewish laws dictating rules of modesty and relations between men and women, *Tzniut*, includes a prohibition on men listening to the sound of a woman singing. The only exemptions to the singing law are when women are singing to their children or singing songs for the dead—activities considered household necessities (Jachter 2002). While this law only applies to singing, not speaking, there is an underlying implication that women's voices have a dangerous quality. Men are warned not to listen to women, for fear that they will be greatly moved or swayed from their course of action. Men are allowed to listen to women speak, but it seems that if women's voices are to be avoided in one context, they may not be given much respect in another context. The responsibility seems to lie with the women, who must not sing around the men, for it will not always be possible for a man to leave the presence of a singing woman. The message to women, then, is that it is their duty to keep quiet in any situation when they might be overheard. Perhaps they will even refrain from singing in situations where they think they are alone, just in case a man was to enter unexpectedly. Silence is safer than the risk of making forbidden sounds.

Another relevant aspect of *Tzniut* is the law protecting the modesty, safety, and chastity of Jewish women by prohibiting men and women being alone together unless related by blood or marriage The implication is that

violence and dangerous sexual interaction are only likely to occur between unrelated men and women. There is no recognition of the dangers between married men and women. While Jewish law forbids physical contact with the opposite sex outside of the family, sexual relations and physical contact between husband and wife are required; it is the man's duty to have intercourse with his wife, and she is prohibited from refusing him (Guterman 2008). There is no clear way, then, for an Orthodox woman to conceptualize her husband's actions of violence as the law allows him to touch her as he chooses in all situations.

Since Orthodox Jewish women have been instructed that they have a submissive role in relation to men, it becomes apparent that treatment of abused women in this group may be extremely challenging. Social workers who will assist victims from this population must be aware of the unique developmental issues and relational dynamics of Orthodox women. These women may be difficult to engage because of the unique combination of shame, isolation, and denial of the problem (or their control over it) that may emerge from someone within the Orthodox community. Social workers treating these clients must recognize that they come from an oppressed population—both as Jews themselves, and as women within the Jewish community—and that their experiences with powerful male authority figures may lead to enactments with their rabbis or other helping professionals. Even though American Orthodox Jews are frequently middle-class and of white-European descent, one must not assume that as Americans, they are fully integrated with mainstream American society. These factors make this a particularly difficult population with which to intervene, but the possibility for positive change is tremendous if an intervention is handled appropriately and respectfully.

CREATING A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INTERVENTION

The modern American domestic violence movement is saturated with views such as those expressed on the website, DomesticViolence.org: "Domestic violence should never happen to anybody. Ever. Period." This same website —the first website that comes up when one performs an internet search for "domestic violence"—also says that women can and should leave their abusive partners quickly and safely. There is no discussion of women living in isolated communities, however. In such communities a woman might find that even her close family members might not support a choice to leave her husband. Social workers may find that Orthodox Jewish women have a stronger drive to maintain the marriage in spite of the abuse. Social workers should be prepared for their clients from this community to prefer working out their problems with their husband rather than simply leave a violent

situation. For women who live their whole lives according to a specific set of religious laws, the assumptions illustrated by the secular website above are unlikely to reach women operating on deeply-held religious beliefs.

Given these dynamics, any intervention that targets the Orthodox Jewish community must come from an understanding of Jewish laws and traditions and be based on respect for the lived experience of Orthodox women. Unfortunately, there are few programs prepared to meet the needs of these women. Project S.A.R.A.H. in New Jersey is one of the very few programs designed to work with women who have experienced domestic violence in the Orthodox Jewish community. Its premise is that neither domestic violence training nor an understanding of Jewish law is sufficient on their own to be of service to these families. But Project S.A.R.A.H. does not explicitly discuss how the developmental issues of Orthodox women may affect their perception of what constitutes an unacceptably violent relationship (East and Stein 2008).

The intervention proposed here fulfills that need. It includes four components: the formation of a women's group at the Orthodox synagogue, individual assessment, a home visit performed by a rabbi and a female social worker, and a community outreach component led by the congregation's rabbis. It combines the work of religious leaders and a social worker trained to conduct treatment within the parameters outlined below.

Orthodox women's group. Because abuse survivors are often afraid to commit a *shonda*, or to bring embarrassment upon their families and communities (Dratch 2006e), the Orthodox women's group is not limited to victims of abuse. Ideally, it will attract women who are in a variety of different marital relationships. Inviting these women to come together in an open forum might encourage women in need of help to make connections with other women who can provide support. The group will consist of two parts.

First, led by a prominent female community member, the women join together to sing traditional songs. By introducing a space where women can sing freely and as loud as they wish, the hope is that women become comfortable hearing the sound of their own voice and the voices of other women. If they can then identify with their feeling of silence and powerlessness, perhaps they will learn to break through it in multiple areas of their life, guided by the capacities of their singing voices (Siegelman 1990). This exercise in vocal power is designed to carry forward into the Talmud study group led by a rabbi.

Second, a rabbi provides a brief study of Jewish laws related to the relations between men and women and the possibility for violence between

them. More and more rabbis are learning that the problem of domestic violence does exist in Jewish communities, and there are training programs designed to teach them how to address this topic with their congregations and it has been shown that Orthodox Jews respond well to domestic violence programming and services that are marked with rabbinical approval (East and Stein 2008). Here the rabbi does not perform the role of male authority-figure since Orthodox women might then begin to reenact a pattern of submission (McWilliams 1999). The rabbi's position is not to correct or critique the thoughts of the women in the group, but to help them deeply explore the Jewish laws and discuss their meaning in relation to controversial gender and family based topics (Cohen 1998). Sessions should end with rabbis reminding women that if they would like to discuss these issues further, they are encouraged to meet with their rabbi privately at any time.

Individual assessment. When a woman from the group meets with the rabbi in his office, a female social worker with an extensive knowledge of Orthodox Judaism will be present. This both adheres to the law which states that another person must be present with the rabbi and a woman so as to uphold the laws of modesty and allows the social worker to begin operating within the confines of the community. Together the rabbi and social worker can perform crisis assessments. This intervention is concerned with women for whom partner abuse occurs within a religious context. Since such cases can be seen as a serious misinterpretation of Jewish law within an already patriarchal religious system, the social worker and the rabbi must intervene directly in addition to referring the victim to various community resources. Throughout all stages of the intervention, while the rabbi can address the religious components, the tone of meetings and the interactions of the wife and husband must be carefully monitored by the social worker.

In furthering the work with such clients, Madsen (1999) suggests not asking these survivors what they have done to attempt to solve the problem in the past. In this case, with such an isolated and disempowered group, this line of questioning would likely lead to the woman being reminded that nothing she has done has been able to change her husband's behavior. She may blame herself even further, and be even less convinced of her own agency. Similarly, when dealing with a domestic violence relationship, putting too much focus on the survivor's behavior may inadvertently blame them for their husband's abuse. It may be beneficial to ask the woman what she would like to see different in her marriage. Whether or not she originally believes she can make changes, listing out her desires in detail is a step toward achieving them.

The rabbi and the social worker provide an opportunity for a partnership with the woman, leaving subsequent steps to her discretion. Home visits by the rabbi and social worker are one such option. Depending on the marriage and the husband's trust of the rabbi, the woman may feel comfortable making the purpose of the home visit explicit, or she may prefer that it be masked. If the woman does decide to proceed with a home visit, the rabbi will be there to discuss the marriage from the perspective of Jewish laws and traditions, and the social worker will help encourage positive communication and collaborative goal-setting. The violence may or may not be mentioned explicitly. If the violence is addressed directly, the rabbi and social worker shall not immediately demonize or criticize this fact. As long as the wife wants to solve this problem mutually with her husband, neither party can be alienated from the intervention. Angering the husband may in fact be quite dangerous; outbursts of violence tend to be more extreme after a victim leaves her partner or attempts to involve the authorities. Instead, the social worker and rabbi will attempt to help the family by respecting both stories, and helping both partners think about how their actions affect the other (Nichols and Schwartz 2005, 275).

Using core conflictual relationship themes and goal-setting. The social worker may find it helpful to search for the Core Conflictual Relationship Themes (CCRTs) expressed by both the husband and wife. Throughout the home visit, the social worker should attend to stories about *relationship episodes;* such episodes consist of a person expressing a clear wish for something to happen within a relationship, there is a response to that wish from their partner, and a final response from the original person (Book 1998). An example of a CCRT in an Orthodox marriage may be the wife wishing that she could feel like an equal to her husband, but when she attempts to assert some control, he hits her or reprimands her harshly. Her response to him may be to isolate, to engage in self-blame, and to be reluctant to assert herself in the future. Describing this CCRT in front of her husband could be a very powerful experience; if his actions have encouraged her to hide her feelings, he may have been relatively unaware of the damaging affect of his behavior on her psyche. The design here borrows from the narrative approach of family therapy, for if violence is acknowledged, this is part of her story, and the husband will be asked to hear about the pain and fear that he causes his wife. The husband should also be encouraged to tell his own story and the wife will be asked to listen, to acknowledge any stories of shame or guilt that he tells about his behavior.

Because both Orthodox men and women spend much of their lives secluded from the opposite sex, husband and wife may find themselves endlessly repeating the gender roles that were established at a very young age (Hurst and Mott 2006). This intervention is designed both to put a

stop to this repetition, and to foster new patterns of marital interaction that are still compatible with Orthodox Jewish tradition.

In addition to the use of CCRTs and the desired areas of change, the intervention relies on a collaborative goal-setting process. Without stating outright that the clients have "a problem" that requires action, the social worker helps the clients develop a mutual goal for their marriage. The social worker elicits details of the goal; for example, what it will look like when the goal has been accomplished, and what behaviors could they each do to step toward the goal. With any family for whom violence is an issue, the rabbi and the social worker will request at least one follow-up session either at the home, or at a private office in the synagogue. The decision for this step should be made by the couple. It is important to let the couple know that any information disclosed in any session will be kept utterly private from the other families in the congregation as this encourages trust and a feeling of safety.

The role of Jewish law and the community. While the social worker is helping men and women focus on collaborative goal-setting, the rabbi will help the couple conceptualize their problems within the context of Jewish traditions. Here the work of Rabbi Mark Dratch (2006c) is very useful and relevant. For example, in his sermon on *Shalom Bayit*, or family peace, Dratch addresses the Orthodox law which states that any money that the woman earns must go toward the betterment of the household, and must be given to the husband to spend as he sees fit. While acknowledging this law, Dratch shows that because it is the husband's responsibility under the law to spend his money wisely and provide well for his wife, the law actually creates a form of reciprocity and that the gender roles outlined in Jewish law need not result in an imbalance of power or in violence.

The intervention is designed to suggest a recognition that Jewish law states most marital obligations are not required if the couple mutually chooses to abandon them. Therefore, it is appropriate under Jewish law for Orthodox couples to rewrite their household division of labor, or for a wife to help her husband make financial decisions, if they mutually conclude that doing so would be beneficial to their frayed relationship. The rabbi can therefore provide the religious context in which couples seek out new ways to interact. The abusive partner can be shown that domestic violence is not only in violation of Jewish law—which commands that married partners treat each other with kindness and respect—but it is a sin that cannot solely be forgiven by God. For sins against another human being, it is necessary to earn the forgiveness of the person wronged before the divine forgiveness is bestowed, and only sincere apologies need be forgiven under God's law (Dratch 2002). Once the wife is in a place where she can forgive him, he can also experience the gift of forgiveness by forgiving his wife when he feels angry. Instead of letting anger rule him, he too can practice

forgiveness. Both parties can endeavor together to be more forgiving; it fits in accordance with Jewish tradition and it can be another goal that the social worker can help them work toward.

In order for this intervention to appear viable, the rabbi needs to set up the congregation as a place of safety for domestic violence survivors. Interestingly, the place where the holy books are kept in the synagogue is referred to as the *sanctuary*. The rabbi can turn the idea of sanctuary into a metaphor that encompasses the whole congregation by announcing to them that the sanctuary holds the most sacred of objects, and now this synagogue will be a sanctuary for those who are suffering at the hands of another. For those women who do not have money at their disposal, the rabbi can set up a fund where a part of the synagogue's financial resources can support women in the congregation who are planning to leave violent husbands. Resources for domestic violence shelters, counselors, and support groups—both geared toward Orthodox women and more mainstream programs—are to be posted in the women's rooms of the synagogue. In this context, the social worker can help recruit families to offer room in their homes to women in the congregation who are trying to secretly and safely leave their husbands and seek help.

In order to spread the idea of the sanctuary throughout the congregation, the rabbi will address domestic violence in his sermons as a community issue that demands attention. The rabbi must acknowledge how hard it is for Jews to admit that fellow Jews are capable of such violent actions. However, Jewish law states that Jews have an obligation to both support and rely on each other. Abuse against one Jew weakens the strength of the community, particularly in the small neighborhoods in which Orthodox Jews tend to live (Dratch 2006a). Another sermon topic that could expand the notion of synagogue as a sanctuary is to encourage congregants to speak up to the rabbi or other authorities when violence occurs. *Lashon Hara* means gossip or slander, and it is typically prohibited in Orthodox Jewish communities. The rabbi must identify *Lashon Hara* as a law that is frequently misused as a tool to keep victims from speaking out against their abusers. The rabbi must remind the congregation that God commands the Orthodox Jews to follow all laws, unless it would be dangerous to do so. For example, the young, the old, and the sick are not to fast on Yom Kippur for the sake of their own health. In this vein, abused women are hereby exempt at this synagogue from the principle of *Lashon Hara*, and those congregants who become aware of interpersonal violence in their community are in fact obligated to report it and protect others from danger (Dratch 2006b). Such sermons encourage community involvement and engagement in the issue of domestic violence. They also tie all Jews together as people who have suffered and must protect each other

from suffering. The synagogue is identified as a safe space with trusted authorities who will listen to, and support, victims. Domestic violence and other issues rarely talked about in Orthodox life are thereby unearthed and acknowledged. This acknowledgement empowers the victims in the congregation by giving validation to their experiences and support for their mental and physical health. All of these principles fit with Bloom's (2000) notion of what constitutes a therapeutic sanctuary, and the synagogue would start to become a place where the traumatized can go to seek healing.

CONCLUSION

Mainstream domestic violence projects, and even Project S.A.R.A.H., seem to respond to every instance of violence by separating the husband and wife and giving them separate counseling. This intervention presented here will always give the couple a greater range of agency and choice. Survivors are given a great deal of self-determination as they choose how to respond to their difficult family situations. Singing and studying in a women's group may help female congregants feel a sense of empowerment, while the entire congregation will learn from the rabbi's sermons that the synagogue is now a place of sanctuary for the abused. The home visit intervention will take into careful consideration all the developmental issues with which Orthodox men and women have been raised. The social worker and rabbi, trained and prepared, will help call attention to instances of old relationships being re-enacted, or a husband's self-loathing being projected onto his wife, or how the long history of Jewish oppression can still affect Jews living today. By integrating these components, the intervention helps Orthodox Jewish women, a population frequently misunderstood and underserved, realize that there is the opportunity to make some changes in their lives.

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PARTICIPATORY THEATER AND THE PREVENTION OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

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Abstract

This paper examines gender-based violence (GBV) prevention programs in two national contexts: the United States and El Salvador. It shows how prevention programs have drawn from popular education movements in Latin America to develop curricula emphasizing participation and personal transformation. Specifically, the paper demonstrates the impact of theater-based activities on the outcomes of school-based GBV prevention programs, focusing on the case of the Equinoccio of Centro Bartolome de las Casas in San Salvador, El Salvador. The author proposes a need for further research about the longitudinal impacts of theater-based prevention programs for adolescents and men.

My goal isn't to change, but to transform.
— Marcos, Equinoccio participant, El Salvador

Social programs in Latin America have a long tradition of using participatory methodologies to engage marginalized groups in the transformation of their societies. Leaders and theorists from Paolo Freire in Brazil to Monseñor Oscar Romero in El Salvador have mobilized war-torn communities to engage in educational activities based in their own realities with the purpose of identifying oppression and seeking justice. In post-conflict Latin American countries, burgeoning violence prevention programs use critical pedagogy, liberation theology and popular education to healing the trauma of "dirty wars," address the violence that continues to plague their cities, and prevent the further perpetration of violence. Many of these programs use theater as a tool to provoke community dialogue and envision a better future. In the United States, although researchers have begun to publish more studies to evaluate the effectiveness of theater

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programs in working with at-risk youth and the prevention of violence, the practice remains marginal when compared to Latin America.

Practitioners in the United States have a lot to learn from examining the impacts of theater programs based in participatory education in Latin American countries. This paper therefore examines the case example of the Escuela Equinoccio (Equinox School) of Centro Bartolome de las Casas (CBC) in San Salvador.[1] It demonstrates the possibilities for using popular education and participatory theater as tools for the prevention of gender-based violence with adolescents in the United States. Through the example of CBC's program, the paper proposes that exploring the limitations of current constructions of masculinity with groups of men and boys using creative and participatory methods will reduce community and family violence by beginning a process of cultural change and reconsideration of what it means to be a man in our societies.

In addition to analyzing the theoretical foundations of Equinoccio and its impacts on participants, the paper reviews studies of theater programs used with teenagers in the United States, focusing on teen dating violence prevention programs. An initial review of the literature shows positive results from these programs. However, much work remains to be done in developing comprehensive theater-based violence prevention programs. Finally, the paper suggests how to integrate lessons learned from CBC's program into similar programs in the United States and proposes further research in the development, implementation and evaluation of theater-based violence prevention programs focused on the transformation of cultural norms about gender.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Before examining violence prevention programs that use theater, it is useful to review the theoretical foundations of their work, particularly around popular education, liberation theology, and participatory theater. One of the most important theorists and practitioners in the field of popular education was Paulo Freire (1974), who advocated for education programs rooted in the realities of oppressed communities with the goal not simply of learning, but taking action to transform the injustices operating in society. Freire enacted these principles in literacy programs in his native Brazil during a time of dictatorship and harsh repression of democratic freedoms. These programs have served as models for communities not only in Latin America, but in many developing countries struggling to overcome poverty and political violence.

Freire began developing his participatory education programs just as liberation theology was popularized throughout Latin America. Liberation theology empowered all people to study and interpret the Bible and

emphasized biblical themes of justice for the poor. El Salvador served as a critical source for liberation theology during the repressive dictatorships of the 1970s and the horrific civil war of the 1980s and early 90s (Hayes and Tombs 2001). Religious leaders in El Salvador encouraged poor communities to draw parallels between their own lives and those of the biblical heroes, helping them to mobilize in opposition to overcoming injustices they faced. The Salvadoran military executed many of these leaders, most famously Monseñor Oscar Romero and Ignacio Martin-Baro. Centro Bartolome de las Casas draws heavily from the tradition of liberation theology.

Participatory theater grew out of both popular education and liberation theology. Augusto Boal, a Brazilian playwright, rejected the idea of theater as an artistic form only enjoyed by the upper classes. Boal (1979) developed various techniques of performing theater with oppressed communities for the purposes of liberation and transformation. In his "poetics of the oppressed," Boal explains, "perhaps the theater is not revolutionary in itself, but it is surely the rehearsal for the revolution" (122). To create theater with oppressed communities, Boal developed various models including image theater and forum theater. In image theater, an individual thinks of a particular problematic situation or theme and then "sculpts" the rest of his group members into an image representing that theme. First they represent the actual situation, then the ideal situation, and finally a transitional image that shows how to achieve the ideal. In forum theater, the group chooses a situation related to a social problem. They then act out a skit based on this situation. Audience members are invited to intervene in the scenario to propose a solution to the problem. Many social programs in Latin America develop interactive social dramas based on this model to increase the awareness in communities of public health problems, environmental issues and women's rights, among other issues.

Theater has been used at a therapeutic level as well, addressing how large societal problems impact individuals and communities. Boal (1995) adapted his image theater model for use in psychiatric hospitals, working from the idea that psychic problems often originate in societal oppression. His book on this approach, *The Rainbow of Desire,* lays out a format for creating images to name internalized oppression, or what he calls the "cop in the head." The field of theater therapy has emerged out of this seminal work. Other theories related to the acquisition of experiential knowledge, such as those developed by Gendlin, support the effectiveness of theater and role-play based activities in the integration of new skills and views about violence (Beardall 2008, 169). The programs reviewed below draw on these models and theories in their efforts to prevent gender-based violence.

THE UNITED STATES CONTEXT

In teen-dating violence and sexual-assault prevention programs in the United States, some programs utilize performances of formal theater productions to educate youth about the issue of violence while others use role-play and skits developed by participants themselves to delve more deeply into situations of violence in their own lives.

A number of researchers have analyzed the impacts of teen dating violence prevention programs on knowledge about healthy relationships and future acts of violence of participants. Weisz and Black (2001, 89-100) studied the results of a 12-week long intervention with African-American junior high school students in Michigan. Partnering with the local Rape Crisis Center, they implemented a curriculum called "Reaching and Teaching Teens to Stop Violence," covering topics such as gender definitions and roles, healthy relationships, sexual harassment, dating violence and sexual assault. The program used a variety of techniques including discussion as well as role-play and experiential activities. The researchers found that the program increased knowledge about these topics and improved attitudes of both boys and girls who participated. Ting (2009, 328-337) conducted a meta-analysis of 13 dating violence programs targeted towards junior high school and high school age youth. He found overall increases in knowledge and attitudes about dating violence as a result of participating in such programs. A key component for successful programs mentioned in one of the studies was the use of a variety of teaching methods, including experiential education as well as didactic learning. These studies point to the importance of theater and role-play in teen dating violence prevention programs.

Many sexual assault and teen dating violence prevention programs focus on the need to change larger cultural norms about gender and masculinity. One example is the Mentors in Violence Program (MVP). The MVP program is a peer education model where high-school age mentors facilitate workshops about gender identity and violence for junior-high school students (Beardall 2008, 169). The mentors go through an extensive training and then discuss the following topics with their younger peers: sexist language, gender representations in the media, the role of the bystander in violence prevention, healthy relationships and dating violence. The MVP program involves mentors scripting and acting out scenarios. At one high school in Massachusetts, developing skits about issues such as peer pressure gave participants ownership over the process as well as involved spectators in dynamic discussions throughout the interactive performance. Beardall found participation in such performances increases awareness about sexual harassment, comfort levels of discussing sexual harassment and the likelihood of intervening in such situations as bystanders.

Although theater is just a small part of many of the programs outlined above, its effectiveness has been demonstrated in preventing violence and other risky behaviors in youth. In analyzing the impacts of a live drama production on students in preventing domestic violence, Bessard (2000, 102) reviewed the literature about the ways theater can impact the behaviors of youth. Theater presentations have been shown to improve attitudes of youth about risky behaviors by presenting models of desired behaviors. Interactive dramas further impact behavioral outcomes by actively involving the youth in the production through discussions with characters as to what decisions they should make in the scenario. In terms of violence prevention, role-playing both encourages youth to seek help if involved in violent relationships and to rehearse interventions with friends and relatives.

Because of the paucity of research directly correlating participation in theater programs to positive outcomes with youth, Zwerling (2008) set out to study the long-term impacts of theater programs on both the attitudes and behaviors of at-risk youth. To do this, he observed 3 different theater programs over the course of 2 years, interviewed participants and conducted surveys with them. One of the programs, City at Peace, engaged youth in creating plays under the rubric of Boal's theater of the oppressed. They sought to "empower, encourage, change, unify, and bring about acceptance in our community by opening eyes to the problems of violence and prejudice that go on every day" (Zwerling 2008). The scripts, written and performed by the youth themselves, addressed problems they experience in their daily lives, including violence and sexual harassment. In terms of effectiveness, Zwerling found that teens who participated in the theater programs had significantly lower levels of participation in risky behaviors than the national averages. As Zwerling notes, participatory theater programs help give teens ownership over decision-making in their lives and increase their responsibility for their own success.

THE SALVADORAN CONTEXT

As noted above, participatory education, liberation theology and theater of the oppressed all developed within a Latin American context. They all served as important tools of resistance during the civil war and recovery after the war. CBC builds on this tradition by using Forum Theater and other participatory education techniques in their Masculinities workshops, which they gave the name, Escuela Equinoccio (Equinox School). The founders of the program chose to address the issue of gender-based violence because of its pervasiveness in Salvadoran society. Most recently, during the civil war, over 80,000 people were killed and half a million displaced, not to mention those who were brutally tortured, fought in armed combat or lost family members to war atrocities (Madrigal 2009). This violence continues in the present day. El Salvador is home to two of the most infamous gangs

in world, the *mara* 18 and the *mara* Salvatrucha. According to the website *ContraPunto*, in 2008, the country had the highest murder rate in the hemisphere at 60 per 100,000 and murders have increased by 37% in 2009. Moreover, gang violence, post-conflict trauma and a culture of *machismo* have all contributed to the rise in gender-based violence in the country.

To address the issue of violence, CBC explores the problematic ways in which men have been socialized to act out their masculinity. The Equinoccio facilitators work intensively with five groups of men, women and adolescent boys each year, between the spring and fall equinoxes, to explore what it means to be a man in their society, the origins of conflicts, sexuality, relationships and self-care. The groups participate in four retreats, each four days long. The goals of the workshops are to build trust and confidentiality within the group, connect participants' emotions with their effects on the body and reflect as a group on how they construct masculine identity in everyday life (Tejeda and Madrigal 2009). To accomplish this, CBC uses participatory activities such as cooperative games, group drawings, dance movement, forum theater, film, meditation and discussion. All of these activities help participants reflect both upon their experiences being a man and how the dominant model of masculinity perpetuates gender-based violence. Most of the participants work as social workers, youth leaders, teachers or government officials and the program encourage each one to spread what they have learned to their communities and workplaces. With this multiplying effect, CBC hopes to change cultural norms about masculinity that maintain gender inequality and violence.

The methodologies used by Equinoccio facilitators in the workshops very effectively draw out participants' experiences of gender, masculinity and violence, particularly through the games and theater exercises. By involving the groups of men and adolescents in soccer matches and other games learned in childhood such as cops and robbers, participants recognize that violence is taught from a very early age. According to Walberto Tejeda, coordinator of the Masculinities program,

> We are working a lot with games as a concept and as a recreational activity. They aren't ingenuous or innocent proposals, but each game has a message, sustains some values or principles that we're interested in examining to find out how we've constructed from games a masculine identity. These games help us to learn, to socialize ourselves to violence and to exert it. These games have huge power as a methodology and as a pedagogy of work and in the case of men it's fundamental. (Nuñez 2009)

Indeed, out of all the activities of the workshops, these games make the strongest impacts on Equinoccio participants. In a series of interviews agency staff and I conducted this summer with 9 men and male youth, all spoke about the affects these games had on them. One of the participants,

a 19-year-old named Marco,[2] said, "All of these games have been violent but also they make you realize that from the age when we are children, we come to understand what is violence, what is machismo and it's something that once grown up is difficult to change. Yes, it's the games which have most affected me here" (Ruiz 2009). Another adult participant, Oscar, said about the games, "it's very interesting because I don't consider myself to be a violent person but when we were playing these violent games in the first workshop, an aggressiveness came out of me from I don't know where. This is something I had never discovered in myself" (Mejia 2009). Thus, engaging in these childhood games draws out of the men how it is that they have been socialized to violence.

Not only did participants play games, but they also acted out situations of violence using image and forum theater (Brigell 2009). While working with CBC this summer, I had the opportunity to observe these sessions in both the adult and youth workshops. In the youth workshop, the participants broke into three smaller groups to come up with situations in which violence occurs in everyday life. The groups then performed their skits without words or sound. After the groups performed, the audience members described what happened while the actors remained silent. The groups then performed their skits with voices and sound. The facilitator stopped the skits at the point where conflict broke out and asked the actors to remain frozen in an image. He then gave the audience a chance to ask questions of the actors. The facilitator asked audience members who was the most oppressed person in the image, the worst affected, and the most discriminated against. He then asks if the conflict could have been avoided. To demonstrate how the conflict might have been avoided, the facilitator invited an audience member to replace one of the actors, "rewind the cassette" and rework the scene.

One group performed a scene in which a man drove up to a group of sex workers in San Salvador. He sat down with them and they began caressing him. As he caressed one of the women, he realized she was a transvestite. He then began to yell at her and beat her until the police came and dragged him away. The facilitator directed the participants and audience members to examine their reactions to the skit. As the boys came out dressed as women, the audience members began to whistle and make jokes. The facilitator pointed out that jokes legitimize many acts of violence. He also brought to the attention of audience members how they legitimized violence through blaming women for wearing miniskirts, blaming alcohol for drunken men's violence towards women, and saying that women provoked the men into abusing them.

This example of forum theater shows how powerful theater can be in helping groups of men and male youth come to realize how they contribute to systems of gender violence and oppression. In Boal's terms, these sessions are rehearsals for finding better ways of handling conflicts.

Participatory activities such as games and theater actively engaged workshop participants in the topics of violence and gender than mere discussions would have done. In the interviews, all respondents found the methodologies used by CBC to be more innovative than other workshops they had participated in related to gender and violence prevention. Carlos, an adult participant who is a forensic psychologist, said:

> In my opinion, this is a very appropriate and adequate methodology that should be used by other organizations and institutions. This way of learning, through participation, reflection, and sharing personal experiences is one of the best ways to learn about the topics of gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence. Compared to other methodologies that are more like presentations or theoretical but aren't grounded in the experience of each person, this seems to me much more effective in terms of learning. (Montenegro 2009)

Many of the men discussed how their participation had changed their perspective on gender roles in their relationships with friends, coworkers, children and partners. Oscar discussed how he is more conscious of the hurtful impact the jokes he makes have on his partner. Another adult participant, Lionel, mentioned the changes he is making in his relationship with his partner:

> She can testify to the changes that I have gone through. I'm leaving behind the macho man who yells, dominates and demands. Sometimes he comes out, the masculine hegemonic model comes out, setting me back. But this ogre now comes in second. When he comes back, he hides. And there is shame and regret. My consciousness has been raised. (Garcia 2009)

The youth often mentioned how the workshops have affected their romantic relationships. One of the youth facilitators of Equinoccio, said, "There were months when I changed girlfriends two or three times, or when I thought it was possible to go out with 3 or 4 girls. My girlfriend saw the changes in me [after my participation in the Equinoccio]. I came to understand how to appreciate her. I consider her a woman who deserves respect now" (Nuñez 2009).

The workshops also helped participants envision ways to transform violence they perpetrate in their own lives. Jorge discussed how the workshop affected his ability to control his anger:

> This workshop has helped me most with my character because I have been a bit violent in reacting to situations that aren't in accordance with my way of thinking… Now in this moment I try to apply more tolerance and comprehension with other people. This in fact gives me more patience and allows me to maintain a more positive emotional state. (Delgado 2009)

Jorge also discussed the impacts on his life of one role-playing activity in which participants engaged in mock arguments with a partner about everyday problems at home and work:

> You gain a new comprehension through this experiential workshop. It helps you realize that in the moment before you react in a certain situation, you can reflect if this is a good or a bad response. I mean, it's a shock of consciousness that you have before reacting. This is important. (Delgado 2009)

Through this activity, Jorge not only recognized his own tendencies to react when angry, but also had the opportunity of practicing new ways of handling such situations.

Although these interviews and evaluations show the impacts of the masculinities program on participants, they also have limitations to their accuracy because they are self-reported. They may not always represent actual changes made in daily life related to gender and masculinity. The interviewees had an interest in presenting themselves positively for the interviewers. Also, the evaluations do not account for long-term impacts of the program, as they were conducted during the course of the workshops. The participants themselves admitted to some of the difficulties in integrating what they experienced in the workshop into their daily lives. "It's not something that changes overnight. It's not magic," said Felix, one of the youth participants (Gonzales 2009). "The violence I have inside is extremely heavy, I carry it with me. It's not easy to leave behind." However, the preliminary anecdotal evidence gathered from interviews and evaluation activities demonstrates the profound impact participatory games and theater activities have had on Equinox Scohol participants in their level of commitment to achieving gender equality and preventing gender-based violence.

TOWARDS INTEGRATION: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE EQUINOCCIO

Evaluating the use of theater and participatory activities in violence prevention programs demonstrates the enormous need for further research. Although many theater programs exist for youth, few focus primarily on teen dating violence prevention or the harmful effects of masculine gender norms. Additionally, in prevention programs such as MVP, the Michigan pilot program, and the Equinoccio, no direct correlation has been shown between use of particular techniques such as theater, games and role plays and the decrease in violent behaviors or attitudes.

CBC's Equinoccio could be used as a model for similar programs in the United States. Because of their great success and innovation in working with groups of men to create acceptance of the diversity of the masculine experience, groups all over Latin America have begun implementing

similar masculinities workshops with the technical assistance of CBC's staff. Participants in Equinoccio have benefited from the participatory methodologies used in the workshops, including games and theater. Integrating the model of the Equinoccio with universal school-based teen-dating violence programs for both boys and girls would greatly impact the level of violence teens experience in their relationships. It would also help to continue the process of changing gender norms about men and violence. More such programs involving participatory theater should be implemented and evaluated longitudinally in order to demonstrate their impacts on youth and on cultural norms about gender an masculinity that perpetuate violence against women.

As Zwerling and Beardall note, various types of interactive theater have great potential to increase participants' sense of collective responsibility to prevent violence from occurring (Beardall 2008, 169; Zwerling 2008). Ignacio Martin-Baro (1986), the well-known psychologist and Jesuit priest murdered 20 years ago by the Salvadoran military, wrote about the need for a collective re-orientation after the effects a 12-year civil war. Mental health professionals needed, he wrote, to break out of traditional modes of practice and "involve ourselves in a new praxis, an activity of transforming reality that will let us know not only about what is but also about what is not, and by which we may try to orient ourselves towards what ought to be." The CBC program draws much of its methodology from Baro's ideas of liberation theology and transformation of violence. Although teen dating violence prevention programs in the United States have begun implementing experiential learning into their work, incorporating participatory theater and interactive games such as those used in Equinoccio could provoke deeper changes on an individual and societal level about masculine gender norms and violence.

NOTES

[1] This research was approved by the SSA-Chapin Hall IRB of the University of Chicago (Protocol #10-015).

[2] All names have been changed.

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SUFFERING, RELATEDNESS AND TRANSFORMATION: LEVINAS AND RELATIONAL PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORY

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Abstract

Using the work of 20th century French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, the following article examines the theoretical basis for the clinical concepts of empathy, attunement, and responsiveness. It demonstrates that Levinas provides a crucial path for understanding human relatedness, a concept indispensible for social work practitioners. Examining relational psychodynamic literature, the author explores ways of viewing psychopathology, modes of psychosocial intervention, and opportunities for transformative results in psychotherapy, as informed by Levinasian concepts. The paper argues that by developing a basic understanding of Levinasian ethics, social work practitioners can gain a better understanding of pain and suffering, and of the transformative power of the therapeutic relationship.

In his writing on ethics, 20th century French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas offers a theoretical backdrop against which to understand important concepts of relational life, ethical responsiveness, and the complexities of human uniqueness. By asking us to accept that every human is at the same time infinitely unique and hopelessly finite, Levinas presents a theory of ethical responsiveness that rests on both the profound connectedness of human life and the extreme vulnerability that permeates encounters with other human beings. Levinas' ideas should, therefore, be seen as indispensible for any practitioner of social work, not only those whose clinical work is informed by psychodynamic theory.

Levinasian ethics provide crucial dimension from which to understand how psychotherapy can create a new experience for the client. By re-thinking the nature of suffering, clinicians can begin to see the possibilities for change inherent in the therapeutic relationship. To think that

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vulnerability and suffering could open the possibility of change seems counter-intuitive. Yet, examining relational psychodynamic theory from a Levinasian perspective makes it clear that these seemingly negative concepts can be transformative. When human relational growth becomes stunted, practitioners can look to Levinas to help clients find real hope for change in the transformative power of the encounter with the other.

Echoing Levinas' conception of suffering as possibly transformative, Froma Walsh (2009, 42) alerts us to an important "paradox of resilience" in social work practice, namely, that, "the worst of times can also bring out our best. A crisis can lead to transformation and growth in unforeseen directions… In the midst of suffering, as we search more deeply within ourselves and reach out to others, the hardship endured opens ways for the spirit to grow."

In the following pages, I will provide points of entry into Levinasian concepts to help social work practitioners conceptualize their everyday work. It is not my intention to develop a comprehensive Levinasian psychoanalytic theory, nor to elucidate the entirety of Levinas' work.[1] To facilitate my investigation, I draw heavily on Borden's (2009) work, as it provides an accessible, broad presentation of psychodynamic theory. For the purposes of the present article, I reference Borden's elaborations of relational psychodynamic theories to provide the reader with clear, informed material. I begin with a general investigation of Levinasian concepts of human connection and uniqueness. From there, I explore conceptions of psychopathology and modes of psychosocial intervention. As a final examination, I investigate what transformative therapeutic results look like from a Levinasian perspective.

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN RELATEDNESS

Levinas' writing focuses on what he calls the "face-to-face encounter with the other," an experience in which an individual is made aware of the other's mortality and vulnerability, and is thus called upon to respond ethically to the other's cries for help. When the other is seen in the vulnerability of the face-to-face encounter, it is "prior to any knowledge about death" (Levinas 1984, 130). The issue of mortality arises in the encounter because the individual recognizes the other's imminent death, while at the same time the individual is *made responsible* for this death. Since the other person cannot see his or her own death, this recognition, writes Levinas, actually "calls me into question, as if, by my possible future indifference, I had become the accomplice of the death to which the other, who cannot see it, is exposed" (131). The knowledge of our shared mortality as human beings is one of the underlying sources of empathy.

Though Levinasian responsibility places a great deal of pressure on the individual to respond, this response calls on our sense of empathy and compassion. George Kunz (2007, 622) elaborates the connection to affective responses in his reading of Levinas, noting that, "the weakness of Others shames our *self-indulgence* and inspires us to be *compassionate*, to suffer others for the sake of their good" (emphasis in original). Guilt in the Levinasian conception leads not to pathology, but to compassionate, empathic responses to the other.

In the "extreme exposure" of the face-to-face encounter, the individual is called on to feel empathy for the other's inevitable death, and thus ethical considerations demand that the individual responds in some way to the other person (Levinas 1983). By making the encounter with the other person a moment of profound human connection, Levinas provides a theoretical approach to explain one of the central tenets of relational psychodynamic thought: namely, that the focus of understanding is "not the individual but the interactive fields in which we work to establish connection, preserve ties, and differentiate ourselves" (Borden 2009, 150). For both Levinas and relational psychodynamic thinkers, it does not make sense to talk about a completely individual self, out of relation to others. The self is only conceivable as a self in relation to and distinguished by its proximity to others.

The Levinasian encounter describes the first establishment of such ties and the quality of such deep connections. For Levinas, human existence cannot occur without such a moment, for it is in the "inter-human" that the individual realizes the "impossibility of abandoning the other to his aloneness" (Levinas 1983, 146). Levinas characterizes the *inter-human* world by the possibility of human compassion, but also by the terrifying claims the other makes on me and from which I cannot turn away. Responsibility springs forth from the demands made in this inter-human realm, and in the Levinasian conception, responsibility is not a choice, but rather a demand that binds me to the other. This "obligation [to the other] is prior to any reasoned construction of a principle of obligation" (Williams 2007, 691). That is to say, the encounter inspires affective responses of guilt and eventual compassionate responsiveness, not a cognitive decision-making process regarding whether the individual "ought" to respond.

Levinas' conception of the inter-human will remind many of psychodynamics as described by Ian Suttie. Suttie, an underappreciated psychodynamic thinker and early relational theorist, regards the expression of psychic energies "not as an outpouring for its own sake, but as an overture demanding response from others," and notes that "it is the absence of this response… that is the source of all anxiety and rage whose expression is thus wholly purposive" (Suttie 1935, 29-35, as cited in Borden 2009, 59). As in Levinas' inter-human, Suttie describes a situation in which the

expression of energy *demands* response from the individual. In this passage, Suttie is directly refuting the Freudian notion of drive psychology, and proposing instead that the individual's actions are always intricately and profoundly linked to others. For Levinas, the additional profundity of life arises due to the other's impenetrable otherness.

Levinas details the ways in which the other's "uncanniness" demands respect just as the other's cries for help demand response. In the face-to-face encounter, the beauty of the other's uniqueness must be combined with the realization that the other is completely and even frighteningly different from me. While this moment is a frightening encounter with complete alterity, it also provides the foundation for recognizing every individual is a unique expression of being. For Levinas, comparing two people to one another is looking at "what is in principle incomparable, for every being is unique; every other is unique" (Levinas 1982a, 104). Every other is unique, and yet the encounter also allows for the recognition of the pure finitude (mortality) and inherent connectedness that is at the heart of human experience.

Levinas asks us to hold these two pieces of human life (human finitude and infinite uniqueness) together at the same time. But the question for psychodynamic therapy is this: how are we to accept the multitude of responsibility for the other's painfully finite life while also respecting the other's infinite uniqueness as a being? Put another way, how are we to engage in an encounter with a completely unique and "un-me" being, while also beginning to feel empathy and respond to that being? In many ways, relational theory tries to answer just these questions. The goal is often to help clients develop socially and ethically responsible ways of being in the world that also respect the individuality of others and do not impinge on the client's own sense of selfhood. Holding all of these pieces of the puzzle of human experience together demands insightful theoretical understanding of problems in living and interventions that rest on the crucial elements of attunement, empathy, and responsiveness.

CONCEPTIONS OF PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OR PROBLEMS IN LIVING

Using a Levinasian perspective of human experience as a general framework can help illuminate different problems in living. Some psychodynamic thinkers, for example, have traced problems in living to the client's inability to feel the crucial sense of responsibility for other people that is necessary in Levinasian ethics (Marcus 2007; Kunz 2007; Fryer 2007). For Paul Marcus (2007, 520) "Many problems in living and, in the extreme, psychopathology, emanate from the selfish self undermining, if not usurping, the ethical self. The needs and aspirations of the selfish

self, the ego, have priority over the life-affirming needs of the other." I argue that, for many clients, there is an inability to be open to simply *engaging* in meaningful encounters with other people, let alone feeling responsibility for these others. Indeed, many clients come to social work practitioners *in the position of the suffering other*. The others in the client's own life have failed to respond to her pain, and as a result, the client has learned to expect a lack of responsiveness from the people in her surroundings. Keeping these failings in mind, it should not be surprising to find that clients lack a sense of selfless responsibility for others.

Relational thinkers postulate that failings in responsiveness early in life are the main sources of subsequent problems in living. Winnicott, for example, discusses the "failings of the facilitating environment" and "absence of good enough care" as producing problems negotiating tasks necessary to healthy development. Kohut, likewise, "traces structural deficits in the organization of the self to earlier lapses and failings in care that compromise capacities to regulate emotion, integrate experience, and engage in relational life" (Borden 2009, 97, 154). The word *engage* is crucial to Borden's formulation here. The suffering other suffers because she is not able to engage in the world with other people. Her cries for help have been unanswered, and as a result, she may become trapped in patterns that guard against intense exposure to the other.

Although responsiveness to the other is a core concept in Levinas' writing, one interesting piece of the Levinasian conception (which is counter to psychodynamic thinkers like Suttie), is that this demand is completely asymmetrical. In Levinas' *inter-human realm*, there is no reciprocity when the face of the other calls out, because "all men are responsible for one another, and 'I more than anyone else'" (Levinas 1982a, 107).[2] Levinas thereby places an emphasis on the fact that, although I can see the other calling out to me for help, there should never be a call from me. I should never expect the other to feel ethically responsible for me, even though I feel the pressure of this responsibility. The asymmetry of the encounter makes it difficult to understand, especially because oftentimes in normal interactions we want to know we are cared about, just as we care for others.

For social work practitioners, the asymmetrical relationship is not unfamiliar. Clients enter the room asking for help; clinicians are not supposed to be asking the client for anything in return for the help they provide. The problems with Levinas' asymmetry arise when it is applied to the client's own problems. When we bring Levinas into dialogue with psychodynamic thinkers, the problems with a formulation driven not by reciprocity but by asymmetry are numerous. The question becomes: what happens when my calls to the other are not met with the responsiveness that is somehow demanded of me by every other in my surroundings? Or,

as applied to the therapeutic setting: how can practitioners ask clients to assume complete responsibility for the other without expecting the other to meet any of the client's own needs?

The asymmetry of the Levinasian encounter reveals some similarity to Melanie Klein's psychoanalytic theory, especially in her discussion of the depressive position of childhood development. During the depressive position, the child begins to realize the object (the parent) which the child previously conceived as either good or bad, now actually has both characteristics. The child begins to feel depressive guilt and anxiety for possibly harming the good object and makes reparations. Klein writes of a "profound urge to make sacrifices" during this phase, an urge which has an interesting link to the Levinasian urge to respond to the other (Klein and Riviere 1964, 65; as cited in Borden 2009, 70).

Similar to the Kleinian notion of responsibility that the child feels for having felt aggression towards the good object, Levinas (1982b, 94) writes of the "just suffering in me for the unjustifiable suffering of the other." There is an urge in the individual to find a justification for his or her own suffering, while the other's suffering is always seen as useless and unjustifiable. For both Klein and Levinas, the beginning of responsible relational life lies in the realization that the other's suffering is unforgiveable, so much so that I must take responsibility for this suffering into myself.[3]

After becoming accustomed to certain patterns of relating to others, it may be difficult if not impossible for the individual to relax these structures enough to truly experience the other in all her uncanniness. Similarly, the concept of vicious circles, as elaborated by Karen Horney (1942) and Paul Wachtel (1993), explains how an individual can become trapped in a particular maladaptive pattern of relating, one that does not allow that individual to truly experience others in a meaningful way. Wachtel (1993, 19) calls on the therapist to pay attention to "how unconscious psychological structures and the patterns of daily life reciprocally interact with and maintain each other." When clients become "stuck" in patterns of living that do not allow for deep human connection, the clinician must turn to the tools of psychosocial intervention.

MODES OF PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTION

Intervention in relational psychotherapy is aimed at helping clients develop more adaptive ways of relating and being in the world with others, while also providing the empathy and responsiveness that may have been missing in the client's early life. If psychopathology stems from failings in responsiveness, then the goal of psychotherapy will often be to provide the needed responsiveness for the client to

develop new ways of relating where growth was previously stunted. In many cases, psychotherapy is a process which transforms vulnerability and anxiety into a new experience of selfhood and relational life.

As such, the Levinasian conception of accepting extreme vulnerability—found within the face-to-face encounter—in order to experience a more meaningful element of ethical life provides a theoretical place from which to understand how psychotherapy can create a new experience for the client. The concepts of attunement, empathy, and responsiveness provide the tools clinicians can use to help the client accept a degree of frightening vulnerability in order to develop more meaningful ways of relating to others.

Attunement. The beginning phase of relational psychotherapy and social work practice in general, calls for tuning in with the client and being "where the client is." In addition, the clinician must establish a holding environment which "helps to stabilize clients, enables them to feel safe, assists them in containing and verbalizing their feelings, mobilizes their motivation, and facilitates their cooperation with and trust of the worker" (Goldstein 2001, 155). Attunement means more than simply listening to the client's story, it means being willing to engage in a meaningful face-to-face encounter with human uniqueness. Client as well as clinician must be willing to accept the vulnerability of the ensuing relationship if growth and change are to occur.

The concept of countertransference helps with this initial acceptance on the part of the clinician. Just as the client hopes to achieve real change in the relationship with the clinician, the therapist must accept the reality that the relationship will be an encounter with vulnerability and human uniqueness, and a new experience of relational life. Although clients' presenting problems may be similar in content, true attunement rests on respecting the client as an infinitely unique expression of being.

In his essay on Levinas and Winnicott, C. Fred Alford (2007, 534) defines attunement as "the sense one has of being in emotional contact with a separate human being," and goes on to argue that, "[t]here is no attunement in Levinas." In this construction, Alford reduces the Levinasian conception of relatedness in a way that does not allow for the eventual transformative power of the encounter with the other. By conceptualizing the Levinasian sense of human connection as "attunement of the hostage," Alford fails to note that the tension between feeling profoundly connected to the other, while also recognizing that the other is completely unique, does not exclude the possibility of true attunement.

In the therapeutic relationship, this tension is exemplified in Patrick Casement's (1991) explanation of a key position required by all therapists. Helping the client develop a new relational world depends on therapists'

own ability to "learn to be open to the 'otherness' of the other—being ready to feel whatever feelings result from being in touch with another person, however different that person is from themselves" (Casement 1991, 82). True attunement requires not only connection, but also an ability to be comfortable with a level of uncertainty regarding the client's experience of the world. Providing an environment which facilitates growth and development does not mean becoming hostage to the other, but rather opening a space in which both the tragedy of human finitude and the infinite uniqueness of human life can be held at the same time.[4]

Empathy. A core concept for Heinz Kohut, empathy means affirming "the validity of the individual's experience" and developing theoretical formulations that are "experience-near," or "generated by empathic processing of the individual's experiential world" rather than "based on external frames of reference" (Borden 2009, 142, 136). Empathy means looking into the face of the other and "seeing beyond the plastic forms which do not cease covering it like a mask with their presence in perception." The encounter in which the clinician can feel empathy for the other's suffering "incessantly penetrates these forms" (Levinas 1983, 144). Moving beyond the purely social world of expected roles and into a place where the clinician can validate the individual's experiential world is an important step in the therapeutic process.

Rather than feeling everything the client feels, Kunz (2007, 635) reminds us that, "The patient does not ask the psychotherapist to suffer his suffering. The psychotherapist suffers empathy; she suffers because the patient suffers and because she cannot suffer the patient's suffering." When the client's suffering presents itself in the face-to-face encounter, empathy offers an entry into the client's world. The therapist must be willing not only to be present with the client, but to enter into the suffering that makes empathy possible.

Responsiveness. Levinas (1982b) explicates the concept of calling for or demanding response from the other in an essay entitled "Useless Suffering." There, he writes:

> Is not the evil of suffering—extreme passivity, helplessness, abandonment and solitude—also the unassumable, whence the possibility of a half opening, and, more precisely, the half opening that a moan, a cry, a groan or a sigh that slips through—the original call for aid, for curative help, help from the other me whose alterity, whose exteriority promises salvation? (93)

As members of a helping profession, social workers are called upon to respond more than most other members of society. Often, the recognition that suffering is indeed useless is what calls clinicians to the field. Passivity, helplessness, abandonment and solitude can be a depressing place to start, but in the Levinasian conception, there is also an almost beautiful moment in which the possibility of real help makes itself known in extreme suffering. The extreme suffering is itself a demonstration of need, and a chance for the other to express a cry for help. By responding to the original call for aid, the clinician opens up the moment of suffering as a true possibility for alleviation of pain.

Alfred Adler (1956, 341) writes of a "devotion to the patient's needs" as an essential task in the therapeutic relationship (as cited in Borden 2009, 32). By restoring the client's confidence in the responsiveness of others, the clinician helps the client in his or her effort to see others in a hopeful light. Responsiveness to the patient's needs offers hope and the potential for new (more adaptive and fulfilling) expectations in relational encounters.

In addition, responsiveness offers the hope that "someone understands what I am feeling." Adler (1998, 25) makes light of the concept of common understanding, stating that "[our] very thoughts and emotions are understandable only when we accept that they are not unique to ourselves." From a Levinasian perspective, the universality of human suffering, suffering that stares me in the face in the face-to-face encounter, is the beginning of a deep mode of human understanding and ethical life. Although unique as beings, the common theme of mortality opens the possibility of deep human connectedness.

Responsiveness in the therapeutic relationship can be more than simply responding in a way that is different from the client's parents. What therapists provide, writes Casement (1991, 272), is "a security within the analytic relationship that allows the patient to feel understood, sensitively responded to, and analytically 'held,' by an analyst who can tolerate what is yet to come in the course of the analysis, without collapse or retaliation." Using attunement, empathy, and responsiveness, social workers can create an environment in which the client feels safe enough to present her deep suffering, while also confident that the clinician will respect that individuality of her complex needs.

TRANSFORMATIVE RESULTS—WHAT CLINICIANS HOPE TO ACHIEVE

There is a very frightening element in the encounter with the other. The encounter places the individual in a position of feeling completely responsible for another being whose is suffering before them. Without engaging in this encounter, however, clients may remain stuck in the world of vicious circles and maladaptive patterns of relatedness. Levinas

gives clinicians and clients alike a way to open out into the rest of humanity, even though his notion of the other can be almost terrifying.

Entering the realm of the Kleinian depressive position, much like entering the ambivalence of the encounter with the other, means entering a place where "self and other are vulnerable but potentially sustaining and enriching in a world of relationship and meaning" (Borden 2009, 73). Accepting the vulnerability of truly encountering the other being (as both good and bad) opens up a world of new meaning.

Writing of the process of curing a patient in psychotherapy, Suttie notes that it is not the skill of the practitioner, but "the willingness of the patient and his emboldenment to relax his defenses *against expressing his hate and so running a risk of being hated"* that is the root of the curative factor in therapy (Suttie 1935, 208). The other is revealed as a vulnerable, mortal being, and I am in the terrifying position of extreme exposure in a moment of "stripping away of expression as such… defenselessness, vulnerability itself" (Levinas 1983,145). This moment of defenselessness can be likened to Suttie's description of the patient relaxing his or her defenses and in so doing, being vulnerable to possibly being hated by the other. Although it may be difficult to run risks which the client has learned to defend against, the opening of this vulnerability leads to more fulfilling ways of relating to others.

Social workers are in the unique position of being able to help clients learn to think about connection in a new way. To become ready to engage in meaningful encounters with others outside the therapy room, clients must learn to accept the vulnerability that goes along with an encounter that is not based on pre-conceived expectations about how the other will act. Rather than this vulnerability being terrifying, it can open up the *possibilities* of relational life without expectation. The type of ethical healing that is possible from a Levinasian perspective should be a priority for social workers.

NOTES

1. This paper does not include any discussion of the phenomenological tradition out of which Levinas' ideas developed and instead follows from a 2007 *Psychoanalytic Review* issue which examined Levinas' work as it relates to psychoanalytic theory. I refer to several of the articles included in the *Psychoanalytic Review* throughout the present article. In addition, Kunz's (1998) book, *The paradox of power and weakness: Levinas and an alternative paradigm for psychology*, provides an accessible exploration of Levinas's connections to psychology.

2. Here, Levinas is quoting Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. Levinas references this line often in his writing.

3. For a more detailed exposition of Levinas's relation to Klein, see B.C. Hutchens (2007). Hutchens argues that the *differences* between Levinas and Klein are more notable than the similarities.

4. Interestingly, my response to Alford's conception of attunement may be slightly "out of tune," as Alford's reading of Levinas is quite different from my own. For example, Alford (2007, 545) argues that, "The face of the other is not an invitation to a relationship based upon deep appreciation of the unique otherness of the particular other. The face is a synonym for the shattering experience of infinity."

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INDICATORS OF ACCULTURATION: A BILINEAR, MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH

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Abstract

This paper presents an instrument for assessing a client's level of acculturation. The instrument has been designed for use by social work clinicians working with clients that affiliate or identify with a culture of origin that differs from mainstream culture in the United States. This bilinear, multidimensional instrument is composed of thirty indicators organized into three domains: language, cultural behavior, and cultural knowledge. Existing research that informed the domain selection is reviewed and the rationale behind the inclusion of each indicator is given. The instrument is presented in such a way as to show how it should be adapted or augmented as needed by practitioners in their work with clients. The paper shows how instrument is designed to: (1) increase practitioner understanding of a client's degree of acculturation; (2) increase the practitioner's cultural awareness and sensitivity; and (3) increase the practitioner's recognition of the impact of acculturation on other health, psychological, and behavioral outcomes and health and social service utilization.

Culture consists of the learned symbols, language, behavior, tradition, and ideas that are distinct among different groups of people. Individual acculturation refers to that complex, dynamic process of adaptation that takes place when one interacts with a new, dominant culture. Defining acculturation is complicated by the ever-changing context in which acculturation occurs, due largely to the socially constructed, dynamic nature of culture (Bennett 2005; Bennett, Bennett and Landis 2004; Bidney 1947; Handwerker 2002; Wolf 1984; Wolf 1982). According to Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936, 149): "Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand

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contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups." This traditional and broad definition, however, has left the assessment of individual- and group-levels of acculturation open to varying approaches and practitioners working with bicultural clients in need of an appropriate and effective method for assessing a client's level of acculturation. An instrument to better understand levels of acculturation, will ideally promote culturally competent practice.

While the concept of acculturation predicts impacts at both the cultural and individual levels, this paper concentrates on the ways in which the acculturative process manifests itself in individual-level adaptive changes. It further defines indicators of acculturation as those reasonably objective, reportable aspects of an individual's adaptation rather than how the individual has processed, or made sense of, his or her acculturative process. For example, asking how often an individual speaks English at work requires less reflection than asking an individual if he or she feels US-American. In other words, understanding and describing one's identity is beyond the scope of the acculturation instrument presented here. The goal of all instrument indicators is to create an individual acculturation profile based on reported language, behaviors, and knowledge that can be compared to broader dominant cultural norms.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE INSTRUMENT

The instrument presented here is multidimensional and bilinear. Multidimensionality refers to assessing acculturation across multiple domains and bilinearity refers to the instrument's ability to capture non-inverse relationships in the individual's participation in the heritage and the dominant cultures (i.e., participation in one culture does not preclude participation in the other culture) (Zea, Asner-Self, Birman, and Buk 2003). The presentation below refers to heritage culture and dominant culture. Heritage culture is often referred to as the home culture or culture of origin in the literature. Dominant culture is often referred to as mainstream US culture, receiving culture, or host culture in the literature. Finally, it is important to note that many of the studies referenced differ in their conceptualization of acculturation and in their operationalization of indicators of acculturation, but these studies include features or outcomes that support or relate to the given selection of indicators of acculturation.

Gordon's (1964) model of unidirectional, unilinear assimilation shows a heritage culture permanently shed as an individual becomes more assimilated to the host culture. This may have been descriptive of the migrant assimilation experience in the late part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, but migrants today do not necessarily cleave their home culture as they become acculturated to a

new one. Acculturation today is most often a bilinear process that occurs across multiple domains, or dimensions, of an individual's life. A bilinear approach that pairs indicators can better account for the high participation in behaviors related to a new culture without precluding the respondent's high participation in behaviors related to her heritage culture. Similarly, the use of a bilinear instrument allows for a tracking of low participation in behaviors related to both a dominant and a heritage culture.

The bilinear approach offers additional benefits. Several studies comparing the use of unidimensional measures and bidimensional measures have found the use of bidimensional measures reveals non-inverse relationships between the dominant and heritage cultural orientations. Therefore it better captures relationships between acculturation, identity, and quality of life indicators (Abe-Kim, Okazaki and Goto 2001; Lee, Sobal and Frongillo 2003; Lieber, Chin, Nihira and Mink 2001; Nguyen, Messé and Stollak 1999; Ryder, Alden and Paulhaus 2000; Tsai 2001; Tsai, Ying and Lee 2000). Since bidimensional measures are more valid and useful in assessing a client's level of acculturation, practitioners relying on unilinear indicators risk uncritically accepting the dominant ideology of the host country as the endpoint of the acculturative process and thus making normative and prescriptive statements to clients regarding their acculturative goals (Adrados 1997; Berry 2003). The bilinear approach, therefore, refuses to problematize perceived non-acculturation or non-assimilation.

The importance of a bilinear approach in assessing levels of acculturation is further maintained by studies that demonstrate the value of emotional or social support from the heritage culture in mediating acculturative stress and decreasing the likelihood of poor mental and physical health outcomes. The bilinear approach also offers the researcher the ability to distinguish between, or isolate, the impact of social support found in the dominant culture versus the support found in the heritage culture. These studies suggest that using a unilinear model of acculturation may miss the connection between a client's ties with his or her heritage culture and healthy socio-psychological and physical functioning, as well as the nuances of an individual's support system (Finch and Vega 2003; Lee, Crittenden and Yu 1996; Vega, Kolody, Valle and Weir 1991; Ward and Kennedy 1993).

The instrument has three domains of indicators: language, cultural behavior, and cultural knowledge. Language has long been recognized as a primary mechanism of cultural conveyance and this instrument's design assumes that respondents have a cultural tie to a culture in which the dominant language is not English. The indicators within the cultural behavior and cultural knowledge domains act as both proxies and, in some cases, direct measures for client participation in social institutions.

According to Bidney (1947, 375), culture is "communicated largely by language or symbolic forms and through participation in social institutions," and therefore the indicators measure the frequency of client contact with the language and social institutions of both the dominant and heritage cultures.

This instrument is designed for use in a variety of client-practitioner relationships. The indicators are relevant across cultures and allow practitioners to alter the base indicators to best fit the client's unique social-psychological context. However, while this instrument can be easily administered to adolescent and adult clients, it would not be optimal for use with child clients, as questions assume the client's self-selection of media and friendship. All indicators contain brief and clear language and responses are on a 6-point Likert scale. Respondents can answer easily, answers can be standardized and compared over time, and additional variation in responses can be captured.

THE INSTRUMENT: THIRTY INDICATORS OVER THREE DOMAINS

Pre-Instrument Questions

The purpose of the pre-instrument questions is to acquire the ethnicity and language with which the client identifies herself. These questions give the client the opportunity to identify her ethnicity and language and prevent the practitioner from making assumptions about the client's ethnicity and the language associated with that ethnicity. The pre-assessment questions are presented as such:

What is your ethnicity?
(The response to this question will be referred to as X in later statements/questions.)

What language is generally associated with this ethnicity?
(The response to this question will be referred to as Y in later statements/questions.)

THE INSTRUMENT: DOMAIN 1: LANGUAGE

Indicators within the domain of language usage and fluency are consistently included in instruments designed to assess a respondent's level of acculturation and are shown to be significant indicators of acculturation (Cuéllar, Arnold and Maldonado 1995; Cortés, Rogler

and Malgady 1994; Félix-Ortiz, Newcomb and Myers 1994; Mendoza 1989; Stephenson 2000; Zea, Asner-Self, Birman and Buki 2003). Some measurements of acculturation only use indicators related to language (Kamo and Zhou 1994; Krause and Goldenhar 1992). This instrument measures language usage rather than language competence or language preference. The bilinear format assesses how English and Y are (or are not) integrated into the client's life.

The following pair of indicators assess the client's self-perceived, overall language competence. English language fluency indicates client adaptation to the dominant US culture, while Y language fluency indicates ties to the heritage culture.

	Not at all	Very Low	Low	Fair	High	Very High
Indicator 1: Rate your English language fluency (or how comfortable you are using the English language).						
Indicator 2: Rate your Y language fluency (or how comfortable you are using the Y language).						

The following indicators in this domain assess actual language usage overall, and in more specific situations and focus on frequency rather than subjective assessments of quality (such as, "How well do you speak English at school or work?"). Frequent use of the English language—a straight-forward, easily-answered question—has been shown to be a significant indicator of acculturation to the dominant culture. A client's perceived quality of language use in different scenarios is more indicative of acculturative stress than level of acculturation and is more fitting of the conversation that follows the client's completion of the instrument, when further reflection is required to grapple with the client's perception of the acculturative process.

	Not at all	Very little	A little	Somewhat	Much	Very much
Indicator 3: How often do you speak English on a daily basis?						
Indicator 4: How often do you speak Y on a daily basis?						

	Not at all	Very little	A little	Somewhat	Much	Very much
Indicator 5: How often do you speak English at school or work?						
Indicator 6: How often do you speak Y on at school or work?						

The indicators highlighting the client's school or work environment can, in conjunction with additional indicators, give the practitioner a sense of whether or not the client has opportunities at work or school to speak Y, whether or not the client is electively speaking or not speaking Y, and may hint at other constraints on language usage in the client's environment. Speaking English at school or work may indicate client adaptation to the dominant culture, whereas speaking Y at school or work may indicate a linkage to his or her heritage culture.

	Not at all	Very little	A little	Somewhat	Much	Very much
Indicator 7: How often do you speak English with family?						
Indicator 8: How often do you speak Y with family?						

These indicators highlights the client's home environment and gives the practitioner a comparison point in terms of Y usage at home compared to at school or work. If English is often spoken at home, this would indicate another level of adaptation to the dominant culture, as home usage of English would often be a more voluntary usage of English.

	Not at all	Very little	A little	Somewhat	Much	Very much
Indicator 9: How often do you write in English during a typical day?						
Indicator 10: How often do you write in Y during a typical day?						

Writing in one language rather than another (or writing in both equally or in neither at all) gives the practitioner additional information on the client's ties to his or her heritage culture as well as the client's adaptation to the dominant culture.

DOMAIN 2: CULTURAL BEHAVIOR

Similar to the domain of language, indicators within the domain of cultural behavior are also consistently included in instruments designed to assess the respondent's level of acculturation (Cuéllar, Arnold and Maldonado 1995; Cortés, Rogler and Malgady 1994; Félix-Ortiz, Newcomb and Myers 1994; Mendoza 1989; Stephenson 2000). Behavior can often tell a practitioner more about a client's level of acculturation than simply asking questions devoted to preference. Reporting on behavior requires less reflection from the client (and controls more for client subjectivity) than requesting information on preferences. Zea, Asner-Self, Birman, and Buki (2003) do not use indicators in the domain of cultural behavior in their instrument, claiming behavior is more a function of availability of media from the heritage culture than a function of preference.

While a lack of availability may preclude the client's participation in certain activities, participation in behaviors (such as consumption of media from the heritage or dominant culture) can be taken to indicate levels of acculturation in each culture, *regardless of the client's preferred behavior*. Furthermore, as Mendoza (1989) argues, increased contact with a non-heritage culture increases the likelihood of cultural change.

	Not at all	Very little	A little	Somewhat	Much	Very much
Indicator 11: How often do you watch English-language television programs?						

	Not at all	Very little	A little	Somewhat	Much	Very much
Indicator 12: How often do you watch Y-language television programs?						
Indicator 13: How often do you watch English-language movies?						
Indicator 14: How often do you watch Y-language movies?						

The language used in a specific activity, whether watching television, going to a movie, reading a newspaper, or listening to music, frequently involves the transmission of culture. A client's regular participation in activities in either English or Y may indicate client behaviors imbued with dominant or heritage cultural content, respectively. It may also suggest the outcome of limited English language ability.

	Not at all	Very little	A little	Somewhat	Much	Very much
Indicator 15: How often do you read English-language newspapers?						
Indicator 16: How often do you reach Y-language newspapers?						
Indicator 17: How often do you read English-language magazines?						
Indicator 18: How often do you read Y-language magazines?						

	Not at all	Very little	A little	Somewhat	Much	Very much
Indicator 19: How often do you listen to English-language music?						
Indicator 20: How often do you listen to Y-language music?						

DOMAIN 3: CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

Cultural knowledge, which refers to knowledge of cultural referents, has been demonstrated to be a significant dimension of acculturation in studies such as those conducted by Félix-Ortiz and others (1994) and Stephenson (2000). Zea and others (2003) suggest that cultural knowledge is indicative of cultural competence, or the capacity to function successfully in a specific culture, which is an important factor in assessing an individual's level of acculturation. These following indicators therefore are intended to assess how familiar the client is with this aspect of the US-national identity. These indicators may be understood as part of the socialization process of US-Americans and may be indicative of some level of client adaptation to the dominant US culture.

	Not at all	Very little	A little	Somewhat	Much	Very much
Indicator 21: I know US-American national heroes.						
Indicator 22: I know national heroes from X.						
Indicator 23: I know US-American political leaders.						
Indicator 24: I know political leaders from X.						

	Not at all	Very little	A little	Somewhat	Much	Very much
Indicator 25: I know popular US-American television shows.						
Indicator 26: I know popular television shows in Y language.						

Familiarity with popular television shows in the dominant or heritage culture (or both) indicates an understanding of the popular aspects of the culture. Such understanding may allow the client to participate fluidly in the dominant culture, depending on the client's environment and his or her actual interaction with the dominant US culture. Similarly, familiarity with popular aspects of the heritage culture may allow the client to recognize popular heritage culture references with family or community, and may thereby allow for the creation of a social support network. It is possible to suggest that the client's social support network in his or her heritage culture may further improve client ease in maneuvering in the dominant culture through, for instance, increased self-esteem through identification and participation with his or her heritage culture. Such extrapolation on the benefits of maintaining linkages to the heritage culture is of course beyond the scope of this instrument and may easily be applied to any of the indicators.

Familiarity with popular printed materials, in combination with frequent reading of English-language materials, may indicate a client's a confidence in, and adaptation to, the dominant culture. Likewise, recognizing popular actors, in combination with frequent viewing of English-language media, may similarly indicate confidence in, and adaptation to, the dominant culture.

	Not at all	Very little	A little	Somewhat	Much	Very much
Indicator 27: I know popular US-American newspapers or magazines.						
Indicator 28: I know popular newspapers or magazines in Y language.						

	Not at all	Very little	A little	Somewhat	Much	Very much
Indicator 29: I know popular US-American actors and actresses.						
Indicator 30: I know popular actors and actresses from X.						

CONCLUSION

In a world that often seems like a post-industrial, globalized society of transnationalism and multiculturalism (Bennett et al. 2004), the complexity and changing meaning of acculturation, as well as the varieties of ways individuals experience acculturation, must be recognized. The instrument presented here assesses acculturation along multiple domains in order to capture the complex social-psychological context in which the acculturative process occurs. It is not designed to be used in isolation since a generic instrument to measure levels of acculturation cannot be suitable for every client.

First, indicators should be developed with an understanding of the complexity of the client's world and the necessity of flexible indicators that can be altered to the unique client situation. In-depth research and understanding of a client's multi-faceted, complex context is an important aspect of working with a multicultural client, as is recognition of the client's impact on their environment and the ever-present person-situation dynamic that guides the acculturative process. An instrument that measures acculturation should not presuppose a cultural homeostasis, or view culture as a static or singular concept (Baptiste 1993; Kottak 1999; Ward and Chang 1997).

Second, when administering an instrument like this, practitioners must consider carefully the client's context. They must think creatively about the multiple approaches to measuring acculturation and what can be learned from existing measures and relate models of acculturation to the practice of assessing client levels of acculturation. They must then apply findings with clients to the critical assessment of existing models, and understand which contextual factors may regulate or mediate the dynamic process of acculturation (Bennett, Bennett and Landis 2004; Berry 2003; Cabassa 2003).

Third, the practitioner should be aware of the potential ethnocentricity that may be found in both existing instruments and instruments that the practitioner creates. To this end, the practitioner should consciously

avoid constructing a client's heritage culture as a risk factor. In addition to researching the client's context, the practitioner must do this in a manner that maintains the dignity, value, and uniqueness of the client and his or her experience of both the dominant and his or her heritage culture. Further, in measuring acculturation, the practitioner must be conscious of the risk of viewing the dominant culture's values as universally superior to conflicting values attributed to non-dominant cultures. They must also keep in mind the risk that widespread negative biases and stereotypes pose to his or her construction of measures of acculturation and his or her work with the client (Greenfield 1994; Shelton et al. 2005; Zhou 2001). Finally, given a client's responses to the indicators of acculturation and the critical thought the practitioner has given the client's context, the instrument should frame a conversation with the client regarding his or her acculturative process, acculturative stress, ethnic identity, and other related or unrelated topics.

In social work practice, a practitioner's awareness of a client's level of acculturation enhances the practitioner's cultural competence in interfacing with that client and deepens the practitioner's understanding of how the client experiences her environment. As the practitioner strives for greater cultural competence and a better understanding of the client's world, she is also protecting the client's dignity by demonstrating respect for the client. A practitioner's awareness of acculturation also increases her recognition of the impact of acculturation on other health, psychological, and behavior outcomes and health and social service utilization. A client's level of acculturation impacts social work practice, so a practitioner's awareness of acculturation improves her practice of social work.

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LANDSCAPING NEO-LIBERALISM: THE WEED AND SEED STRATEGY

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Abstract

Weed and Seed, a federal initiative that started in the 1990s, seeks to improve economic and social conditions for residents in poor urban neighborhoods by removing criminals (weeding), and implementing programs designed and administered by conglomerates of state, local, and community level actors (seeding). This paper, however, seeks to outline the necessary questions about the program's as yet unmeasured socio-economic outcomes. It argues first that the potential impact on targeted neighborhoods goes largely unaddressed in the strategy's design, and ultimately threatens to undermine substantive neighborhood improvement. It further argues that while the project's flaws may be cast as the perpetual imperfection of social policy and implementation design, they are instead products of the political-economic context in which they are embedded. In other words, it argues that Weed and Seed is a product of the neo-liberal state and reflects policy decisions that privilege capitalist development, re-enforce small-scale social spending, and the mass incarceration of the US prison system.

In 1993, the United States Department of Justice initiated Operation Weed and Seed, a community-based crime prevention program that has spread to over 250 communities across the United States. Weed and Seed is a federal initiative that aims to improve social and economic conditions in poor urban neighborhoods through the combination of aggressive law-enforcement practices and collaborative community programming. The Weed and Seed approach pursues better economic and social conditions in targeted neighborhoods by removing criminals (weeding), and implementing initiatives designed and administered by conglomerates of state, local, and community level actors (seeding).

At the federal level, the Weed and Seed strategy is intentionally vague, thereby delegating most design, implementation, and funding mechanisms for initiatives to local and community leaders. The logic of the Weed and

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Seed model largely frames criminals and uncoordinated service provision as the primary obstacles for socio-economic growth in blighted urban neighborhoods. In other words, "weeding" criminals out of neighborhoods, and "seeding" in local service programs marks a departure from the Keynesian model of welfare that proliferated in the 1960s and 70s, a model that framed federally funded cash and in-kind public assistance programs as America's preferred anti-poverty edifice. This divergence is most pronounced in the Weed and Seed strategy's reliance on the U.S. prison system as an institution instrumental to keeping criminals out of targeted neighborhoods. Further, politicians aligned the strategy to neo-liberal ideals that position capitalist development as a viable strategy for improving conditions in poor neighborhoods, providing legitimacy for small-scale social spending and mass incarceration.

This paper argues that Weed and Seed, shaped by a post-Keynesian penology, is a strategy that satisfies a contemporary neo-liberal agenda that effectively reproduces class stratification. It begins by describing, in more detail, the Weed and Seed strategy, then illustrates the concept of a post-Keynesian penology, and lastly explores the strategy as it relates to the neo-liberal agenda. To provide a richer understanding of the relationship between the post-Keynesian state and the US prison system, the paper draws on Ruth Wilson Gilmore's (1999) theory of the post-Keynesian militarism, as well as the work David Harvey (2005) and William Sites (2003) to provide a historical framework of neo-liberalism, and to provide critical points of analyses through which to demonstrate that Weed and Seed is a product of the neo-liberal state.

WEED AND SEED: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Weed and Seed is a strategy, not a program. "[It] is a means to mobilize resources in coordinated efforts, *not simply a mechanism to fund local activities that share no collective aim"* (Dunworth et al. 1999, 15; italics added). Whereas a program might generate the expectation of uniform implementation at every site, the Weed and Seed strategy requires a significant amount of planning at the local level for its implementation. Because socio-economic landscapes (crime patterns, police presence, organizations, businesses and community groups) vary, the format and implementation of a Weed and Seed mission can look quite different from neighborhood to neighborhood.

However, every Weed and Seed site has three core components: weeding, seeding, and community policing. The first element, weeding, aims to remove criminals from the neighborhood through targeted operations and elevated police presence. Commonly utilized tactics include identifying and securing locations of high-crime activity, aggressive use of search and arrest warrants, undercover "buy busts," and extended

police coverage with an emphasis on field interrogations (Miller 2001). The second component, seeding, uses new resources from the program to leverage pre-existing community resources and actors in the planning and implementation of self-selected initiatives. While seeding initiatives vary based on locally defined priorities, all sites are required to have a "safe haven," a multi-service center or space that hosts a variety of different programs and activities. Popular seeding efforts include youth prevention and intervention programs, adult employment programs, family support services, community building and neighborhood beautification initiatives (Dunworth et al. 1999). The third component is community policing, in which the police and community proactively collaborate to address and respond to pressing problems.

Each Weed and Seed site has a designated a Grantee Organization, which is responsible for program coordination and implementation. Steering committees are charged with designing the program and, often chaired by officials such as an attorney general or mayor, consist of a mix of public sector representatives and community members (Dunworth et al. 1999). For example, the Crawford-Roberts Weed and Seed site in Pittsburgh had a task force that consisted of members from the local police department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) (Bynum et al. 1999).

While the above components and organizational elements define the general outline of the strategy, such governing committees are not uniformly implemented, and rely on varying funding sources. Depending on the site, community members and organizations can use more or less discretion in relation to selecting which seeding initiatives to fund. This exercise of community power, however, can only be activated once seed funding is made available. For example, funding for seeding initiatives in the Crawford-Roberts Weed and Seed site was largely unavailable until two full years after weeding began (Bynum et al. 1999).

Nevertheless, the Crawford-Roberts neighborhood experienced decreases in crime within four years of strategy implementation, and residents perceived improvements neighborhood safety and quality of life (Bynum et al. 1999). A cross-site analysis (Dunworth et al. 1999) showed similar findings in four other neighborhoods. This crime reduction trend is also evident in a more recent study of homicide rates, which found that, 55% of the two hundred and twenty Weed and Seed site respondents reported a decline in homicide rates from the time period between 1996 and 2001 (O'Connell, Perkins and Zepp 2003).

While many of the Weed and Seed sites are selected on the basis of high crime rates and high density of indicators of poverty (unemployment and income status) (Miller 2001), outcomes measuring the latter are not widely publicized in available program materials. The evaluation of the

Crawford-Roberts reports little to no improvement in unemployment (Bynum et al. 1999), and the cross-site analysis (Dunworth et al. 1999) omits these outcomes all together. In sum, while reduced crime rates and improved community perception indicate some success, the absence of data regarding the economic wellbeing of communities suggest that such success is perhaps too narrowly defined.

POST- KEYNESIAN PENOLOGY

In addition to decentralized control of resources, there is the propagation of criminal incarceration without rehabilitation. While weeding focuses largely on identifying and arresting criminals, incarceration is an integral element of the strategy as a whole. Miller (2001) describes the Weed and Seed strategy as an expression of a penology that largely positions crime as an unpreventable phenomena whose elements are to be managed, and negative impacts to be mitigated.

These attributes reflect the greater political economic climate of the 1990s. Starting in the 1970s the Keynesian model of economic governance, which proscribes the deployment of state controlled public money to mitigate free-market failures (e.g., unemployment and poverty), lost much of its popularity (Harvey 2005). The US federal government had fewer resources (and less political incentive) to launch significant public assistance campaigns. In other words, the Weed and Seed focus on crime reduction and neighborhood development are hallmarks of a distinctly post-Keynesian response to poverty. Instead of treating poverty as a primary producer of criminal behavior, the logic of the Weed and Seed largely inverts this causal story by localizing criminality onto individuals.

Such an orientation to crime, as Miller (2001) describes it, provides little in the way of programming to meet broader social goals, and decentralizes state responsibility for the contexts in which crime is embedded. In short, this penology justifies purging social programs in favor of reactive measures that aim to separate criminals from law-abiding citizens, and often diffuse remedial responsibilities to local contingents. The abandonment of rehabilitative services for criminals, the intensified commitment to removing criminals from neighborhoods, and the (minimal) support provided to citizens in the community correspond to the model she describes. Lastly, the delegation of crime control responsibility to local organizations is a primary characteristic of both this penology and the Weed and Seed approach as state and elected officials are insulated from assuming accountability for crime rates.

Ruth Wilson Gilmore's (1999) work on US prison growth further places this penology in a post-Keynesian state. As Gilmore frames it, the corporate tax-rebellion and social militancy of the 1960s left the state with fewer resources to spend on social programs, and a white electorate that

was no longer in favor of funding the war on poverty. The accumulation ushered in by lower tax barriers and a growth in the popularity of finance capital created an environment in which pools of money were amassed with few outlets for investment. While suburban development channeled some land (and financial) surplus, capital had still withdrawn from rural areas as a result of agribusinesses forced out by debt (driven by international commodity markets and natural disasters). Such restructuring of agricultural and industrial markets also lead to a surplus in labor, land, and unemployment, and the restructuring of taxes meant that social programs would not be implemented to put labor surpluses back to work. Gilmore argues that prisons became the post-Keynesian state's outlet for surpluses in capital, land, and labor.

In other words, the mass incarceration and harsh sentencing that Miller (2001) refers to may well be the result of the recent dramatic increase in the state's criminal storage capacity. Gilmore argues that the demand needed to both justify and meet the rise in supply of "cages," was achieved by a politically and economically crafted "crime" crisis. Fueled by the militant civil rights movement that threatened race and class hierarchies, Nixon's "law and order" campaign recast radical activism as crime that needed to be controlled (Gilmore 1999). After a decade of moral panic, the harsher sentencing and massive prison construction that started in California in 1982 seemed justified to the American public, regardless of the fact that crime rates had been steadily declining since 1980 (Gilmore 1999).

When President Bush introduced the Weed and Seed Act of 1992, Congress was not receptive to the bill. It wasn't until later in the year, after the Los Angeles riots had gained significant media attention, that funding was appropriated for Weed and Seed under the Tax Fairness and Economic Growth Act of 1992 (Ruben 1994). This provides support for the notion that crises energize reform efforts, and as Gilmore argues, particularly those that reinforce standing social orders. The result was a combination of mass incarceration, harsh sentencing, and a limit on rehabilitative programs and services.

The Weed and Seed strategy is a prime example of the way in which the post-Keynesian penology is able to reproduce the crisis of crime, and thereby create a steady supply of prisoners. Weeding in targeted neighborhoods results in more arrests, and consequently in more incarcerated community members. During incarceration, these community members are unable to participate in the labor market, maintain personal and professional connections, or contribute to the economic and social wellbeing of family members (Solomon, Fischer, Le Vigne and Osborn 2006). Upon release, the majority of reentering prisoners stay with their families, returning many to the neighborhood in which they lived prior to incarceration with relatively little to offer (Visher and Farrell 2005). Meager job prospects, untreated mental and physical health conditions, few

public benefits, and sometimes major debt accumulations (one study found that a quarter of prisoner respondents owed an average of $25,000.00 in child support) make reentering prisoners difficult community members to re-integrate successfully (Solomon, Fischer, Le Vine and Osborn and 2006). In effect, the weeding component ends up concentrating disadvantage by maintaining the socio-economic conditions correlated with crime.

PLANTING A NEO-LIBERAL AGENDA

The Weed and Seed approach served goals other than crime reduction and local social programming as politicians embedded the strategy in legislation that positioned Enterprise Zones as a legitimate means to improve poor neighborhoods. Originally introduced in England in response to neighborhood "blight" produced by urban deindustrialization, Enterprise Zone initiatives provide tax-breaks and other financial incentives to encourage entrepreneurial development in poor neighborhoods. Following up on campaign promises to implement Enterprise Zones in the United States, George Bush introduced the Weed and Seed Implementation Act of 1992. The Bush model marked an innovation of traditional constructions of Enterprise Zones, which according to Rubin (1994), were unsuccessful in spurring economic growth due to an over-reliance on the free-market and failure to address social obstacles.

The origins of Operation Weed and Seed suggest that it emerged as a solution to the problems of developing surplus urban space. Target neighborhoods for Weed and Seed implementation were selected based on indicators of underdevelopment and economic promise (Miller 2001). For example, the Crawford-Roberts neighborhood occupied a central location in the Hill District in Pittsburgh that had once been a populous African American urban center for commerce and cultural activity. As a result of fleeting industrial production from the city, the Hill District had seen a 70% drop in population by the 1990s and was home to neighborhoods with the highest violent and drug crime-rates in the city (Bynum et al. 1999). The combination of tax incentives, aggressive law enforcement, and growing community involvement through small-scale neighborhood investments were to stimulate economic development and improve conditions in neighborhoods like Crawford-Roberts.

According to David Harvey (2005), such disarming impediments to free market growth is at the top of neo-liberal agenda. Harvey (2005, 19) argues that neo-liberalization of the state is a "political project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites." Harvey further outlines the dramatic increase in income inequality that followed drastic shifts in monetary policy of the 1970s to assert that political pursuit of a free-*er* market system produces hyper-concentrations of capital for a very small economic elite. This new model

of governance, one that prioritizes corporate welfare over human welfare, was not strictly created by legislation. As an example, he cites the New York City fiscal crisis of the 1970s is an example of the way that neo-liberal practices took hold of city government, and became a compelling model for social and economic policy during the Reagan era. The crisis came to a head in 1975 when a coalition of New York investment bankers refused to roll over the City's debt, which pushed the city into virtual bankruptcy in the midst of a national recession. What followed, Harvey shows, was a series of concessions that required the city to render tax revenues to bondholders, and the large scale re-orientation of city government priorities from pubic employment and services to entrepreneurial development. New York's fiscal recovery, engineered by the "cadre" of investment bankers, brought both new practices and justifying ideologies. City government resources were increasingly utilized to attract investment capital by building infrastructure and providing tax incentives and subsidies for new enterprise (Harvey 2005).

As Sites (2003) asserts, out of the crisis and "recovery" emerged a narrative that laid blame for the city's fiscal failure on the "excessive demands of poor people, municipal workers, racial minorities, and community groups—and… the liberal politicians who supported them" (39). This definition of the crisis, Sites shows, justified major cuts to public services that the poor and working-class residents relied on, and set a precedent for distributing public money and political attention to business entrepreneurs and corporate leaders. While Harvey is careful to point out that this mass reallocation of public resources wasn't necessarily an overt effort to restore class power to economic elites, Sites (2003) demonstrates that the neo-liberal approach, as "philosophy for public action," functions to fix the needs of free-market enterprise at the top of the political agenda. Because the expansion of enterprise relies on growing private pools of capital, politicians must then protect capital concentrations against redistributive policies and practices. The neo-liberal model rationalizes expanding and protecting investment opportunities for the economic elite (Harvey 2005), and initiatives to eliminate obstacles to free-market proliferation (Sites 2003).

Urban revitalization initiatives, of which Empowerment Zones are an example, are a product of the New York fiscal crisis recovery that were subsequently reproduced throughout the United States. As an appendage to urban revitalization efforts, the Weed and Seed works to facilitate urban economic development by reducing crime and increasing community engagement, all while constricting—by increasing arrests and incarceration—the already limited opportunities for capital accumulation for residents of those targeted neighborhoods. Gilmore (1999) argues that high rates of incarceration create a pool of low-cost labor. Since living wages for low-skilled work are an obstacle for competition in the global economy,

prison labor functions as a mechanism to reduce the cost of production and post-incarceration, ex-prisoners feed the increasingly "flexible" workforce that characterizes the neo-liberal labor market.

Western and Beckett (1999) identify a key paradox in the short- and long-term labor market effects of the US prison system. Prisoners are excluded from unemployment figures in the United States, deflating the unemployment rate and creating the illusion of a stronger economy in the short-run. But because incarceration reduces job prospects for ex-offenders, they argue that consequences of a rapidly expanding penal system are sustained long-term unemployment and deepening social inequality: "Incarceration.... deepens inequality because its effects are increasingly detrimental for young black and unskilled men, whose incarceration rates are highest and whose market power is weak" (1031). This unemployment contradiction marks the potential long-term negative impact on recidivism in targeted neighborhoods.

Dunworth and others (1999) and Miller (2001) document local level resistance to Weed and Seed implementation. Miller's documentation of a Seattle Weed and Seed site illustrates the ways in which strategy implementation and design activated effective community opposition and control. Not only was this neighborhood successful in initially staving off program implementation, but when they eventually "accepted" the initiative—they were able to lead campaigns that increased seed funding and granted more community control over funding streams.

While the activation of opposition cannot be held up as an accomplishment of the strategy as a whole, community investment in seeding initiatives can be a positive outcome of its decentralized design. However, this shows how both success and failure are projected on the neighborhood level, while program elements are highly dependent on a host of state and local institutions. Community groups in the Crawford-Roberts neighborhood were similarly included as seeding strategists, but they were not granted access to seed funding until two years into implementation. Both by history and design, Operation Weed and Seed is thus a hallmark of a neo-liberalism in theory and in practice, which, as Harvey (2005) emphasizes, delegates state responsibility, projecting accountability on a more local and individual level.

While economic outcomes for residents and local businesses have yet to be measured or made accessible, the initiative's alignment with the principles of free-market growth gave Weed and Seed political legitimacy. This neo-liberal strategy, characterized by decentralized responsibility, tight social spending, and the prioritization of short-term tactics over long-term social gains, functions to cut off vast numbers of individuals and families from the accumulation of both physical and social capital.

CONCLUSION

Despite federal-level warnings about accelerated recidivism, and community mistrust of its aggressive law enforcement techniques, the Weed and Seed strategy was ratified by law and enacted in neighborhoods throughout the country. While some communities have implemented seeding programs for reentering prisoners (Solomon, Palmer, Atkinson, Davidson and Harvey 2006), such programs compete for a portion of limited seed funding that could otherwise be spent on a host of other prevention programming. Because rehabilitative services are not a fixed and securely funded part of the strategy, communities incur the cost of socio-economic losses accumulated during incarceration.

Particularly at the municipal level, the Weed and Seed approach enables local governments to brand spaces of social disorder, and strategically infiltrate these spaces to eradicate free-market obstacles. The Weed and Seed strategy embodies a post-Keynesian penology that justifies the acceleration of concentrated disadvantage, and further expands economic opportunity for the capital class through tax incentives and cheap labor. This strategy threatens to create, if even indirectly, a recurring criminal crisis that will both justify and shore up demand for a growing supply of "cages," and reproduces a landscape in which minorities inhabit socio-economic spaces devoid of power and opportunity.

Certainly, improving the conditions of poor urban neighborhoods and increasing community involvement through crime reduction and social programming are practical goals at the state and local level. In some cases, crime reduction, improvements in the way that residents felt about their neighborhood, and institutional collaboration are positive outcomes of the Weed and Seed strategy. What remains is a question of whether these positive outcomes create substantive gains for the communities in which the strategy is implemented. While further research is needed to answer this question, the studies included in this paper suggest that prisoner re-entry presents significant challenges for ex-offenders, their families, and the communities. These findings stimulate further questions about the net social value of a policy that seeks to improve poor neighborhoods by removing residents without providing any support for their inevitable return. In looking forward, it's important to understand Weed and Seed as a product, not an artifact, of social policy-making in a neo-liberal environment, one that continues to be reproduced in urban communities throughout the United States. For this reason, it is imperative that the socio-economic impact on targeted neighborhoods is carefully studied moving forward so that the design of the Weed and Seed strategy can be enhanced to ensure maximum benefit for urban communities.

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FOR THE ANIMALS, THE EARTH, AND OUR HEALTH: STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE PROBLEM OF ANIMAL-PRODUCT CONSUMPTION

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Abstract

How does an issue come to be defined as a social problem? Once a problem is defined as such, what are the processes through which activists engage and organize citizens to join the cause? What strategies can activists use to get their issue on the public agenda for change? Using the purported social problem of animal-product consumption, this paper will provide a response to these questions through the social change lens of the vegan/vegetarian (VEG) movement. The author will discuss how VEG activists have created meaning through the use of collective action frames, expanded the boundaries of the movement to mobilize an increasing number of individuals and groups, and utilized campaign tactics and policy windows to get the animal-product consumption problem on the public agenda.

In order to develop an understanding of how social problems come to be, it is important to recognize that what we perceive as "problems" are not simply conditions that preexist in the world, separate from human creation. Rather, as Spector and Kitsuse (1987) argue, social problems emerge from "the activities of those who assert the *existence* of conditions and *define* them as problems" (74). Individuals who make such assertions sometimes use value judgments to construct a problem through compelling and convincing language.

Within the context of social movements, activists act as claims-makers by effectively framing an issue as a pressing social problem. The *framing* technique can also be used as a strategic tool to *mobilize* and engage a diverse group of people around the issue. By broadening the frames through which a social problem can be understood, activists can effectively increase

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the amount of potential supporters, and thus make a larger impact. Once individuals and groups have been mobilized around an issue, activists try to set an agenda for change. With the power of effective frames and mobilized citizens, activists will engage in mass-communication to increase the likelihood of public support and policy adoption.

This paper will present an example of these advocacy techniques through their implementation by the vegan/vegetarian (VEG) movement. The VEG movement has effectively utilized these framing, mobilization, and agenda-setting techniques to advocate on behalf of animals, the environment, and our health and thus offers a clear example of how activists use these essential techniques to bring about social change.

FRAMING THE ISSUE

In their assessment of social movements, Benford and Snow (2000) illustrate how framing creates meaning. When frames are used to mobilize groups to take action on a particular social movement, they are called "collective action frames." Under the umbrella of collective action frames, there are three component parts: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing. Diagnostic framing refers to the words that agents use to identify the problem and the sources of causality. In some cases, determining the causal source for a social problem is a difficult task. Change agents who agree that a given situation is a social problem may disagree about *what* or *who* specifically is causing the problem.

In the case of the VEG movement, the causal source of the social problem is intrinsic to the problem itself. According to Vegan Action's website (vegan.org), animal-product consumption is a social problem due to its negative effects on animals, the environment, and our health, so the obvious source of blame are the people who consume animal products and the institutions that perpetuate the meat/dairy-production industry. Once a social problem and its cause have been identified in this way, the next task is to determine a course of action to respond to the problem. This is where prognostic framing is utilized.

Prognostic framing is used not only to identify the solution or plan of action, but also to articulate the strategies that will be used to carry out the plan. Activists within Vegan Outreach, for example, frame the solution to animal-product consumption as being a matter of educating the public about alternatives to eating meat and dairy, and the ethical issues around animal-cruelty. Their hope is to appeal to our human sense of right and wrong, and to help provide an alternative perspective to the notion that animal products must be a central component of our diet. Matt Ball (2008), a member of Vegan Outreach, stated that "effective advocates . . . recognize that they can't *change* anyone's mind. No matter how elegant the argument,

real and lasting change comes only when others are free to explore new perspectives" (2). Furthermore, vegan activists use prognostic frames that do not involve the imposition of value judgments or the intention to make meat and dairy-eaters feel guilty about their diet choices. Rather, they focus their solution on the dispersion of information, increasing access to vegan/vegetarian options, and promoting a healthy and environmentally friendly lifestyle.

The third component to collective action frames is motivational framing. These frames are used to provide a rationale and motivation for individuals and groups to engage in collective action around a social problem. More specifically, motivational frames involve using a vocabulary that indicates a sense of "severity, urgency, efficacy and [or] propriety" (Benford and Snow 2000, 617). With respect to propriety, Bruce Friedrich (2004), the director of Vegan Campaigns with People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), stated that the ultimate goal of the animal rights movement is to apply the golden rule to all animals: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. By using this recognizable phrase, he intended to appeal to our society's conventionally accepted beliefs and morals. Surely, we would not want to be locked in a cage unable to walk around or breathe fresh air. We would not want to be forced into a small space where there was no separation between our living area and the place where we expelled waste.

Peter Singer and Jim Mason (2006), both authors and activists for animal rights, use motivational frames that exemplify the severity of slaughterhouses. Throughout their book, *The Way We Eat: Why Our Food Choices Matter*, they explained in detail the extreme cruelty and pain that chickens experience in factory farming conditions. Their writing conjures "excrement-filled litter" and "premature death" of animals "crammed into cages" and "suffer[ing] dislocated and broken hips, broken wings, and internal bleeding" (24-5). By continuously using motivational framing that illustrates the distressing conditions of slaughterhouses, Singer and Mason have the capacity to potentially influence the reader to take action and change their diet.

"Master frames" are another form of framing that activists commonly use to mobilize action in social movements. While collective action frames use words and phrases that are specific to the social problem at hand, master frames are less restrictive and reach out to connect with other social problems (Benford and Snow 2000). For example, Singer and Mason's (2006) detailed description of the maltreatment of chickens in slaughterhouses provide a collective action frame, but the words like unethical, cruel, inhumane, gruesome, and destructive are all contribute to a master frame. While these words could certainly be used to describe factory-farming conditions and environmental destruction, they could

also be used to describe a variety of other issues. Benford and Snow (2000) explain that the inclusive nature of master frames make them both beneficial and detrimental to their overall effectiveness in mobilizing individuals and groups. While a master frame has the ability to resonate with many people, its lack of specificity can limit its inability to capture the severity of the issue. For this reason, it is in the best interest of VEG activists to choose their framing strategically, and with the intention of revealing the ruthless nature of animal-product consumption.

MOBILIZING INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS

In the evolution of a social movement, the act of framing and the creation of collective action frames give advocates the ability to mobilize individuals and groups to join and support a cause. After all, the intention of the powerful and compelling language involved in framing is to convince the public (or specific audience) that the issue at hand is urgent and severe enough to require our attention and efforts. In addition to utilizing framing techniques, it is important that activists continually strive to broaden the boundaries of their movement, and thereby increase the number of potential supporters. As Valerie Jenness (1995) argues, "domain expansion" is a "necessary resource for 'framing work'" (147) because it allows "claim-makers [to] offer new definitions for—and thus extend the boundaries of—the phenomena deemed problematic" (154).

The VEG movement has utilized the concept of domain expansion in its efforts to mobilize individuals and groups. In their advocacy efforts, VEG organizations such as Vegan Action seek to educate the public about the benefits of adopting a vegan lifestyle for the sake of animals, the environment, and our health (Vegan Action). By incorporating issues of animal-rights, environmentalism and health-consciousness into the VEG movement, vegan/vegetarian activists have the ability to influence a larger population and convince these individuals and groups that adopting a VEG lifestyle is the ultimate form of advocacy for these issues. How could a *true* environmentalist support the meat-production industry if "the raising of livestock takes up more than two-thirds of agricultural land" (Vegan Society) and uses an excess amount of energy and water simply to keep animals warm and able to perform bodily functions? According to the Vegan Society, beef production is an incredibly inefficient use of fossil fuels in that it uses "about three times the amount of energy as food energy produced" (Vegan Society). In comparison, corn and barley production creates 15 times the amount of energy of beef production for equal fossil fuel input. Furthermore, all of the energy that is lost on meat production could be used to sustain human beings on a vegan diet. Surely, a hamburger would

be hard to swallow once an environmentalist became informed about the detrimental effects of meat-production on the environment.

Bruce Friedrich, an advocate for both animal-rights and veganism, illustrates how the VEG movement has utilized domain expansion by joining forces with the animal-rights movement to achieve a common goal. He suggests that being an effective vegan advocate means refraining from framing VEG activism in terms of personal purity and policing other vegans/vegetarians about the specific ingredients that they consume. Instead, VEG activism should be framed as a method to protect the well being of animals. Friedrich (2008, 4) stated, "Veganism is not a dogma… [it] is not a list of ingredients or a set of rules… veganism is about stopping suffering [and]… doing our best to help animals." By framing the adoption of a VEG lifestyle in terms of preventing the suffering of innocent animals, activists have the ability to convince animal-lovers to be vegan/vegetarian instead of viewing such lifestyle options as policing and fanatical.

In addition to advocating for animal-rights and environmentalism, the VEG movement has been able to expand its domain to health-conscious people more generally by informing the public that a diet excluding animal products is better for our health. Vegan and vegetarian diets have become appealing as they have been shown to lower cholesterol, decrease the likelihood of obesity and decrease the risk of heart disease (Key et al. 2006, 37-8). Because health is a concern of *all* human beings (not just animal-lovers and environmentalists), the VEG movement has been able to increase its amount of supporters and advocates strictly on the basis of health considerations. In turn, those who adopt the VEG lifestyle expand the reach of advocates by increasing exposure to the issue.

SETTING AN AGENDA FOR CHANGE

The simple act of spreading knowledge about the benefits of living a VEG lifestyle is an essential component to the vegan/vegetarian movement, as it helps with agenda setting and moving issues forward. As mentioned previously, the VEG movement has focused a large amount of activist efforts on penetrating the popular agenda (the media and the mass public) by spreading the word about the benefits of being VEG, the realities of the meat/dairy production industry, and the variety of VEG alternatives to meat and dairy. In *PETA's Guide to Becoming an Activist* (2009), animal-rights advocates encourage making displays, distributing leaflets and posting fliers as an effective method to educate the public. A persuasive leaflet, they argue, includes short and clear sentences, a photograph, a few bullet points outlining the issue, and contact information (PETA activists recognize that they will not be able to affect the public by handing out lengthy packets of information about their issue). Instead, one bold, eye-catching

statement often has the power to make individuals consider or reconsider their views about a particular issue. For example, Vegan Outreach created a flyer with three large photographs of innocent animal faces and one bold statement in the center: "Boycott Cruelty!" This exemplifies how one bold statement, within the master frame of cruelty, makes its short, sharp appeal. Ultimately, an effective outreach strategy for getting on the popular agenda is to first capture public attention, and then guide interested individuals and groups to what Vegan Outreach, on its website (veganoutreach.org), calls "credible, persuasive, and focused literature [that will] provide well-documented and thorough answers for specific questions."

With respect to initiatives for getting on the "public" or "governmental" agenda, the VEG movement has taken part in many campaigns to create change around issues of animal cruelty and the lack of accessibility to vegan/vegetarian food. VEG activists have recognized that the university student population tends to be more receptive to veganism/vegetarianism than the rest of society (veganoutreach.org). Vegan Action's website features a description of its "Vegan Dorm Food" campaign, which helps to introduce students to a healthy, vegan lifestyle and the variety of dishes that can be made without the use of animal products.

Vegan Action's website also describes an even broader campaign: their "Vegan Certification" campaign, which promotes a "certified vegan logo, an easy-to-recognize symbol applied to foods, clothing, cosmetics and other items that contain no animal products and are not tested on animals." By administering a recognizable logo to all vegan goods, consumers will be able to choose vegan-friendly products with ease, and the word "vegan" will likely become a part of mainstream vocabulary over time. While a common excuse that VEG activists hear from individuals who are interested in, but unwilling to adopt, the VEG lifestyle is that "being vegan or vegetarian would be such a burden because animal products are in everything." With the implementation of the "Vegan Certification" and "Vegan Dorm Food" campaigns, interested individuals have an increased ability to gain knowledge about and access to the VEG lifestyle.

In addition to spreading the word and partaking in campaigns, the VEG movement has taken advantage of policy windows that open when a significant event, like a natural disaster, occurs. VEG organizations have thus capitalized on the issues of climate change through advocacy efforts to protect the environment. By spreading the word about the detrimental effects that animal agriculture has on the air, land, soil, water, and biodiversity (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United States), VEG organizations can effectively frame animal-product consumption as unethical and irresponsible. The VEG movement also has the opportunity to take advantage of rising health concerns in today's society. Leitzmann (2005) found that "vegetarian diets are beneficial in the prevention and

treatment of… cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, cancer, osteoporosis, renal disease and dementia, as well as… gallstones and rheumatoid arthritis" (147). VEG activists can also point to the finds that red meat has been shown to increase the risk of pancreatic cancer, one of the deadliest forms of the disease (Nothlings 2005).

CONCLUSION

In sum, I have illustrated the critical processes through which social change can occur, drawing on the VEG movement as evidence. First, I discussed the methods that VEG activists have used to frame animal-product consumption as a social problem. With diagnostic framing techniques, VEG organizations have shown that supporting the meat-production industry by eating meat, dairy and eggs is detrimental to animals, the environment and our health. As a proposed solution, these organizations have created prognostic frames that indicate the need to educate the community about the benefits of a VEG lifestyle and plausible alternatives to consuming animal products. Additionally, motivational and master frames have enabled VEG activists to illustrate the severity of animal-product consumption.

Secondly, I showed how VEG organizations have utilized "domain expansion" by including animal-rights, environmental and health issues under the umbrella of VEG activism. Domain expansion has allowed the VEG movement to increase the number of activists working toward the cause, and make a larger impact as a result. Finally, I have addressed the agenda-setting techniques that the VEG movement has used to get on the public/governmental and popular agenda for change. By utilizing informational and eye-catching leaflets, fliers and displays, the VEG movement has been able to capture public attention and ultimately educate individuals and groups about the benefits of veganism and vegetarianism. In an effort to get on the public agenda, VEG organizations like Vegan Action have initiated campaigns to increase accessibility to vegan/vegetarian food in college dormitories and grocery stores. The VEG movement has also taken advantage of policy windows that have opened as a result of natural and human factors, capitalizing on our society's increasing concern about global climate change and life-threatening diseases by promoting the VEG lifestyle as a responsible and humane solution to these problems.

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STANDING STRONG AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

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Abstract

Gender-based violence (GBV) includes all forms of violence that specifically and disproportionately target women and girls, including dating violence, domestic violence, and sexual assault. It is a problem of epidemic proportions in the United States. However, efforts currently being funded and implemented to alleviate this problem either address the violence after the fact or attempt to prevent it using strategies that are not optimally beneficial because they intervene too late, do not reach enough people, and do not address risk factors empirically shown to lead to GBV. This paper presents an alternative intervention strategy known as STRONG. The strategy's three essential tenets—(1) initiation in early childhood, (2) universal-level prevention, and (3) targeting of sexists attitudes, GBV-supporting beliefs, and rigid gender role socialization—are derived from a solid evidence base. Problems with existing programs, advantages of the proposed STRONG program, and obstacles to STRONG's practical implementation are also addressed.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identifies violence against women as a broad category encompassing "intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and other forms of violence against women committed by acquaintances or strangers" (2009a). Within the category of intimate partner violence, the CDC includes physical violence, sexual violence, emotional abuse, and threats. Violence against women—including effects of bodily injuries, sexual and reproductive health issues, risky behaviors on the part of the victims, and death—is a serious and pervasive public health problem that takes a severe mental, physical, social, and economic toll on individuals and society. Violence *prevention* is garnering increased attention from social workers, researchers, and the federal government. In 1994, the US Congress enacted the

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Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which provides both support and prevention measures around domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. The law was reauthorized in 2000 and again in 2004, and each renewal has introduced more comprehensive measures addressing these forms of GBV (U.S. Department of Justice: Office of Violence Against Women 2010). On the state level, spousal rape became a crime (USDOJ: OVW 2010) mandatory arrest laws, which sought to ensure that police called to investigate domestic violence would have to make an arrest, were introduced (Hirschel 2008). Nonetheless, according to the CDC (2009a), approximately 1.5 million women in the United States still experience 4.8 million cases (CDC 2009b) of intimate-partner violence in the form of rape and/or physical assault each year. Because of the low reporting rates of crimes such as intimate violence and rape, even these statistics do not reflect the extent of the problem of violence against women and girls (CDC 2009b; 2009c).

Those addressing the issue from the fields of social work and anti-violence projects are increasingly turning their energies to school-based efforts that seek to stop problems like acquaintance rape and teen dating violence before they start. Many of these efforts, though significant, start in middle school or even as late as high school, at which point the data show that much of the targeted youth population has *already* been engaging in the dating and sexual activities that are a setting for GBV (Kinsman, Romer, Furstenberg, and Schwarz 1998; CDC 2007; 2009d). Other prevention programs, such as the Child Assault Prevention Project, do target children in younger grades. However, these programs have rarely been evaluated for efficacy, and they are limited in that they seek not to prevent anyone from eventually committing GBV, but rather to teach small children to recognize and protect themselves from sexual assault by adults (Hébert and Tourigny 2004). Along the same lines, there are programs aimed at women in domestic violence shelters designed to prevent their revictimization, but by far the most widespread initiatives are traditional prevention efforts designed to keep identified perpetrators of GBV; there is very little evidence to show either of these approaches reduces GBV (Wathen and MacMillan 2003).

All this speaks to the fact that we are still not addressing GBV before it starts. This paper first looks at existing GBV-prevention models, then draws upon the evidence base to identify program components likely to lead successful GBV prevention, and finally proposes a model for a program based upon this body of evidence. The proposed program, called Steps toward Respect in Our Next Generation, or "STRONG," is conceptualized as a universal measure to prevent GBV by instilling a sense of respect for women and girls in school children, starting with those who are very young.

The program aims to keep the next generation of children and youth from growing up with beliefs and attitudes empirically proven to be precursors of intimate-partner violence and sexual assault. It should be noted that this program model, while evidence-based, has yet to be tested in the field.

EXISTING MODELS OF GBV INTERVENTION

Historically, prevention has been a tertiary measure aimed at men identified as perpetrators of abuse (Neil Guterman, class lecture, October 15, 2009). Only recently have programs attempted to implement prevention for those who have not yet committed GBV, targeting young adults and high school students. However, while the CDC (2009a) has identified primary prevention as the strategy of choice for curbing violence against women, a survey of violence against women prevention programs in which the CDC is now involved—by researching, funding, evaluating, monitoring, assisting, proposing, or otherwise supporting them—shows no programs starting in early childhood that address respect for boundaries. For instance, the Choose Respect Campaign disseminates messages promoting healthy relationship styles, but only targets 11- to 14-year-olds (CDC 2009a). The one program cited in the review (above) aimed at preventing younger children from growing up to perpetrate violence, Second Step, stands out for beginning in preschool and continuing through ninth grade. Second Step, however, focuses on preventing general aggression rather than gender-based aggression and hence does not specifically address gender role socialization. Another study reviewed by Schwartz and others (2006) examined a group-based program that did aim to prevent dating violence by means of addressing gender role norms, but this prevention group was conducted with college-aged young adults rather than children (Schwartz, Magee, Griffin, and Dupuis 2004).

Based on a review of available sources, there does not seem to be an existing program in place that addresses gender-role socialization starting with young children as a means of primary prevention of GBV. Although a program incorporating universal-level prevention, onset in early childhood, and the targeting of GBV-supporting beliefs has not yet been implemented or studied as a way of preventing subsequent perpetrating behavior, there is sufficient evidence of the usefulness of each of these elements to suggest that the approach has enough promise to merit pilot-testing.

THE EVIDENCE OF UNIVERSAL INTERVENTION SUCCESS

Evidence for a universal intervention can be drawn from research on the Second Step program described above (Frey et al. 2000). Second Step is

a promising universal, school-based prevention measure implemented with children in pre-K through eighth grade. In randomized controlled studies of the program conducted in private and public schools in both urban and suburban communities, researchers blind to condition observed significant increases in pro-social behavior and significant decreases in verbally and physically aggressive behavior in children receiving the Second Step classes, results that were sustained at the 6-month follow-up.

Theoretical support for a universal measure to prevent GBV can be taken from social support theory or social networking theory, which says that our social relationships inform our conception of what counts as an acceptable behavior or attitude. A corollary of this theory is that violent behavior is embedded socially, through attitudes that normalize and thus perpetuate it. In looking for ways to prevent what is commonly called community violence, researchers such as Robert Sampson (2004) have drawn clear practice implications from social support theory: if violence is embedded in the broader social community, interventions should be directed at the same level (Guterman, class lecture, November 19, 2009). The normative component of social support theory must also apply to people's attitudes about gender roles, which have been linked to GBV (Schwartz et al. 2006).

THE EVIDENCE OF GENDER-ROLE INTERVENTION SUCCESS

In the "Need for Future Research" section of their meta-analysis of studies examining the link between parenting factors and future intimate partner violence, Schwartz and others (2006, 216) recommend that prevention efforts target gender-role socialization, citing many studies that link gender socialization to GBV (Archer 2002; Bookwala, Frieze, Smith, and Ryan 1992; Riggs and O'Leary 1996; Franchina, Eisler, and Moore 2001; O'Neil and Harway 1999; Schwartz, Waldo and Daniel 2005). The latter three studies found a positive correlation between gender-role stress and intimate-partner violence, as conceptualized by Pleck (1981; 1995). According to Pleck, belief in traditional gender roles, especially a "macho" paradigm of masculinity, confine men to mostly aggressive means of self-expression. Finn (1986) also found a strong correlation between a belief in traditional masculine/feminine gender roles and attitudes endorsing the use of physical force by a husband against his wife. Interestingly, Finn found these attitudes to be held by both men and women who subscribed to these roles. Jakupcak, Lisak, and Roemer (2002), also examined the link between sex role ideology and relationship violence. Their results indicate that interventions aimed at decreasing sex

role rigidity *and* increasing distress tolerance and relaxation techniques would be more effective than those that only address ideology.

Studies have tied sexual coercion and sexist attitudes, especially in the form of rape-supporting beliefs (Forbes, Adams-Curtis and White 2004). Forbes and others went so far as to break sexist attitudes down into cognitive and affective categories and found that the affective expression of sexism in the form of generalized hostility toward women was an even stronger predictor of sexual coercion and dating aggression than cognitively-based sexism in the form of subscription to rape myths. Ryan and Kanjorski (1998) found that the enjoyment of sexist humor was positively correlated with men's rape-supporting beliefs and their likelihood to force sex or be psychologically, physically, and sexually aggressive. Sexual harassment, another form of violence against women, also appears to be associated with sexist beliefs. Begany and Milburn (2002) found that men who believed in traditional gender roles as well as men who subscribed to rape-supporting myths and displayed an attitude of hostile sexism were more likely to sexually harass women. The relevance of sexual harassment to an examination of factors that contribute to violence against women is clearly highlighted by Begany and Milburn, who write, "Our results support the argument that sexual harassment as non-physically violent sexual aggression is a part of the same continuum as physically violent sexual aggression" (125). They found the same factors to feed into behavior all along this continuum. The studies discussed here are part of a large body of evidence identifying traditional gender role socialization and sexist attitudes as factors that precede GBV.

THE EVIDENCE OF EARLY INTERVENTION SUCCESS

In its literature on teen dating violence, the CDC (2009d) reports that 72 percent of eighth- and ninth-graders "date" in some form and that 25 percent of adolescents report being verbally, physically, emotionally, or sexually abused by a partner each year (2010). Studies since the 1980s have indicated a decrease in age at which youth begin having sex (O'Donnell, O'Donnell, and Stueve 2001). Results from the national Youth Risk Behavior Survey (CDC 2007) show 7.1 percent of youth report having had sexual intercourse *before* age 13. A survey administered to nearly 1400 sixth-graders (mean age of 11.7 years) in the Philadelphia urban area showed even more alarming trends: 30 per cent reported having initiated sexual intercourse before entering the sixth grade, and another 5 per cent reported doing so by the end of the sixth grade (Kinsman et al. 1998). These findings suggest that this is a planned behavior based on cohort norms. If sexual intimacy is starting at a young age, so is peer sexual assault. Among female rape survivors, 25.5 per cent are

first raped before age 12, and 34.9 per cent are first raped between ages 12 and 17. Family violence and child sexual abuse cannot account for all of these cases; 30.4 per cent are first raped by an intimate partner, and 20 per cent are first raped by an acquaintance (CDC 2009b).

Research findings in neuroscience and developmental psychology (Heckman 2006) suggest that the first few years of a person's life can greatly impact that person. Heckman's research was conducted in the field of economics but it documents a phenomenon known as brain plasticity, or the capacity of the brain to have its neural pathways shaped and changed, which is what happens when learning occurs. Although the human brain can make new neural connections in adulthood, it has the highest amount of plasticity in the first few years of life. As children age, neural circuits stabilize and it becomes harder to create new brain pathways (Shonkoff 2006). Systematic research on youth violence prevention programs (Rosenberg and Knox 2005) cite the importance of starting a program early in a child's life, then underscore that it is crucial to continue to implement it throughout later childhood and adolescence.

Dahlberg and Potter (2001) also note that the evidence base strongly favors early interventions. A comprehensive meta-analysis of a wider variety of prevention programs (i.e., not just violence prevention) by Nation and others (2003) draws definitive conclusions about timing. Their findings indicate that early intervention with booster sessions tailored to students' development levels is best.

All three of these reviews also help make the case for implementing prevention measures within systems and environments that are already in place (Dahlberg and Potter 2001; Nation et al. 2003; Rosenberg and Knox 2005). This idea is supported by social resource theory, which states that institutional contexts play a substantial role in shaping a child's lifelong outcomes (Neil Guterman, class lecture, November 19, 2009). This theory tells us that a school environment that condones or fosters GBV increases a child's chance of being a victim or perpetrator, but it also contributes to the theoretical foundation to the implementing of GBV prevention programs.

THE STRONG MODEL

The model described here represents STRONG in its preliminary phase, its design stemming from the empirically validated precursors to GBV outlined above. The following presentation does not attempt to cover every detail of the curriculum and its manner of implementation, but instead presents the program's general layout and a detailed rationale for its design.

STRONG's design begins with the pre-K or kindergarten classroom and a universal curriculum administered in hour-long sessions twice-a-week throughout the school year. The program means to take advantage of young

children's brain plasticity and to intervene before the onset of dating and sexual behaviors that come with puberty. The STRONG curriculum is administered in early childhood and then continues into early adolescence, its curriculum designed for each grade level after kindergarten. From first grade through sixth, students receive ten weeks of weekly hour-long sessions consisting of a booster curriculum that reintroduces the basic concepts while adding new, developmentally appropriate material in the form of factual information, skills training, and illustrative examples presented in class, as well as homework assignments. This curriculum is designed to be taught by students' home classroom teachers, or by trained counselors contracted by the school for this purpose, using a manualized version of the curriculum to make it easier to learn and to increase methodological consistency. By starting in pre-K and adding material in follow-up sessions as students advance in grade level, STRONG's design should prevent a washout effect.

STRONG is designed to intervene on a cognitive level to stop the beliefs and attitudes that have been identified as precursors to GBV, most notably rigid gender-role socialization. Based on Finn's findings (1986) that both men and women subscribe to the rigid gender roles that put them at higher risk for perpetration and victimization, respectively, STRONG is administered to both male and female students. STRONG design targets young children and addresses the following factors known to precede GBV: (1) gender-role stress due to rigid masculine gender-role socialization in males, (2) belief by both males and females in traditional masculine/feminine gender roles, (3) attitudes endorsing the use of physical force by a man against his wife, (4) poor distress tolerance and conflict resolution skills, and (5) sexist attitudes in the form of (a) rape-supporting beliefs, (b) affective hostility, and (c) enjoyment of sexist humor.

Gender-role stress. The component of gender role stress, the idea that a macho style of gender socialization limits them primarily to aggressive means of self-expression (Pleck 1981; 1995) will begin with the teacher asking the children (who are not sex-segregated) to give examples of men they admire and to list the reasons they admire them. Based on this exercise, the teacher will lead a discussion on what it means to be a man, guiding the class toward the concept that being a "real man" can look many different ways. The teacher will emphasize non-aggressive traits as desirable qualities for men to have. This list should expand as the children grow older and by sixth grade should include alternative expressions of gender identity and sexual orientation.

Belief in traditional gender roles. Here the teacher will solicit lists of characteristics and roles the children associate with being male

or female, and once again a flexible model with a wide range of possible expressions for each gender should emerge with the teacher's guidance. As the children get older, they will be asked to first give examples of what they think "traditional" roles for men and women are and then to list the advantages and disadvantages of either keeping to or breaking out of these traditional roles. Examples of famous role models who do not conform to these traditional roles will be given, and tolerance for a wide range of roles will be encouraged by the teacher.

Endorsement of physical force. Attitudes endorsing a man's use of physical force against his wife or partner are not addressed directly until the later years of the booster curriculum. The first few years of the curriculum target this factor by focusing on healthy and unhealthy ways for boys to treat girls, creating a classroom environment that does allow for any kind of physical force. The teacher will point out to the children that they may have heard the reason someone has chased, hit, or kicked them is because that person likes him or her, and then explain that this is not an acceptable way to express either positive or negative feelings toward anybody. The teacher will then encourage the class to come up with a list of healthy ways to express such feelings.

Poor distress tolerance. Evidence shows that GBV prevention programs are more effective when they both decrease gender role rigidity and increase distress tolerance and relaxation techniques (Jakupcak et al. 2002). In this section, students at all levels will discuss positive and negative ways to handle distressing situations. The teacher will teach the students age-appropriate techniques to promote healthy ways to relax, stress-soothe, and release stress and healthy conflict resolution techniques will be taught through examples and then practiced using role play, possibly with puppets or action figures. Each year, the students will recall and practice old techniques for distress tolerance and conflict resolution while adding new ones to their repertoire.

Sexist attitudes. Sexist attitudes, especially with regard to rape myths, are to be framed in terms of core values that children can understand without including material parents and educators might deem inappropriately sexual or violent. It is based on a list of oft-cited sexist, rape-supporting, and violence-accepting statements (adapted from Burt 1980) restated in terms a five-year-old could understand and then eventually reexamined in its original form during booster sessions with the older students. Other expressions of sexist attitude associated with future GBV, identified as affective hostility and enjoyment sexist humor, will be a challenge to address in a formal curriculum because it is affective rather

than cognitive. Therefore, STRONG teachers may be trained to watch for and log signs of such hostility as a way to identify students for whom more extensive GBV prevention measure may be indicated.

CONCLUSION

STRONG is not a perfect program design and cannot end the threat of violence against women and girls in this country on its own. As with any proposed program, STRONG may have trouble securing funding. STRONG is potentially controversial and some parents, educators, and elected officials may resist addressing gender roles or the perpetration of sexual and domestic violence with young children. Another challenge is that STRONG acts within the school system, whereas research suggests that it is most desirable for a prevention measure to target multiple social systems (Nation et al. 2003; Rosenbern and Knox 2005).

STRONG's attempts to promote positive messages of respect and tolerance, build on children's strengths, and maintain a developmentally appropriate curriculum are all attempts to minimize backlash against the program. Moreover, the evidence base does indicate that STRONG has the potential to make a significant contribution. STRONG complements existing prevention programs with different areas of focus or modes of administration. With the growing conversation around GBV and the growing consensus in the field that interventions must address violence before the fact to have maximum impact, there has never been a more promising time to put forth a fresh and unique program like STRONG and see where it leads us.

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