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In this issue

Te Awatea ~ finding solutions
moving from darkness into light

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Director's report

Dr Annabel Taylor

Kia ora koutou katoa,

Greetings from Germany. At the time of writing I am staying near Stuttgart and am struck by the common challenges for families in different international settings and the same need to provide a safe and nurturing environment for children. One of the things I have been struck by here in the small community I am staying in, are the visible measures to support parents and children. Just one example is the signs on various streets that require motorists to travel at 30km per hour because there are families with children in the vicinity. Day care facilities are readily available and while social insurance is high, there are no costs on health care for family members. However, child abuse remains a challenge and there have been calls by the current Minister of family affairs to have compulsory health checks for children as a preventive measure (Kulish, 2007).

Germany also faces the challenge of an aging population and Angela Merkel, the current Chancellor, is promoting strong immigration measures to attract workers to Germany as a way of boosting population (Czuczka, 2013). Cross cultural issues will require new measures from the government in order to make this wave of immigration function well. Researchers have found that there are higher levels of child abuse and neglect among migrant populations (Jacobi, Dettmeyer, Banaschak, Brosig & Herrmann, 2010). It will be interesting to see what policies and practices are put in place to support ethnic minorities.

This new German approach to immigration contrasts with New Zealand where attitudes towards immigration are frequently negative.

This edition of the Review has an interesting mix of articles which reflect international perspectives and also report on some home grown responses to family violence. Professor Susan Rose, who hails from Pennsylvania University, compares indigenous peoples in Aotearoa and the United States and discusses gender violence in these respective countries. While evidence in both countries suggests extremely high rates of sexual and domestic violence amongst indigenous women, she argues that abuse of women is not traditional to these cultures but a result of colonisation. Calling upon aspects of traditional cultures, however, may be an effective resource in a bid to reduce violence against women and children.

In "The changing nature of family violence interventions" Ken McMaster, a well known family violence practitioner, outlines the changing face of interventions with men who use abusive

Dr Annabel Taylor, Director Te Awatea Violence Research Centre, with Dr Andrew Frost, Acting Director until 2014

practices within their families. Over the past 30 years, workers have used a number of different models, yet outcomes have been variable. Ken argues that one-size-fits-all models are limited in their ability to consider the diversity of men attending programmes. Not only are men diverse in terms of their cultural background but also in their paths to violence, their risk of forming abusive relationships and their required intervention dosage. He proposes that Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a complex issue that requires practitioners to match interventions to the individual requirements of each case.

In her article "Gang rapes and molestation cases in India: Creating mores for 'Eve-teasing'", Ambika Kohli was prompted to report on and analyse the recent Delhi gang rape case in which Joyti Singh Pandey was brutally raped by five men and subsequently died from her injuries. This article considers the Indian State's reaction to this and a number of other high profile rape and molestation cases. Ambika argues that such responses have focussed on regulating women's sexuality and mobility, which she contends has led to increases in violence against women in India. The article draws attention to the presence of a rape culture in India, defined as an official distortion of facts in cases of sexual violence against women and the proliferation of victim blaming. It appears that the current legislation in India does little to protect women from sexual violence, which is represented as a consequence of women's sexuality and immorality.

In our next article, Dr Lesley Campbell and Claire Gray report on a research project on peer support carried out by Te Awatea Violence Research Centre on behalf of the Christchurch Women's Refuge in 2011. The research drew together evidence from an extensive literature review alongside findings from interviews and focus groups where participants discussed their experiences of peer support within a family violence context. The authors argue that peer support can provide significant benefits for both men and women who have experienced or perpetrated family violence. Peer support introduces a relatively new approach to family violence and the findings helped to inform new directions for Christchurch Women's Refuge (now known as Aviva) which we would like to report in another edition of the Review.

The final contribution to the review returns to an international perspective and is an article written by Dr Aditya Malik. He considers violence from the point of view of identity and the misunderstanding of individual subjectivity. Dr Malik argues for a reframing of our understanding of human subjectivity and encourages the reader to reconceptualise what it means to be a human being. He describes Eastern philosophers who challenged entrenched caste, class and gender hierarchies and encouraged people to access spiritual experience outside the confines of organised religion. Dr Malik's argument is that the seeds of conflict and violence emanate from powerful and mistaken notions of identity as fixed and definable with rigid boundaries.

In closing, I would like to thank the Te Awatea team of Dr Sue Carswell, Claire Gray and Denise Forbes who continue to assist with managing an interesting and vibrant research programme and Dr Andrew Frost who will be acting Director in my absence until 2014. They can be contacted at the email addresses below.

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Kind regards,
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Gender Violence: Using Culture as a Resource in the Process of Decolonisation

Susan D. Rose

Gender violence is a global human rights and public health issue that affects women and children across the developing and developed world. The most common rationale given for the denial of human rights to women is the preservation of family and culture. This paper examines the situation of both Native Americans and Maori who today have the highest rates of sexual and domestic violence in their respective countries. Abuse, however, is not traditional within these communities. With colonisation came increasing violence both towards and within Native American and Maori societies. In the process of decolonisation, both Maori and Native Americans are reclaiming aspects of their traditional cultures to greater understanding and reduce violence against women and children.

The United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* proclaims that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights," yet women's freedom, dignity, equality, and health are persistently compromised by law, custom, and religious tradition in ways that men's are not (Bunch, 1995, p.14). Statistics paint a bleak picture of the social and health consequences of gender violence: it is a major cause of death and disability for women 16-44 years of age worldwide (UNIFEM, 2007). Over the last three decades, gender violence has increasingly become recognised as a human rights issue and public health problem. Yet, it continues to be pervasive in both developing and developed societies.

The World Bank report, *Violence Against Women: The Hidden Health Burden* (Heise, 1994) examined the implications of gender violence for health and socio-economic development, estimating that gender-based victimisation is responsible for one out of every five healthy years of life lost to women of reproductive age. The report concludes, "female-focused violence also represents a hidden obstacle to economic and social development. By sapping women's energy, undermining their confidence, and compromising their health, gender violence deprives society of women's full participation" (Heise, 1994, p. ix). Violence against women and girls is often referred to as "gender-based" violence because it derives in part from women's subordinate status in patriarchal societies. Many cultures have beliefs, norms, and social institutions that legitimise and therefore perpetuate violence against women. The same acts that would be punished if directed at an employer, a neighbour, or an acquaintance often go unchallenged when men direct them towards a family member or intimate partner.

The most endemic form of violence against women is Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). While it is important to recognise extreme forms of violence that often gain international attention, it is critical to recognise the everyday, "ordinary" enactment of violence that plays out in very similar ways across societies. Studies from 35 countries indicate that between one-quarter and one-half of women report having been physically abused by a present or former partner; an even larger percentage has been subjected to on-going emotional and psychological abuse (Heise, 1994, p.4). The 2010 *WHO Multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women* found that between 6% and 59% of women reported experiencing sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime (WHO, 2010).

Resistance to change is strong – especially when it comes to challenging deeply held beliefs and values about gender roles, statuses, and power. Violence against women is a complex phenomenon, deeply rooted in gender-based power relations, sexuality, gender roles, and identity that are embedded in cultural values and institutional practices as well as in individual beliefs and behaviour. Efforts to eliminate or ameliorate gender violence must therefore confront underlying cultural beliefs and social structures that reinforce and perpetuate it.

Gender Inequality and Cultural Arguments as Excuse and Resource

IPV is enacted at the interpersonal level but supported by macro, patriarchal systems of male power, entitlement, and authority. Sexual violence too is (usually) the act of an individual man against an individual woman, but it is important to place such acts in the context of prevailing societal values, beliefs and norms. A sense of male entitlement to expect and exact respect from women, regardless of their behaviour, typically characterises such human rights abuses against women and children (Connell, 2005; Kimmell, 2009; O'Toole, Schiffman, & Edward, 2007).

Both within and across societies, culture has often been used as a rationale for not challenging the abuse of women and children. When violence is used against other groups of people based on ethnic, racial, or religious grounds, it is called racism; in the case of systematic killings it is referred to as genocide. When it comes to systemic violence against women and children, it is often considered cultural or traditional. But as Michael Singer (2001) argues, it is critical to ask who gets to define culture on behalf of the group? Who holds the power and authority to dictate the contours and confines of culture and for whom? In the context of patriarchal societies, one half of the population (men) holds the power to define the parameters of the social order and what constitutes culture and religious tradition. It is worth examining, historically and contemporaneously, how and why analyses may differ when the violence is enacted on a subordinated group of people based on race, ethnicity, nationality, or gender.

Neither patriarchy nor violence against women and children is traditional if one considers the societies in which the vast majority of human history has been lived (Harris, 1991). Numerous studies of gathering and hunting societies reveal that neither patriarchy nor private property had yet emerged. Women's and men's roles were relatively equally valued and abuse of women and children was uncommon. As modes of production shifted from gathering and hunting to pastoral and horticultural to agricultural and industrial, so did social organisation and gender roles, statuses, and relations. As women's status relative to men's declined, violence against women increased (Collins, 1971; Friedl, 1978; Gough, 1971).

Neither culture nor religion is inherently patriarchal. Tendencies towards both gender egalitarianism and inequality can be found within and across religious traditions and cultures. David Levinson's (1989) study of violence in 90 societies around the world reveals that wife beating occurs more often in societies in which men have economic and decision-making power in the household, where women do not have easy access to divorce and where adults routinely resort to violence to resolve their conflicts. In areas of the world where family violence was low or nearly absent, cultural norms included monogamous marriage practices, equal access between men and women to economic resources, the ability for both men and women to initiate a divorce, and the availability of non-parental child caregivers (Levinson, 1989). Drawing upon a vast review of the literature, Robertson and Oulton (2008) argue that such factors are manifested by distinct and hierarchical gender roles, notions of male sexual entitlement, the low social value and power of women, and ideas of manhood linked to the control or "disciplining" of women. These in turn are linked to factors such as low levels

of education among women; few public roles for women; the lack of family, social and legal support for women; and the lack of economic power for women (Robertson & Oulton, 2008).

Patriarchal norms engender and reflect gender inequality and inequities at a societal level, and legitimise IPV and sexual violence perpetrated by men at the micro or interpersonal level (Russo & Pirlott, 2006). Such gender inequality decreases the resources available to women, including resistance to unwanted sex and violence, and increases the acceptance of the use of violence against women. Furthermore, it contributes to gender-based inequities in health and access to health care; in opportunities for employment and promotion; in levels of income; in political participation and representation; and in education. Thus, "macro-level interventions that increase structural supports and resources that decrease gender inequality – as well as interventions to reduce gender inequality at the community and individual levels – may serve to decrease intimate partner violence and sexual violence" (Smith et al., 2005, p. 680).

Over time, patriarchal culture came to be seen as normal and natural (Lerner, 1987), legitimising discrimination and violence against women "for their own good" (Ehrenreich & English, 2005). Increasingly, however, scholars and activists are beginning to mobilise the concept of culture as a resource in the struggle against gender violence (Adelman, Haldane & Wies, 2012; UNSRVAW, 2009). Historically, among Maori iwi and Native American tribes, where women's economic contributions and work were valued commensurate with men's, violence against women was not common (Cram et al., 2002; Smith, 2005; Smith, 2008). An increase in violence against women came with colonisation (Robertson & Oulton, 2008; Rothenberg, 1980; Smith, 2005; Smith, 2008;). Targeting the relatively high status of many indigenous women as problematic, colonisers imposed notions of gender roles based on patriarchy and individualism which led to the devaluation of the position women held in Maori iwi (Balzer et al., 1997) and in Native American tribes (Rothenberg, 1980; Smith, 2005).

Today, both Native Americans and Maori have the highest rates of sexual and domestic violence in their respective countries. Native American women are more than two and a half times more likely to be raped or sexually assaulted than other women in the United States. (Amnesty International, 2009; Bhungalia, 2001; Deer, 2010; Smith, 2005; UN Human Rights Commission, 2011). The UN Human Rights Commission Special Rappoteur's report (2011) on violence against women in the United States indicated that nationwide between 60% and 80% of violent victimisations of Native American women are perpetrated by non-Natives. Sexual violence and sexual trafficking of Native American women has a long history, dating back to settlers and soldiers raping women, not just as a random or individual act but, as a tool of conquest and colonisation (Amnesty International, 2009; Deer, 2010; Smith, 2005). Viewed by colonisers as "dirty... sexually violable and rapable" (Smith, 2005, pp. 10-12), indigenous women's bodies became objects to be conquered, just like the land (Mikaere, 1994; Salmond, 1992). As the 2009 Amnesty International report notes, "the underlying attitudes towards Indigenous peoples that supported these human rights violations committed against them continue to be present" in the contemporary United States, and "they contribute to the present high rates of sexual violence perpetrated against Indigenous women and help to shield their attackers from justice" (Amnesty International, 2009, p.1).

Maori also are substantially over-represented as both victims and perpetrators of violence in families/whanau. Maori women have a lifetime prevalence of IPV of 49%, twice that for New Zealand European (24%) or Pacific women (23%): 28% of Maori women, compared to 10% of non-Maori women with current partners, reported experiencing at least one act of physical violence or sexual abuse in the previous 12 months of the 1996 Women's Safety Survey (Lievore & Mayhew, 2007, p. 55). Seven times more Maori women and four times more Maori children are hospitalized from an assault compared to Pakeha women and children (Reporting Domestic/Family Violence, n.d). Maori women and children are disproportionately represented as clients in women's refuges (Cram et al., 2002, p.1), and half of all children killed by caregivers are Maori (Reporting Domestic/Family Violence, n.d). A constellation of conditions contribute to these and other measures of health and quality of life: Maori are the most likely to die early, be unemployed, be imprisoned, be homeless, suffer mental illness and collect a welfare benefit (Te Puni Kokiri, 2010, p.10).

These statistics are not a reflection on indigenous cultures per se but on the conditions of poverty, cultural disruption and disintegration; lack of access to land, employment, a living wage, quality education, and affordable housing. Extensive literature supports the assertion that colonisation has played a major role in the perpetration of sexual violence in indigenous communities by undermining traditional values and practices protective against sexual violence, by the colonisers' construction of indigenous women as dirty and impure, and by the sexual harassment and rape by white men of indigenous women who in many cases provided them and their families with domestic services (Goldsmith et al., 2005; Hill Collins, 2000; Robertson & Oulton, 2008; Smith, 2005).While one cannot assess how these cultures would have adapted had there not been colonisation, it is clear that with colonisation came the introduction of new diseases, alcoholism, and violence in its many forms: increased warfare, killings, suicide, and family and sexual violence that had not been common previously.

Re-Claiming Traditional Culture as a Way of Fighting Gender Violence

Engaging in a process of de-colonisation, many colonised peoples are examining what has been stripped away and what may be useful to reclaim as the best of their culture's traditions. Maori organisations and scholars are emphasising the traditional obligation and power of the whanau to protect all its members; women, children, and men from harm (Te Puni Kokiri, 2010). Likewise, many Native American tribes and associations are creating training manuals for both Native men and women that emphasise cultural traditions of respect for women.

New Zealand and the United States are both highly developed countries with relatively high levels of sexual and intimate partner violence. Both have significant indigenous populations that were characterised by low levels of gender violence pre-colonisation while today they suffer the greatest degree of gender violence in their respective countries. The following case studies examine the ways in which both Maori and Native American domestic violence activists and agencies are reclaiming traditional cultural beliefs and values in the struggle against gender violence.

New Zealand: Maori

Activists, scholars (Mikaere, 1994; Milroy, 1996;) and service providers are emphasising the importance of reclaiming more traditional and collective responses to acts of sexual and domestic violence within Maori communities and against Maori women and children. The Amokura Report (as cited in Te Puni Koriri, 2010) suggests the ways in which traditional concepts and practices can inform the contemporary struggle against family and gender violence:

> Drawing on the wisdom of our tupuna and traditions is not to return us to a mythic past or golden age – our people have always adapted to new circumstances and experimented with new technology. Rather it is to understand and be guided by the symbols, values and principles that can enhance our capacity to live together peacefully as whanau and communities. Our capacity for resilience as an indigenous people is fed and nourished by our language, traditional practices and oral traditions.(p. 21)

In the past couple of decades, greater attention has been paid to exploring culturally specific approaches to counselling and legal remedies. Increasingly agencies are realising, as Milroy (1996) notes, that "legal responses to domestic violence which may be valid and beneficial for Pakeha women may be inappropriate, ineffective or worse for Maori women" (p. 59). Many have questioned the relevance of the New Zealand Domestic Violence Act (1995), "based on Western concepts of family, to the more complex whanau and hapu structures, and traditional constructions of, and responses to, violence practised by Maori and Pacific peoples" (Te Puni Kokiri, 2010, p. 39).

"If whanau violence interventions continue to be delivered from a Pakeha conceptual and practice framework that isolates, criminalises and pathologises Maori individuals, nothing will change" (Tu Tama Wahine staff member interview cited in Kruger et al., 2004, p.4).

The need to strengthen whanau, as an alternative to "individual or couple-based approach to intervening in family violence" (Grennell & Cram, 2008, p. 1) underpins the Amokura Family Violence Prevention Strategy. Designed to achieve positive outcomes by focussing on "whanauoranga (family well-being), rather than family violence per se" (Grennell & Cram, 2008, p. 5), Amokura is a collective response to family violence overseen by a consortium of seven iwi authorities. The strategy received international recognition in 2009 for its innovative approach to addressing domestic violence and was awarded the Annual Human Rights Prize from the Leitner Centre, New York.

Cram et al. (2002) cite a program facilitator involved with another Maori-oriented program, Tu Tama Wahine, who commented:

> In all those early written reports the women and children were fearless; I've read them. The only way you get fearless women and children is by raising them in a culture where women and children are loved and respected. That's the only way. You do not get fearless women and children through raising them in a violent manner and that's the evidence. That has to be put across in any programme. (p. 20)

As a counselling agency, Tu Tama Wahine sees the need to provide services from a Maori perspective that focuses not only on inequality between men and women, the core of the mainstream family violence programs, but also on decolonisation and the continuing history of inequality between Maori and Pakeha (Cram et al., 2002, p. 40).

The focus on decolonisation gives a framework for understanding the conditions that lead to the reproduction of intergenerational violence, but it is not and should not be used as an excuse (Grennell & Cram, 2008). This is echoed by another service provider, which described one men's program using Maori culture and history as a guideline:

> Often, men don't acknowledge committing violence in the present, but blame it on the past-they externalise the blame, and often blame colonisation. In such instances, they are told, "white men came and colonised, but they didn't pick up your hand and make you smash your missus". (cited in Contesse & Fenrich, 2008, p. 97)

It's Not OK National Campaign

One in three New Zealand women has been a victim of domestic violence and nearly half of all homicides and half of all violent crime in New Zealand are committed by a family member (Families Commission, 2009). The New Zealand Institute gave New Zealand a "D" rating on a report card because of its high rates of violent deaths and child abuse (Women and HIV/AIDS Confronting the Crisis, 2004).

In order to reduce family and sexual violence, the New Zealand government is clear about the need to change attitudes and behaviours within the culture at large. Their very effective national media campaign, *It's Not OK* started airing TV advertisements in 2007. The first advertisement features a wide range of men and women from various ethnic and racial backgrounds, ages, and positions in society who simply and adamantly say that violence against women and children IS Not OK. While Maori may have the highest rates of family and sexual violence in New Zealand, they are clearly not the only ones experiencing and perpetrating it. Yet, for the past century, the dominant media and violence discourse rendered Maori both hyper-visible and invisible.

> If we pause for a moment we can bring to mind the names and faces of women and children victims of intimate partner violence and child abuse. Are most of the faces and names you recall Maori? While it is true that Maori are disproportionately represented as both victims and perpetrators of this violence, media representation would suggest that Maori are the only victims and perpetrators. High profile tragedies are seized on by misinformed commentators who denounce Maori leaders and make reference to the 'brown under classes'. (Te Puni Kokiri, 2010)

The goal of the anti-family violence *It's Not OK* media campaign is to educate both the media and the public. The representation of people from multiple backgrounds speaking in the first person is very effective in communicating how violence happens in all sectors of society. Older and younger men, women and children speak: "It's not OK to say she was asking for it; it's not OK to be cruel to your boy just because it never did me any harm; ... to control your family with threats, to bully them, or intimidate them, or *ever* think you can demand their love and respect; to make them feel worthless just because you're having a bad day ... it's not OK to blame the drink, or blame your culture; it's not OK to punch a hole in the wall to teach your wife who's boss; it's not OK to make them feel scared in their own home; ... it's not OK to look the other way and say it's not our problem, because it is *our* problem. And it's not OK, ever. But it is OK to ask for help."

In its evaluation of the effectiveness of the national campaign, the Ministry of Social Development found that the Campaign met the media objectives of making people more aware of the problem and more likely to intervene (McLaren 2010, p.12). My experience doing research on family violence in New Zealand likewise indicated that people were aware of the campaign and quite ready to talk about it. I had many informal conversations with men and women I interacted with in everyday contexts: in restaurants, on the ferry, in a café. Usually the conversation began by someone asking me why I was in New Zealand, and when I mentioned that I was studying family violence, it almost unanimously prompted the response, "It's not OK." While anecdotal, such conversations were both striking and telling; at the grass-roots level, people were willing to engage the subject. They had heard about the high rates of family violence in New Zealand, and the widely publicised OECD and United Nations reports on child abuse and deaths. It was interesting to discover as well that when someone now asked, "are you OK? I mean, really, are you OK?" there was an understanding that she or he was asking whether the person was experiencing abuse. Within a few years, the question "Are you OK?" had become a code phrase to ask if someone was suffering from family violence. The media campaign has helped not only to raise awareness but also to create a more open space within which people can approach the subject with one another.

United States: Native Americans

A number of Native American associations have organised efforts to more effectively respond to Native American women's concerns and needs related to intimate partner and sexual violence. One of the earliest and best developed is "Mending the Sacred Hoop" (MHS) which grew out of a Native women's advocacy and support group for survivors of domestic violence in Duluth, Minnesota in the 1980s. MSH explicitly argues that "progressing in the work to end violence against Indian women must begin with the development of relevant responses that work at reclaiming pre-contact values, values that restore harmony and balance to Native communities shaken by a history of oppression". An important part of their advocacy work is to reclaim traditional values of respect and cooperation: "we must work to restore the balance and harmony to our tribal communities...This is accomplished through remembering who we are, where we come from, and working to create social change" (Mending the Sacred Hoop, 2003 p.72; Wolk, 1982).

In a similar vein, the Sacred Circle National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women's Informational Handbook reframes domestic violence issues and dynamics within the context of Native people's experience of colonisation and a history of oppression. It argues that gender violence increased when Native people moved away from the cultural traditions in which women and men were valued and respected equally (Violence against Native women is not traditional, n.d).

Both of these organisations, and an abundance of scholarship, emphasise that Native people held women as sacred (Allen, 1985; 1992; Mending the Sacred Hoop, 2003). While the legends of creation differ from tribe to tribe, most equate the power of woman with that of the Earth Mother. Their communities respected and honored them. Acts of violence, such as rape were uncommon, and when they did occur, they evoked fear and horror because Native respect for women arose from the belief that women had power over life and

death. By many accounts, domestic violence was rare in indigenous societies prior to European contact and only became common after the onset of colonisation. In various tribes this honour and respect was evident in the way in which Native women were active and influential in political, religious, and economic spheres (Wolk, 1982).

The work in Native men's groups also emphasises the importance of respecting and honouring women and men in ways that "restore natural ways of living" (Mending the Sacred Hoop, 2003). The authors of the "Mending the Sacred Hoop Tribal Men's Program " intend the guide to be a "resource tool for Native communities wishing to design a program built upon tribal values, perspective, and life ways that helps men understand and address their use of violence against an intimate partner... In order to create social change in and for our communities, we have to reclaim our own indigenous teachings on culture and values" (Returning Men to Honor, 2012, p. 4).

The parallels between the de-colonising work being done by Maori in New Zealand and Native Americans in the United States are striking. Both are clear about the damage done to their people and the need to reclaim many of their traditional values and practices in order to restore health to their communities.

The Tribal Men's Program/Batterer Intervention Workbook (Returning Men to Honor, 2012) clearly articulates the links between colonisation and IPV and analyses the processes used by both colonisers and batterers to dominate those they want to control. "Colonization was a methodical, reoccurring, and systematic process to establish dominance (power and control) over the land and people. Battering is a methodical, reoccurring, and systematic process to establish dominance (power and control) over an intimate partner" (p. 5). The workbook attributes the high rates of violence perpetrated on Native women to the history of colonisation that disrupted tribal structures, family structure, language, beliefs, values, and traditions, replacing them with the colonisers' patriarchal culture and practices.

These sentiments were echoed throughout the domestic violence workshop organised by the Inter-Tribal Council of California and subsequent interviews conducted with domestic violence social workers who participated in the workshop. As part of the workshop, we conducted a Clothesline Project which invited women to create t-shirts that expressed their experiences with violence and with healing.

> We are experiencing intergenerational trauma. We are responsible for 7 generations ahead of us; and what happened to the 7 generations behind us still affects us today. I had to send my son away just like my parents had to send me away. I was adopted because my biological parents were alcoholics and abusive. And I became an alcoholic and drug addict - I wasn't a nice person when I drank and I chose bad partners – they were violent and I was used to being a victim. I tried AA and NA but something was missing. When I became involved with White Bison, which is a 12-step program for Native Americans, I learned about the sacred hoop - I knew my sacred hoop was broken. So that's my shirt: mending the broken hoop. I'm still working on it. But that's when I began healing. Now I am able to help other women – I had to go back to our traditions. (Personal communication, May 11, 2011)

Mending the Sacred Hoop believes many of the problems affecting both rural and urban tribal communities today are a direct result of several generations of Indian children being taken away from their families and suffering abuse in boarding schools that began in 1879 and continued well into the 1950s.

> Many children who were taken from their homes learned lessons of self-hatred, and domestic and sexual violence, and brought these ways back into their communities. The boarding school era of Native experience created one of the most tragic chapters of loss in Native identity, and left in its wake a legacy of domestic and sexual violence, alcoholism, displacement, and suicide that continues to affect tribal communities today". (Mending the Sacred Hoop, 2003, p. 37)

Once Native women had higher status in their communities than white women did in theirs. Wagner (as cited in Mending the Sacred Hoop, 2003) argues that Iroquois women influenced the early suffragette movement by providing a model of women who lived liberated lives, with rights, freedoms, and a voice in government.

Today as well as in the past, we all – Native and non-Native - have much to learn from indigenous cultural traditions that valued and practiced gender egalitarianism. For some of us, this means recognising and re-claiming our cultural traditions: for others, it means embracing new models that value women's and children's rights as human rights equal to those of men. For all of us, it means being willing to expose social pathologies within our own cultures as well as others (Gunning, 1991-92). To ignore or condone violence in order to protect the sanctity of the family only reproduces more violence and ultimately destroys the very institution it was meant to preserve. Just because a practice has become characteristic of some cultures or sub-cultures (be it living up to ideals of unattainable beauty through toxic breast implants or cosmetic surgery or female genital mutilation or breast ironing or everyday enactments of power and control over another person) does not mean such practices are legitimate or should be protected and immune from criticism. We need to examine both the motivations and consequences of such actions – who they benefit and who they hurt; who they serve and who they make subservient.

Conclusion

The struggle continues for women's rights to be fully recognised as human rights. The most common rationale given for the denial of human rights to women is the preservation of family and culture. Increasingly, however, it is being recognised that the relatively egalitarian societies of the past – among gathering and hunting societies, Maori iwi, and Native American tribes – have much to teach us. Greater gender equality leads to a healthier quality of life for everyone and the more democratic development of societies (Farmer, 2004; Wilkinson, 1996; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). Data from various cross-cultural studies indicate that the greater the equality between men and women, the less violence against women (although there may be an increase in violence in transitional periods as evidenced in India and the United States). From the macro to the micro level, people are beginning to challenge older, static notions of patriarchal culture as well as mobilise aspects of many traditional cultures as a resource in the struggle against gender discrimination and violence.

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The Changing Nature of Family Violence Interventions

Ken McMaster

This paper describes the changing nature of interventions with men who use abusive practices within their families. One-size-fits-all is now questioned as an approach to effective change. This paper brings together thinking that can better inform intervention including newer models (Acceptance & Commitment Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, Relapse Prevention and Accountability Processes), matching interventions to pathways into abusive practice, and aligning intervention dosage with levels of risk. The paper also explores the restraining nature of contemporary interventions in the current contracting environment.

Thirty years ago, in an alcohol and drug clinic, I began working with men who were acting abusively within their relationships. These men had the dual challenge of grappling with an alcohol and drug issue as well as managing behaviour towards others. Through group practice the men began to make sense of their behaviour and discovered that *abusive practice* (the term I will use throughout this paper) did not necessarily result from being alcohol or drug affected. When I gaze back to that very first group, much has changed and much has stayed the same in relation to finding workable interventions for men's violence towards women. In this article, I reflect on the journey that I have been on, assess what gains have been achieved over time, and conclude that the work is only partially completed in fulfilling the promise of safety for men and their family/whanau.

In this paper I describe the changing nature of interventions with men who use abusive practices within their families. I focus on interpersonal violence (abusive practice within the private spaces we occupy), rather than violence in the public domain,[1] and challenge the limitations of the one-size-fits-all approach of putting men who act abusively into the same programme group. While there are often common factors in abusive practice, restraints within a group context can also work against an understanding of the individual pathways into abusive practices. These restraints may impact on the effective targeting of dynamic and acute risk, and building protective factors that provide unique solutions for breaking patterns of abusive practice. Outcome studies have questioned the effectiveness of current approaches. With a move to results-based funding, questions are now being raised about what should be included in effective interventions and the extent to which interventions should be matched to the offender profile, risk level and both dynamic and acute needs (Serin & Lloyd, 2009).

Where Have We Come From?

Since the "discovery" of child physical abuse by Henry Kempe in the 1960's, child sexual abuse, violence against women, sexual abuse of boys and girls in institutional care, and abuse of the elderly have become common issues workers face in their daily practice (McMaster & Gregory, 2006). The second wave of feminism (1970 – 1990) opened to public gaze abusive behaviour that took place behind closed doors. During this period, the development of the Women's Refuge movement and rape crisis centres offered a dramatic expansion in services for those victims of domestic violence.

Alongside attending to the needs of those on the receiving end of men's behaviour (most abusive practice is gendered and directional in that it still remains the issue of men abusing women), we witnessed a pro-feminist men's movement taking on the challenge of developing interventions targeting those who engaged in abusive practices - family violence, child physical abuse and neglect, child sexual abuse and adult sexual abuse (McMaster & Gregory 2006). This occurred in the context of more thoughtful state intervention through adequate policing of family violence along with interagency protocols to ensure gaps were closed.

The legacy of approaches from the 1970s and 1980s, based upon psycho-educational, awareness raising and social skills training, has continued to influence current programme design. The basic premise of contemporary programmes is the notion that men have a skill or knowledge deficit; teaching relevant social skills and providing an awareness of gendered power may allow the impact of abuse to be understood and abusive practice minimised. There are two main traditions in programme design that target desistance to abusive practice. These can be described as cognitive-behavioural (Dutton & Corvo, 2007) and politically-driven interventions (Pence & Paymar, 1993; Pence & Sheppard, 1988). Neither of these approaches has achieved optimum results (Gondolf, 2012) and practitioners in the family violence field have debated the merits of each.

During the 1990s, correctional programmes developed into three very different types of design. The design of traditional corrections programmes, heavily influenced by sex offender intervention, went down the route of strongly cognitive-behavioural and relapse-prevention approaches (Laws, Hudson, & Ward 2000). This emphasised developing social skills, and working with distortions and thinking associated with offending. Understanding patterns of offending behaviour generally related to those programmes with a focus on safety planning and developing skills necessary for preventing relapse. Other types of correctional programmes began to move away from psycho-educational approaches and sought instead to identify and address offence-paralleling behaviours in every day interactions (Sturmey & McMurran, 2011). For example, if an offender meets his need for compliance through intimidation, then he may exhibit this in an intervention group. Group programmes aimed to address such behaviours in order to bring about second-order change.

Around the same time, there was a burgeoning in community-based stopping violence programmes. These programmes were responsive to the socio-political second wave of feminism (McMaster & Gregory, 2003). By the 1990s, supported by legislation change, police arrest policies, and a much greater awareness of what took place behind closed doors, many localities were able to support and sustain group interventions of up to fifty hours targeting abusive practice. Most programmes were of an educational nature where men were taught about the nature of gendered power with the assumption that behavioural changes would result from this learning.

During the past 10-15 years we have witnessed the development of theories for effecting change. These have included a number of innovative models and methods; acceptance and commitment therapy (Hayes & Strosahl, 2004), third-wave cognitive-behavioural approaches including mindfulness (Hofman, Sawyer, & Fang, 2010), motivational interviewing (Miller & Rollnick, 1991), dialectical behaviour therapy (Linehan, 1993), the good lives model (Ward & Brown, 2004) and family/whanau and accountability processes (Cagney & McMaster, 2013). Such developments have the potential to contribute to promising outcomes. The way forward to achieve better outcomes in terms of family/whanau safety will be to identify stable and acute risk factors, and

1 It is worth noting, however, that for a significant number of men presenting for intervention, general violence is a common factor and so successful change promises increased safety in private and public domains

address these through targeted interventions. While the above models provide the possibility for more effective intervention, existing legislation places limitation and restraint on what is possible (see Domestic Violence Act Regulations, 1996).

How Well Are We Doing?

Concerns exist around the value-for-money proposition of current interventions with perpetrators of IPV. Not an insignificant amount of funding supports a range of community based providers delivering services to a diverse range of men; culturally, in terms of risk, and linguistic and cultural diversity (newer migrants and refugees). It is worth noting that Maori, for example, accounted for 43% of all family violence related offences 2006 (Families Commission, 2009).[2]

As the government, the major funding provider, moves towards results-based accountability (RBA) of social policy initiatives, pressure is increasingly coming onto organisations to produce positive results. The problem agencies face is, apart from anecdotal stories of success,[3] very little robust evaluation of the effectiveness of intervention programmes has occurred within the New Zealand context (Slabber, 2012). Following a review of the literature, stakeholder consultation and analysis of the existing legislative framework in New Zealand, Little (2010) concluded there was scant evidence that programmes were successful in meeting the aims of the Domestic Violence Act (1995). The few programme evaluation studies carried out have used small sample sizes and demonstrate some methodological problems (Dominick as cited in Hetherington, 2009; McMaster, Maxwell &Anderson, 2000).

New Zealand is unique in that our prison system does not offer dedicated family violence interventions. Programmes are community based, often relying upon sessional facilitation staff, with limited training opportunities and lower remuneration than the government sector.

2 The developing field of exploring lateral violence also fits with a more responses approach to addressing the issue from a cultural frame (Gooda, 2011). Lateral violence occurs as a result of colonisation and internalisation of identity degradation over a long time, where a group of people are told they are worthless and treated as being worthless for a long period of time. Lateral violence occurs when this internalised hatred of self is rendered back into one's own community.

3 What constitutes success remains controversial in terms of which evaluation questions should be asked, what should be evaluated, which research design should be used, which methods employed and what is best practice in interpersonal violence (IPV) interventions? See Bowen (2011) for further discussion.

Bridging Fields of Practice

General offending programs have been developed from a different perspective than family violence intervention. While there is significant overlap, family violence intervention has historically been more interested in the role of gendered power within men's violence towards women. Within the New Zealand context, criminal justice interventions for offending behaviour are predominantly state-funded and operated. Family violence programmes, on the other hand, are often community-based programmes provided by NGOs. This has led to a disproportionate amount of resources being committed between the two, which can impinge upon programme integrity.

Maintaining programme integrity is fundamental to achieving intended outcomes. Andrews and Dowden (2005) specify ten elements of programme integrity:

- Having a specific model
- Selecting workers
- Training staff
- Clinical supervision of staff
- Using training manuals
- Monitoring service process or intermediate gains
- Ensuring adequacy of intervention "dosage"
- Maintaining "freshness" of programme
- Programme evaluations involving small sample sizes (less than 100 participants)
- Involving an evaluator in design, delivery or supervision of the programme

According to Wales and Tiller (2009):

> Threats to integrity can come from "drift" (the gradual shift over time of the aim of the programme), "reversal" (where staff reverse or undermine the approach of the programme), and "non-compliance" (where practitioners elect, for reasons of their own, to change or omit parts of the programme).(p.38)

There are further problems with programme integrity within the New Zealand family violence sector. When we consider the challenges faced by organisations in the community sector delivering interventions for men who use abusive practices, we would be hard-pressed to confidently state that our programs are meeting the benchmark of integrity noted above. This is not a criticism of provider groups, but of a low resource base, dated programme design, lack of evaluation, inadequate supervision and a lack of adherence to a risk-need-responsivity model (Andrews & Bonta, 2006); all of which works against contemporary best practice. In general correctional work, for example, the contaminating impact of mixing low-risk offenders with high risk-offenders within the same intervention group has long been understood (Andrews & Bonta, 2006). In family violence work, however, men are not screened according to risk, nor is their dosage of intervention adjusted on this basis. Arguably medium-to-high-risk men engaging in abusive practice require more intensive intervention over a longer period of time. While men referred from state-based (Department of Corrections) into community-based interventions will have a risk profile[4] which has been generated from rigorous assessment, for men coming via a civil proceeding through the Family Court where a protection order may be granted, or men who self-refer into programmes, there is scant information available to allow a comprehensive risk assessment.

Some restraint has also been driven through legislation such as the Domestic Violence Act (1995), which stipulates a maximum of 50 hours of intervention time for group programmes run by community providers. It also restricts the nature of programme design and range of approaches, biasing towards psycho-educational approaches rather than rehabilitative/therapeutic or family/whanau-oriented interventions. Through maintaining both a what-works orientation and adhering to the principles of integrity, therefore, state run correctional based programmes have moved far ahead of community based interventions in terms of outcome (Slabber, 2012).

The Need for Better Case Formulation

There has been growing concern voiced about treating family violence as a simple, rather than complex, phenomenon (Boshier, 2009; Eckhardt et al., 2008). Criticism has been directed at the current one-size-fits-all model for addressing family violence. While few would disagree that abusive practice is a gendered phenomenon, located within the milieu of male entitlement, it is problematic to solely construct family violence programmes on this basis.

Understanding the pathways men use to engage in abusive practice better informs the focus of interventions and may assist in identifying reinforcement loops that exist around such behaviour. In my professional experience, working alongside a significant number of the main programmes within New Zealand, what is lacking is a clear case formulation for each man entering an intervention. This makes exit interviews and

4 This is referred to as a probability measure of risk of conviction x risk of imprisonment within a five year period or RoC*RoI

evaluation of outcome difficult. Case formulation aims to answer the following questions:

- Who is this man and family/whanau (cultural and social considerations)?
- What place does abusive practice play in their lives?
- What are the barriers to change?
- What pathways can enhance change?
- What are the key factors that underpin and sustain pathways of abusive practice?
- What strategies can be suggested to minimise the barriers and establish new pathways to safety?
- Who do we need to involve to implement these strategies?
- How do we help the man and their family/ whanau to implement the strategies?

In order to fully answer these questions, we would want to interrogate predisposing (vulnerabilities), precipitating (triggers), perpetuating (maintaining factors) and protective (strengths) factors, exploring how these operate at multiple levels - psychological, social, cultural and biological. A comprehensive formulation is also informed by what the research indicates is relevant in causing problem behaviour.

In the field of men's violence, research has identified a number of factors that can add usefully to an individualised formulation of abusive practice. As far back as the late 1980s and 1990s writers were identifying precipitating events. Giles-Sims (1983) argued that first assaults may be triggered by pregnancy, illness, a new job for the woman, moving house or divorce from another partner. Verbal aggression was also identified as a potential indicator of future physical assault as it may signal personality traits of defensiveness and aggressiveness. Saunders (1995) and Morris (1996) noted that separation does not signal an end to violence with from one-quarter to two-thirds still experiencing harassment from ex-partners. The dysphoric-borderline group, those men with high dependency needs in their relationships, could account for a significant percentage of these men (Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart,1994).

It is now recognised that there are multiple pathways into abusive behaviour along with high-risk times such as separation or the discovery of infidelity (Gottman & Jacobson, 1998; Holzworth–Munro & Stuart, 1993; Johnson, 2008). The literature identifies two particularly high-risk pathways into abusive practice. The first involves men who are both emotionally dependent and fearful of abandonment. This fear produces jealous rages and attempts to deprive their partners of independence. Such men are easily aroused during arguments, prone to fits of rage and tend to be hypervigilant of their partners' behaviour. They are very demanding in their relationships - insisting partners are more available - while, at the same time, withdrawing or avoiding changes that their partners seek. They tend to confine their violence to family members, especially their partners. This group in particular are at high risk of breaching protection orders, stalking, and potentially murder-suicide post separation (Dutton, 1995; Johnson, 2008; McMaster, 2009).

The second pathway can best be described as involving men who exhibit an antisocial orientation in life. They have a high propensity towards violence as a mechanism for conflict resolution. They often misperceive hostile intent and view many situations as threatening. Such men share a number of characteristics including early onset anti-social behaviour, a history of general offending and impulsive tendencies, which may include high rates of alcohol and drug use. Violence is often instrumental in obtaining what they want and exacting punishment on their partners. When predisposing factors are analysed for this group, they are more likely to have experienced dismissive attachment which is evidenced in adult life by low trust and dependency needs, along with challenges in empathic skills (Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994).

Pence (1999) describes resistive/reactive violence where victims of violence often retaliate and resist domination by using force themselves. The major goals of such violence are to escape and/ or stop violence that is being perpetrated against them, and establish a semblance of parity in the relationship as a method of protecting themselves and their children against escalating abuse. She also describes pathological violence where individuals who abuse alcohol or drugs, suffer from mental illness or physical disorders, or have neurological damage, may use physical violence against others, including their intimate partners.

Another major pathway into violence is through situational factors where intimate partners may use abusive practices against each other to express anger, disapproval, or to reach an objective; for example, to quit drinking, end an affair, or stop being obnoxious in public. Mood regulation and emotional volatility are also common reactive challenges to manage during separation. It has been noted that the difference between non-violent and violent couples is that the former have a *withdrawal ritual*: when escalation takes place the process stops or reverses itself before the abuse escalates to outright violence. In men who use abusive practices, this mechanism is violated and overridden (Jacobsen & Gottman, 1998), or unanticipated events may interfere with withdrawal ritual behaviour.

Issues still exist for assessing and applying this knowledge to practice (Fowler & Western, 2011; Hetherington, 2009). As argued elsewhere (McMaster, 2009) each group of men, described above, requires nuanced intervention. If we are to seriously reduce men's violence towards women then careful formulation is more likely to provide focus for where we best place our intervention, resources and attention. The provision of a generic intervention, with the idea that some ideas will stick, is a poor use of precious and limited resources.

Promising Intervention Practices

Working from a strengths perspective, through identifying and enhancing protective factors, appears to be showing great promise in the way ahead. Morgan et al. (2012) evaluate a number of factors associated with protecting against further general offending, which may also extend to the area of men who exhibit abusive practices. These factors incorporate both internal assets such as responsiveness to advice, having a pro-social identity, knowing the costs/benefits of crime, and the external assets of social support and social control.

We stand at a crossroads in terms of what is possible in the design of interventions for men who act abusively within their interpersonal relationships. We now have 30 years of research, practice and thinking to inform what we do and how we do it. The challenge going forward is how to increase safety within family/whanau through better engagement with the risk, need and responsivity model, ultimately achieving better outcomes from the resource investment in programmes. Designing interventions[5] opens up the possibility of addressing the real challenges that exist in meeting diverse needs through matching interventions to risk levels. These include issues of dosage, open or closed interventions, content areas, participant learning styles, post-intervention tasks, and the role of family/whanau.

Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, I advocate reclaiming a case-work approach to intervention. This could focus upon blending the best elements of relapse prevention, social location (including cultural alignment), and social skills within a context of therapeutic process. Offence mapping, for example, now forms the core of most contemporary programme design. Offence maps contribute to a case formulation. This helps clarify and reveal the habitual nature of pattern behaviour and provides key information about the best intervention targets for an individual, based upon identifying dynamic risk factors that support and maintain offending behaviour (Smith, Gendreau, & Swartz 2009). This provides a rich platform for group participants to actively identify the key factors that contribute to their own offending behaviour.

When considering the issue of dosage, two factors need to be taken into account: the optimum number and the frequency of sessions. Determining the latter creates a degree of challenge, particularly for interventions that are community-based, in that gaining commitment to several sessions over the course of a week can be highly disruptive to the participant's lifestyle. This challenge also applies to workers/facilitators whose own lives will be altered by increased involvement in programme delivery.

Additionally, there is a need for thorough

5 I deliberately use this term rather than programmes, as an intervention allows for a matching of the particular needs of the whanau/family rather than a more "siloed" approach.

assessment to identify the drivers of offending behaviour, or dynamic factors, and the perpetuating or maintaining factors for violence (e.g., pro-violence attitudes and beliefs, gendered entitlement, alcohol and drug issues). The most effective interventions individualise and target each person's assessed dynamic factors (stable and acute) while building individual protective factors (Serin & Lloyd 2009).

The risk, need and responsivity literature raises major concerns regarding over-treatment, particularly of those who are at low risk of further abuse or offending (Andrews & Bonta, 2006). The research indicates that overtreatment may increase risk through contamination with those at the higher end of the risk spectrum. Therefore, the question remains, what is the sufficient dosage for an intervention?

The answer is not so straightforward as factors such as age, onset of behaviour, risk categorisation, complexity of dynamic risk factors and other possible coexisting disorders in the areas of mental health, personality pathology and drug and alcohol abuse all have to be taken into account. It is concerning that interventions continue to mix together people with different levels of risk. Mixing low and high-risk offenders may result in low-risk participants perceiving their behaviour to be somehow less problematic, less serious, and potentially more acceptable.

Coming back to the key question of how much intervention is enough, we need to revisit the idea of matching along a number of key continua. Smith et al. (2009) argue that for high risk offenders around 300 hours of intervention time is required. Unfortunately, community-based family violence programmes in New Zealand are bound by legislation (Domestic Violence Act, 1995) which allows a maximum of fifty hours intervention time in any one programme. This represents significant under-intervention for many participants presenting to these programmes. While over-treating may increase the risk of escalating behaviour, under-treating those who require more intense intervention may mean that the programme does not have enough time to reinforce alternative skill sets.

The ability and disposition to respond to an intervention (responsivity) has been thoroughly dealt with in the literature (Andrews and Bonta, 2005; Serin & Lloyd, 2009) and sits alongside risk (static and dynamic) as key considerations for any treatment programme. Responsivity relates to how participants engage with ideas (openness), how they learn (learning styles), along with barriers and enhancements to engaging in the work (such as mental health issues, intelligence, alcohol and other drug issues, existing family and community support systems). Additionally, responsivity is as much about the relationship or therapeutic alliance formed between the intervention worker and the person who has offended as it is about the unique issues of the offender (Hubble, Duncan & Miller 1999; Ross, Polaschek & Ward, 2008).

The idea of tailoring intervention to an individual's needs is now accepted as best practice (Taxman, Shepardson, & Byrne 2004). Gone are the days of delivering generalised interventions with the idea that "something would get through". Most modern designs use forms of pattern or offence mapping to identify the specific intervention targets that are most likely to obtain a positive result.

Increasingly, interventions need to be viewed as more wide-reaching than the commonly accepted idea of a group programme. When we think about programmes we often think of a group intervention where work is undertaken to address the presenting risk issues that the person poses to others. However, the Domestic Violence Act Regulations (1996) allow for one-on-one work as the preferred method of intervention, particularly where responsivity barriers (e.g. linguistic issues, mental health, or intellectual disability) make it difficult to function well within a group setting.

Working from the premise that an intervention needs to target and match the needs of the person (identified through thorough assessment), opens the way for interventions to incorporate a range of diverse elements. In addition to traditional group work, which is still seen to be most effective in providing an opportunity to practice skills in situ (Yalom, 2005), interventions can include individual sessions, couple and or family/whanau work, and potentially wider accountability, or what we call *system review* meetings. Involvement in these latter strategies provides a wider context for intervention. An intervention therefore becomes a multi-layered method of not only creating accountability for change but also creating an audience that will still exist once intervention staff cease to be involved.

Conclusion

In this paper I have reflected upon the journey we have been on to find effective interventions that can rekindle trust and safety back into relationships and family life. Even when separation has occurred, relationships may be on-going due to parenting and other family/whanau connections. I have argued that despite having expended significant resources over the past 30 years in finding workable solutions to the issue of rebuilding safety following abusive practice, the results of our endeavours are mixed. Outcome results have been equivocal. This is not a reflection on the dedication and skill of those who front group programmes but, rather, working with one-size-fits-all models, which do not address the significant diversity of men attending programmes. This diversity is inclusive of culture, risk and complexity of individual pathways into abusive practice.

I have argued that the way forward requires us to recognise IPV as a complex, rather than simplistic, issue. Single-cause theories do not adequately explain the reasons for abusive practice within an intimate relationship. Adopting thorough and empirically informed assessment will contribute to individualised case formulations, thereby allowing better matching of intervention with need. Targeting the dynamic and acute factors that underpin abusive practice, while concurrently building protective and risk mitigating elements, together will add greatly to intervention effectiveness. This all of course needs to occur through developing and maintaining an effective working alliance.

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Media Release

Understanding Violence: Context and Practice in the Human Services

Co-edited by Dr Annabel Taylor and Professor Marie Connolly

Published by Canterbury University Press, June 2013, RRP$45,

ISBN 978-1-927145-48-7

The co-editors of a new book on violence, published by Canterbury University Press, hope it will provide a valuable resource for those providing prevention programmes and studying its impact.

The book, Understanding Violence: Context and Practice in the Human Services, is co-edited by Te Awatea Violence Research Centre Director Dr Annabel Taylor and Professor Marie Connolly from the University of Melbourne.

Dr Taylor said the book aims to increase the understanding of violence, its origins and the practices that have developed in response to violence. "This book reflects the work of UC's Te Awatea Violence Research Centre researchers and includes a broad coverage of many types of violence and recent response initiatives. It will be an essential resource for family violence practitioners, police, shelter organisations and violence prevention programme providers, as well as students and academics," she said. "Gangs, elder abuse, sexual offending and social networking risks are some of the areas described. I hope this contribution to research and writing will help to inform the public about violence prevention and contribute to on-going debate concerning effective responses to violence."

Dr Taylor said the economic cost of family violence was estimated at $1.2 to $5.8 billion per year by economist Suzanne Snively in 1994. In today's figures that would rise to $8 billion. "We [New Zealand] have the fifth worst child abuse record out of 31 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries with, on average, one child killed every five weeks."

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Gang Rapes and Molestation Cases in India: Creating Mores for Eve-Teasing

Ambika Kohli

This article highlights the patriarchal nature of the Indian state and discusses this in relation to the state's response to several rape and molestation cases. It emphasises a number of responses made by political, community and well-known fundamentalist leaders, which have focussed on controlling women's sexuality and mobility. Such statements are framed within patriarchal notions of female morality, honour and shame through which mores are created for eve-teasing (sexual harassment). The article also discusses public remarks highlighted within the media in relation to the internationally reported Delhi gang rape case, which focussed on the movements and morality of the victim. I argue that such patriarchal responses support a rape culture in India, which has led to increased violence against women and breaches of Indian women's human rights.

Violence against women is a global phenomenon and is recognised as a human rights violation. Various international conventions and policies aim to safeguard women's rights by condemning different forms of violence against them. Violence against women, as stated in United Nations' (UN) documents and forums, hinders the achievement of "equality, development and peace" (Johnson, Ollus & Nevala, 2008 p.16; United Nations, 1993). This violence varies across the world and is practiced in different forms under the cover of cultural, religious or social practices: it includes dowry violence, female foeticide, female infanticide, acid-attacks, domestic violence, female genital mutilation, honour killings, sexual harassment and rape.

In the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) 1995, sexual rights were defined in relation to human rights providing women with the right to control and make decisions regarding their sexuality (Sheill, 2008). Thus, rape and sexual harassment are recognised as inhumane crimes against women at a global level. While such crimes are matters of international relations and security (True, 2012), rape and sexual assault are also a serious issue for governments at a national level where laws are designed in a culturally specific fashion within each country.

The existence of rape and sexual harassment laws does not, however, guarantee justice for victims. The interaction of religion, culture and social values, in many countries, strengthens traditional patriarchal ideals and structures contributing to the subordination of women and an increased rate of violence, particularly sexual violence, against them. Currently women's security in India is a controversial issue and breaches of their basic, legally mandated, human rights are often evident. The promotion of patriarchal ideologies by well-known political, community and fundamentalist leaders, many of whom are involved in framing legal and social policies, is of particular concern. I argue that the remarks made by such leaders are not merely an issue of moral policing ("Implement Verma report", 2013) or electoral politics (Chaudhuri, 2012), but have led to the increased rate of violence against women by creating a rape culture.

Patriarchal Nature of the Indian State and Culture

Rape culture in India can be understood as a situation where rape myths are articulated within different legal and socio-cultural discourses of morality, shame and honour. In India these myths include the minimisation by government officials of cases of rape and sexual violence (Baxi, 2002), patriarchal attitudes toward sexuality where men's sexuality is deemed as natural and women's as seduction (Herman, 1984) and the persecution of female victims because of their style of dress, mobility or marital status.[1]

A reluctance to challenge the patriarchal nature of a society that relegates women to subordinate positions remains a key element of rape culture and little attention is paid to women's empowerment in countries where rape culture is evident (Rozee, n.d.). Violence by male perpetrators against women within this culture is often perceived as an emblem of masculinity. Such violence is deemed indispensable in preserving traditional patriarchal practices and gender roles (True, 2012) through which women are perceived as carriers of traditions and not as primary actors in bringing social change (Yuval-Davis, 1999). Austin and Young (2000) further suggest that, when women experience a change in status, traditional patriarchal structures are disrupted leading to male aggression which for a short period may actually increase the number of rape cases.[2] Thus women's emancipation is seen as a serious threat to patriarchal structures and, through the above-mentioned rape myths, patriarchal structures are maintained.

Gender equality and women's empowerment is the third goal of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) to be achieved by 2015 (United Nations, n.d.). While India is a signatory to international gender equality and women's rights policies and conventions the country is ranked at the bottom, after Saudi Arabia, for gender equality among the G20 nations (Pidd, 2012). India was also ranked the fourth most dangerous country for women in the world according to TrustLaw's poll (Zirulnick, 2011). Kabeer (2008) highlights the reluctance of third world countries to protect women's rights:

> Political leaders in the south routinely sign on to various international conventions and declarations in support of gender equality, intersperse their speeches with references to their commitment to women's advancement, pass laws aimed at overturning long standing forms of discrimination, and formulate policies with the apparent goal of acting on these intentions. However, they also routinely fail to follow through. (p. 244-245)

In India the Dowry Prohibition Act (1961), the Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques Act (1994), Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005) and provisions for sexual harassment incidences are some of the laws designed to curb gender violence in India. Despite this legislation, however, the state fails to protect the basic rights of women, as evidenced by a constant rise in gender violence. Gender-based violence, such as female feticide, female infanticide, acid attacks, rape, molestation, dowry deaths and honour killings, are quite common in India. Studies suggest that 18 women are raped every hour (National Crimes Records as cited in Gangoli, 2011), a dowry death occurs every 93 minutes (Sharma, Harish & Wadman as cited in Sharma et al. 2007), 10 million girls are missing because of female feticide[3] (Laurance, 2006), and there are 1000 honour killings in India per year (Honour Based Violence Awareness Network,

1 For example, in India and in many other countries it is socially and culturally important for a woman to marry at an early age in order to protect herself from other men. Unmarried women are often looked down upon and deemed to be open to sexual relationships.

2 One such incident happened in Rajasthan in 1992 when a woman called Bhanvri Devi was gang raped, purportedly as a result of her political activities, after she intervened to prevent a child marriage.

3 India has the lowest female child sex-ratio in the world after China.

n.d.).[4] Moreover, in the 15 days following the Delhi gang rape case, a further 45 rape cases and 75 molestation cases were reported ("45 rape", 2013). These statistics highlight issues of female security within Indian society, including the failure of police to adequately enforce the laws and ensure women's safety. Despite changes in women's educational and financial status,[5] these statistics reveal a significant amount of violence against women.

Eve-Teasing and Rape in India

The term *eve-teasing* is used in India to describe sexual harassment of women by men in public spaces. This includes verbal assaults, staring, whistling, physical assault, psychological assault, obscene gestures and winking (Ramasubramanian & Oliver, 2007). The word *eve* here refers to women and has been derived from the biblical story where Eve was named as the first woman.[6] Although eve-teasing is quite common in India, only one in 10,000 cases is reported (Ramasubramanian & Oliver, 2007). Moreover, eve-teasing is often viewed as normal, romantic and a moderate crime unlike rape or murder (Ramasubramanian & Oliver, 2007), despite the fact that it violates women's basic right to live in dignity (Chatterji, 2007). Furthermore eve-teasing can often escalate into a violent crime, such as a rape or a murder (Jaishankar, Desai & Sundaram, 2008; Ramasubramanian & Oliver, 2007). The Delhi gang rape in 2012, which started as an eve-teasing act, resulted in the brutal rape and murder of the victim.[7]

Although rape cases in India are frequent, the majority go unreported, due to the perceived impact on the honour of the woman's family (Gangoli, 2011) and the belief that a woman's sexuality should be confined within the institution of marriage. In addition to this the narrow definition of rape, within Indian law, prevents women from reporting such incidences. Rape is defined as sexual intercourse under sections 375 and 376 of the Indian Penal Code, and acts of "forced oral sexual intercourse, penile-anal intercourse, sodomy and penetration by foreign objects" are ignored (Mehta, 2013). In India rape is not recognised as a violation of a woman's rights or bodily integrity; as "male oppression and control of women" (Gangoli, 2011 p.10); a security issue; or a need for women's empowerment. It is rather viewed as a loss of honour in the legal system in India (Gangoli, 2011).

True (2012) argues that, worldwide, women are more open to reporting violence against them due to the rising awareness programmes. A comparable pattern is visible in India where there has been a sudden increase in reported rape cases. For instance, 2,919 cases of rape were reported in Indian in 1973 (Little Justice, n.d.), and by 2011 reported rapes rose to 24,206 registered cases[8] (Human Rights Watch, 2012). This raises a question: has there been an actual increase in the number of rape cases, or are women and their families empowered to come forward and report cases, stepping beyond the boundaries of shame and honour? Despite the increase in reporting, however, treatment of victims is often poor with women still predominantly blamed for their own eve-teasing or rapes.

In India the issue of rape and sexual assault is often highlighted by politicians for vote bank politics (Chakravarti et al. 2007) rather than as an issue of women's safety. Several rape myths have been articulated by different leaders in response to rape cases highlighted within the media. Such statements draw upon the dichotomy of moral versus immoral women within the socio-cultural discourses of shame, morality and honour. Moral women in India are often classified as those who dress modestly, are not influenced by western clothing or ideas, return home before dark, remain virgins until marriage and follow social sex-segregation principles. Immoral women are defined as those who follow western lifestyles, wear body revealing clothes, practice their sexuality outside a conjugal relationship, drink, smoke, go out at night and visit nightclubs. Such rape myths create social mores which provide justification for the eve-teasing of the latter group.

The fear of being sexually-molested or raped encourages many Indian women to follow a culturally determined set of morality principles in order to protect themselves. Women from all socio-cultural groups understand that being raped is a realistic danger. In response to this threat, they dress modestly[9]and regulate their movement[10] as a safety measure to attempt to protect themselves from all forms of violence. However, such measures often turn out to be futile as no group of women is immune from being molested or raped.

Tolerance for Gender Violence in India

Khap panchayats are the traditional governing councils in North Indian villages. These panchayats, comprising older men from the Jat community, define rules for Jat community members inhabiting the governed villages (Das, n.d.). Khaps are found in North Western provinces such as Eastern Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana, but are most active in Haryana where Jats comprise 25% of the state's population (Das, n.d.). They frequently assume responsibility for moral policing and honour killings, breaching Indian laws in order to preserve patriarchal traditional practices (Das, n.d.). The panchayats are often supported by male politicians, such as Navin Jindal (Chaudhuri, 2012) and Om Prakash Chautala, who have openly defended the council's attempts to control women's sexuality (Chaudhuri, 2012), bodies and movements.

Chautala is an active politician in the Haryana region of India where 15 rape cases were reported in September 2012 (Joshi, 2012). One of the most notorious cases was the gang rape of a girl from a low caste[11] whose rape was recorded and later circulated on the Internet and mobile phones (Joshi, 2012).[12] In response Chautala, with the support of the Khap Panchayats in Haryana, proposed the formulation of a new state law allowing teenage marriages as a means of protecting young women from rape (Joshi, 2012).

India has the highest number of child marriages in the world as reported by UNFPA (Trivedi, 2013) despite child marriages being illegal in India under the Sarda Act (1929). This idea of child marriage as a means of protecting women from rape is quite popular within some parts of rural India but fails to acknowledge that married women are also raped throughout the country. Major political parties in Haryana and in other khaps governed states such as Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan appear willing to tolerate gender violence and reluctant to challenge the panchayats due to the fear of losing their political support (Joshi, 2012; Kaur, 2010; Das, n.d.).

According to the United Nations Population Fund (as cited in Johnson, Ollus & Nevala, 2008):

> Gender-based violence is perhaps the most wide-spread and socially tolerated of human rights violations....It both reflects and reinforces inequities between men and women and compromises the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims. (p.1)

Herman (1984) highlighted the victimisation of rape and sexual harassment victims, in many countries, by the general public, judges, police and prosecutors; a scenario that is apparent in Indian cases too. Male and female politicians alike have, at times, denied the occurrence of rape cases reflecting patriarchal ideas of femininity

4 It is important to realise that these statistics are not complete as much of the violence against women is neither recorded nor reported in India.

5 According to Indian Census, 2011, the female literacy rate has increased from 54.16% in 2001 to 65.46% in 2011.

6 It is interesting that India is predominantly a Hindu country and the reference is taken from the Christian Bible. The reference signifies that women are held responsible for their molestation by attracting men similar to the way Eve seduced Adam.

7 I will discuss the Delhi gang rape, 2012, later in this article.

8 The actual number of rape cases is still unknown as the majority of cases never get reported by the victims.

9 Dressing modestly in general terms is defined as wearing non-body revealing clothes and, in some cases, even ethnic dresses over western clothing.

10 Regulating movement refers to not going out at night or in the dark, not going to certain places, and not being escorted by a male or not being in the company of male friends.

11 Class and caste play important roles in gender violence in rural parts of India, where women from low castes are raped by men of higher caste as a way to practice and maintain their status

12 This is not the first case where violence against women has been recorded and circulated on the Internet in India. Such videos are easily accessible and largely viewed by the majority of the Indian population. The videos are there, but prosecution against the perpetrators happens rarely and the whole process is slow.

and masculinity where a woman's sexuality plays a crucial role in determining her moral standards (Walby, 1990).

In 2012, a woman was gang raped by five men when she exited a nightclub in Park Street, Kolkatta, India (Banerjie, 2012a). Dr. Kakoli Gosh Dastidar, a female politician, responded to the attack by calling the victim a prostitute stating that it was not a rape, but rather a misunderstanding between the woman and her clients (Banerjie, 2012b). By being identified as a prostitute, the female victim was framed as a woman of immoral standards who acted as a seductress and was herself responsible for the incident. While legally it is a crime to rape or sexually assault any woman, there exists a high level of tolerance for assaults on women identified as being of immoral character.[13] In India, it seems "sexuality has become an adjunct to discussion on rape..." (Gangoli, 2007; p. 57).

This situation was exacerbated when Mamta Banerjee, the ruling member of Trinamol Congress Party, called this case a fabrication by the opposition party designed to disgrace her government (Banerjie, 2012b). Violence against women is deeply institutionalised in cultural and legal systems (Johnson, Ollus & Nevala, 2008) in India and many women themselves do not feel able to question it, thus participating in its proliferation. Electoral politics, it seems, remains a more important issue than women's safety even for the female politicians.

A similar response was made by the female chief minister Sheila Dixit in regards to a Mumbai molestation case, where a man, his wife and his female cousin, coming out of a hotel on New Year's Eve in 2008, were attacked by 50 hooligans who molested the two women. Dixit's statement blamed the victims, criticising their sexuality and mobility and stating that women should dress modestly and behave according to a moral code of conduct.

This apathy of women towards other women highlights the dominant role of patriarchal gendered socialisation in India, which leads to the perpetuating of rape myths by the female leaders themselves. Moreover, such statements emphasise that the control of women's sexuality and their mobility has become a prerequisite for their protection. It has also become a way for the police and state to escape from taking any responsibility for such incidents and for the security of women in general.

Delhi Gang Rape

Gang rape is considered to be one of the most serious forms of rape in the Indian legal system, and there are more severe punishments for this act than other forms of rape (Gangoli, 2011). At the present time in India there has been a sudden increase in the reported number of cases of gang rape. The Delhi gang rape, which happened on December 16, 2012, was covered by both local and international media. While the sexual humiliation of victims is not new or unique in rape cases (Herman, 1984) the amount of torture involved in this gang rape case attracted attention.

Joyti Singh Pandey was brutally raped by five men in a moving bus who took turns driving so that all five of them could rape her. The insertion of a rod in her vagina by the rapists led to the mutilation of her uterus and intestines. Following the attack, a generic apathy of the public towards the victims was visible as Jyoti and her male friend were thrown naked onto the road where some time passed before anyone came forward to help them. It was reported that the police also delayed the admission of the victims to hospital and did not help them to cover themselves (Zee News, 2013).

This incident received widespread national and international condemnation. In New Zealand, silent protests were observed in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. In Christchurch, Joyti Singh Pandey was remembered on International Women's Day. Following her death on December 29, 2012, Anupam Kher, a famous Bollywood actor, tweeted the comment "INCREDIBLE INDIA[14]: A nation where Daughters are neither safe inside WOMB nor OUTSIDE..."(sic). This tweet is more than an emotional outburst in regards to violence against women, but also illuminates the dominance of gender based violence in India that starts even before the birth of a female child. Such violence is indicative of dominant patriarchal practices, ineffective laws and a high degree of acceptance for different forms of violence against women.

Following Joyti's death, for the first time in India, large numbers came forward condemning the actions of the attackers. Simultaneously, demands for strict amendments to the rape law were made by the masses. Initially, however, rather than supporting the cause politicians denounced such protests and targeted female dissenters. Abhijit Mukherjee, a Congress MP and the son of the Indian President, raised concerns over the sexuality, movements, agency, and morality of the female agitators. He called them "painted and dented" (Banerjie, 2012b, para. 10) with make-up, and criticised their western attire. Mukherjee raised questions about the authenticity and sincerity of the demonstrators claiming that they would go to the discotheques after the protest. Discotheques in India are largely seen as a symbol of westernisation; they are also a place for fun and enjoyment. Thus, their going to discotheques, according to Mukherjee, symbolised that the protesters did not have any sympathy with the victim's grief and had "very little connection with ground reality" (Daniel & Bhattachaijya, 2013, para. 10). After a huge outcry and criticism from people from different walks of life in the media, Mukherjee apologised for his statement.

Despite the protests, various rape myths continued to be articulated under the umbrella of culture, tradition and women's morality. Jyoti Singh Pandey's morality was questioned as it was pointed out that she was out with her boyfriend at 9:30pm when the incident took place. Moral policing was openly and widely conducted both in the media and at a personal level. One of the Bhartiya Janta Party members used the synonym of Laxman Rekha[15] from the Hindu religious scripture, Ramayan, to suggest that if women crossed their limits of morality, then these crimes would be likely to happen. Thus, women are themselves responsible for these crimes and they need to regulate themselves in order to protect themselves.

The famous religious guru (teacher) Asaram ("Delhi gang rape", 2013) openly blamed Jyoti for the rape.

> Only five-six people are not the culprits. The girl is as guilty as her rapists... She should have called the culprits brothers[16] and begged them to stop... This could have saved her dignity and life. Can one hand clap? I don't think so. (para 1)

Statements given by different leaders, at the time of the rape, also blamed the victim focussing on traditional patriarchal myths associated with women's sexuality and movement by confining them at home, creating mores regarding when they should leave the house and with whom, and what they should or should not wear. This reinforces the patriarchal norms where women's subordination (Petchesky, 2003) and control of their sexuality is seen as natural. Articulating these patriarchal ideas perpetuates a rape culture which leads to the victimisation of the victims and creates a fear of being unsafe among Indian women.

The Criminalisation of Marital Rape and other Women-Friendly Recommendations

Following ongoing protests at the time of the Delhi Gang Rape, a panel of three legal experts, chaired by Justice J.S. Verma, was appointed to recommend amendments to the current rape law. The Committee's proposal for strict laws for stalking, staring, voyeurism and acid attacks were, however, strongly criticised by many who argued that such amendments would provide the legal means for women to take revenge and send any man behind bars if they wished to.

13 As stated earlier the moral and immoral character is socially and culturally defined.

14 This is the slogan of Indian tourism.

15 Laxman Rekha is symbolic of women remaining within their limits and regulating their movement. The religious tale comes from Hindu's religious scripture, Ramayana. It focuses on Sita (the main female figure of Ramayana) who crossed a line, called Laxman Rekha, drawn by her brother-in-law Laxman. The line was drawn for Sita's security as she was left alone at home., however she crossed the rekha and was subsequently abducted by Ravana (the main villain of Ramayana). Thus, reference to Laxman Rekha is always made to regulate women's movement and to term them responsible for their self-made bad fate.

16 People criticised and made fun of Asaram by saying that he did not realise that they actually persuaded Joyti to board the bus by saying 'sister we were going your way'.

Furthermore, the Indian government rejected the Committee's proposal for an amendment to the rape law to include the criminalisation of marital rape. In India marital rape is only a crime if the bride is a minor (Gangooli & Westmarland, 2011), although such cases are hardly ever reported. The majority of Indian women have no legal right to protection from rape by their spouse, thus interpersonal violence is legitimised within the institution of marriage. The government, however, argued that criminalising marital rape would weaken the institution of marriage and the family in India (Jain & Chakrabarty, 2013). It is important to realise that, in most parts of India, patriarchal and patrilineal families are the dominant form of family structure. Thus, criminalising marital rape is seen as a threat to the institutions in which patriarchy is embedded. The spousal exemption in the rape law objectifies women as a commodity (Gangooli & Westmarland, 2011; Herman, 1984) where a husband has immunity even if he forces himself sexually on his wife.

Conclusion

A combination of religious and cultural beliefs reinforcing traditional patriarchal values has led to the proliferation of a rape culture in India. This rape culture, which includes the misrepresentation by officials of sexual violence against women and blaming of victims for their behaviour or mode of dress, not only encourages violence against women but justifies it. Official responses can not simply be seen as part of electoral politics, but as an escape from all state responsibility towards female citizens. Media coverage of such responses can arguably be seen to create mores for women's molestation ultimately increasing tolerance for violence against women. Thus, strict action should be taken against these leaders for creating fear for women's security, and the media should not cover and broadcast such responses.

Despite an increase in protests against such violence, particularly in the wake of the Delhi Gang Rape, proposals to amend laws to protect victims of rape and sexual assault have largely been disregarded. While continued gender violence indicates that current legislation is failing to protect women, sexual violence continues to be framed in terms of women's sexuality, morality and honour relying upon the dichotomy of moral versus immoral women. These patriarchal responses serve to perpetuate the rape culture and do little to halt continued breaches of Indian women's human rights.

Effective legislation together with better police patrolling and a transformation in social structures are the need of the hour. A specially trained police force should be recruited to conduct patrolling specifically for women's safety. Amendments to social structures are required which could be made possible through an introduction of gender courses at the school level. These courses should highlight gender inequalities and the marginalisation of women in our societies. This will make students aware of these issues from an early age, which will lead to a more tolerant society. This transformation in social structures will lead to a better understanding of and respect for female victims of sexual crimes. These women should be viewed as being empowered through their reporting of such incidences and not merely as poor victims of rape or molestation.

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Peer Support: Reframing the Journey from Lived Experience of Domestic Violence

Dr Lesley Campbell and Claire Gray with Beryl Brogden

In 2011, Aviva (at the time known as Christchurch Women's Refuge) commissioned the Te Awatea Violence Research Centre to assemble an evidence-base to inform the design, development and implementation of a systematic model of specialist peer support for men and women with lived experience of domestic violence. Multiple perspectives were sought during the research project, including contributions from individuals with lived experience of domestic violence, those working within New Zealand's domestic violence sector and people with expertise in delivering specialist peer support services. This article reports on the research project, drawing together the evidence from the literature on peer support alongside findings from interviews and focus groups where participants shared their experiences, views and opinions about peer support within the context of domestic violence.

In 2011, Aviva commissioned the Te Awatea Violence Research Centre to assemble an evidence-base to inform the design, development and implementation of specialist peer support models for men and women who had lived experience of domestic violence. The research comprised two aspects: a review of the literature pertaining to existing models of peer support services, peer support roles and peer support training programmes; and interviews with key stakeholders alongside focus groups with women overcoming domestic violence and with men who have used violence against other family members. Both the literature and the participants interviewed for the research project reported encouraging experiences and outcomes in relation to peer support. The research findings indicate the potential for this intervention to make a significant and positive impact on ameliorating domestic violence in New Zealand.

Thirty individuals participated in focus groups and interviews and shared their experiences, views and opinions about peer support within the domestic violence context. Together with those consulted, a review of the New Zealand and international research, government policy, evaluation reports and the grey literature was undertaken. The purpose of this article is to draw together the evidence from the literature and the research interviews in order to present an argument for the creation of a systematic model of peer support and a peer support specialist training programme appropriate to a domestic violence setting in Canterbury, New Zealand.

Literature Review

The review of the literature involved a systematic search for and review of published and unpublished research on existing models of peer support services, peer support roles and peer support training programmes internationally and in New Zealand. Because peer support is wide-ranging, the literature search covered a range of databases that accessed multi-disciplinary journals and other sources. The literature examined included research and evaluation studies and policy and programme documents. In addition, the review encompassed administrative and service-based data collected by government and non-government agencies.

Social Supports for Those Experiencing Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a serious, avoidable human rights issue that impacts on the lives of many New Zealanders. The term describes physical, sexual, or psychological violence perpetrated by a partner or ex-partner. It has been linked to poor mental health, suicide ideation and suicidal behaviour as well as adverse physical health outcomes (Coker et al., 2000; Hale-Carlsson et al., 1996, Fanslow & Robinson; 2004; Plichta, 1996).

Over the past twenty years service providers and researchers have sought practical solutions to moderate against the negative outcomes for women who experience domestic violence (Goodkind et al., 2003). Research has now established that social support has favourable effects on women's psychological wellbeing across population groups (Collins et al., 1993; Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993). Kaniasty and Norris (1992) argue that perceived social support by women experiencing domestic violence relates more strongly than enacted social support in terms of overall quality of life. In addition, it has been found that women seek out family and friends not only for emotional support to cope with the abuse, but also protection for themselves and their children (Thompson et al, 2000; Krishnan et al., 2001).

Past research indicates that most women disclose their experiences of violence to close family and friends (Goodkind et al., 2003; Krishnan et al., 2001; Thompson et al., 2000). Mitchell and Hodson's (1983) study found that women who had greater numbers of social supports and more empathetic family and friends experienced greater levels of psychological well-being. Women who received tangible support from family and friends have identified this as a key factor in relation to their decision to leave their abusive partners (Donato & Bowker; 1984).

The literature also suggests that the prevalence of domestic violence experienced by women varies according to the amount of support they receive. As the degree of support increases, the likelihood of partners using violence against them diminishes (Baumgartner, 1993). Research studies document that social supports are beneficial and reduce psychological negative outcomes for women who experience domestic violence (Collins et al., 1993; Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993). In a case-controlled study with people who experienced domestic violence and suicidal ideation, Kaslow et al. (1998) found that social support moderated the impact of the violence.

Defining Peer Support

O'Hagan et al. (2010, p.14) describe peer support "as support provided by peers, for peers; or any organised support provided by and for people." Mead, Hilton and Curtis (2001) elaborate on this.

> Peer Support is a system of giving and receiving help founded on key principles of respect, shared responsibility, and mutual agreement of what is helpful... it is about understanding another's situation empathically through the shared experience of emotional and psychological pain... and this relationship presents an excellent framework to explore personal and relational change. (p.135)

Dennis (2003) proposes that peer support evolves and is organised around the rationale underpinning the circumstances for its formation. Peer support has occurred in response to experiences of trauma where people respond to identified needs in others, such as those adjusting to a long-term or chronic disability. Peer support networks have also developed to assist in dealing with the transitional stressors that occur periodically over the life span, for example, in situations when people encounter post-natal depression, teen pregnancy or bereavement. They have also emerged as a means to promote health and wellbeing, for example, in relation to substance abuse or smoking.

Peer support has developed in a number of forms:

- Self-help groups run by volunteers
- Internet online support groups
- Peers offering support via the telephone
- Service user drop-in centres
- Independent peer run organisations
- Peer support within mainstream agencies

Benefits of Peer Support Services

Benefits for recipients of peer support services. The literature identifies numerous advantages for those working with peer support specialists. One of the key benefits is the perceived empathy for the service user's experience (Campbell & Leaver, 2003), which builds a trusting relationship where the service user is not pathologised (Clay, 2005). The peer support specialist provides a credible role model. Mead (2003 p.1) suggests that when the peer support specialist and the service user interact they feel a connection that is a "deep holistic understanding" based on mutual experience and enabling the development of trust. The literature also suggests that peer based relationships may enhance social skills and reduce isolation (Forchuk et al., 2005). This may be particularly helpful for those service users who have been out of their community for a period of time and need support to reintegrate.

Benefits for peer support specialists. Research with peer support specialists indicates that they too receive many benefits from the peer-based relationship. Salzer (1997) noted that peer support specialists gained enhanced self-efficacy and power to combat feelings of stigma often associated with challenging life experiences. Peer employees have also reported heightened levels of hope and self-esteem (Ratzlaff et al., 2006) and an improved quality of life (Armstrong, Korba & Emard, 1995; Mowbray et al., 1998). When positions are paid, the financial rewards can provide the peer support specialist with independence (Mowbray et al., 1998). Both paid and voluntary positions offer skills development, subsequently increasing future employability (Ratzlaff et al., 2006).

Benefits for social service organisations. Peer support also has a number of demonstrated benefits for social service organisations. Peer support may complement existing services by providing an additional resource, thereby enhancing the ability of a sector to address need in the community (Campbell & Leaver, 2003; Christensen & Jacobson, 1994). Research has also highlighted the potential for cost-savings as a result of employing peer support specialists (Solomon, 2004). A number of studies within the addiction and mental health sectors have demonstrated the link between participation in peer support services and a reduction in reliance on costly professional services traditionally associated with these sectors (Humphreys & Moos, 1996; Segal et al., 1998).

Effectiveness and Outcomes from Peer Support

There is a well-established body of research demonstrating that mutual support self-help groups and independent consumer-run peer support programmes reinforce the development of life skills across a variety of health and social circumstances. Studies have found, for example, that self-help groups reduce the use of formal health care services and increase individuals' sense of self-efficacy, social support, ability to cope with stress, and quality of life (Campbell & Leaver, 2003; Solomon, 2004). A review of twenty studies published from 1995 to 2002 found that participants in peer support organisations were satisfied with their involvement, had a decreased involvement in hospital services and experienced improvements in their psychiatric symptoms, quality of life, self-esteem and social functioning (Campbell, 2005). Studies on peer support in mainstream mental health organisations have concluded that although peer support specialists provide services differently from non-consumers, they performed this role adequately (Mowbray et al., 1996; Stoneking & Greenfield, 1991) and outcomes are similar amongst people receiving services from peer or non-peer workers (Chinman et al., 2006; Davidson et al., 2006).

Peer Support for Women Overcoming Domestic Violence

Women attending domestic violence peer support services have reported overwhelmingly positive experiences. Following evaluations of drop-in sessions, self-help and support groups, participants have reported experiencing feelings of greater self-worth, confidence and developing the ability to renegotiate the terms of present and future relationships (Barnes & Abrahams, 2008; Batsleer et al., 2002; Hester & Westmarland, 2005).

Abrahams (2007, p.68) found women identified three main advantages of weekly peer support groups: "information, having fun and then more therapeutic stuff ... building up confidence and self-esteem." She identified two functions of such services, practical support (for example, information and advocacy) and emotional support. Laing et al. (2010) reported that, for the participants in their study, life skills gained in peer support groups ameliorated the damaging psychological effects of abuse. In a later study, Abrahams (2010) highlighted the apprehension many women feel seeking assistance from those in the medical profession and statutory agencies. This stemmed from a concern that misinterpretation by professionals could impact on the outcome of legal proceedings related to access and custody of their children. Instead the women reported a preference to draw on less formal supports, such as peer support, to rebuild their lives.

Peer Support for Men who use Violence Against Partners

Following his review of international programme evaluations and research literature, Robertson (1999, p.68) argued that, "changing the behaviour of batterers is difficult". This perspective is consistent with the findings of the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Domestic Violence and the Family (1996), which found that those who perpetrate domestic violence are seldom self-motivated to change their abusive behaviours. Myers (1995) argues this is due to the fact that they receive instantaneous positive-reinforcement for their violence from such actions as chores done, compliance and increased sexual availability. He proposes that negative consequences for those who perpetrate domestic violence are rare and if they do occur, it is often well after the violent incident. Over the longer term, the rewards from controlling their partners, for those who perpetrate violence, may outweigh any incentive to stop (Lerman, 1992).

Within the context of peer support, the literature notes that interaction with peers can either positively or negatively influence behaviour. Schwartz and DeKeseredy (2000) argued that men learn how to use intimate partner violence through contact with their peers and this, they contend, is a powerful determinant of intimate partner violence. It appears that such peer interaction offers a context in which role modelling and training endorse intimate partner violence as a way of enforcing patriarchy (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2002; Raphael, 2001).

Point Research Limited's (2010) research on help giving and receiving behaviours within New Zealand's domestic violence sector also found that those who use domestic violence are heavily influenced by the attitudes of those around them. While the research noted that a "climate of tolerance ... where violence was seen as 'normal,' or where there were few or no dissenting voices about their violent behaviour" led to violent behaviours persisting, they also found the reverse to be true: a context in which there was a low tolerance for violence was equally influential in initiating and maintaining a non-violent lifestyle,

especially if this was expressed by those who had overcome violence (Point Research, 2010 p.36). Similarly a project study carried out in the United Kingdom noted the correlation between positive change and the maintenance of networks of peers where violence was not condoned (Hester et al., 2006).

Methodology

The review of the relevant international and national literature formed the secondary data for this project. In order to provide a local context within which to situate this literature, primary data was gathered through face-to-face interviews and focus groups where participants were asked about their experiences and opinions concerning peer support within the domestic violence sector. Participants represented different roles across the spectrum of communities of interest in the creation of specialist peer support services. The research proposal was presented to the Social Science Human Ethics Committee of the University of Canterbury and approval gained to contact informants and collect the data that informed this study.

Both the focus groups and the interviews began by introducing the purpose of gathering the data and how the information would be used. Three focus groups were conducted during early December 2011. Two groups comprised women overcoming domestic violence and were co-facilitated by a member of the research team and an Aviva staff member. The third focus group was with men who had used violence against family members. This was co-facilitated by a member of the research team and a member of staff from He Waka Tapu (a provider of men's programmes addressing violent behaviour against women). Participants for the focus groups were recruited from existing clients of Aviva and He Waka Tapu.

A structured interview schedule was used to guide the focus group interviews, which included topics of interest and associated questions. Each topic was described to the focus group members followed by the questions in each section. The duration of the focus groups was between two-and-a-half and three hours, and these were recorded with participant's permission.

Five structured face-to-face interviews were undertaken during December 2011 and January 2012. The interviews were conducted with informants well positioned to represent the views of the various roles within the domestic violence sector: policy and quality assurance, police, and providers of mandated and accredited Family Court programmes for men and women. The interview questions were developed to elicit information about topics that pertain to the various elements associated with design and implementation of the Specialist Peer Support Services. Each informant interviewed was asked the same questions and in the same order. All but one of these interviews was recorded. Detailed notes were taken in the interview where the participant declined permission for audio recording.

Results

Information from the focus groups and individual interviews was coded, by the lead researcher, into thematically orientated categories. The following key themes emerged from the research.

- Enhanced acceptance, empathy and respect
- Elevated level of understanding about lived experience of domestic violence that enabled a unique sense of connection
- Provision of support that is holistic in nature and based on experiential evidence of what works
- Positive influence that motivates and empowers people in transformational change
- Enhanced personal resilience and resourcefulness
- Role modelling
- Enhanced access to hard-to-reach groups

The Views and Opinions of Women Overcoming Domestic Violence

The focus group participants described in some detail the unique qualities of support given and received by peers. They noted that the relationship they had with peers provided a connection and depth of understanding that was quite different from those without lived experience of domestic violence. This type of connection brought a "sense of not being alone," a "sense of belonging" and a sense of peace to their lives: "I could go to sleep at night knowing I was not on my own."

Moreover, the level of understanding evident in peer relationships held a different quality to the support offered by professionals, family members or friends without lived experience of domestic violence. The women noted that other people, who did not have lived experience of domestic violence, were able to sympathise but not really understand. This level of understanding meant that the women had one place they could be without having to explain and rationalise their experiences of entering, remaining or leaving abusive relationships. One participant explained:

> There is a universal knowing about what I had been through, how I felt … I did not have to explain and they knew what I was talking about.

In addition, the trust inherent in the peer relationship appeared to provide an environment in which the women could share their experiences in their entirety.

The women noted that one of the strategies used by those who use domestic violence to keep them in the relationship and minimise their independence was "to break down my competence." Over time such strategies resulted in their experiencing enduring "feelings of worthlessness" and "self-doubt." They described these feelings and thoughts as a significant barrier to being able to make any decisions about their future or feeling confident enough to explore the possibility of leading an independent life free from domestic violence. The emotional support provided by peers, however, enabled the women to work through such barriers and begin to feel they were "worth something" and "important."

Interacting with peers provided many of the participants with a picture of "me at the other end [of this journey]." Working with women who were further down the path of overcoming domestic violence motivated change and the achievement of life goals.

> I looked at their success … saw how life could carry on … how they had moved on … Looking at them and seeing that they had their own life again … had a job … had moved on … her success gave me the motivation to do it and come out the other side.

Almost all the participants recalled periods in their journey when they had lost their way and were faced with hurdles that they did not know how to surmount. Working with someone who, because of their lived experience, could provide examples of the "what works" steps they had taken was described as being very helpful. Furthermore, the participants stated that this evidence-based, experiential assistance provided the confidence they needed to take the next step as they were secure in the knowledge that such strategies had been tried previously and were effective.

The Views and Opinions of Men who have Overcome Domestic Violence

The men who participated in the focus group were overwhelmingly in agreement that the most effective support they received during their journey away from domestic violence was that provided by fellow participants and one of the facilitators leading a Family Court accredited stopping violence programme. Te Whariki Whakamana is a fifteen week open group for Maori males aged 18 and over designed to take the participants on a personal journey in a group setting with the goal of stopping violence and abuse against others in their relationships. For the majority of men who had used violence against family members, this was the only type of support they received.

The group process provided several key drivers for setting these men on their journey away from domestic violence. Listening to others recount similar experiences and problems was identified as an incentive to recognise, acknowledge and take ownership of their own issues. Furthermore, having others who really listen, who were receptive and who share like experiences gave the men the confidence to communicate their experiences of domestic violence in an open and honest manner. Participants revealed that their ability to have meaningful and truthful conversations about their role in, and experiences of, domestic violence was due to the fact that "everybody's been there, done that and are trying to deal with it themselves". Witnessing the transformational changes of others in the group who described, "living a great life without domestic violence" provided a sense of hope and certainty about their ability to successfully make the journey away from domestic violence.

The focus group participants noted a service gap following completion of Family Court mandated stopping violence programmes that could be filled by a peer support service. They were adamant that such a service would increase the long-term effectiveness of mandated stopping violence programmes. For example, they stated that post-programme some men reverted back to former violent behaviours: a situation largely brought about by not having a forum where men could continue to talk in a safe place. Rather than repeating another programme akin to one that they had just completed, they envisaged this post-programme service as one that enabled connecting and talking with trusted peers.

Having previously accessed a range of services designed to assist them on their journey towards a violence-free life, the men were in a good position to describe the unique qualities of services delivered by individuals with experience of domestic violence and those without. For many, services delivered by those without the experience of overcoming domestic violence had not been effective in bringing about positive change. In part, this ineffectiveness was due to their feelings of shame about their upbringing within a household where domestic violence was the norm, as well as their violent behaviour within their own family homes. These feelings seemed to form a barrier to their communicating in an open manner. In comparison, the men stated that working alongside people they identified with made them "comfortable" and gave them the confidence to begin the process of overcoming the shame they associated with their violent behaviour, forgiving others and themselves for past behaviours and practising more appropriate ways of expressing their anger.

Professionals' Observations on Peer Support and Domestic Violence

Participants spoke positively of the women's refuge volunteering movement, commenting that "women were drawn to it because of their own experience ... (they'd) come through it and wanted to give back". Those who described their observations of peer support within the women's refuge volunteering model also noted the conditions that ensured its success and the challenges faced. In relation to the former, they noted the requirement for volunteers "to be well educated around the issues," the need for a range of organisational infrastructure support mechanisms such as "supervision ... (and) the availability of debriefing sessions" and "a clear mandate about what the role was."

Those who had observed the mechanism of mutual support operating in Family Court accredited education programmes noted that the women "bonded quickly, took each other's phone numbers, met outside the group and visited each other's homes." In relation to the peer support mechanism operating in Family Court mandated programmes for men, participants noted that the men engaged and sustained change when they interacted with others who were further along the path of change. Some described this relationship as "aunty-ing," or "uncle-ing" and noted examples where men supported each other for some years after attending a mandated Family Court programme.

All participants had observed and experienced elements of peer support operating both historically and currently within the domestic violence sector. While each identified a range of challenges associated with the peer support mechanism of service provision – challenges "that needed to be thought through clearly" during the service design phase, overall the professionals interviewed believed that a specialist peer support service had the potential to add considerable value and enhance the effectiveness of services currently delivered by other professional groups within the domestic violence sector.

Conclusion

Despite this research project having reached its aims, there are some limitations. The literature review was not an exhaustive review of all available data sources, as this was not achieved in the project time frame. There were also limitations presented by the location of the interviews and focus groups. Due to time and financial constraints these were carried out in Canterbury utilising a small population sample. For this reason some caution needs to be taken when considering the findings in relation to other jurisdictions.

While formalised domestic violence peer support services for men, women and children operate internationally with beneficial results, the systematic application of this model within the domestic violence sector would be innovative in New Zealand. Despite this observation, those consulted related past and current instances of its application, in a less structured manner, across a range of domestic violence contexts, for example the women's refuge volunteering movement and within the Family Court mandated and accredited programmes respectively for men and women. Participants reported first-hand experiences of men and women with lived experience working from a zero-tolerance-for-violence perspective, assisting peers engage with and maintain transformational change in their lives.

Both the literature and the qualitative data clearly articulate the benefits of peer support, however, there are also challenges to be surmounted. Securing the mandate of stakeholders, obtaining resources, ensuring the unique qualities of peer support are not submerged by the dominant perspectives of other professional groups and addressing concerns about the ability of those with lived experience to deliver professional and ethically sound services, are but a few of the challenges noted in the literature and by those consulted. Such challenges can be managed, we suggest, by clearly articulating the, purpose, values, and business processes of peer support, engaging with stakeholders and implementing performance management processes for the peer support specialists. The findings from both the literature review and those consulted, show that people with lived experience of domestic violence can offer huge benefits to their peers, their families and to the organisations and sector within which they operate. Such findings provide a promising foundation upon which to launch a more systematic domestic violence peer support specialist service.

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On Violence and Identity: Three Vignettes

Dr Aditya Malik

This essay looks at the question of violence beyond the commonplace notion of physical conflict and abuse. It looks at violence from the perspective of *identity* drawing a distinction between *identity* and *self*. Identity is defined in terms of particular signifiers such as ethnicity, religious affiliation, nationality, profession, and gender; and self in terms of that which can be considered to be beyond particular signifiers, as the being of human being that is neither definable nor limited to particulars. In this essay it is argued that the source of violence lies in a mistaken understanding of human subjectivity solely in terms of particular signifiers that ultimately are limiting and exclusionary rather than with self that is not limited but is inclusive in scope providing a common ground for humanity. Furthermore, the notion of identity is deconstructed by looking at it as (a) a conversation and (b) non-existent. It is also suggested that nationhood and citizenship as pervasive global and modern modes of identity are hegemonic and exclusionary in their vision and practice.

If they see breasts and long hair coming,
They call it woman,
If beard and whiskers,
They call it man:
But, look,
The self that hovers in-between is neither man
Nor woman,
O Ramanatha!
Devara Dasimayya (tenth century CE)[1]

The composer of this short verse belonged to a community of poet-saints from southern India. Between the tenth and twelfth centuries these poets – both women and men – composed collections of short, inspirational poems that expressed a personal, intimate relationship to a deity that they had chosen to devote themselves to. In doing so they radically questioned several entrenched beliefs and practices of the society in which they lived: the inequalities and hierarchies of caste and gender, the imbalance of wealth and power, the blind adherence to scripture and ritual, and the mediation of religious experience through organised priesthood. Religious experience as the unmediated, direct union of the human and divine, was obtainable – they asserted – by anyone, regardless of their social status, education, gender or age. While the movement these poets-saints initiated had a strong religious component, it was, at the same time, a revolutionary basis for social change that was uncompromisingly critical of our assumptions – whether personal or social – with regard to what we in modern parlance call identity. For example, in the poem above, the poet speaks of a "self" that "hovers in-between", being neither male nor female; a self that is not contained by the obvious categories of "man" and "woman" that are so familiar to us in our everyday transactions. Similarly, other poems point to a self that is not limited by social representations and modes of operation whether given by religious practice or social status. The poet-saints criticised our habitual and customary ways of identifying ourselves through our professional affiliations, social roles, family lineage, religious ritual, and so on. These ways of identifying and representing ourselves, the poets claimed, were restrictive, constraining, and limiting, resulting in deadening positions that created unnecessary boundaries between human beings, but also between human beings and God.

What is this notion of selfhood that goes beyond our everyday, commonplace representations of self that are informed by our ethnicity, religious affiliation, nationality, occupation, and even gender? Is it possible for us to understand or even appreciate what is meant here? Moreover, is it possible that the very notion of identity informed (and constrained) by various modes of social representation is the source of violence and conflict? Following on from the ideas proposed by the poet-saints, in this essay I suggest that conflict and violence come into existence because of pervasive, yet mistaken notions of self as being clearly definable, fixed, and contained by what we regard to be our identity. In order to pursue this idea I draw a distinction between self and identity. Whereas self,[2] in the sense I am using it, is not limited by identifiable features given by the general parameters of space, time, and society, identity is specific to space, time, and society. Broadly speaking then identity is *identifiable* through the signifiers of particular social and historical conditions; self, on the other hand, can be described through the metaphor of context, that is, a framework within or inside of which the specific expressions of identity are created, manifested, formed, and played out. While a context may provide meaning to its content it is not the same as the latter. Along the lines of the poem above, self is not identifiable, quantifiable, or definable. It is in-between, neither here nor there, neither this nor that. It transcends specificity. Any definition of self would therefore be limiting.

Nevertheless, this unidentifiable, unquantifiable, context is an essential aspect of being human. In fact, it is what constitutes the *being* of human being.[3] Yet, in our discussions of social, religious, national, ethnic and other forms of identity there is rarely any reference to what it means to be a human *being*. What is the being of human being? If we claim that all people across cultural, political, economic and other boundaries are human beings regardless of their identification with those particular formations, then surely we need to understand what this means. Moreover, if we claim that all people are human beings then we are also stating that there is a *common ground* that is not limited in its potential to be socially and politically inclusive. In this essay I will present three brief reflections that explore the distinction between self and identity while examining the connection between identity and violence.[4] My intention is to deconstruct the notion of identity through different approaches while showing that identity obscures the possibility of a common ground of being human, thus leading to various manifestations of violence.[5] In the first reflection I propose that identity is a *conversation*; in the second that it is *non-existent*. In the third and final section I move from examining identity and violence in more general terms, to exploring

1 Translated Ramanujan, 1973, p. 92.

2 It needs to be noted that there are multiple uses of term self, depending on academic discipline. I am using self in a philosophical sense as co-terminus with the ontological category of *being*.

3 Several recent philosophers, notably Martin Heidegger (1962), Christopher Macann (2007), Jean-Paul Sartre (1943), and others have raised the question of Being, as the central question of philosophy.

4 These reflections are necessarily fragmentary and speculative given the length of this essay. They point to a set of questions, rather than providing definitive conclusions.

5 I am looking beyond the commonplace understanding of violence as a purely physical act: Inequality, injustice, the vastly imbalanced distribution of wealth and resources, are all forms of insidious violence that pervade human society, let alone the unprecedented momentum at which other non-human species are being driven to extinction.

a specific articulation of identity, namely nationhood and citizenship. Here I propose that nationhood and citizenship coupled with corporate power have become dominant modes of identity for the vast majority of people, and yet, I argue that they have become *dysfunctional* as ways of operating in a shifting global context.[6]

Identity as Conversation

There are a variety of explanations for the causes and sources of violence – social inequality, racial and religious prejudice, political conspiracy, power and domination, even species determined disposition. As mentioned above, in this essay I will approach the question of violence from the perspective of identity. Is it possible to speak of violence without evoking the complex subject of identity? Yet, the question of identity is so intricate, and at the same time so relentlessly debated that we risk becoming vague, perhaps even hollow when we discuss it. While it seems that every small movement of the intellectual and political world is writ large with the issue of identity, what we mean by this seems to be adrift, receding out of sight with each renewed attempt to assert something dependable and defensible. This is not to say that people all over the globe do not use *identity* to compare themselves to others, through national, ethnic, religious and racial narratives, configurations of gender, occupation, physical appearance, kinship, ancestry, political affiliation and more. And yet, the more precisely we direct our scrutiny, the more identity seems to become a mirage-like vapour, a substance that isn't really there, but whose existence we seem to worship most keenly, with perilous consequences. This may not seem obvious at first, since the concreteness of identity presses on us in such familiar and evident ways that it would appear to merit no further inspection. Indeed, the very questioning of the staunch existence of identity would in many situations be an annoying irritant worthy of a place only in the trash-can of ideas. Could it be that our unshakable trust in something that scatters upon stricter examination – in something that has a make-believe material core – is the source of violence?

Let me explain what I mean. Of course identity does have an existence, in the sense that we have organised our existences around some notion of it. We have classified ourselves into nations, races, tribes, ethnicities, religions, political and economic affiliations, and a species in a world of other non-human species. Yet, if we observe any period of time, these classifications are shifting, their meaning changes, they come and go out of existence. They are ephemeral and fluid, yet we relate to them as being rigid and immovable. The fact that the classifications around which identity is based are malleable should give us pause for thought. Why is this so? And, why even though the fluctuating nature of identity is plainly observable, do we continue to cling to the notion that it is something unchanging, an essence of sorts without which our very own existence would be cancelled? There is a paradox here to say the very least. A paradox, I think, worthwhile of investigation. While historical, economic, political, social, educational, and environmental explanations abound regarding the cause for the creation, change and dissolution of identity, the conditions for the possibility of such movement are not fully explored. The conditions for the possibility of identity being fluid, I propose here, lie in the nature of identity being a *conversation*.

What do I mean by conversation? In its basic units, conversation involves a speaker and a listener, with the open-ended possibility of a reversal of roles: the speaker may become listener and vice versa. A conversation may happen in the immediate present or it may take place over a longer period of time encompassing decades or even hundreds of years. It may involve two people or it may involve entire societies. When a conversation takes place in the immediate *spoken* present, the words that are uttered contain both sound and meaning. The meaning is carried, so to speak, through the material signifier of sound. Yet, the material signifier of sound riding on a wave of air, as it were, has only a brief, limited material existence. A conversation of this kind is not only ephemeral in its subject matter, which shifts and twists as two people figure their way through a given theme, but also in its primary carrier of sound propelled through air. A conversation, may, of course, persist beyond the limits of the immediate spoken present, receding into the past while being impelled forward into the future. For this to happen, means other than the spoken word are required. The transmission of knowledge through the written word and built spaces and other instruments stretches a conversation through time, through material signifiers that persist beyond the duration of sound waves created through speaking. However, even in its temporal extension, a conversation remains malleable, fluid and even ephemeral since whatever is the subject matter of the conversation is continuously being grappled with or negotiated. Thus if identity is also a conversation, as I am proposing, then it too must be fluid, malleable and transient, having no real or lasting ground. Identity as conversation arises and disappears like the acoustic signals of the spoken word in a conversation. And, yet we treat our personal, social and national identities as being rigid, concrete, and permanent. Why is it that we consider the question of identity in such concrete terms even though on observation we find it is continuously changing and ephemeral? This leads to the next section in which I examine the question of our subjectivity or self as distinct from our identity.

Identity as Non-Existent

Amartya Sen (2006) describes identity as two-faced: "A sense of identity can be a source not merely of pride and joy, but also strength and confidence…And yet identity can also kill – and kill with abandon" (p. 1). The drawback with identity lies not in having one, but in averring that our identities are singular, as Sen's counter portrayal of himself shows: "I can be, at the same time, an Asian, and Indian citizen, a Bengali with Bangladeshi ancestry, an American or British resident, an economist, a dabbler in philosophy, an author, a Sanskritist, a strong believer in secularism and democracy, a man, a feminist, a heterosexual, a defender of gay and lesbian rights, with a non-religious lifestyle, from a Hindu background, a non-Brahmin, a nonbeliever in an afterlife…" (Sen, 2006 p,19). Rather than cheer the singular and skeletal, the call here is for the lushly plural in which identity is made up of sundry values and membership to assorted groups.

But even this sumptuous, many-sided account – which could easily be applicable to the situation of many individuals – *assumes* the existence of something tangible. Thus, the *fact of identity* is never questioned. To frame things in another way: the *subjectivity* of the person, or individual, who asserts the existence of an identity – whether singular or plural – is never rigorously examined. To engage in the latter sort of enquiry, and to perhaps find that the ground underneath all our claims to identity is uncertain, shaky, even non-existent is tantamount to a kind of intellectual and political profanation. But I am suggesting here that unless we conduct an enquiry of this kind, that, in a sense, literally alters and transforms our view of our own subjectivity as human beings, we will continue to generate age-old and new forms of conflict, divisiveness and violence. Put another way, our own subjectivity is like the huge mass of an iceberg that is submerged or hidden from our view, and yet it is this mass, and not just the visible tip above the surface that determines the nature of the iceberg. We could compare this again to the nature of a conversation: to that which is the unsaid, or hidden in a conversation. While the unsaid remains implicit, masked behind the words that are being spoken and heard by our senses, it has a profound impact on the flow and outcome of a conversation. It is the unsaid that we tune into when trying to ascertain the authenticity or trueness of a person's communication or when we come away from a conversation with a clear sense of what a person was trying to get across without actually putting their intention in a clear and straightforward manner. Our social and political lives are perpetually caught up in determining what our friends, family, colleagues, superiors and political leaders *really* meant when they said "x". Our sensitivity to the real meaning of a conversation depends largely on how we have trained ourselves to *listen* to what lies beyond the explicitness of spoken words. Listening we could, therefore, state is the necessary condition or background against which spoken conversations acquire meaning. In the commonplace view,

6 Our inability to nurture ourselves and our environment while being masterful at the invention of weapons designed to exterminate entire populations or financial structures that privilege and validate the severely disproportionate accumulation of wealth, will most likely be viewed by future generations – if there are to be any – as an age of darkness in which human beings lacked a fundamental appreciation of themselves and the world they lived in.

however, listening occupies a diminished status to the more active, explicit activity of speaking perhaps because the latter is more tangible, observable, and knowable, than the former which remains hidden, implicit, and largely unknowable, unless it is revealed through a process of self-reflection. Yet without this hidden, veiled, and apparently (though not actually) dormant, passive capacity to listen, conversation and communication becomes meaningless, a jumble of acoustic signals.

Our own subjectivity, as the basis of the claim to identity, thus remains concealed even while we assert the reality of the latter. Why is it so? Why does the question of our own subjectivity remain hidden? As I stated in the opening section, we could say that our subjectivity involves a mistaken notion or *misrecognition* with regard to the nature of *self* or *being*.[7] What do I mean by misrecognition and what does this have to do with conflict and violence? Misrecognition or *doxa,* as the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (as cited in King, 2007) calls it, involves

> the coincidence of the objective structures and the internalised structures which provides the illusion of immediate understanding characteristic of practical experience of the familiar universe, and which at the same time excludes from that experience any enquiry as to its own conditions of possibility (p.229).

Whereas the Greek term *doxa,* as outlined by Bourdieu, can be applied to a broad series of social circumstances, in Indian speculative thought the idea of misrecognition is directed toward our understanding of self or being. This is considered the primary misrecognition. The Sanskrit term used here is *avidya* which means literally means non-knowledge or as it often translated *ignorance*. Ignorance not with regard to our capacity to accumulate information about the world, but with regard to our own subjectivity shaped through the prism of an individual, isolated identity.

In order to initiate this enquiry we must examine the nature of thought itself. By thought I mean the context in which thinking and thoughts arise. It is in thought and in language that the very notion of a separate self as indicated by "I" or "me" comes into existence. Without thought or language there is no possibility of the notion of myself. But the very possibility of a self that I claim as being "mine" is predicated on the dual notion of the existence of something that is *not* I, that is, on the notion of their being *another* self. Thought and language in the linear form mostly encountered, is foundationally *dual*, creating a series of dichotomous opposites of which self and other become the basis for all conversations about identity. The fundamental experience of *being-in-the-world* for most human beings is experienced in terms of duality – of being separate from other human beings, and from other creatures that are deemed non-human, and therefore often also devoid of *beingness*. This constant, everyday experience of disconnection or *separation* is so deeply pervasive that it is rarely questioned. That this may be one of our most mysterious yet critical assumptions as human beings is revealed only in moments of either great rapture or great calamity. Our normal, ordinary, social life is geared toward skilfully veiling a revelation of this magnitude. In fact, for the paradigm of survival, inside of which so much of our competitive nature as a species has developed, any enquiry into which the assumption, indeed unshakable *belief*, of the separateness of individuals, cultures, religions, societies, nations, human beings from their environment and so on, is to be considered threatening and dangerous. Any possibility that the dichotomous system of dualities in which we supposedly thrive may, in fact, be the root cause of the imminent collapse of financial, political, environmental arrangements, is quickly suppressed, denied, or marginalized. Why is this? Because to reveal something like this would be to unearth the profound *unworkability* of our current way of operating in the world. So what does it mean to state "identity is non-existent"? This is not to say that we do not have identities or that we do not need identities to operate in the world. What it means is that once the source of identity is recognised as arising out of the dual nature of thought, and the existence and creation of the notion of I as separate to you, then separateness and disconnection cease to be the primary mode of *being-in-the-world*. In fact, what follows is the realisation that there is a fundamental connection and interdependence between oneself and other human beings, the environment, and non-human creatures.

Nationhood and Citizenship

In this next section I will examine a particular expression of identity, one that is essential to the modern organisation of societies and communities, nationhood and citizenship. My proposition is that the concepts and practices surrounding citizenship and nationhood are impoverished modes for conceptualising and practicing human identity in the twenty-first century. At best they seem to fulfil a certain initial purpose of emancipation and empowerment but paradoxically they are also the source of tremendous disempowerment, conflict and misunderstanding on a global, perhaps heretofore, unprecedented scale. I refer here to the extraordinary magnitude of violence and war that have been waged by *secular*, non-religious, democratic nation states against each other not only in two world wars, but countless other regional conflicts. The unmatched displacement of human populations because of war and the exploitation of resources; the unmitigated abuse of natural resources on the basis of what is called scientific and technological progress; the unparalleled accelerated extinction of entire species; the list goes on.

Citizenship and nationhood are disempowering precisely because, I argue, they become essentialising, ontological categories, which then in the hands of state power and nationalistic ideologies become what can be termed a "totalising discourse". In other words these categories begin to occupy the spaces of human identity in dominant, essentialising ways that marginalise alternate ways of both conceptualising, practising and experiencing what it means to be human. Thus the possibility of a common ground of being human gets suppressed or relegated to spaces that are not heard or even worse are objectified through academic disciplines, corporate and political discourse, and are therefore lost.

The question that I am posing is whether there is a possibility of being human beyond citizenship and nationhood in the twenty-first century? As a way of approaching this question I will begin by explaining what I mean by beyond. Homi Bhabha (1994) in his book *The Location of Culture* has pointed out that we live in a historical moment of "posts": post-colonial, post-modern, post-independence, post-feminist, etcetera. The post suggests both a historical "after" and a conceptual "after". But it can also represent as Bhabha and also the late Chicago scholar of South Asian Languages and Literature whose translations of devotional poetry have been cited above, A. K. Ramanujan suggested, the hyphen in the post: the in-between space, the bridge or to use a popular term, the *hybrid*. To talk about that which is beyond can also mean to talk about that which is in-between, that which is neither here nor there, neither this nor that, of a "self that hovers in-between" as the poem at the beginning of this essay states. It is simultaneously to talk about the margins and the marginalised, the cracks and interstices of culture wherein the question of human identity stands on uncertain, tenuous, fragile ground in comparison to the seemingly solid and massive edifices of citizenship and nationhood and the many repositories of power that they engender. But it is in these cracks or in-between spaces that Bhabha (1994) suggests culture itself gets created and engendered:

> The beyond is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past…we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion… These 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies for selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself (p.1 ff.).

There are and have been several voices, for example, within South Asia/India (and elsewhere) that have called for less bounded, permeable, in-between, perhaps even boundary-less conceptions of *human being* – not primarily one focussed on South Asian or Indian identity – indeed

7 Self as I pointed out at the beginning of the chapter, is the unquantifiable, undefinable point of reference (or non-reference) or context for *being* human leading to the relativisation or even dissolution of our identification with particular formulations of identity.

even the Greek conception of citizenship as a practice of responsibility and rights revolved around becoming fully human. But this latter case too, like its contemporary re-workings was exclusionary in its scope, creating a hierarchy between citizens of different orders within the Greek polis or city-state and non-citizens including slaves and women. But these voices, I suggest, are lost or marginalised in the cementation of the nation state and its territorial claims. There is, I would like to suggest, a process of amnesia that operates here by means of which that which is initially intentionally constructed, adopted or invented is displaced by a process of forgetting that transforms the constructed into that which is given, that which is fundamental and that which becomes an ontological *a priori* category that suppresses other possibilities of being human. This process of forgetting the invented nature of nation, and citizenship as an essential category with regard to the question of identity within nationhood, and, two, in the sense of forgetting voices that have proposed and continue to propose alternative visions and perspectives of the question of human identity. These voices are allowed to operate at best at the fringes of this totalising nationalistic discourse that has spread over the globe like a highly effective, supremely tenacious virus. They are allowed to exist at best in literature, poetry and some corners of religion that itself is marginalised in the modern secular state. At best they become voices that are resurrected at conferences and in academic works that through a process of objectification takes the discomfort, unease and challenge out of those voices.

Citizenship and nationhood in the South Asian or rather Indian context (and elsewhere in the colonised world) initially emerged as a process of democratisation involving resistance against British imperialism. The development of democracy in India as a project of resistance against the Empire was adopted as a strategy or form of empowerment and emancipation. But the very democratic state that set out to be emancipatory becomes an instrument of disempowerment and dominance through a process of transformation by which the constructed and created becomes the given and the ontological. Independence from colonial rule itself becomes paradoxical and dualistic in the sense that, once established, the state or its members that sought freedom from colonial oppression, become instruments of oppression within the territorial and sovereign boundaries of nation state particularly towards those minority groups seeking a mandate for social justice, equality and freedom. An example of what I mean here is to be found in the political situation in India today: in over 200 of the some 600 districts that make up the 28 states and 7 union territories there is a so-called "Maoist" insurgency. We are talking here of one third of the administrative units of India being under constant violent uprising and rebellion driven by Marxist ideologies. This insurgency has been called the most serious internal threat to the country since India became independent in 1947. But who exactly are these so-called "Maoist" rebels? While some leaders of these groups belong to the Marxist intelligentsia being intellectually conversant with Marxist/Communist thought and practice, the majority of people involved in the uprising belong to tribal communities living in Central and Eastern India who live in extreme, abject poverty and whose resources have been exploited by instruments of state power, urban populations and multi-national corporations. The ancestral lands belonging to these communities – mostly forests and mountainous areas are rich in minerals including uranium, gold, and particularly bauxite that is used to extract aluminium. A case in point being a United Kingdom based mining company, ironically called Vedanta, that sought to gain mining rights to some of world's largest bauxite reserves in the hills where these tribal communities live. We are talking here of a US$ four trillion business venture, approximately the size of India's current GDP (at PPP rates). The enormous imbalance of power and resources reflect a true-life version of the plot of the recent James Cameron blockbuster movie *Avatar*. Paradoxically, the resistance movement against imperial powers that were considered exploitative and oppressive, then replicates and reproduces the very same forms of oppression in a new context of post-colonial independence, democracy, nation state, and citizenship with new forms of justification and legitimation. Thus nationhood and citizenship as pervasive forms of social and political identity become an example of identity that creates a condition of separateness on an enormous scale with disturbing consequences.

Concluding Reflections: Self and World

J. Krishnamurti (1972) reverses the outward gaze through which we are constantly trying to fix the world:

> The society *is* ourselves, the world is ourselves, the world is not different from us. What we are we have made the world because we are confused, we are ambitious, we are greedy, competitive, brutal and violent. It seems to me that our responsibility is to understand ourselves first, because *we are* the world (p. 32).

What does the statement "we are the world" mean? Most immediately this would imply that there is no difference between 'us' and the 'world out there.' There is a relationship of equivalence, so to speak, between oneself and the world. But if there is no separation between oneself and the world then the question arises what is the self, since self is ordinarily based on the distinction or separation between self and non-self. Self and world would, in this statement, cease to exist as distinct categories. This is one dimension of the meaning of the statement. However, the statement also implies that the existing problems in the world such as violence, inequality, environmental disaster, etc. are the direct result of *who we are* as human beings: competitive, ruthless, violent, greedy, unfair and so on. In other words the problem is not out there as we often assume, but lies with us and within us. Thus a transformation in our understanding of our own subjectivity as human *beings* would also result in a revolutionary transformation of how we organise ourselves socially financially, and politically.

The current state of crisis in the world urges us to reconsider, rethink and re-experience what it means to be human. The answer to this question – if there can be an answer at all – cannot be or become an ontological given. It must remain tenuous, fragile and uncertain in the present for it to be creative and explorative. It is from this in-between space where boundaries meet and merge that the present as a function of a created future can begin its arrival in our everyday world. As Martin Heidegger (as cited in Bhabha, 1994) states, "a boundary is not that at which something stops, but as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing" (p.1). In this essay I have thus suggested that the notion of identity as a fixed, bounded category that occupies our understanding of what it means to be human in a dominant manner is both mistaken, and also the source of different manifestations of violence. In order to deconstruct the category of identity, I have suggested that it is both a *conversation* and *non-existent*. As a conversation, I have indicated that, identity is shifting, fluid, transient and ephemeral having no reality beyond its arising and disappearing like the spoken word at any given moment in time. It is non-existent in the sense that once a distinction is drawn between self or being and identity then the latter ceases to occupy the primacy of place in terms of the *being* of human being. Finally, I have suggested that the categories of nationhood and citizenship as universally prevalent forms of identity are exclusive and divisive while claiming an ontological status that in fact obscures the possibility of a common ground of human being.

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Cultures of Violence vs. Individual Pathology: A Comparative Perspective on the Global Response to Gender-Based Violence

A Te Awatea Seminar presented by Dr Hillary Haldane, Wednesday 15 May 2013

During the latter half of 2012 and the beginning of 2013, the international media paid an unprecedented level of attention to the problem of violence against women. Cases of violence against women in India, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Brazil, and the United States were highlighted and the media attention brought widespread public awareness to the issues.

Unfortunately, some scholars have argued that this increased attention may have done more harm than good, particularly concerning the way that cases of violence in Europe, Canada/United States, and Australia/New Zealand are presented as acts carried out by individuals suffering from mental disorders, and perpetrators in non-Western countries or cultures are guided by traditional (read backward) belief systems.

In this talk Dr Haldane offered two cases to highlight why such binary thinking is problematic: the gang rape of a woman in Delhi, India and a similar attack on a woman in Ohio, United States. In the first case, the Western media presented the public with the idea that culture was to blame, a patriarchal culture that devalues women and holds them back from their human rights. The United States reporting of an alleged rape in its own backyard placed the blame squarely on the problematic behavior of a few youth, with some reports even going so far as to question what the victim was doing at the party in the first place. Yet the two cases, stripped away of ethnocentrism and cultural relativity, are crudely similar: a group of young men acted in concert to violate, humiliate, and physically harm a helpless young woman. Dr Haldane posed the question: given the extraordinarily high rates of violence cross-culturally, why do we fail to see the problem in its totality, and why do we insist on viewing the problem so differently depending on where the violence takes place?

Dr Haldane recounted how she and her colleagues Madelaine Adelman and Jennifer Wies have been working on a theoretical framework positioning culture as a resource in the effort to end abuse. Although women are abused everywhere, how they experience the abuse, what constitutes the abuse, and how people respond to the abuse is local and culturally-specific and it is critical, therefore, that each case is approached from a local perspective. She pointed out that there is no-culture free space when we are discussing humans and we should not shy away from the local cultural dynamics that hold within them the power to shift thinking. Local efforts to end violence feed into our global understanding of abuse, and these local efforts do not merely replicate powerful Western models. Comparison within countries, of one village to the next, can prove useful for identifying the ways local values are mobilised against violence, and could be productive for finding common ground. This could be similarly useful for breaking down the binary that blames Indian culture for rape in one case, and bad apples in another. It might allow us to shift our thinking away from us and them, to one of we. Treating a case of rape as a cultural act in one context, and behaviour exhibited by a madman in another, does little to promote a truly global effort to eradicate violence from local women's lives, wherever they may reside.

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