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A VOLUME IN PEACE EDUCATION

# Gender, Sexuality, & Peace Education

Issues and Perspectives  
in Higher Education

Edited by Laura Finley

# **Gender, Sexuality, and Peace Education**

**Issues and Perspectives in Higher Education**

A Volume in Peace Education

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**Edited by**

**Laura Finley**  
*Barry University*



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# PEACE EDUCATION SERIES INTRODUCTION

**Laura Finley and Robin Cooper**

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With the many forms of violence and injustice plaguing people across the globe, the need to teach people the skills, knowledge, and motivation to make peace has never been more acute. Peace education is an essential component of peacebuilding. Although it takes many forms and occurs in a broad array of settings, peace education always includes efforts to understand the root causes of violence, offers opportunities for marginalized groups to share their perspectives, teaches methods of nonviolent conflict resolution, and inspires action toward a better world.

The books in the Peace Education series, authored by leading scholars and activists, provide engaging, insightful, and timely examinations of the best practices and most innovative thought in the field of peace and conflict studies. Moreover, the books in this series exemplify the truly interdisciplinary nature of the examination of violence and the building of peace, as authors are sociologists, linguists, educators, rhetoricians, feminists, theologians, psychologists, political scientists and more. Further, each book in the Peace Education series is thorough and scholarly yet user-friendly for students, educators, activists, and practitioners.

From understanding the violence we use in everyday language, to grassroots efforts globally, to using popular culture to teach peace, to evaluating our successes and so much more, the books in the Peace Education series help illuminate the problems, challenges, and rewards associated with using educational means to diminish, ameliorate, or eliminate violent conflicts and to create a more inclusive, just, and peaceful world.

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*Gender, Sexuality, and Peace Education: Issues and Perspectives in Higher Education*  
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As series editors, we are proud of these eclectic, unique, and insightful books and thrilled to have been able to work with authors of such caliber. We welcome feedback from readers and encourage authors to consider submitting proposals that advance our understandings and inspire improvements in the teaching of peace.

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# PREFACE

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This edited volume aims to inform and inspire educators, students, and activists interested in mainstreaming gender and sexuality into peace and conflict studies and, in particular, into peace education curricula and programs. The book is designed to provide ideas and tools for those interested in or who are already teaching in peace studies or peace education programs, offering a current and useful guide to classroom activities and campuswide initiatives focusing on important issues relevant to gender and sexuality. More than that, though, the goal is to entice faculty and students in other disciplinary areas to identify and address the nexuses between gender, sexuality, and peace education. Further, the volume is recommended for administrators and faculty involved with helping transform campus cultures such that they minimize gender-based violence or violence that is based on an individual's perceived gender identity and sexual orientation. Additionally, this book aims to elevate the voices of college students who are affected by various forms of gender-based violence and discrimination based on real or perceived gender identity or sexual orientation. Most chapters include contributions from students who are making a difference on their campuses.

An additional benefit of this volume is that it is authored by scholar-activists in multiple disciplinary areas at several different institutions. Contributors have backgrounds in English, Communications, Sociology, Criminology, and Social Work, as well as practical experience engaging in community work on issues of gender-based violence and LGBTQ advocacy. As such, it will be both scholarly and practical, and thus friendly to an array of users. Finally, students will enjoy the inspiring stories of peers who are working with faculty to create more inclusive, peaceful classes and campuses.

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I am grateful to so many people for helping this volume come together. First, to Jing Lin, Ian Morrison, and Edward Brantmeier, who started this series and trusted me to take it over. Many thanks to my coeditor, Robin Cooper, for being such an easy and helpful partner! And to the staff at Information Age Publishing, I remain deeply thankful for your vision and dedication to this series.

I also want to thank all the scholars, activists, and students who contributed to this volume. I believe each of the chapters included herein were authored with love, passion, and a solid devotion to using higher education to help build a better world. I am hopeful that this volume can significantly enhance the scholarship and praxis around gender and sexuality in higher education. In particular I thank my Barry University students in my Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 courses, who read various pieces of some of these chapters and whose feedback is included in several places.

Finally, my deepest love and gratitude to my husband, Peter, and daughter, Anya. Balancing four simultaneous book contracts was perhaps not the most wonderful idea, but you two both tolerated my moments of crisis and mania as I worked to meet the various deadlines.

I dedicate this book to beautiful Anya, who also offered feedback on a number of the entries here and who is already an amazing scholar, actor, activist, and human being.

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# INTRODUCTION

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Peace education takes many forms and can occur in K–12 schooling, in higher education, as well as in other settings. It should be designed to recognize, challenge, and change one’s thinking. It should reveal various forms of violence, the conditions that trigger them, and the policies, practices, and structural arrangements that sustain violence and exclusivity (Reardon, 1988). Peace education is both “a philosophy and a process involving skills, including listening, reflection, problem-solving, cooperation and conflict resolution. The process involves empowering people with the skills, attitudes and knowledge to create a safe world and build a sustainable environment” (Harris & Morrison, 2003, p. 9).

It is dramatically different from the typical education, which Giroux (2017) critiques:

education can all too easily become a form of symbolic and intellectual violence that assaults rather than educates. Examples of such violence can be seen in the forms of an audit culture and empirically-driven teaching that dominates higher education. These educational projects amount to pedagogies of repression and serve primarily to numb the mind and produce what might be called dead zones of the imagination.

Peace education should take seriously all forms of violence. It can offer an important challenge to the growing neoliberal, individualizing ethos that typically emphasizes to young people that social problems are the result of individual pathologies or deficiencies, and therefore require merely personal, not social, change (Arnot, 2009; Lagree, 2002). Peace education can help develop a global citizen, who Oxfam (1997) defines as an individual who understands “how the world works, is outraged by injustice

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and who is both willing and enabled to take action to meet this global challenge” (p. 1).

Peace education focuses on dignity and social justice. Peace educators are concerned with both what is taught as well as the methods of doing so. As Kester (2000) explained,

peace education as a practice and philosophy refers to matching complementary elements between education and society, where the social purposes (i.e., why teach), content (i.e., what to teach), and pedagogy (i.e., how to teach) of the educative process are conducive to fostering peace. Accordingly, peace education is a dialogical experience conducted through participatory learning, where learners communally and cooperatively grapple with contemporary issues (i.e., talking points) related to local and global contexts. (p. 2)

Kester (2000) went on to explain that peace education is not proscriptive. Instead, it must be creative and flexible.

Peace education does not pour knowledge into the minds of students or tell students what to do. Nor does peace education utilize a system of experts who come into the classroom and tell students what to think. Peace education helps learners begin to raise questions and gives students the tools they need to direct their learning. It is an education about how to learn, not what to learn. (p. 2)

Jing Lin (2006) asserts that a primary goal of peace education is the development of “peace intelligence.” Peace intelligence is

associated with a deep love for all lives, a deep compassion for all existences, a courage and a conviction for unconditional forgiveness and reconciliation. It is the ability to see others’ losses as our losses, others’ pain as our own pain. It is cultivating the ability to coexist in a peaceful, respectful manner. (p. 68)

Many peace educators have been influenced by critical pedagogies. Critical peace pedagogy is organized around the struggle over agency, values, and social relations within diverse contexts, resources, and histories. Its aim is producing students who can “think critically, be considerate of others, take risks, think dangerously and imagine a future that extends and deepens what it means to be an engaged citizen capable of living in a substantive democracy” (Giroux, 2017). Rather than just critique, however, critical pedagogy requires that classrooms be spaces of hope. As Giroux (2017) explains,

Without a simultaneous discourse of hope, it can lead to an immobilizing despair or, even worse, a pernicious cynicism. Reason, justice and change

cannot blossom without hope. Hope speaks to imagining a life beyond capitalism, and combines a realistic sense of limits with a lofty vision of demanding the impossible.

Critical peace pedagogy is inevitably political. Yet, Giroux (2014) argues for political pedagogy rather than politicizing pedagogy. The latter “insists wrongly that students think as we do,” while the former “teaches students by example and through dialogue about the importance of power, social responsibility, and of taking a stand (without standing still) while rigorously engaging the full range of ideas about an issue” (p. 43). Giroux (2014) continues,

What is important about this type of critical pedagogy is the issue of responsibility as both a normative issue and a strategic act. Responsibility not only highlights the performative nature of pedagogy by raising questions about the relationships that students have to teachers but also the relationship that students have to themselves and others. (p. 44)

It is a method of transformative teaching that questions, inspires and incites (Taylor, 2006). Although many scholars have commented on the role that higher education should play in developing civically engaged young people who are able to critically think and act (Harkavy, 2006), in most cases campuses are offering more rhetoric than reality. Higher education still tends to privilege the “scholarship of discovery” over pedagogy, application, and engagement (Boyer, 1990; Marullo & Edwards, 2000). College educators often emphasize the rational, rather than the emotional or relational, which fails to create students who are inspired and empowered actors.

Action resulting from what has been learned should not only be initiated by faculty but by students, as they should feel prepared to share ideas, plan and implement programs, and reflect on their successes and failures. Faculty should mentor these initiatives but should not always be in charge. Unfortunately, campuses often stifle the activism of both students and faculty. Through excessive rules, policies, and procedures enacted by the burgeoning administrative bloat on most campuses, faculty and students can be dissuaded from pursuing activist agendas (Finley, 2015). Students and faculty fear reprisals for taking on certain issues or holding particular positions. The increased cost of education means many students have little time to engage in activism, as they must maintain full course loads coupled with work and other obligations. Likewise, campuses are increasing workloads for faculty, often without a concomitant increase in pay, which serves to decrease morale and reduce the chance of activism. As they struggle to finance their operations, many campuses have turned to corporations for funding. These are often conservative in nature, and

the monies they provide are not without strings attached (Finley, 2015). Thomas Hayden, the longtime activist, maintains that students today are so worried about how they will pay for school and whether they will get a job afterwards so that they can pay off their loans that they have little time for activism. Giroux (2011) explains that,

crippling debt plus few job prospects in a society in which individuals are relentlessly held as being responsible for the problems they experience leaves little room for rethinking the importance of larger social issues or the necessity for organized collective action against systemic injustice. (pp. 67–68)

While peace education has such amazing, transformative potential, that potential has not yet been reached. One reason is that the field has yet to fully address gender and sexuality. Although other scholars and activists such as Betty Reardon (2001) have emphasized the importance of including gender studies as part of peace education initiatives, there remains a shortage of resources that appeal to both educators and activists in terms of what precisely should be included and how to do so (Brock-Utne, 2009; Cook, 2007; Fobear, 2014; Yablon, 2009).

Indeed, the work of women peacebuilders and peace educators has generally been marginalized in the field (Enloe, 1990; Jenkins & Reardon, 2010; Mingol, 2009), which remains based on patriarchal privilege. Although it is clear that women are disadvantaged in peace time (Denmark, Rabinowitz, & Sechzer, 2000), women are even more disadvantaged in war. They are overrepresented among victims of conflict, and, in post-conflict reconstruction efforts, they are underrepresented as decision-makers, administrators, and judges (McKay, 1998; Morris, 1998). Today, women are involved in many peacebuilding initiatives around the globe, yet they still

suffer from unequal land redistribution, receiving of aid, and programs for social mobility. Women peace builders, as well as female soldiers, are routinely pushed aside in the rebuilding and peace process, sometimes making them even more marginalized than they were during times of conflict. (Fobear, 2014, p. 108).

As Cook (2007) notes in reference to global violence,

Bad decisions can kill people, and in this case the vast percentage of those dying are women and children. To write women out of this sad story by refusing to engage the disabling effects of gender discrimination is intellectually dishonest and morally repellent. (p. 67)

Similarly, Reardon (1993) wrote

there is a fundamental interrelationship among all forms of violence, and that violence is a major consequence of the imbalance of a male-dominated society. Forms of various types, from the intimidation of rape to the social imposition of dependency, maintain this balance. In itself, the patriarchy is a form of violence. (p. 39)

Cook (2007) maintains that the marginalization of gender in peace education is the result of the backlash against feminism, which dissuaded educators and researchers from incorporating anything controversial related to race, gender, or sexuality for fear of losing financial or institutional support. Some have even accused peace educators of playing into dangerous and limiting stereotypes that depict men as “natural” warriors and women as “natural” peacemakers. But a gendered perspective must go beyond simply adding women’s voices. Sharoni (1994) maintains that,

In many cases feminists, in conflict resolution as in other fields of inquiry, see no other choice but to plead to be included in the discipline by stressing that women’s caring and nurturing experiences make them valuable resources in the discipline. (p. 12)

As Zalewsky (1995) points out, though,

it is not enough rhetorically and theoretically to “add women and stir” [but we need to change] the empirical focus ... [and] start questioning how belief and myths about gender play an important part in creating, maintaining and ending wars. (p. 347)

It is imperative to understand how educational systems continue to undervalue, marginalize, and minimize women and those who are not cis-gender. Arnot (2009) explains,

The educational systems are most likely to have embedded within them the conventional gender boundaries and hierarchies, producing and reproducing the hierarchies and power of masculinity that are associated with women’s oppression as well as traditional forms of femininity. (p. 193)

The failure to include a gendered analysis of peace education is troubling in that, as Cook (2007) explains, it prohibits a full and inclusive understanding of structural violence and, as such, can never be a truly useful vehicle for the promotion of positive peace. There is also some evidence that peace education programs may be more effective when they utilize a gendered perspective (Yablon, 2009). In sum, the lack of gender focus in peace education is a barrier to the implementation of effective programs, in the classroom and on the campus at large.

Sexual orientation is also largely absent from the peace education literature (Mizzi, 2010). While critical peace educators like Brantmeier (2007) and Bajaj (2008) note the importance of a peace education that raises consciousness about all forms of oppression including sexual orientation, there are no books that can help faculty members or administrators create curricula or engage in campus-based advocacy for LGBTQ individuals. Opatow, Gerson, and Woodside (2005) assert that moral exclusion can help explain why certain groups are marginalized and more likely to be the victims of violence. Those who are within our scope of justice are morally included. That is, we feel a sense of fairness toward them and for them. We tend to be more supportive of discrimination, deprivation, and other harms for groups that we have morally excluded. One of the groups that has long been morally excluded is persons who identify as LGBT. As such, addressing how and why that moral exclusion occurs is an essential part of peace education, as is educating for coexistence and to challenge harmful gender role binaries, assumptions, and policies.

The stifling of activism may well be worse for female professors and students and for those who identify as LGBTQ. A growing body of research has shown that student evaluations of teachers vary significantly by gender (Arbuckle & Williams, 2003; Basow, 1990; Liddle, 1997; Marcotte, 2014). Studies have found that students rate male professors as more capable than females, and that they expect female educators to be nurturing and supportive while males are expected to be scholarly and rigorous. Benjamin Schmidt, Assistant Professor of History at Northeastern University, analyzed the words used in 14 million reviews on the popular website Rate My Professors. He found that male professors were described using words that indicate academic prowess, including “smart,” “intellect,” and “genius,” while those used to describe female professors were negative, for example, “bossy,” or were qualities not valued in academe, like “nurturing” (DeSantis, 2015). Faculty and students who identify as LGBTQ suffer far higher rates of discrimination, harassment and abuse.

This volume, then, offers an important and timely introduction to how to include sexual orientation in peace studies. The chapters in the first part of the book focus on classrooms as spaces for critical conversations about gender and sexuality. Chapter 1 by Janet Gray and Natalie Tietjen illustrates how faculty and students, working together, can use a problem-posing approach to deepen their understanding of issues, in this case, the connections between environmental violence and destruction and gender. In Chapter 2, Tyler (Ellora) LaCarruba focuses on the benefits and concerns of trigger warnings, noting that while they are purported to create safety and comfort, they can be a tool for minimizing certain voices and for marginalizing the mentally ill. While peace educators recognize the

need to create safe spaces for classroom discussion, there is no consensus in the field as to whether trigger warnings in syllabi are the most effective means to do so. Rather than shy away from difficult topics, in Chapter 3, Kelly Concannon addresses how educators can use the controversial Netflix series *13 Reasons Why* to engage students in critical examination of gender, sexuality, and suicide. Concannon emphasizes the importance of helping students understand the dominant narratives in popular culture that are often limiting in terms of gender and sexuality. In Chapter 4, Samba Zaoui students provide an extensive description of one of the worst human rights violations of the 21st century—sex trafficking. She writes for educators but also for clinicians and service-providers, knowing that students studying sex trafficking will likely enter these fields and must be prepared to use a trauma-informed approach. In Chapter 5, former Barry University social work students reflect on how they have used their education about sex trafficking in their lives and their careers. Lucia Klenkakova and Mariely Valentin-Llopis's Chapter 6 offers a critique of the depiction of women in popular culture, offering critical analysis of several popular films in various genres and providing recommendations for media literacy education that promotes peace and justice. In Chapter 7, Nickesia Gordon and Margaret Chojnacki outline a class project they use in the Gender and Communications course that is designed to allow students to challenge their everyday assumptions and stereotypes about gender, gender roles, and stereotypes. Their chapter is an important reminder of the need for peace education to be active and experiential, and for it to allow student creativity to emerge. Continuing the theme of experiential education, in Chapter 8, I describe a dating violence education initiative on a campus that includes a service-learning component. The chapter describes the scope and extent of the problem, the initiative called the College Brides Walk, and how students have been involved in serving with it. It also offers an assessment of students' experiences in doing so.

The chapters in the latter half of the book focus on transforming campuses and communities. In Chapter 9, Ashley Austin, Irene Kepler and Shelley Craig, with input from several students, discuss what is needed for campuses to be not just accepting but welcoming of LGBTQ students. In doing so, they provide an extensive review of the literature regarding violence against LGBTQ students. Chapter 10, by Rafael Harley and Nekeisha Bascombe, addresses how campus climate can help or hurt Muslim women seeking college degrees. It offers a review of the history of women in higher education and of Muslim women in particular, and debunks myths about Islam and education. In Chapter 11, Matthew Johnson provides a personal reflection of his journey in becoming a male feminist activist as a college undergraduate. His important and disturbing chapter

underscores the importance of male activism as well as the backlash that is often experienced by men who do so. John Chapin and Grace Coleman showcase how campuses can collaborate with community groups to better understand bullying, dating violence, and domestic violence in Chapter 12. Their chapter also offers important recommendations for addressing bullying in all its forms, in schools, on campuses, and in communities. In Chapter 13, I focus on the role that faculty can and should play in campus sexual violence prevention initiatives. The chapter provides a review of literature as well as personal reflections from the authors to critique the marginalization of faculty and offer recommendations for improvement.

The Conclusion provides recommendations, drawn from all the chapters, regarding the next steps in terms of creating peace education that is more inclusive of gender and sexuality. Although we live in challenging times, in particular with a president who is personally and politically misogynistic, record numbers of people have become actively involved in protest and challenge. This includes faculty, students, and communities, and as such, provides hope in desperate times. Finally, the Appendix includes a compendium of recommended books, films, journals, and websites for additional information.

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## CHAPTER 1

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# GENDER-ENVIRONMENT-PEACE

## Exploring the Links Through Problem-Posing

**Janet Gray and Natalie Tietjen**

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Peace studies as a field increasingly recognizes both gender and ecology as cross-cutting factors for theory and practice. So far, however, introductory texts have not drawn on the rich body of literature, policy, and practice linking gender analysis with environmental concerns.<sup>1</sup> The result is emerging literature and pedagogical strategies that integrate gender analysis into peace education and a separate emphasis on the links between environmental and peace education, but little attention to the connections among all three. Efforts to incorporate gender analysis into peacebuilding and development practices have been made through gender mainstreaming, the “process of incorporating a gender perspective to any ... policy, legislation, or action in order to ensure gender inequalities are not perpetuated across institutional means” (Alston, 2014, p. 287). However, there remains much to unpack within institutional structures that perpetuate gender inequities and mask the particular needs of women. Students of peace may ultimately enter careers across a wide range of employment sectors that will immerse them in problems related to environmental crises;<sup>2</sup> they will need the capacity to think through the complexities of varied scenarios in which gender, environment, and peace intersect.

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In this chapter, we present the outcomes of a collaboration with participants in a student-faculty interdisciplinary research seminar on environmental justice at The College of New Jersey. We facilitated a discussion on key concepts in peace education, how these concepts are gendered, and how they apply to environmental justice, and followed with a common classroom activity on gender analysis that we adapted to raise questions about how environmental and peace discourses construct and deploy gender. Charged with applying this introductory material to approaches to teaching the connections among our three categories, the seminar members proposed interactive approaches to exploring the following problems:

1. If there are no people, how do you analyze gender?
2. How can outside helpers peacefully negotiate gendered interests in a community adapting to climate change?
3. How does structural violence manifest itself in the gendered options available to people whose livelihoods are impacted by environmental degradation?

We have expanded on the brainstorming work in the seminar with sketches of learning activities based on these problems.

The problem-posing approaches that emerged from the seminar session suggested an entry into understanding the potential conversations among the three disciplines we want to link that recognizes the partial, situated nature of knowledge and invites differently located subjects into mobile partnerships, with the task of co-constructing open-ended frameworks for new knowledge out of related elements of differing disciplines. Problem-posing pedagogy begins with what participants already know and invites them to frame and explore questions that arise as new information and divergent perspectives are added. Rooted in participatory practices familiar to both feminist pedagogy and peace education, this problem-posing strategy suits our research question because all three fields of study draw on multiple knowledge bases, resisting and transgressing conventional disciplinary boundaries. All three fields also are concerned with forms of justice and seek knowledge that transforms consciousness and empowers opposition to intersecting systems of power and oppression.

Our initial intent for this chapter was to present an overview of topics, themes, and resources that high school and college instructors could use to teach the links among our three categories. Integrating the three terms is dauntingly complex, and what we present here is not a complete overview. Each of the activities we sketch here calls for additional development by instructors and learning communities, as well as critical interventions

beyond what we have accomplished; ultimately, the vision promoted by the intersection of our three categories calls for a fully intersectional peace ecology work. The collective knowledge that a learning community can assemble using this approach will be constrained by the knowledge bases and social and geographic locations of its members, who will need curiosity and humility to face the challenges of those limitations and expand their view.<sup>3</sup> A group's recognition of its own unknowing is key to the success of a problem-posing approach, and was the source of the questions that emerged in our seminar. What we demonstrate in this chapter is that problem-posing pedagogy can be a productive approach to linking conceptually complex fields. Problem-posing pedagogy can be used to engage learning communities in discovering and building connections among gender, environment, and peace, and in opening up inquiry in ways that raise critical questions for further exploration.

## METHODS AND SOURCES

Our working question for this chapter has been: How can peace educators at the secondary and college levels fully incorporate the significance of gender to the convergence between peace and environmental studies? Our collaborators in exploring this question were five students and five professors at The College of New Jersey who participated with us in an interdisciplinary student-faculty research seminar during the spring of 2017. The student-faculty research seminar is a curricular innovation that brings faculty and undergraduate partners together from across fields of study to explore a theme. Each pair of partners pursues their own research topic within the broader theme. For the first half of the semester, each pair leads a class session based on readings pertinent to their subject area. For the second half, the students take charge of leading discussions related to their projects (Robertson, 2017). The seminar's structure is highly compatible with the study of peace and justice because it cultivates a collaborative learning community that minimizes hierarchies and crosses disciplinary boundaries. Participants explore together and challenge each other's thinking, serving as sounding boards and resources for each other's projects. Ongoing threads and shared concepts emerge as the teams engage with the methodological tools of one another's disciplines.<sup>4</sup>

Focused on the theme "Toward Just and Sustainable Communities," our group had two faculty-student pairs from the Department of English, one pair each from Biology and Physics, and a pair from Environmental Sustainability Education. In addition to the authors' project on linking the study of gender, environment, and peace, the research topics that

shaped our shared knowledge-building included postcolonial ecocriticism, food systems, sustainable agriculture, atmospheric pollution, and science education standards.<sup>3</sup> We were the only pair not matched by discipline: Janet Gray is on the faculty of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Natalie Tietjen has a double major in Public Health and Communication; she had studied ecofeminism and peace studies in courses that Gray taught.

Reflexive conversations about how our social and disciplinary locations constrained our knowledge-building recurred throughout the semester. A narrow range of social locations limited our shared perspectives, with six White women, two Asian American women, and four White men in our group, and all of us privileged by education, class, and global location. Further, while science and the humanities were well represented, the lack of social scientists narrowed our orientation toward social systems. Participants' exposure to gender analysis varied, and, while all of the participants had engaged in study, service, or activism related to ecology and environmental justice, none had done transnational fieldwork pertinent to our topic. None of the other participants had background in peace studies, but their beginner status was helpful in our effort to shape instruction for introductory courses.

For our class session, we assigned readings that introduce links among our three categories. For background, we assigned primary documents from the Earth Charter and UNESCO's Cultures of Peace initiative—a model for global peace education—as well as brief discussions and schematic representations of these agreements from *Peace Education Program* by Teachers Without Borders (2010). Both of these agreements propose integrative models that suggest, but do not unpack, three-way links among gender, environment, and peace. We also assigned three texts that Gray has assigned in her courses: the introduction from Randall Amster's *Peace Ecology* (Amster, 2015), a chapter on gender security in Houston Wood's *Invitation to Peace Studies* (2015), and an overview of research findings in Irene Dankelman's edited collection *Gender and Climate Change: An Introduction* (Dankelman, 2010). Each of these chapters provides an introductory discussion of links between two of our three categories. We review these sources below and return to them later in this chapter where we describe the results of our collaborators' efforts to insert the missing category in an instructional approach to each chapter.

Amster's *Peace Ecology* is the fullest scholarly exploration to date that synthesizes environmental and peace studies. Environmental degradation is both an outcome and potentially a cause of violent conflict, but, Amster argues, “the same environmental processes that often drive conflict ... can also become profound opportunities for peaceful engagement” (p. 8). Peace ecology is a transdisciplinary frame for theory, history, and vision

that promotes such action, building on the principle of interconnection, a core value for both peace and environmental studies.

Amster briefly touches on a paradoxical theme in gender-mainstreamed peace education: the protection of women serves as a rationalization for war but women are also “collateral damage” (p. 3). He also mentions gender as one of many intersecting social systems in which militarism has a defining role (p. 4). The chapter misses other opportunities to include gender in its analysis. Gender is prominent among the intersecting “sociopolitical hierarchies” (p. 9) that Amster links to environmental problems; in societies structured around a gendered division of roles, human activities in relationship to the environment are also gendered, as are the impacts of environmental degradation. The same is true of conflict and its impacts. Gender ideology is also a component of the “deeply held belief systems and ways of looking at the world” (p. 11) that Amster mentions as drivers of global crises. Gender ideology undergirds the norms that split male and female roles, norms that are disrupted or heightened by both violent conflict and environmental crises. In hierarchical worldviews, the attributes linked to the dominant gender promote power, while those linked to the subordinate gender are disempowered. Globally, men dominate leadership roles in industry, government, and the military, while women predominate in sustenance labor. The values of interconnectedness that peace ecology promotes and the exploitive and militaristic values they seek to displace thus are both gendered: a core dilemma for the intersection of ecology and peace. We discuss this dilemma more fully below in the section titled “Key Terms and Concepts.”

Houston Wood’s *Invitation to Peace Studies* (2015) does the fullest job to date of integrating current scholarship on gender and peace throughout an introductory textbook. Chapter 5 discusses major forms of sex- and gender-based violence, as well as the empowerment of women and LGBTQ people globally. Sex-based violence is harm directed at people because of their perceived biological sex. Gender-based violence is harm built into cultural constructs of gender, either as a penalty for violating gender norms or as the normalization of victim and perpetrator roles. In war, men predominate as powerbrokers and combatants, roles associated with masculine characteristics. War disrupts the homemaking and nurturing activities associated with femininity; women are more likely to be forced out of their homes, and their caregiving roles become increasingly difficult as they lose access to basic resources while sickness, hunger, and injuries increase in their communities. Women are more likely than men to be victims of rape as a tactic of war, and other common forms of violence against women, including sex trafficking, also increase during war.

Research on “missing women” shows that, even in peacetime, the toll of violence against women and girls is equivalent to war. In the 20th century,

the total number of excess female deaths from such factors as sex-selective abortion, infanticide, neglect, and lack of reproductive health care exceeded the combined combat toll of men for all wars (p. 74). Women face high rates of violence targeted at them simply because they are women; according to the World Health Organization (2016), “one in three women worldwide will be the victim of some form of male-on-female violence at least once in their lives.” Intimate partner violence against women is the world’s most common form of personal violence.

Wood cites research that shows that women’s active participation in decision-making bodies can improve democratic problem-solving, and that the increased influence of women and sexual minorities reduces violence generally, not just sex- and gender-based violence. Since the mid-twentieth century, women’s increasing access to roles in politics, peace networks, research, and education has resulted in policy changes that incorporate a *gender perspective*: attention to differences in men’s and women’s “customs, expectations, experiences, opportunities, roles, status and power” (p. 84). Through the United Nations and nongovernmental organizations, women’s movements have built global networks for combating gender violence. Wood does not mention that beginning in the 1970s this transnational organizing linked gender, the environment, and peace by producing an ongoing agenda that stresses the interconnections among gender equality, sustainable development, and just peace.<sup>5</sup>

Wood briefly discusses peace ecology in his introductory chapter (pp. 10–11). Elsewhere, he draws on research to dispel the common assumption that climate change will increase war. It will exacerbate existing disparities in access to resources, but he argues that the outcome of such crises, whether conflict or cooperation, depends on cultural choices (pp. 48–49). He does not discuss environmental links to peace work from a gender perspective, which would show that both access to scarce resources and cultural choices about managing resource crises are gendered.

*Gender and Climate Change: An Introduction*, edited by Irene Dankelman (2010), builds on 50 years of theory and research on gender-specific roles, rights, and responsibilities in relation to the environment, with the aim of promoting just and sustainable development (pp. 1–2). In the 1980s scholars, activists, and development workers observed that because of women’s subordination their experience and knowledge were overlooked in resource management and environmental science. In Chapter 2, “Gender, Environment, and Climate Change: Understanding the Linkages,” Dankelman and her coauthor Willy Jensen provide an overview of developments since the 1980s. Their approach is feminist political ecology, which focuses on how gendered environmental roles are impacted by colonial and neocolonial forces, together with class, race, and other unequal social systems.

Dankelman and Jensen point out that the challenges climate change imposes are layered onto long-term, profit-driven development, which concentrates wealth and power while taking more from ecological and social systems than can be regenerated. Unequal power relations combined with differences of need and perspective among different social groups leads to unjust and unsustainable development, which increases unequal access to natural resources. The examples they cite are from rural and urban communities in the global south, where environmental conditions have the greatest impact on human livelihoods. In these areas, women's work is largely dependent on natural resources; they often have primary responsibility for gathering and cultivating food and collecting fuel, water, and animal fodder. Women's and girls' access to education and formal employment is more limited than men's and boys', so women's ability to change their livelihoods, their access to emergency information, and their voice in decision-making is also less (Dankelman & Jensen, 2010, p. 61).

Unsustainable development combined with the impacts of climate change increases the time and effort women must expend to meet basic needs, reduces their opportunities for education and income-generating activities, restricts their capacity to organize, and increases their vulnerability to extreme weather and other unsafe conditions. Their health suffers, their poverty deepens, and their autonomy and decision-making power decline. Women cope by working harder and economizing on resource use, but they also organize to undertake adaptation projects and to pressure policymakers. Dankelman and Jensen urge people in power in government, business, and nongovernmental organizations to work in partnership with such grassroots efforts, using participatory methods and gender-specific approaches in projects focused on sustainable technology, access to resources, and alternative livelihoods.

In terms of peace studies, the authors include armed conflict among the factors that cause the overuse and contamination of natural resources, the results of which have the greatest impact on women (p. 34). Their recommendations are consistent with the practices of peacebuilding, a term they do not mention. Further, their call for action on gender equality and sustainable development assumes the transnational networks that women's movements have built with the United Nations and other organizations, but they omit peace, the third principle of the agenda we described earlier.

Adding a peace studies lens also suggests the following:

- Structural violence of all kinds, including gender inequality, increases as environmental degradation withdraws resources and adds burdens to subordinate groups.

- Several forms of personal violence against women, including trafficking and intimate partner violence, increase during and after natural disasters (p. 61).
- The increased possibility of armed conflict adds to the gendered conditions produced by climate change. While Wood discusses research that shows no predictable pattern of violence following climate disasters, wars are fought between and within states over scarce resources (p. 125).
- Violent conflict impedes women's coping capacities by reducing access to resources for sustainable development and alternative livelihoods.
- The presence of armed combatants adds to the unsafe conditions that women face while engaged in livelihood activities such as water and fuel gathering.
- Women lead among those displaced by armed conflict, which further reduces their access to needed resources and increases their exposure to unsafe conditions.

In the following sections, we describe the methods and outcomes of three activities we facilitated in the seminar to engage the participants in discovering links among gender, environment, and peace and in framing critical questions around those connections. For the first activity, we used Powerpoint slides and a handout to introduce peace into the seminar's shared vocabulary and spark a conversation about how key terms in peace studies pertain to environmental justice. These are terms we would expect to be familiar to students in an introductory peace studies course. More advanced classes can further explore these connections through the differences between *national security* and *human security*, with *gender security* as an integral component of human security. The second activity is an adaptation of a common classroom activity introducing gender analysis, in which students brainstorm their understandings of the attributes of masculinity and femininity, with the goal of gaining a shared critical awareness of gender as an unequal binary system of constructed norms. The third activity is a problem-posing exercise based on close readings. We organized the seminar participants into three teams, each focused on one of the assigned chapters, and challenged the teams to devise pedagogical approaches that included the third factor missing from their chapter. We describe the outcomes of the groups' work. While the texts we used may be suitable for some classroom contexts, we hope that our work can be adapted to a wide variety of source materials for learners at different educational levels. Peace teachers may wish to explore the particular problems that our group derived from our participatory process, or they may

want to use our process as a model in facilitating a class as they formulate their own questions.

## KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

The distinction between *negative* and *positive peace* provides a foundation for conceptualizing links to gender and the environment. In *negative peace*, direct violence is absent. Both gender and environmental justice are fields of study that aim to produce *positive peace*, the absence of both direct and indirect violence, or, more concretely, *structural peace*, the presence of interlinked social structures that promote social justice and inclusive, non-violent approaches to problem-solving (Amster, 2015, p. 7).

With *negative peace*, indirect *cultural* and *structural violence* may persist. *Cultural violence* refers to cultural institutions, practices, productions, and myths that drive and normalize structural violence. *Structural violence* refers to social systems that institutionalize privilege and oppression and result in unequal access to needed resources and human rights. Environmental injustice—the unequal distribution of environmental benefits and harms—is an example of structural violence, produced through intersecting systems of inequality, including gender, race, class, and global region.

Negative peace is unstable because direct violence may readily erupt from its conditions, as is the case in police shootings or domestic violence, and because the long-term impacts of indirect violence can be lethal, as is the case with the “slow violence” of environmental degradation and environmental injustice (Nixon, 2011). Further, cultural and structural violence generate contradictory messages in order to justify their continuation in the face of changing social and environmental conditions. Throughout our seminar, we looked for “cracks in the system,” that is, contradictions and weaknesses in the dominant system’s efforts to maintain themselves, and the opportunities that these “cracks” present for resistant agency.

The connection of environmental degradation to structural and direct violence can be explored by studying Maslow’s hierarchy of needs together with common precursors to violent conflict. Maslow’s model provides a useful overview of the scope of deprivation that structural violence imposes, but it needs to be critiqued with an intersectional lens because it assumes that particular kinds of needs are universally more fundamental than others—implying that, for example, people who suffer from hunger cannot love or sustain a sense of belonging. Kent Shifferd (2011) offers a list of conditions that may predict cycles of violent conflict, including demographic pressures, unaccountable governments, human rights violations, ethnic inequalities, massive human flight, and regional economic

and environmental collapse. A learning community can reflect on how these factors illustrate deprivation of basic human needs and how they correspond to climate crises.

Gender is readily visible in breakdowns of the scope and types of peace work. The scope of violence and work to end it can be broken down into the *macro* (nation states and global systems), *meso* (within nations and between groups and regions), and *micro* (individual, interpersonal, community) levels. Efforts are underway globally to mainstream a gender perspective in peace work at all of these levels, but historically women have been all but invisible at the macro and meso level. The incorporation of gender analysis in peace studies has roots in recognition of links between micro-level gender-based violence and the gendered consequences of violence at the meso and macro levels (Wood, 2016, pp. 9–10).

Peace studies describes three types of peace work. *Peacemaking* is the negotiation and mediation undertaken to end an existing violent conflict. Its goal is negative peace; its agents, drawn from the top leadership of the conflicting parties, are usually men. *Peacekeeping* aims to protect communities from eruptions of violence. Although effective unarmed peacekeeping forces exist, the largest and best funded efforts internationally are militarized and masculinized. Armed peacekeeping has had some dire unintended consequences, including abuse of resources and sex trafficking of women and children by members of the forces (Aoi, DeKoning, & Thakur, 2007). *Peacebuilding* activities work toward the formation of conditions needed to create structural peace, building capacities to prevent violence by addressing conflicts cooperatively. Taking place usually at the micro level through grassroots and nongovernmental organizations, peacebuilding is more accessible to women and is most likely to address environmental sustainability. Wood describes a *global peace network* composed of interregional coalitions of peacebuilding organizations that collaborate on analysis, strategy, and action. Since the 1970s, women's organizations have been leaders in these efforts and, as we mentioned earlier, in linking gender equality to sustainability and peace.

## THE GENDER BINARY

Exposing the gender binary is critical in peace studies and environmental studies because in both fields gender constructs are often mistakenly universalized, and gender norms can make significant, complex differences in people's lived experiences. This activity explores the question: In what ways do gender constructs appear in and connect environmental and peace discourses?

*Preparation:* From assigned readings, collect a list of terms that might be considered gendered. The associations may be ambiguous and may vary among cultural contexts; such terms can spark useful discussion. In class, students can add to the list by brainstorming attributes linked to each gender in their everyday contexts. Once the list is complete, write each term on a slip of paper or a notecard.

On the board, create a chart with three vertical spaces. Head the outer spaces “Environment” and “Violence/Peace,” with the middle space representing the overlap between the two categories. Mark the upper part of the board “Positive Impacts” and the lower part “Negative Impacts.”

*Activity:* Form two or more groups and give each group a share of the slips of paper. The facilitator instructs the groups to categorize each term by gender, explaining that a word may be gendered because it represents a role or activity associated with either men or women, or because it represents an attribute commonly thought of as either masculine or feminine. Groups use different colored pens to mark the slips masculine (M), feminine (F), or other. We used “Q” for this third category to indicate “queering,” the critical practice of breaking down hierarchical constructed categories. Once the groups have categorized the words, invite students to bring them to the board and locate them on the chart.

*Discussion:* Pose basic debriefing questions and follow up with clarification questions and other active listening strategies to build a shared reflexive awareness of the group’s knowledge-building process.

1. *What? What happened, what was that like?* Students may struggle with their decisions on the terms. In our seminar, participants recognized that their social and geographic locations influenced their choices. Some participants made decisions quickly, while others debated the scale and contexts for their decisions—global versus local, legislation and policy versus popular culture and everyday life. Some felt emotionally challenged as they confronted harmful dominant norms.

2. *So what?* What does the groups’ placement of the terms suggest about gender constructs, and why does it matter? The instructor guides the class to describe and interpret patterns. The groups in our seminar easily located most of the Q terms in the Positive Impacts area of the overlap between Environment and Violence/Peace. Second most abundant were words marked F, including compassionate, relational, organizer, nurturing, service, interconnected, interdependent, and interactive. The few M words in that area indicated power: politically engaged, leader, land owner, researcher, and innovative. Most of the terms across the Negative Impacts area were marked M, including imperialistic, militaristic, and capitalist. These results suggested to us that unequal binary gender systems constrain capacities to address problems of peace ecology. When women are disempowered, many of the attributes associated with positive

impacts are devalued, while empowerment of other positive attributes depends on transgression or suppression of the gender binary.

3. *Now what?* What kinds of action do the patterns we've discovered imply? Our seminar generated new questions:

- What would the board look like if we added other differences, such as class, race, and culture?
- How can the connection of the gender binary to positive and negative poles be abolished?
- How can constructive capacities that are gendered be fostered in all people, regardless of their biological sex?
- How can the ideological constructs of gender be further dismantled?
- What are some potential unintended consequences when the binary is disrupted or blurred?

## **BEYOND CLOSE READING: POSING AND EXPLORING INTERDISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS**

### **1. Finding Gender Where There Are No People: The DMZ Wildlife Sanctuary**

The group assigned to the chapter from *Peace Ecology* in our seminar (Jessica Hwang, Lauren Madden, Nathan Magee, and Alyssa Sanford) was charged with adding gender to an instructional approach to key concepts in the text. They focused on a brief passage in which Amster describes a wildlife sanctuary in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea, using it as an example of how “demilitarization can serve to promote biodiversity and thriving ecosystems” (p. 21). Within this depopulated two-and-a-half-mile wide strip of land, rare and endangered species that once inhabited the entire peninsula have a safe place to thrive (Brady, 2012). The group found this example paradoxical, because peace ecology advocates a “holistic sensibility” of human interconnectedness with the environment, but the health of the DMZ ecosystem depends on the absence of people. The example seems rooted in an assumed split between humans and nature; for nature to thrive peacefully, people must be eliminated. If there are no people, how do you analyze gender?

A pedagogical approach addressing this question needs to start by finding the human activities surrounding the depopulated natural space. The goal of instruction is to create a *thick description* of the place; that is, to

assemble as many details about the place as possible, with the aim of discovering gendered patterns. The instructor can present some background, but the main learning activity would be a “search and learn,” in which small groups of students conduct online and library research and collect a variety of materials, including images, timelines, maps, news stories, case studies, and personal narratives. Each group analyzes their findings and presents them to the class for further discussion.

Questions like the following can guide the instructor and students in collecting materials:

- How did this place come to be the way it is? How have power, conflict, and peace efforts shaped its current condition?
- Who is in or near the place now? What does the place mean to them? What is everyday life like? How are families and communities structured? What activities are women and girls involved in? Men and boys?
- How do they interact with the natural environment? How do they meet their needs, and what structural or environmental obstacles do they face?
- How is cultural, structural, or direct violence manifested there, and who is involved in efforts to transform these conditions?

In the case of the DMZ, the class would review the long history of invasion and occupation by external forces seeking control of Korea’s natural resources. Much of the violence that has historically ravaged the country originated in other powers seeking control of Korea’s abundant resources (Brady, 2012). The Japanese occupation (1905–1945) exacerbated the depletion of resources, as did the Korean War (1950–1952), at the end of which the DMZ was established as a buffer between the conflicting sides. Students will discover that a million soldiers guard the DMZ, making it one of the most heavily militarized borders in the world (Lah & Kwon, 2015). They will learn that both sides have planted landmines in the area, and life is risky for the centuries-old farming villages along the border (Brady, 2012). Students may research the implications of the split between North and South Korea for families and communities, gender roles in the surrounding villages, gender norms and cultural stereotypes in the north and south, gender violence, and the gendered impact of the military presence. They could also research movements to reunify Korea and how Korean women’s movements have addressed related issues.

Two images that students will easily find on the Internet can spark a discussion of how a stereotypical gender binary is entrenched in peace discourses: images of the almost exclusively male military forces guarding

the border and of the Women's Peace Walk crossing the DMZ in 2015. These paired images can help spark a gender binary activity, with the goal of unpacking the association of masculinity with violence and femininity with peace, and how culture and social systems reinforce these connections.

### **GENDERED DILEMMAS IN CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION: THE THREE BEANS**

Challenged with adding the environment to an instructional approach to peace and gender, the group assigned to the chapter from *Invitation to Peace Studies* (Julien Blanchard, Janet Gray, and Leeann Thornton) focused on a story about crop cultivation that Dr. Thornton recalled from a conference. Johnathan Lynch, a researcher at Pennsylvania State University, spoke about the work of his colleagues, Rachel Smith and Jane Findeis, in developing bean varieties that could thrive in parts of Malawi and Mozambique where climate change has created adverse conditions for growing food staples. In interviews with community members, Smith and Findeis learned that women and men envisioned different uses for new crop varieties based on their gender roles: women are the primary growers, but men have greater social and geographic mobility (Smith & Findeis, 2013). The researchers, Western outsiders intending to help, found that they might unintentionally exacerbate conflict and structural violence. How can outsiders peacefully manage competing gendered interests in climate change adaptation?

Smith's and Findeis's research can be used as a case study, with the goal of unpacking the implications of gender roles in communities facing disruption of their livelihoods from climate change. The following is an adaptation of their findings.

Asked what they needed from a new bean variety, the community members described to the researchers three different sets of attributes. The first variety is easy and inexpensive to grow. Women of the community prefer this bean because it provides wholesome food for their families. The second variety is a cash crop that requires the purchase of commercial inputs, such as fertilizer and pesticides. If grown in enough quantity, this variety can be sold locally for a profit. Men prefer it because the profit enables them to gather in bars with other men, thereby expanding their social networks. The third variety is a cash crop that is more costly to grow, but can generate greater profit because it can be transported to and sold in cities. Men who already have some financial means and wider social networks prefer this seed, because the higher profit enables them to move to the cities, where they can start a new family. The first wife will

stay behind cultivating the crop that provides for her husband's new family, with added responsibility in the fields and less space or time to raise food for her own family.

Students are invited to explore the dilemmas that the researchers face in this case study. In small groups, they can role play or plan dialogue strategies between researchers and community members. Their initial aim would be to deepen their understanding of diverging preferences and of the implications for the community of choosing each type of bean. Beyond solving the researchers' dilemma, students would seek ways that community members can transform gendered conflicts.

The instructor and students can prepare groundwork for a role play activity by using prior knowledge, quick research, and analysis to explore the following questions:

- In what ways are cultural and structural violence at play in the story of the three beans—between men and women, community and researcher, local and global regions?
- What risks do women and girls face in communities where the social structure is changing in response to the impacts of climate change? Why is women's mobility more restricted than men's, and what are some consequences of this difference as climate change impacts the region? What kinds of social networks support women in responding to these challenges?
- What dialogue strategies could the community use to address conflicting interests, and how can the problem of the three beans be incorporated into an ongoing peacebuilding process?

## **SCENARIOS IN CLIMATE CHANGE: GENDERED VULNERABILITIES**

The group assigned to the chapter from *Gender and Climate Change* (Manisha Bandamede, Rachel DiVanno, Michael Robertson, and Natalie Tietjen) was drawn to a passage that Dankelman and Jensen quote from Lorena Aguilar, Senior Advisor to the International Union for Conservation of Nature: "Climate change exacerbates existing inequalities and slows progress toward gender equality. Gender equality is a prerequisite for sustainable development and poverty reduction. But inequalities are magnified by climate change" (p. 41). The problem that the group posed was: How does structural violence manifest itself in the gendered options available to people whose livelihoods are impacted by environmental degradation?

The group proposed that this problem be explored through case studies. The objective for students is to build a framework for analyzing how

the structural violence of gender inequality, in combination with other forms of indirect or “slow violence,” produces the conditions for direct violence. Social, political, and environmental conditions vary and interact widely across the world, so the goal of this activity would be to build a lens for evaluating actual situations rather than to draw universalizing conclusions. The group expected that students would find the complexity of these factors daunting, and recommended that the instructor provide a handout summarizing key concepts and critical factors to review with students in preparation for the case study activity. The instructor can find a case study or, for more advanced classes, invite student teams to research their own case studies. The instructor or the students could also fictionalize case studies based on actual critical factors. The group recommended that students focus on two kinds of options: the choices men and women face in staying in rural surroundings or migrating to urban locations, and education as a means of social mobility enabling people to migrate out of areas threatened by climate change. Small groups can prepare their case studies by creating thick descriptions, as described above in our section on the DMZ, then present them to the class in multimedia presentations or problem-posing dramatizations, perhaps using Theater of the Oppressed methods to invite the audience to participate in identifying and addressing structural violence. The questions on violence that we posed above in the section on the three beans can be adapted for these activities.

As a starting point for exploring gendered options in out-migration, below is a partial list of conditions described in *Gender and Climate Change*.

## Rural Settings

- Power dynamics change as women lose control of natural resources and access to technology more rapidly than men (p. 35).
- Women’s labor in meeting the basic needs of their families becomes harder and more time-consuming (p. 35).

Example: Women in Northern Kenya spend an average of 3 days per week gathering firewood. Their average weekly time gathering firewood is 8.2 hours; in more arid areas, 10.5 hours with loads of up to 100 pounds per trip.

- When climate crises lead to the loss of crops, livestock, or other needed resources, men under pressure to provide for their families migrate out, in hopes of quickly gaining income to make up for losses. Men may not want to leave rural villages, but they have the

choice to leave, whereas women are left behind feeling the full effects of climate change on their homes and livelihoods (p. 37).

- Landslides, soil erosion, and flooding change girls' opportunities because families need extra workers to collect resources for the family (p. 36).

Example: in Nepal, environmental degradation led to the forest cover shrinking by more than half over 20 years. Girls' education is hindered, because the scarcity of natural resources forces them to help manage their households' needs instead of going to school (36).

- Ecological destabilization from unsustainable development for cash crops and industrialization, together with the impacts of climate change, exacerbate structural violence and increase the risk of direct violence (p. 41).
- The incidence of men's interpersonal violence against women increases as jobs are cut, livelihoods are lost, and increased responsibilities enter their sphere (p. 41).

## Urban Settings

- Most people who migrate to cities from rural areas lack legal access to land and settle in areas with hazardous contamination, inadequate waste management and water sanitation, or landslides and flooding. Women predominate among the urban poor (p. 39).
- Women face the greatest risks of harm from contaminated water, waste, and toxic products, because their gender role of providing basic resources for the family does not change with migration to the city (p. 40).
- Cities are heterogeneous and power dynamics are more complex than in rural areas. Rural migrants face new intersecting forms of structural violence based on class, literacy, ethnicity, religion, and other factors (p. 81).

Below are some questions students could explore in investigating educational options:

- Do boys and girls have equal access to formal education? If not, why not? If so, what makes this possible?
- For young adults who have had formal schooling, does their education give them opportunities to move elsewhere when environmen-

tal conditions make life difficult? Are the opportunities for educated men and women the same or different? Why? What is the impact on a rural community when educated young people leave?

- Investigate the impact of environmental degradation on education, especially girls' access to education and their ability to achieve social mobility. What would help them stay in school? Research and speculate about possible solutions.
- What ethical choices do outsiders face when planning a school or an education program for a community, given that social structures and family life will be impacted?

Integrating gender analysis into environmental themes in peace education matters because peace learning is directed toward action. Peace educators want their students to gain the capacity to investigate conflict and work toward peace in nearly any context. Gender and the environment are prominent among the multiple intersecting factors that drive conflict and structure different ways of perceiving its causes and impacts. Because no one standpoint can fully capture a conflict or envision the needs that structural peace must address, transforming conflict is a recursive process; peace workers must repeatedly reflect on their work, raise new questions, and stretch their understanding. Problem-posing instruction as an approach to linking conceptual frameworks offers future practitioners the opportunity to practice ongoing, open-ended, integrative inquiry.

While we happily recommend the format of the student-faculty research seminar to other institutions as a model for stimulating creative ways of integrating multiple disciplines, that is not our primary intention for this chapter. Rather, we present our collaboration as evidence of the effectiveness of problem-posing for incorporating gender into the convergence between peace and environmental studies. Peace ecology makes evident the connections between militarism and environmental degradation, and urges the incorporation of human interconnectedness with the environment at all levels of peace work. Less evident are the obstacles gender ideology presents to this work, and the differing roles that gender dictates in how people interact with the environment. With the help of our collaborators, our project focused on discovering the implications of these differences at the micro level, paying attention to the ways that environmental degradation forces community structures and livelihoods into uncharted territory and exposes the indirect violence bound up in gender ideology.

The seminar's work was limited to sharing information and exploring ideas, and a critical limitation of the outcome presented here is that our shared learning did not include the extended recursive learning process that accompanies community engagement, which is properly a compo-

ment of problem-posing education. One result is that the instructional approaches we devised in the seminar assume a privileged outsider perspective, most obviously in the story of the three beans. The activities aim to make students empathetically aware of actual conditions facing subsistence communities elsewhere, but instructors can bring problem-posing closer to home by inviting students to apply their learning to understanding and responding to the gendered violence in their local communities, where the links between environmental injustice, food insecurity, and direct violence may be rarely discussed but quickly evident. Beyond empathy, students will need the capacity to decenter privileged viewpoints from their understanding of the problems they are studying. Intersectional, postcolonial, indigenous, and transnational frameworks can further help aspiring peace ecology workers to recognize how dominant ideologies drive structural violence and to identify “cracks in the system” where pressing unmet needs can be addressed by building peace.

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### NOTES

1. The links between gender and the environment have been explored through a variety of scholarly and policy lenses, including ecofeminism, feminist political ecology, women and development (WAD), and gender and development (GAD). This literature is vast, and has been added to with new policy documents and scholarly work on gender and climate change.
2. David Smith in *Peace Jobs: A Student's Guide to Starting a Career Working for Peace* (2016), claims that peace work can be done in virtually any career.
3. I have found Parker Palmer's discussion of “the great thing” in *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life* (1997) valuable in structuring learning communities capable of building knowledge collaboratively in ways that stretch the limits of their standpoints.
4. For a fuller description of the student-faculty research seminar model, see Friedman and Leigey (2014).
5. . The agenda linking equality, development, and peace emerged from a worldwide consultation process conducted through the UN's series of

World Conferences on Women and accompanying nongovernmental organization conferences (1975 in Mexico City, 1980 in Copenhagen, 1985 in Nairobi, and 1995 in Beijing, with follow up conferences extending into the 21st century). Primary documents from these conferences, including the Beijing Platform for Action, are readily available on the web.

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## CHAPTER 2

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# THE CAMPUS TRIGGER WARNING

**Tyler (Ellora) LaCarrubba**

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Colleges have been known for their encouragement of students to be exposed to new ideas (Committee A, 2014). However, college administrators and professors are being faced with a persistent question: whether trigger warnings have a place on campuses. Despite the belief that they are beneficial, the implementation of marked trigger warnings in college classrooms is problematic. Trigger warnings can mute different groups and their experiences, as well as perpetuate stereotypes about mental illness. This is harmful to students, professors, and administrators because trigger warnings are becoming increasingly difficult to define and understand, and whether they are implemented in the classroom can determine whether a student goes to a particular school, or a professor has a job at the end of the day.

### WHAT ARE TRIGGER WARNINGS?

Though the debate regarding trigger warnings on college campuses is in its infancy, trigger warnings themselves are not new. Their origins are largely online, appearing mainly on blogs to warn readers of potentially traumatic content such as sexual violence and self-harm (S. Brown, 2016;

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Committee A, 2014; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2015; Manne, 2015; The Times Editorial Board, 2014; Waldman, 2016). Here, they give the ability to “vulnerable readers to tread lightly through and around subjects that reignite[s] their pain” (Waldman, 2016). Similarly, “In academic settings, they are written or spoken warnings given by professors to alert students that course material might be traumatic for people with particular life experiences” (S. Brown, 2016). Despite this definition, trigger warnings are believed to encompass more than just providing a warning.

There are a number of topics which may result in a request for a trigger warning. The topics which are most frequently associated with trigger warnings are rape, sexual assault, suicide, self-harm, racism, and any form of violence, such as sexual violence, racial violence, and/or graphic violence (Arnett, 2016; S. Brown, 2016; Committee A, 2014; Downes, 2016; Essig, 2014; Flood, 2014; Holmes, 2016; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2015; The Times Editorial Board, 2014; Waldman, 2016). However, it is also important to note that these are not the only topics which may be triggering. As articulated by Gillian Brown (2015), “absolutely anything” can be a trigger because “triggers are anything the person can sense that reminds them of the cause of the triggering.”

Though these are not the only triggers, they are things any individual can experience. However, individuals in marginalized groups, including women and LGBTQ+-identified individuals, have an increased chance of having these experiences which tend to warrant a request for trigger warnings. These experiences can include assault, rape, bullying, and suicide-related behaviors (“Campus Sexual,” n.d.; “LGBT Youth,” 2017; *Statistics About*, 2015). As stated by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “some LGBTQ youth are more likely than their heterosexual peers to experience difficulties in their lives and school environments, such as violence” (2017). In this case, violence is defined as including “behaviors such as bullying, teasing, harassment, physical assault, and suicide-related behaviors,” and “LGBTQ youth are also at increased risk for suicidal thoughts and behaviors, suicide attempts, and suicide” (“LGBT Youth,” 2017). As found by the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, “23.1% of females and 5.4% of males experience rape or sexual assault” as undergraduate students, and “21% of TGQN (transgender, genderqueer, nonconforming) college students have been sexually assaulted” (n.d.). Additionally, according to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, “91% of the victims of rape and sexual assault are female, and 9% are male,” and 46% lesbians, 74.9% bisexual women and 43.3% heterosexual women reported sexual violence other than rape during their lifetimes, while 40.2% gay men, 47.4% bisexual men and 20.8% heterosexual men reported sexual violence other than rape in their lifetimes (*Statistics About*, 2015). Individuals in marginalized groups are at a higher risk to have

these experiences, which are associated with the topics which are frequently requested to have or are given trigger warnings.

The topics associated with trigger warnings can elicit a negative emotional response of fear, panic, or pain, among other emotions (G. Brown, 2015), which are common reactions when someone who has a mental health issue such as post-traumatic stress disorder is triggered by the content. This kind of reaction can cause someone to be “flooded with anxiety to the point of struggling to draw breath, and feeling disoriented, dizzy and nauseated” (Manne, 2015). Trigger warnings are given in an effort to protect those with such issues from material which will cause that experience to resurface (The Times Editorial Board, 2014) by “creat[ing] an alert about content in the discussion that could prompt traumatic memories” rather than “censor[ing] what’s about to be said” (Holmes, 2017).

Closely related to trigger warnings are content notes. Content notes, sometimes referred to as content warnings, are “a theoretically value-neutral way to provide information about the contents of something to allow people to decide if they want[] to engage with it” (s.e. smith, 2014). They are “often used interchangeably” with trigger warnings, and though they “are often conflated, they aren’t the same thing” (Flynn, 2016). Content notes differ from trigger warnings in that they don’t necessarily elicit the same type of physiological response (s.e. smith, 2014), and are about giving a warning for “something mature or challenging” (Flynn, 2016). The conflation of these terms is also problematic because it causes them to become intertwined to the point where one cannot be easily distinguished from the other. This causes them to be assumed to be the same, which is inaccurate based upon their definitions. As Johnston shares (2015), “I added a trigger warning (or, as I describe it, a content note) to my syllabus.” When the two become tied together, understanding what content notes are, how they differ from trigger warnings, and how the two are often conflated, is essential to understanding the debate surrounding the use of trigger warnings.

Also tied to this debate regarding trigger warnings is the debate regarding safe spaces. “Until about two years ago, a safe space referred to a room where people—often gay and transgender students—could discuss problems they shared in a forum where they were sheltered from epithets and other attacks” (Furedi, 2017). This view defines safe spaces as places where students “can feel comfortable talking about their experiences” and which “encourage a free exchange of ideas” (Downes, 2016). However, this is not the only view of safe spaces. Similar to some views of trigger warnings, safe spaces are viewed as places “where young adults are shielded from words and ideas that make some uncomfortable” (Lukianoff & Haidt, 2015). This view defines a safe space as somewhere which “insulates [students] from not just hostility, but the views of people who

are not like them” (Furedi, 2017). The differing views regarding safe spaces tend to also become conflated with the views of trigger warnings.

Though content notes and safe spaces are different from trigger warnings, the “shades of meanings and distinctions between these terms, and how they are used, has become muddied” (s.e. smith, 2014). As a result, references to trigger warnings tend to also be references to content notes and/or safe spaces. For example, Sophie Downes (2016) refers to a trigger warning consisting of “a professor’s saying in class, ‘The reading for this week includes a graphic description of sexual assault,’ or a note on a syllabus that reads, ‘This course deals with sensitive material that may be difficult for some students.’” Though one of those statements is a content note and not a trigger warning, they are both given as examples of trigger warnings. Similarly, Frank Furedi (2017) states, “Students’ frequent demand for protection from uncomfortable ideas on campus—such as so-called trigger warnings—is now paralleled by calls to be physically separated too.” Though trigger warnings and safe spaces are different, they are both being defined as ways in which students avoid discomfort on campuses.

This conflation of terms adds a layer of complexity to the debate regarding trigger warnings, because the use of the term ‘trigger warning’ is being used to encompass other terms as well. In combining trigger warnings and content notes, “the importance and value of the trigger warning” is undermined (s.e. smith, 2014) because trigger warnings are assumed to encompass warnings for anything a student may be opposed to hearing, rather than potentially traumatic material. Similarly, through the combination of trigger warnings and safe spaces, value is taken away from safe spaces in the same way; trigger warnings are being assumed to protect students from discussions they do not want to have. The terms ‘content note’ and ‘safe space’ being conflated with the term ‘trigger warning’ in this way makes the examination of the debate more difficult because terms are misused due to the way each term may be described as a trigger warning.

This conflation of terms causes trigger warnings to be controversial; with the definitions of several terms being tied to the definition of trigger warnings, pinpointing what exactly a trigger warning is becomes more difficult of a task. Additionally, the fact that anything can serve as a trigger also contributes to the controversy surrounding them. Though certain experiences, such as sexual assault, tend to warrant trigger warnings more than other experiences, such as homophobia, all of these experiences are still valid and have the ability to be extremely damaging. Moreover, the controversial nature of trigger warnings has caused there to be a debate regarding their use. The debate surrounding trigger warnings leads to an important question: if trigger warnings are meant to warn about poten-

tially distressing material, and potentially distressing material is being discussed in college classes, do trigger warnings belong in college classrooms?

## **SYLLABUS TRIGGER WARNING AND/OR CONTENT NOTE FORM**

The forms trigger warnings and/or content notes take tend to look relatively similar when used in syllabi. This happens through the presence, or lack thereof, of five main parts. These parts focus on the warning itself, information about the material or content being warned about, the expected level of student responsibility, the emotions or feelings of the student, and the role of the classroom, and whether they are made explicit or not. The interconnection of these parts create trigger warnings and/or content notes within syllabi.

In some instances of trigger warnings and/or content notes appearing on syllabi, they are explicitly marked. This could be at the beginning of the warning entirely, starting with something such as “Content note:” before moving into the rest of the warning (Johnston, 2015; McWilliams, 2015; I. Smith, 2016). This could also be done within the warning itself, such as by stating, “several of the readings could be triggers” (Clemens, 2016). In these cases, the warnings are explicitly labeled as warnings rather than solely providing the warning. However, not all warnings are explicitly marked in this way. Some are as brief as the statement, “this course deals with sensitive materials that may be difficult for some students” (Downes, 2016). This example does not mark the statement explicitly as providing a warning or notice to students.

Another important part of trigger warnings and/or content notes on syllabi is whether they provide any information about the material prompting the warning. Some warnings make explicitly clear the content of the material to be covered. One such warning is shared by Meredith Loken, a doctoral student, and reads,

This course is about sexual violence. We will be discussing rape and other forms of sexual abuse in class and you are expected to complete assignments concerning these topics. Some of the readings and films for this course are graphic and include narrative, testimony, and descriptions of sexual violence. (as cited in I. Smith, 2016)

This warning provides in-depth information as to what the course will entail. However, not all warnings contain information regarding what content is being warned about. Some warnings refer only to “sensitive material” (Downes, 2016) in the course, or only mention that reading may

contain triggering material (Clemens, 2016), rather than explain what the material will specifically cover.

Additionally, trigger warnings and/or content notes may also contain information regarding the level of responsibility expected of students when potentially difficult material is presented. In some instances of trigger warnings and/or content notes on syllabi, this is not mentioned at all, such as in the statement, “this course deals with sensitive material that may be difficult for some students” (Downes, 2016). However, in other warnings student responsibility is made explicit. This is exemplified in a warning given by Angus Johnston, a professor, which reads,

*If you ever feel the need to step outside during a class discussion you may always do so without academic penalty. You will, however, be responsible for any material you miss. If you do leave the room for a significant time, please make arrangements to get notes from another student or see me individually to discuss the situation. (2015, italic in original)*

This example in particular places explicit responsibility on the student to complete all assigned work regardless of if they are present for it or not. As seen when Ismail Muhammad, a graduate student instructor, provides a similar warning, which states that “this class will be a space to think deeply about explicit and, in some cases, disturbing texts” (as cited in I. Smith, 2016), statements regarding student responsibility do not need to be either non-existent or deeply explicit; these statements can be present in a less overt way.

Furthermore, the emotions or feelings of the student may be incorporated into trigger warnings and/or content notes. Some warnings expressly mention the way certain material may make a student feel. One instance of this is in a warning provided by Jacob McWilliams (2015), a postdoctoral research associate, which states, “*Some of what we read or view in class could well leave you feeling guilty, uncomfortable, anxious, and sad*” (italic in original). While this warning touches upon how certain content may elicit an emotional reaction, other warnings do not. Steven Hammer, an associate professor, does not include such a statement in his warning, which reads, “I will assign and ask that we discuss works that address and/or contain strong language, violence, sexual content, racial and gender inequity, and other representations that may challenge or trigger you” (as cited in I. Smith, 2016). As with the other parts, the feelings content may elicit in students does not always have to be explicitly stated in a trigger warning and/or content note.

The final main part of trigger warnings and/or content notes in syllabi is whether they state the role of the classroom. Building on the other parts, some warnings aim to establish the classroom as a place where potentially difficult material can and should be brought up (Downes,

2016; Flynn, 2016; Johnston, 2015; McWilliams, 2015; I. Smith, 2016). Returning to Muhammad's warning, the classroom is declared to be "a space to think deeply about explicit and, in some cases, disturbing texts" (as cited in I. Smith, 2016), making explicit this idea that difficult materials can be discussed. In a different direction, Colleen Clemens (2016), an associate professor, establishes the classroom as somewhere students should feel safe by including in her warning, "I want you to feel safe in the class at all times." However, not every warning will take a stance on the role of the classroom in the same manner that these warnings do.

As mentioned, each trigger warning and/or content note provided in a syllabus will not necessarily contain each of these parts. However, some warnings, such as McWilliams' (2015) warning, will contain each part. The full warning reads,

***Content warning:*** *This course focuses on issues of deep social injustice and the strategies used by oppressed groups to resist subjugation. It is impossible to explore these issues without also considering the tools of oppression—including instances of physical, verbal, emotional, and social violence. These are stories of trauma, and engaging with them may be distressing or painful. I will do my best to provide advance warning when we will be reading, watching, or discussing stories of trauma. If you anticipate needing additional accommodations—or if at any time in the semester you find yourself needing additional accommodations—in order to engage effectively with course materials, please let me know.*

*Additionally, we will spend a good deal of time this semester discussing issues of deep social injustice—including racism, sexism, heterosexism, and transphobia. Some of what we read or view in class could well leave you feeling guilty, uncomfortable, anxious, and sad. These are normal and healthy responses to exploring social injustice, and I will do my best to build a community in which these feelings can be discussed honestly and openly if necessary. If at any time you have ideas for how I can be more effective at supporting you or your classmates as we grapple with personal and societal injustices, please let me know.* (bold and italic in original)

The warning begins with the explicit naming of it as a content warning. McWilliams then discusses what content may be distressing, and continues to provide information regarding the material in the course throughout the entire warning. Next, student responsibility is touched upon with the statement, "*in order to engage effectively with course materials*" (McWilliams, 2015, italic in original). Though more subtle, it places responsibility on students to engage with materials rather than avoid them. McWilliams (2015) also touches upon the emotional response students may have when engaging with course content through his mention of how the material may cause students to feel. Lastly, he touches upon the role of the classroom when he states he "*will do [his] best to build a community in which these feelings can be discussed honestly and openly if necessary*" (italic in original). Looking at these parts, and whether they are present in trigger warnings

and/or content notes on syllabi, is particularly important due to the nature of the debate surrounding trigger warnings and their use on college campuses. For example, whether there is an explicitly stated responsibility of any student who may choose to not participate in a particular discussion matters due to the tension in the debate regarding whether students take advantage of trigger warnings.

### **THE DEBATE: PROMINENT VIEWS OF TRIGGER WARNINGS**

Trigger warnings have recently spread from their origins in online settings to college campuses and classrooms, which has resulted in an intricate debate. One important facet of this debate is what trigger warnings do. Three main views as to what is accomplished through trigger warnings have arisen; they prepare students for certain materials (S. Brown, 2016; Downes, 2016; Flood, 2014; Holmes, 2017; Manne, 2015), they lead to the avoidance of certain materials (Swanger, 2016; The Times Editorial Board, 2014), or they do both (Committee A, 2014; Flynn, 2016; Shapiro, 2014; Waldman, 2016).

Trigger warnings are argued to have a place on college campuses in an effort to warn and prepare students who may have a negative emotional reaction to certain material for their presence in the classroom. The emphasis from this view is on the idea that trigger warnings are meant to “create an alert about content in the discussion that could prompt traumatic memories if a person happened to experience something related in the past” (Holmes, 2017) rather than to promote the avoidance of certain discussions in the classroom. However, this view does not account for two things. The first thing is that trigger warnings may not always help students avoid having a negative reaction. As stated by a student, eliciting this response is “never going to be completely avoided, but if you can reduce it dramatically, why wouldn’t you?” (Arnett, 2016). This inability to completely prevent a reaction is partly because triggers are complex and can be “anything the person can sense that reminds them of the cause of the triggering” (G. Brown, 2015). The second thing it fails to account for is that not all students will see trigger warnings in this way, and some may try to take advantage of their presence. This could be in the form of using them as an excuse to miss class and not make up the work (Shaw-Thornburg, 2014).

The belief associated with the argument that trigger warnings are given to avoid discussion does account for students taking advantage of trigger warnings. The main idea of this view is that students are trying to avoid contact with material and discussion they do not agree with; emphasis is placed on students looking to “scrub campuses clean of words, ideas, and

subjects that might cause discomfort or give offense” (Lukianoff & Haidt, 2015). Those who support this view tend to believe trigger warnings allow students to miss class and assignments related to uncomfortable topics, or force professors to change discussion and assignment topics to prevent discomfort in their students (Swanger, 2016; The Times Editorial Board, 2014). However, this view fails to see trigger warnings in any other light, and therefore fails to see them as having the ability to help certain students be better prepared for class discussions pertaining to particular experiences. Additionally, this is where this view of trigger warnings deviates from the definition of what a trigger warning is, moving away from the idea of trigger warnings as existing to warn and seeing them as existing only to censor (Klugman, 2015).

Combining these two views is the argument that trigger warnings can serve both of these functions. As Waldman notes, referring to trigger warnings as flags, “In some cases, the flags are meant to shepherd students away from high-voltage material; in others, they simply advise readers to be prepared” (2016). This view places emphasis on the eclectic nature of trigger warnings and acknowledges that they do not need to be limited to serving one function or the other. However, this becomes problematic because it does not help answer the question articulated by the debate surrounding trigger warnings. If they might be both helpful and harmful, how can we decide whether or not professors should or should not be using them in college classrooms, and if so, when?

### **WHICH GROUPS ARE AFFECTED?**

There are three main groups affected by this debate. The groups are students, professors, and administrators. These groups in particular are affected by the debate because of their presence on college campuses; without these three groups, colleges would not be able to function as institutions in the same way they do presently.

Students pay for the education they receive, and are being viewed as consumers. They are using their ability to contact administration to make formal complaints about discomfort they experience in the classroom, and it is believed that they will ultimately be the ones to make the decision because they will “get[] what they want as long as they down the cash” (Winstanley, 2015). In some instances, students demand the removal of professors who offend them (Friedersdorf, 2016). However, as explained by Bailey Loverin (2014), the goal is to mark content which may “elicit a reaction from students with PTSD” rather than to “censor anyone or to restrict academic freedom.” Similarly, Sophie Downes (2016) states that “students are trying to create ways to have compassionate, civil dialogue.”

Professors are seeing this move as a growing threat to their teacher autonomy. Some are responding by “try[ing] to avoid showing anything too upsetting” (Essig, 2014) in the classroom. There is a perceived increase in demands from administration for professors to either “remove ‘triggering material’ from their courses entirely” whenever possible (The Times Editorial Board, 2014) or use trigger warnings to avoid facing institutional investigation (Piper, 2016). Such demands have caused professors to “fear their own students” (O’Brien, 2016). Professors who do not have tenure are left “feeling more vulnerable to student complaints and unflattering course evaluations” (Arnett, 2016). One professor cites the concern, “How many complaints will it take before chairs and administrators begin to worry that I’m not giving our customers—er, *students*, pardon me—the positive experience they’re paying for?” (Schlosser, 2015, italics in original). Professors think that they should be providing “a rich and diverse body of study that often requires students to confront difficult or uncomfortable material, and encourages them to discuss such topics openly” (The Times Editorial Board, 2014), and think that the demands for trigger warnings are infringing upon that and could ultimately cost them their jobs.

This is also an issue on the administrative level, as administrators have to take a stance on this issue. Administrators at Drexel University have stated, “It is expected that instructors will offer appropriate warning and accommodation regarding the introduction of explicit and triggering materials used” (Piper, 2016). In contrast to this, administrators at the University of Chicago have decidedly taken a stance against explicit trigger warnings and safe spaces, viewing them as a hindrance to the freedom of expression (Grieve, 2016). With students feeling more like customers due to tuition costs, administrators are being forced to take a stance toward or away from trigger warnings (Arnett, 2016). Their decision, in turn, impacts both students and professors.

## CONSEQUENCES OF USING TRIGGER WARNINGS

The use of trigger warnings on college campuses and in classrooms comes with consequences. These consequences affect each individual in these settings, whether they are a student, professor, administrator, or even an individual who trigger warnings are supposed to benefit. Consequences of trigger warnings for students include having less exposure to topics deemed too upsetting for further discussion, and the possibility for a negative reaction if a potentially triggering topic is brought up without a trigger warning being given. When all material deemed to be upsetting is either given a warning or removed entirely from classrooms (Essig, 2014),

students in those classrooms are either getting a limited exposure to that content or not being exposed to that content at all. Topics which may be triggering are “likely to be marginalized if not avoided altogether by faculty who fear complaints for offending or discomforting some of their students” (Committee A, 2014). If such topics do arise in the classroom, and a warning has not been given for that discussion, the responsibility is now on the student to decide what is appropriate to say. One student discussed not wanting to risk “truly hurting someone or damaging their mental and emotional well-being if it could be easily avoided” (Arnett, 2016) with a warning. Should a student proceed with the discussion, they are taking that risk and could possibly evoke a negative reaction in another individual in the room. Trigger warnings are “creating a culture in which everyone must think twice before speaking up” (Lukianoff & Haidt, 2015). Additionally, through the presence of a trigger warning, students are being told which content is expected to hurt and which is not, taking that decision away from them and priming them to believe one thing over another. Though students advocate for trigger warnings, they suffer consequences from their use.

Similarly, professors are also faced with difficult decisions when using trigger warnings. In using a trigger warning, the decision has to be made regarding which content warrants a warning, and which content does not; which material is upsetting to the point of giving it a warning? (Flood, 2014). By deciding for everyone present which material is safe to talk about, and where it is safe to talk about, it implies all other topics and areas of campus do the opposite until otherwise stated (Shapiro, 2014). Additionally, professors need to decide how to give the warning. Trigger warnings and potentially triggering content alike have the ability to out students with certain experiences, and depending on the context in which they are brought up, this could create an even more uncomfortable situation for students with these experiences (Flood, 2014). Another consequence of this is whether supplying a warning will result in students who use it as a reason to avoid the material and associated work (Shaw-Thornburg, 2014).

These issues are also faced by administrators, who have to decide the stance of the institution on trigger warnings, and respond accordingly to student feedback. With students being viewed as consumers, administrators have to take their comments and complaints into consideration (Gretatrix, 2011). Some students respond to offensive messages from professors by calling for their removal entirely (Friedersdorf, 2016). If professors give trigger warnings, and students feel offended by the course material regardless, administrators are likely where students will bring that complaint. Additionally, administrators have the important task of making sure trigger warnings do not limit free speech and academic free-

dom across the entire campus (Committee A, 2014). As explained by Conor Friedersdorf, a writer for *The Atlantic*, a number of speakers were disinvited from speaking on campuses as a result of student “efforts to censor speakers based on their viewpoints” (2016). Administrators are constantly faced with having to decide where to draw the line.

### A NEW AFFECTED GROUP

Students with mental illnesses, especially post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), are viewed as the group that trigger warnings are being requested to support, and are not exempt from the consequences surrounding their use. Trigger warnings first came about “for the benefit of people who experience panic attacks, PTSD flashbacks, and other responses” (s.e. smith, 2014). In some instances, trigger warnings can be helpful for those with mental illnesses. However, this is not always the case. As stated by Edna Foa, a professor of clinical psychology, “I do not appreciate this idea that people should always decide whether they will be made upset. If we act as though they cannot handle distressing ideas, we communicate the unhelpful message that they are not strong” (as cited in Waldman, 2016). This sentiment is echoed by Nicole Wildhood (2016), who states, “As someone diagnosed with PTSD, I resent being treated as fragile.” By using trigger warnings as a form of protection against negative reactions caused by a mental illness, those who would presumably benefit from their use are instead rendered weak.

The idea that students with mental illnesses are weak and need protection serves to perpetuate the stereotypes of individuals with mental illnesses as childlike and naïve (Burge, n.d.; Fawcett, 2016). There is a belief that students do not want to be exposed to any ideas or viewpoints which may result in their discomfort (Arnett, 2016; S. Brown, 2016; Furedi, 2017; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2015; Shapiro, 2014), and trigger warnings are acting as the shield or buffer for those ideas. Further, if trigger warnings are acting as a buffer in this way they also perpetuate the stereotype that individuals with mental illnesses are unpredictable (Burge, n.d.; Tartakovsky, 2016). In serving as a buffer, trigger warnings are expected to control any negative reaction material may elicit from a student. This ideology and these stereotypes of mental illness are ultimately what get reinforced through the use of trigger warnings.

This ideology creates a situation in which students are limited in when and where they can share their experiences, and their ability to decide which material will be harmful and which material will not be harmful is taken away. They can either out themselves to the professor by explaining their situation (The Times Editorial Board, 2014), or risk having a reac-

tion in class and being outed to the entire group. If something elicits a negative response from them, “They are stuck in a classroom where they can’t get out, or if they do try to leave, it is suddenly going to be very public” (Flood, 2014). The only alternative to this is to remain silent about it entirely. Should their experiences lead them to need or request a trigger warning for certain material, they are again viewed as being weak, which further silences them (Holmes, 2016). This both prevents them from telling their stories and makes it more difficult for them to seek help should they need it. In not hearing about their experiences, we limit our ability to understand and potentially prevent them, allowing them to continue (Schultz, 1998). This is not only a consequence for those who have been through these things, but for everyone else as well.

## CONCLUSION

Trigger warnings are new to college campuses, though they are not new concepts in general. Despite being continually conflated with content notes and safe spaces, trigger warnings are able to be defined as “written or spoken warnings given by professors to alert students that course material might be traumatic for people with particular life experiences” (S. Brown, 2016) when used in academic contexts. Though this definition is generally agreed upon, trigger warnings are viewed as allowing students to avoid course material which makes them uncomfortable rather than learning from the discomfort of having their ideas and opinions challenged in the classroom (Lukianoff & Haidt, 2015). The differing views surrounding trigger warnings raises the important question of whether trigger warnings should be implemented in the classroom.

Trigger warnings have a large impact on students, professors, and administrators when trying to answer this question. Students are generally trying to make their discussions safer for everyone in the classroom (Downes, 2016), and many professors are grappling with whether to use trigger warnings, change the material they teach, or risk losing their jobs (Schlosser, 2015), and administrators are generally finding themselves faced with the task of having to decide whether trigger warnings infringe upon the freedoms of speech and expression on campuses (Grieve, 2016; Piper, 2016). However, the use of trigger warnings does not come without larger consequence than limiting discussion or the loss of a job. Trigger warnings require those who have certain experiences to either out themselves as having the experience, or remain silent. In not having the discussion, we are unable to better understand these triggering situations, and therefore have a harder time preventing them from happening again (Schultz, 1998). Because of their ability to further silence and, ultimately,

mute those who have these experiences, trigger warnings are more problematic in college classrooms than they are helpful.

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## CHAPTER 3

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# RECIRCULATING THE NARRATIVE

## Exposing the Ethics of Language Use in *13 Reasons Why*

Kelly Concannon

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For the girl who is targeted, the experience of being labeled a slut is heightened and sharpened like ever before. In today's electronic age, 'slut' is an identity with no escape.

—*I AM NOT a Slut: Slut Shaming in the Age of the Internet*  
(Tanenbaum, 2015, p. 3)

Recently I received a letter from our school board about the Netflix series *13 Reasons Why*. In the letter, our local school board expressed deep concern regarding “disturbing trends” involving teen mental health, self-harm, and suicide *prompted* by the Netflix series. The letter equally acknowledges a web-based game on social media, which ultimately involves a suicide challenge: The Blue Whale Challenge (Murphy, 2017). Thus, the letter encourages parents to talk to their children about what they watch and how they experience it; they conclude with a list of resources including suicide hotlines and tips for parents. The purpose of

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the letter is to both ask parents to actively take a part in their children's lives and to take seriously the effects of social media and popular culture. The letter I received is part of a general response to the series, as administrators across the country are providing responses which are intended to make visible multiple resources (Richter, 2017).

Schools around the nation are revealing their overwhelming concern about the effects of watching the series. While most schools are offering similar solutions to what they see as potential consequences of watching the show—which include making resources visible, encouraging conversations, and watching the series with your children—the fear is that the show presents an “easy way out” to teens who may be experiencing something similar to the main character, who ultimately kills herself after repeatedly being bullied, sexually assaulted, and finally raped. In “Why Schools are Warning Parents About Netflix’s Series *13 Reasons Why*,” Kimble (2017) outlines the ways that the show could “glamorize teen suicide.” As a response, the National Association of School Psychologists issued a warning against the show to parents of “vulnerable youth” due to the ways that suicide, then, is portrayed as the only answer to bullying and sexual violence. Additional mental health organizations have followed suit (Khosla, 2017). Schools across the country from Montclair Public School District, Newton Public Schools, Maryland, Ohio, New York, and Canada are equally concerned that students will be unable to adequately process the content of the show, given the themes which were identified as “very adult themes” (Kimble, 2017). In other cases, schools are banning conversations surrounding *13 Reasons Why* (Long, 2017) noting that students are not prepared to discuss such issues. In all of these cases, there is an underlying assumption that the show may trigger self-harm. These responses should not be minimized in any way, given the prevalence of suicides that occur amongst young people today.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people, resulting in about 4,400 deaths per year; according to the CDC. For every suicide among young people, there are at least 100 suicide attempts. Over 14% of high school students have considered suicide, and almost 7% have attempted it. (Bullyingstatistics, n.d.)

The series *13 Reasons Why* is based on a 2007 young adult novel by Jay Asher, which was on the *New York Times* best seller list in 2011. The series was released through Netflix on March 31, 2017 (Hale, 2017). The series depicts a high school girl, Hannah Baker, who after multiple experiences of bullying, sexual harassment/sexual assault, and ultimately rape, kills herself in her bath tub, where her parents find her. She leaves behind 13 tapes to all who have influenced her decision to finally end her life.

The public reception of the series reflects an overwhelming concern with preventative measures to avoid the end result (the suicide), and rightly so, given how high suicide rates are for young people (Robinson, 2017). Yet, in some cases, the series is vilified as serving as a catalyst *for* engaging in self-harm, rather than focusing on how the series *reflects* what teenagers experience in their everyday lives beginning with the way that they use language to harm one another. The key here, I think, is to focus on the *everyday* material realities that particularly young women experience on an everyday basis and to disrupt heteronormative narratives about young women.

To this end, my analysis will be framed around the following questions:

- What are the underlying cultural narratives embedded in both the: production and reception of this series?
- To what extent does glossing over the effects of slut shaming function to constrain larger conversations regarding bullying and its connection to sexual harassment, assault, and rape?
- How might we understand the intersections of sexual violence and suicide and how they permeate popular culture?

As we build a safe and healthy framework for young college men and women, we can work on creating conditions on our campuses that carefully explore how this series charts the downward spiral of a young woman who initially experienced slut shaming. College students either directly experience bullying and/or still carry the effects of bullying from earlier years (“Bullying in College,” 2014) The emotional and physical health risks are very prevalent today (Lamotte, 2015). In doing so, we can pay attention to the role of social media and popular culture in prescribing narrow roles to men and women and create new conditions of and for change.

## **NARRATIVES MATTER**

The series carefully makes a statement about how women are both denied and afforded power and agency. Throughout the series, we are introduced to flashbacks of Hannah Baker’s life. In the majority of these flashbacks, Hannah is seen as resisting stereotypes about her sexuality, as she resists rumors that have been targeted towards her with little to no basis. The series begins with an accusation of her behavior with a boy, Justin, who is immediately followed by the word “slut.” The repetition of the word is circulated throughout her high school. Consequently, she was bullied because people at her school assumed that she was behaving in a way that

was not appropriate. As the season develops, the audience is provided with a glimpse of her life, and shown how assumptions about her sexuality led to instances of bullying, sexual assault, and ultimately rape. Yet, as she continues to reveal her experiences to us, it is clear that her suicide, ultimately, represents her inability to keep fighting. During the last episode, she reveals why she decided to end her life: to Justin and Jessica who each broke her heart; to Zach who messed up her reputation; to Ryan who broke her spirit; and to Bryce, who broke her soul (*13 Reasons*, 2017).

However, the narrator of this series, Hannah Baker, ironically maintains a strong sense of power *after* she has taken her own life. The series opens with Hannah assertively speaking directly to the audience. She tells us to sit back and relax, as she is about to tell the story of her life. Several individuals are implicated for affecting Hannah which include: Justin (tape 1); Jess (tape 2); Tyler (tape 3); Courtney (tape 4), Marcus (tape 5), Zach (tape 6) Ryan (tape 7), Clay, Justin (repeat), Jenny, Bryce, and finally, Mr. Porter, the school counselor (tape 13).

The first episode serves as an introduction to both the main characters of the season and overarching themes regarding bullying, slut-shaming, sexual violence, and ultimately suicide. In the first episode, we learn that the series is dictated by Hannah's voice, as she carefully goes through the details of her different encounters with those implicated on the tapes. However, we see the progression of these encounters through the lens of Clay Jensen, who comes home from school and finds the 13 tapes at his doorstep. He is instructed to listen to all of the tapes and then pass them on to the next person. As the season progresses, we later learn that Clay was the only person on the tapes that did not harm Hannah, and his actions throughout the series illustrate his compassion and love for her as he attempts to process the events leading up to her death.

In the opening stages of the series, Hannah tells her audience that it all begins with a house party. She discusses going to this house party to meet other students, since she is one of the new girls at school. "It was just a party. I didn't know it was the beginning of the end." We are then introduced to the fact that Justin, the initial impetus for the series, is the subject of the first tape. In this first episode, Hannah tells her audience that she starts to fall in love with Justin, who she was initially introduced to at the party. Their banter is playful. After several encounters at school, they begin texting and talking on the phone, and eventually, agree to meet up at the park, where Hannah experiences her first kiss. She slowly moves down the slide into Justin's arms.

This episode is used to carefully re-write the narrative of her reputation. It is the initial interaction with Justin that Hannah identifies as responsible for her reputation slowly deteriorating throughout the series. To her, it was a simple kiss. Her first kiss, to be exact. In fact, Hannah

makes it clear that her truth—the less exciting truth—deserves to be heard and remembered. The audience is reminded too that “a rumor based on a kiss, basically ruined everything:”

I know what you are all thinking. Hannah Baker is a slut. Did you catch that? I can't say it anymore. And that's how it all happened. We kissed. Why? Did you hear something else? Nope. We just kissed. Sorry to disappoint you. But I guess we are even. Sorta.

The next day at school Justin is talking to his friends and shows them the photo of Hannah sliding down the slide. In the photo, the audience can see her underwear. One of Justin's friends, Bryce, takes Justin's phone and sends the picture of Hannah to everyone in the school. We see Hannah shyly walking into class and sitting in her seat. She makes eye contact with Justin, who diverts his attention elsewhere. During class, students' phones continue to buzz as they open an image of Hannah from last night.

This initial encounter between Hannah and Justin illustrates the power of *perceptions* of how masculinity and femininity should be performed. When kids were sent the text, they chose to read it as Hannah being promiscuous. Rather than students asking Hannah what happened during their meet up, the whispers over her photograph alluded to the fact that Hannah had sex with Justin. When Justin's phone was taken by Bryce and he sent the picture to everyone in school, Justin did little to confront Bryce but instead maintained little to no accountability to Hannah for initially, showing it to his friends the next day in the first place. Throughout her narrative, Hannah insists that her actual experiences with Justin were not as interesting, therefore individuals at her school *choose* to write her into a particular narrative of femininity.

That is what slut-bashing is all about: making the slut-basher feel secure in his or her own masculinity and femininity. Slut-bashing reveals the tenuousness of gender identities. If femininity and masculinity require slut-bashing to be bolstered, how stable can these identities really be? (Tanenbaum, 2015 p. 105)

## SLUT SHAMING AND BULLYING

This series makes an important critique regarding the cultural narrative that is linked to slut shaming; it carefully urges its audience to not sit back and wait until the main character, Hannah, is authorized to tell her story *after* she has committed suicide. We see how actions are interpreted, and an “innocent” girl is the victim of slut-bashing, which should be under-

stood as a form of bullying. Bullying is a word used to describe behaviors that occur in educational settings, as there has been a resurgence of interest by educators to identify and respond to situations where students engage in behaviors that are inappropriate. It is defined as “unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.” The main elements of bullying include both an imbalance of power as well as repetition (“What is Bullying” n.d.). Additional studies indicate:

When it comes to verbal bullying, this type of bullying is the most common type with about 77% of all students being bullied verbally in some way or another including mental bullying or even verbal abuse. These types of bullying can also include spreading rumors, yelling obscenities or other derogatory terms based on an individual’s race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc. Out of the 77% of those bullied, 14% have a severe or bad reaction to the abuse. (“School Bullying Statistics,” n.d.)

Given the widespread amount of bullying—both online and in educational settings—how can we work to minimize gender-based violence that is based on perceived ideas about women’s sexuality? That is, how can we learn from real life tragedies and from the circulation of narratives involving bullying to enact a change within the educational climate? What would happen if we were able to make sense of slut-shaming and slut-bashing as a gender based form of bullying?

Hannah reminds her audience that *everyone* is accountable, as we are introduced to tapes 2 and 3, where bullying and slut-shaming continue to gain visibility. She refers to both people who directly bullied her and those who merely watched her being bullied. “Maybe you watched. Maybe you didn’t do anything at all. Maybe you should have. We will get through this tape by tape—and don’t forget there are others.” In these episodes, Hannah begins to make friends with Jessica and Alex—two transfer students who are both outliers at the school. We watch them discuss their experiences at school at a coffee house on a regular basis, until Alex and Jess begin dating without Hannah’s knowledge. When they break up, Alex creates a “list” that is circulated across the school. The list identifies the “best” and “worst” of the females at the school, and he writes down that Hannah has the “best ass,” as he deliberately pits Hannah and Jess (the “worst ass”) against one another. When Jess assumes that Hannah is responsible for their breakup, and with the evidence from the “list,” she calls Hannah a “slut,” slaps her in the face, and tells Hannah to enjoy it.

In this episode, Hannah continuously reminds her audience of the power of words and how using these words to label women provides negative consequences. First, we see the power of both women and men identi-

fying Hannah's assumed behavior as deserving of the word "slut" with the circulation of the image. Then, Jess calls Hannah a slut because she assumes that she is the reason for her breakup with Alex. However, Alex's behavior of placing Hannah on the list creates an additionally problematic environment for Hannah. Hannah explains, "Maybe you say its nothing, Alex, it's just words." Hannah reminds her audience of the effects of using language to sexualize and disempower women.

Maybe you think it's silly ... but you didn't walk that hall. You didn't feel those eyes on you. You never heard those whispers... But it was just a joke, right, Alex? You think I was taking it all way too serious. But here's the thing, you have never been a girl.

This episode too raises serious questions about the double standard that girls experience on a daily basis. Unlike other girls represented in these episodes, Hannah does not take being on this list as a compliment; rather, she sees it as offensive. For example, the audience is provided with a scene where Clay and Hannah are discussing the list, and Clay naively tells Hannah she should be happy she made the list. Hannah then forces the audience to pay attention to the serious effects that labeling and stereotyping have on the behaviors of others, as she asks Clay why men make these types of lists in the first place. The audience is then sent to a flashback where Hannah went to a convenience store and was grabbed by another high school student, Bryce. When she calls him out, he whispers in her ear and says, "I don't usually listen to sophomore gossip, but for what it's worth, that list got it right." Hannah walks out of the store and is in tears. She speaks directly to Alex (the subject of the 3rd tape), "It seems like nothing ... when you put that name on my list... you made it open season on Hannah Baker." In her narration, Hannah tells the audience that these experiences should be understood through the concept of the butterfly effect, indicating that "everything affects everything."

### **INTERROGATING THE WORD SLUT**

Young girls are positioned to experience a double standard regarding their sexuality. In this series, Hannah experiences a double standard because she does not adhere to what is expected of her. When she does not act according to expectations about gender roles, she is punished. This begins with the use of the word slut, which then ripples into actions that involve disrespecting and violating Hannah. The word slut carries with it a complicated history (Wadkins, 2012), and feminists to this day

dispute whether using the word in an effort to repurpose it—does more harm than good (Carr, 2013).

The series implores its audience to think carefully about how the use of the word slut is complicated insofar as it raises questions about who is placed in the position of power to determine the identities of young women. In “There’s no such thing as a Slut,” Nicole Lang argues that

Our sympathy, as viewers, is somewhat conditional upon this fact: Hannah Baker doesn’t deserve to be slut-shamed because, factually speaking, she wasn’t a “slut.” Hannah remained “pure and clean” until Bryce (Justin Prentice) assaulted her and took her virginity. (Lang, 2017, p. 2)

To this end, she argues that our sympathy for slut shaming resides in the fact that she didn’t engage in sex. Her focus in this piece is on the double standard that women are faced with, as she carefully draws attention to the role that viewers are given in this process regarding the extent to which victims *deserve* the punishments that they face. She argues

That’s because slut-shaming is about power as much as it is about sex. It’s about our ability to strip women of their worth based on an extremely narrow version of acceptable femininity, one that tells transgressors they have so little value they may as well not even exist. (p. 9)

The use of the word slut isolates girls from the group and draws attention to their negative behaviors and ultimately positions them as either a good girl or a bad girl; either way, there are consequences.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE EDUCATIONAL CLIMATE**

Social media plays an integral role in taking agency from young women and re-purposing their identities to fit current ideologies regarding women’s’ bodies. Young women are consistently online, as their presence on social media exceeds men’s (Sales, 2016). Given the push for women to look and behave a particular way, it is no coincidence that social media sites become a new tool for slut-shaming. Throughout the series, the audience is introduced to the power of social media and its ability to ruin someone’s reputation. In tapes 4 and 5, we are introduced to both Tyler and Courtney. At the beginning of this episode, Hannah tells the audience that we are a society of “stalkers”; she speaks directly to Tyler, and asks him just how long he was watching her. The audience is then introduced to a scene where Hannah is being photographed in her room and she explains that she was “too afraid to move.” In this case, Hannah tells her friend Courtney that she is being watched, and Courtney comes to

Hannah's house when her parents are not home. The girls drink too much, and start to play truth or dare. Courtney dares Hannah to kiss her, and Tyler snaps a photo through the bushes. As predicted, the photo is circulated throughout the school. Although it is difficult to see both of the girls' faces, Courtney does everything that she can to implicate Hannah in an effort to protect her sexuality, as it is implied that Courtney is gay. This is the second time where Hannah's photo was taken without her consent and was circulated without her permission. "Teenagers today aren't necessarily crueler than they were in the 1600s. It's just that now when we chastise each other, everybody who has access to the Internet can see it. And once that picture or video is out, you can't be completely safe in your mind that the past won't creep up on you at some random time. This is the new scarlet letter" (Fagbenle, 2013 p. 4). This photo, which raises questions about Hannah's sexuality and is intended to overly sexualize her, serves as another impetus for her demise. She is unable to connect with other women (because they are either threatened by her or judge her) and the majority of the men are objectifying her in such a way that she is rendered powerless. The power of social media, then, to dictate who she is raises serious questions about its impact on young women.

In *American Girls: Social Media and the Secret Lives of Teenagers*, Nancy Jo Sales (2016) explores the effects of social media on young girls ranging from 13 to 19, and argues that social media has drastically effected how girls' sexualities (namely heteronormative expectations and assumptions) are performed and assessed, based on the public presentations posted through social media sites. Her work highlights how social media negatively affects girls' perceptions of their bodies, self-worth, and self-esteem. Sales investigates how the double standard for young women materializes through social media, thereby creating a culture of competition.

A landmark 2007 report by the American Psychological Association (APA) found girls being sexualized—or treated as objects of desire ... "as things rather than people with legitimate sexual feelings of their own"—in virtually every form of media, including movies, television, music videos and lyrics, video games and the Internet, advertising, cartoons, clothing, and toys. (p. 14)

Sales (2016) highlights how social media creates particular types of cultural attitudes and behaviors. These include: a culture of young people who engage in competition and public shaming; while simultaneously, many young girls engage in these practices to garner attention because their self-worth is based on their ability to adhere to cultural norms (pp. 235–239).

Significantly, Sales (2016) creates links between bullying, sexism and sexual objectification, and social media. In her study, she reveals how

issues related to online bullying came into public attention after Columbine high school in the late 90s (p. 128). She argues that, despite the fact that millions of young girls are bullied online—namely due to an inherent sexual double standard—little research is done on the emotional and physical effects of such bullying; rather, the behaviors are dismissed as girls just being mean (pp. 130–131). Sales also highlights how normalized these behaviors are especially in the context of schools.

And yet, despite the high numbers of girls experiencing sexual harassment in schools, only 12% said they ever reported it to an addict.... “Some researchers claim that sexual harassment is so common for girls that many fail to recognize it as sexual harassment when it happens,” according to the AAUW report. (p. 273)

Yet, many students—both males and females—identify this abuse as normalized, common, and even comical (p. 274).

The series illustrates how these elements come to life as Hannah attempts to recover from the effects of the circulation of her photos, yet her voice is silenced and marginalized by those surrounding her. In these cases, individuals place her into a particular category and sexualize her. In the following two episodes, we see how she tries to create connections with two boys—Marcus and Zach (tapes 6 and 7). Hannah gets matched up with a boy named Marcus during a Valentine’s Day game. She waits for him at a diner, where he comes in late with a large group of friends. Hannah tells her audience that Marcus always seemed like a good guy, and she was surprised when he grabbed her at the table. In speaking directly to him on his tape, she says: “What was it? Did you want to see if the rumors were true or did you want to start some of your own?” When Hannah reacts negatively to his advances he tells her that he thought she was easy. When she engaged with Zach, another boy who was attempting to date her, she immediately rejected him. In response, he manipulated her by taking things from her at school. In other cases, we see glimpses of Hannah’s interactions where she is being identified as “overly” dramatic, and how her responses to objectification and assault were “blown out of proportion.” Several interactions with the school counselor, an African American male, illustrate the power of perceptions about young women and their sexuality. For example, when the school counselor in this series discusses what happened between Hannah and Justin, Justin explains that Hannah blew it all out of proportion, as it was all a big joke about them having sex at the park. Even in the last episode, when Hannah is actively seeking help and she meets with the school counselor to talk about being raped by Bryce (tape 12), she is met with resistance. Hannah tries to talk about her rape with the counselor and struggles. He asks her how she got where she was—if she had an “encounter” with a boy that she might

regret or that she is embarrassed by. The counselor engages in victim blaming rhetoric as he asks Hannah, “Did he force himself on you ... Did you tell him to stop? Did you tell him no? Maybe you consented and changed your mind?” Hannah attempts to engage in this conversation. Upon being asked to identify her rapist, she asks him if the rapist will go to jail if she identifies him. Unfortunately, the counselor’s response is anything but reassuring. Throughout their encounter, he indicates that it can be really dangerous to accuse someone like this, especially if there are elements of uncertainty. Although he says that he will try to keep her safe, he simultaneously says “without a name ... if you aren’t even sure you can press charges, then there really is only one option ... You can move on.” In this regard, we are reminded of the power of sexism in an institutional setting, where sexualization and victim blaming (although seemingly unintentional) go unchecked. The reputations of men are protected at the expense of those victimized by their actions. It is also no coincidence that Bryce, her rapist, was not only inadvertently being protected by the school counselor, but was being protected by several of the subjects of Hannah’s tapes, even as he had raped another girl in the series and alluded to there being several more (tape 12).

Shifting the focus from drama to bullying in the form of slut-bashing, sexual assault, and ultimately rape provides a different lens through which to address these gendered issues. According to the American Association of University Women,

nearly half of all girls (46%) in grades seven through 12 experience sexual harassment in some forms, mostly verbal harassment (unwelcome sexual comments, jokes, or gestures) that take place either in person or by text, email, Facebook, or other electronic media. (in Tanenbaum, 2015, p. 67)

Seen in this way, “Slut-bashing is a particular form of bullying ... because it is verbal harassment conducted repeatedly over time in which a girl is intentionally targeted because she does not adhere to feminine norms” (Tanenbaum, 2015, p. 68). She indicates that we should understand this sort of bullying through a particularly gendered lens, because it is the woman’s adherence or denial of the social standards that serve to dictate how she is treated.

## **CONCLUSION**

As educators of college-aged students, what do we actually take from a series that has sparked so much controversies ranging from the glamorization of suicide to the misrepresentation of depression and high school

life? A multitude of responses throughout the series illustrate attempts to address these issues that are inherently problematic. In the beginning scene of the series, we are given a view of two girls taking a selfie in front of Hannah's locker, and walk away saying #neverforget. Yet, the response comes across as performative, and intended for a public *representation* of their sadness for Hannah's death. In addition, we see teachers, counselors, and parents all seemingly missing the mark as they create uncomfortable situations that are intended to force conversations with their students and children. Teachers awkwardly highlight suicide prevention statistics and activities for engaging with one another given the tragedy of Hannah's death, while students' responses range from melancholy to aloof, as one student even responds to a teacher by asking if they could "move on." This theme is carried throughout the series, as teachers and parents are consistently positioned as those misreading what their children need, as their attempts to incite uncomfortable dialogue produces little to no relief. Do we turn a blind eye, and assume that our kids are "good" kids, a theme that is repeated throughout the piece as parents attempt to engage with their children about their involvement in Hannah's suicide? Do we engage in a form of censorship and not discuss the series with young men and women, and assume that these issues which are *clearly* represented through social media and, I would argue, in their everyday lives? One of the most powerful and promising approaches to understanding what our college students experience both inside of the classroom as well as through social media is to create spaces of and for kindness. Being attentive. Being accountable. Being empathetic. The final episode brings forth a sense of closure. Clay has successfully addressed all who were implicated on Hannah's tapes. His final message is connection.

As educators and peace advocates alike, it is obvious that we must resist a simplistic causal relationship between watching a Netflix series and engaging in problematic behaviors, as scholars warn us of over simplifying these one-to-one correlations in recent analyses of young kids and suicide (Bazelon, 2013). However, the circulation of particular types of beliefs—about those who adhere and do not adhere to social norms as they are inscribed into our roles in educational contexts—should be a part of our larger conversation, as we should not ignore the relationships between aggressive and violent repeated behavior, and extreme consequences. Thus, as this series creates the space for a young girl to speak *her* truth, as audience members, then, we are given a choice as to how we want to make sense of these truths. To this end, we can begin to make important changes and work together to prevent real life tragedies from occurring:

Jessica Logan, 18. Hope Witsell, 13. Phoebe Prince, 15. Alex Pilkington, 17. Rachael Ehmke, 13. Audrie Pott, 15. Amanda Todd, 15. Jessica Laney, 16. Rehtaeh Parsons, 17. Gabrielle Molina, 12. All girls who took their lives after being bullied/slut-shamed in both an educational and online context (Tanenbaum, 2015 pp. 37–38).

We need to continue to provide adequate resources both inside and outside of our classrooms for students to effectively deal with the effects of bullying in college. While bullying is *reportedly less* than in K–12, students still experience the effects of being bullied in a variety of settings.

When it comes to Bullying in College, according to a Health Day News study in 2012, 15% of college students studied reported being bullied and nearly 22% reported being cases of cyber bullying in college. The study found that when it comes to bullying in college is that 38% of students knew someone who was facing cyber bullying in college and about 9% said they had done some form of cyber bullying in college on someone else. (Bullying in College, 2014)

This series implores educators to engage in challenging conversations. To place ourselves in difficult situations as we challenge the very social fabric that makes this series so seductive and attractive in the first place. To understand the power of words, the effects of behaviors, and ultimately to create conditions of and for kindness. Thus, I recommend the following approaches to assist our students in addressing the realities represented and circulated throughout this series.

1. Create opportunities for safe spaces, where students are able to critically examine the ways that femininity and masculinity are framed in popular culture. To that end, create spaces where double standards regarding sexualities—for all genders—are adequately explored (Valenti, 2009);
2. Encourage narratives—but do so in a way that does not overly rely on individual stories, but complicate these stories within a larger social, political, and historical context;
3. Create opportunities for media literacy; Use social media as a space of liberation rather than oppression (For example, see [www.Hollaback.org](http://www.Hollaback.org));
4. Identify spaces where social media can serve to resist ideologies that position men and women in particular ways; to this end, we can work to alter the culture of social media (Sales, 2016, pp. 374–375);
5. Acknowledge the power of popular culture to provide insight into the everyday experiences of our college students. In other words,

avoid an overly simplistic approach to issues related to language use that involves censorship.

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## CHAPTER 4

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# HUMANIZING SEX TRAFFICKING AND COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION THROUGH A TRAUMA-INFORMED, PERSON-IN-ENVIRONMENT LENS

**Sambra Zaoui**

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This chapter aims to underscore the importance and usefulness of integrating a trauma informed care (TIC) and person in environment (PIE) perspective when working with survivors of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. By utilizing a TIC and PIE framework, it serves to frame sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation as a human rights and social injustice violation. In doing so, I refrain from portraying the victim as a coconspirator in their own victimization, which often happens, and rather ascribe responsibility to those systems that directly contribute and sanction this crime against humanity.

Rachel Lloyd, CEO and Founder of GEMS (Girls Education and Mentoring Services), poignantly illustrates a TIC and PIE perspective in her statement: “To truly address trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, it’s critical to address the systemic factors making girls and women so vulnerable, such as poverty, gender inequity, racism, classism, child

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sexual abuse, and lack of educational and employment opportunities for women and girls globally. The PIE perspective accurately exposes the systemic factors that Mrs. Lloyd so eloquently identifies as major contributors to trafficking young girls and women (Lloyd, 2014). The whole purpose of using a PIE framework is to view the client in context to his/her environment, not as a separate entity that is impenetrable from his/her direct external experiences, but rather as a byproduct of his/her environment, which includes considering the many systems in an individual's life, a history of interpersonal exchanges and intrapersonal lived experiences. Equally imperative to integrate in the kaleidoscope of analysis is the trauma informed care approach, similar to PIE in its consideration of the systems in an individual's life, TIC specifically focuses on those experiences that have been particularly traumatic to the individual. Therefore, adopting a TIC perspective with clients who have experienced trafficking and exploitation is arguably, nonnegotiable. TIC is defined as a thorough understanding of the neurobiological, biological, psychological and social effects of trauma and violence on the individual (Jennings, 2004). Hodas (2006) believes we need to presume the clients we serve have a history of traumatic stress and exercise "universal precautions" by creating systems of care that are trauma informed (SAMHSA 2016). Complex trauma is a reality for survivors, the amount of duress they undergo while being trafficked and exploited leaves them with more than just PTSD symptomatology—not to minimize PTSD in anyway, yet it's important to make a distinction. It's a trauma that's defined by multiple occurrences within a person's lifetime. Henceforth, my audacious endeavor in writing this essay will hopefully lend to contributing greater insight and effectiveness in working with this population, by successfully convincing the reader to adopt a TIC and PIE framework into their existing repertoire. As one study suggested, rather than focusing on exact numbers of those trafficked, we must focus on addressing the problem (Institute of Medicine, 2013), not because numbers aren't important; more so, precisely because we have numbers that the urgency is so great. Each of those numbers represent a human being; thus, magnifying why I am so zealous in proposing that a TIC and PIE framework be employed as foundational perspectives in the assessment process. Additionally, I later highlight the importance of using an evidenced based trauma resolution approach that specifically targets the body's response to trauma. By incorporating the above mentioned tools, my hope is that the recidivism rate will decline and the stigmatization that is often associated with the survivors of this crime will be defused. Echoing Mrs. Lloyd's statement, I will methodically attempt to address a spectrum of interpersonal experiences and environmental contributors that increase the likelihood of an individual being sexually trafficked and commercially sexually exploited within a TIC and PIE

framework. These frameworks will enable us to better understand and explicate the etiology of this phenomenon; moreover, it serves to promote and encourage collective mobilization in eradicating this all too common evil. It is with this inclination that I engage in this process so that all social workers, mental health professionals, and laymen alike learn and lean on this vital information.

### **WHAT COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND SEX TRAFFICKING IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT**

Human trafficking is defined legally as occurring under “force, fraud or coercion” in the U.S. Trafficking Victims Act (TVPA). For cases of sex trafficking, this means that the individual is generally tricked or forced to engage in prostitution and is unable to leave their situation. This may include an inability to leave due to fear of their safety, threats to their family, or withholding documents they may need like a passport for example. Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking includes any instance where a child under 18 is engaging in prostitution whether the child states they are doing it “willingly” or not in which a third party profits. Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children which occurs during Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking can include other areas of the sex industry in addition to prostitution such as stripping, pornography, erotic massage—meaning that any sexual act that is exchanged for money or something of value involving children. While there is a connection between childhood sexual abuse and risk of human trafficking, childhood sexual abuse alone is not human trafficking unless it involves profit in exchange for a sex act. Therefore, if a child experiences sexual abuse that does not mean that they necessarily meet the criteria for human trafficking.

### **WHERE WE’VE COME FROM AND WHERE WE’RE HEADED**

As a well-seasoned social worker with over 18 years of experience, I have never felt such urgency as I do now to inform, educate and equip the next generation of social workers and those in the helping field who work with survivors of sex trafficking. Social workers are at the intersection of law enforcement, healthcare, the foster care system, juvenile justice, substance misuse treatment centers, mental health agencies and social service agencies—uniquely positioning them to competently identify, assess and treat this population. As a profession our mission and goal is to uphold social justice for all through our advocacy efforts, research and be the voice for

those whose voices have been silenced. Through research, dissemination and presentation of that research, our desire is to bring about change, transformation to better the lives of those we serve, to draw attention to the marginalized subgroups and influence policy and legislation to be inclusive of all human beings. And as such, sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation is a human rights violation and social injustice issue that we must all take part in annihilating, and as social workers, more so is our burden.

As a result of pioneers in the antitrafficking movement such as Rachel Lloyd, Vednita Carter, and Tina Frundt, just to name a few, we now have language to accurately frame this human rights violation, and because we have language we now have legislation to prosecute those that commit this crime. One of the most crucial pieces of legislation aimed at eradicating human trafficking in the nation are Safe Harbor laws. Safe Harbor is a policy that removes criminality on the part of the minor who may have been arrested for prostitution. Safe Harbor laws, however, have only been enacted in 34 states (Polaris Project, 2015). Furthermore, these laws are administered differently depending on the state, including the age of immunity. This can vary from age 18 to age 14 (Polaris Project, 2015). This means that in some states, minors under 18 may still be found culpable of engaging in prostitution. Knowing what we know about who the victims are, how they are recruited, and factors that drive them into this life, it is critical that the laws be focused on service provision and restoration, instead of punishment, therefore, it is obvious we still have work to do, even though we acknowledge how far we've come.

Nevertheless, as a social worker in the 1990s, I had no language for this injustice, and because I had no language, and/or insight, I followed suit with the voices around me, unfortunately, at the cost of further revictimizing, dismissing and stigmatizing. I specifically recall being part of case planning meetings where words such as, prostitution and teenage prostitution were used to describe individual cases that came before us. Unbeknownst to us (case planning team), by defining the situation as we did, we were making the victims responsible for what was done to them; and directing all blame on their moral shortcomings, rather than questioning the possibility of exploitation, responsibility on behalf of the caretakers or identification of oppressive systems that certainly played a role in the life of the victim.

As of the last 15 years, paradigms have positively changed due to tireless efforts from those in the antitrafficking movement, such as survivor leaders and allies alike; henceforth, as social workers our responsibility is to continue the legacy they started, by first educating the next generation of social workers, students, community at large and stakeholders on the realities of sex trafficking, as well as educating society on its lucrative role

in sustaining the exploitation and objectification of women, men, and our children. It is indispensable when addressing this human rights issue that we grapple with current social systems that further support the exploitation and sale of our most disenfranchised, by either turning a blind eye or directly profiting from this crime. Through education we can transparently address how specific cultural norms, consumerist mind-set, classism, racism, gender inequality, and abuse directly contribute to the increase of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

Secondly, our work is to set the stage for informed prevention and treatment with a TIC and PIE framework, as well as pushing forward the idea of integrating innovative cutting edge trauma resolution approaches when working with survivors. Person in environment perspective along with a trauma informed care approach invites a paradigm shift that allots for these changes to take place. A shift I hope is adopted by law enforcement, social service agencies, NGOs, and the legal system. These frameworks highlight our clients from a strength based perspective—an empowered interpretation of all they have endured and lived to tell. No longer will we describe or seek to find personal deficits to pathologize behaviors that support our terminal prognosis, but rather, we wrestle with understanding how this type of trauma was able to exist in its environment. Questions such as “What happened to you?” rather than “What’s wrong with you?” are examples of a trauma informed care, person in environment perspective we must buy into.

Kathleen J. Moroz (2005) further reminds us that

If [we] fail to look through a trauma lens and to conceptualize client problems as possibly related to current or past trauma, [we] may fail to see that trauma victims organize much of their lives around repetitive patterns of re-living and warding off traumatic memories, reminders, and affects. (p. 12)

Moroz’s comment is rich with insight. Her declaration helps us frame present challenges with unaddressed childhood traumas. This brings us to the topic of adverse childhood experiences (neglect, malnutrition, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, divorce and incarceration of a care taker) in the life of a survivor. As we deconstruct and systemically analyze the root of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, we quickly recognize that it is not one factor that contributes to this issue but a series of complex issues that leaves an individual vulnerable to this inhumane behavior. Yet, one thing is most certain, personal pathologizing is a deficit model that does not serve anyone in the restoration process but rather further infuses and births more shame-saturated narratives to those who have already lived through horrors most of us can only imagine.

## **SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS: GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, GENDER INEQUALITY, AND THEIR ROLE IN TRAFFICKING**

Without making any reckless assumptions, women and girls are in continuous demand in the underground sex trafficking market. This truth is supported by the fact that the National Human Trafficking Hotline run by Polaris Project has received 22,191 reports of sex trafficking since 2007 (Polaris Project, n.d.), and according to a new report from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2016), the vast majority of all human trafficking victims—some 71%—are women and girls and one third are children. This is not to say that boys and young men are not sold; as a matter of fact, “boy sex trafficking rings represent a major criminal enterprise in the United States, and around the world, with boys constituting up to 90% of the child prostitutes in some countries” (Jones, 2010), I address trafficking of boys in a later paragraph.

Sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation are forms of gender-based violence against women and girls that lucratively exists across continents. Therefore, the most obvious questions to contemplate are: What is it about a society that may contribute to this type of gender based crime? Moreover, what social constructions have emerged and permeated throughout the ages that support this crime against women and girls? Media, gender inequality, misogyny, poverty, classism, racism and the thin categorical role of a woman’s potential and purpose plays a major role in the proliferation of this crime. Media’s indisputable sexual objectification of women and young girls sends a pervasive global message: a women’s value is measured by her sexuality. What is more, society then normalizes this skewed one dimensional perception of women and young girls by sanctioning establishments and industries that directly and indirectly profit from this depiction. It is a well-known fact that in many parts of the world there is a misogynistic stance toward women; moreover, women are often perceived as weak, emotional and less competent, and made for the sole purpose of fostering procreation, and caring for their male counterparts and children. This is the extent of their role. Although we have evolved in many cultures and subcultures, gender-based violence rooted in misogynistic attitudes around the world remains sadly ubiquitous. This is evident by the ongoing rape crisis in India in which 34,000 cases were reported in 2015 (Aljazeera, 2016). Honor killings remain commonplace, as was illustrated by the case of Saba Quaser in Pakistan, who was shot by her father and left for dead in a river, but miraculously survived (Kristoff, 2016). In the United States, several doctors have been charged with performing female genital cutting and statistics show that 200 million women and girls around the world have had this procedure done on them (World Health Organization, 2017). Rape remains a

weapon of war, as Yazidi women are raped and trafficked in Iraq and Syria by ISIS (Barnett, 2016). The dominant communiqué is loud and clear: a woman is dispensable.

A more benign yet no less harmful message is that beauty is everything. For example, early on girls are taught the importance of looking pretty, and behaving correctly, we often hear statements, such as “young women don’t behave that way.” To this end, these messages communicate that love, acceptance and validation is based on meeting specific criteria, criteria that’s conditional to a young woman’s performance and appearance. These perceptions have long been transmitted from generation to generation, but thanks to the women’s movement our roles have broadened; however, our fight continues uphill as long as we have male dominant societies that devalue the role woman can make in leadership, and in as much, continue to silence their voices. As aforementioned, the need to look pretty and behave a certain way doesn’t come without a host of other issues; an obsession with weight, comparison and competition among women and young girls is often the unintended outcome of this social construction; to add injury to insult, the breakdown of relationships among women and young girls further divides and interrupts the potential power that naturally emerges in our unity. The competition is fierce: to be chosen means you are the prettiest, most validated and accepted one. This mindset flows deep, branching out even in the most unlikely places: the stables. A stable is a word used in the life/in the game to describe the home in which pimps’ house women. Women in the life who have a pimp are often vying for his attention and approval; unbeknownst to the girls, this insidious need runs deep, creating an ever impenetrable symbiosis, generated from an innate need to be loved and validated; and secondly, from the not so benign social construction that has been embedded to support power imbalances and gender inequality. Acrimoniously, another well-established social construction which leads to the demise of many women is the idea that it’s better to have a man than to have no man at all—the latter would mean something is seriously wrong with you for not having a man. Again, if we put ourselves in the shoes of a 24 year old commercially sexually exploited woman who has a “man” but her man exploits her, this culturally integrated message can be easily misleading her. Some may say this is an antiquated societal directive that no longer holds any truth; however, the Pew Charitable Trust found that while only 51% of Americans get married, “love” remained an important ideal for which people strived to obtain (Cohn, 2013). These well-ingrained societal paradigms: *needing* a man to feel worthy, the competition among women to be the prettiest, most adored, seeing ones’ sole purpose as serving and caring for your male counterpart or for that matter any partner, feeds a dangerous lie to our women and young girls from early on. This

one dimensional perspective has the potential of being misused, and warped to the dissolution of the whole personhood of women and young girls. The unfortunate outcome of this thin narrative is that in response men and young boys are also inundated by this misrepresentation of women. The outcome is that the immensity of a woman's power: her integrity, intelligence, central essence is minimized and often dismissed by such narrow perceptions of who she needs to be rather than who she is. This is a double bind for a young woman, who naturally seeks love, acceptance, and validation. Her natural healthy desires often become contorted when the only loud speaker she hears is screaming: The way you receive attention, validation and acceptance as a woman is by overtly sexualizing yourself and having a man by your side. This can be very confusing for a 15 year old that's going through a highly emotional intrapersonal crisis: Who am I, who do I want to be, how should I want to be perceived, and/or how do I fit in? All of a sudden the voices and messages from media/society at large seem louder and more prominent than any counter voices—if at all any exist.

Societal constructions such as these directly contribute to the abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and overall oppression of women and young girls; additionally, it contributes to the deeply ingrained negative cognition that women who are victim to this crime often believe: that they are not worthy and/or are damaged goods, and somehow having a man makes one believe that perhaps you're not damaged goods or unworthy if they're with you. All of a sudden, your intrinsic value is dependent on whom you're with because alone, you are not enough. Inevitably, this leaves the door wide open for pimps to capitalize on these lies.

## **PORNOGRAPHY'S RELATIONSHIP TO SEX TRAFFICKING**

Pornography is a form of commercial sexual exploitation (CSE)—it fits all of the definition of CSE: you're exchanging a sex act for something of value. A commercial sex act is "any sex act on account of which anything of value is given to or received by any person" (Polaris Project, 2015). According to Mackinnon (2007) pornography qualifies as a commercial sex act in two ways:

First, the production of pornography involves payment of individuals to perform sex acts before a camera. Most performers in the industry are paid for the different films or photo shoots. Because they are produced by recording actual events, real men, women, and children are actually engaging in sexual acts, often repeatedly to get the desired shot. In this way, the production of pornography is without question a case of commercial sex acts, in this case performed on camera. Unequivocally, children who are

exploited in this manner are being domestically sexually trafficked. Secondly, consuming pornography is an experience of bought sex.

The experience of using pornography is a sexual one for the viewer, or as Catherine Mackinnon (2007) put it, “porn is used as sex (masturbation). Therefore it is sex.” Further, it is a commercial sex act in this sense because money or other items of value (clothes, cars, alcohol, drugs, etc.) are exchanged on account of this sexual experience for the consumer. The pornographers are receiving direct monetary benefit from providing this sexual act.

Shared Hope International (n.d.) estimates that one in five pornographic images online is of a child. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) reviewed 22 million images and videos of suspected child sexual abuse imagery in its victim identification program in 2013—more than a 5000% increase from 2007; 19% of identified offenders in a survey had images of children younger than 3 years old; 39% younger than 6 years old; and 83% younger than 12 years old. Child pornography is one of the fastest growing businesses online, with estimated annual revenue of \$3 billion, according to the Association of Sites Advocating Child Protection. Shared Hope International’s report on the demand for sex trafficking, pornography is the primary gateway to the purchase of humans for commercial sex. A study conducted by Jones (2010) found that the sex trafficking of young boys feeds the high demand for child pornography in the United States, more than half of which features boys rather than girls. Catherine Mackinnon (2007), a professor at Harvard Law School, says:

Consuming pornography is an experience of “bought sex” and thus it creates a hunger to continue to purchase and objectify, and act out what is seen. And in a very literal way, pornography is advertising for trafficking, not just in general but also in the sense that traffickers and pimps use pornographic images of victims as specific advertising for their “products.” In addition, viewing pornography and gratifying oneself with it ends up short-circuiting the sexual process. This creates a drug-like addiction which distorts the individual’s view on sexuality. It also trains the mind to expect sexual fulfillment on demand, and to continually seek more explicit or violent content to create the same high.

In one study researchers found that among those possessing child pornography, “Fourteen percent had pictures of mostly boys” (Wolak, Finkelhor, & Mitchell, 2005), and to underscore this reality is the stunning find as mentioned above by Jones (2010) that half of the images depict boys rather than girls. To this end, it is evidently clear that boys are most clearly being domestically sexually trafficked through pornographic

images whether we want to see it or hear it, moreover, the direct relationship between pornography and trafficking has been solidified with the abovementioned points of reference that are supported by statistics. Pornography, commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking have a bidirectional relationship—one influences the other. Therefore, the question ceases to be whether pornography is a gateway to trafficking but rather how can it be that we are still rationalizing pornography at the cost of an individual's freedom.

### **BOYS, THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY AND VULNERABILITY**

When we talk about gender and trafficking most of us make reference to young girls and women, but the truth is boys, young men and the LGBTQ community are equally vulnerable to sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

Although it is true that, historically, females have suffered enormous levels of harm, particularly at the hands of males, this truism does not preclude the empirical reality that males have also suffered enormous harm at the hands of both males and females. Male vulnerability is consistently obscured by modern-day media expressions of male dominance and invulnerability perpetuated under the guise of masculinity. To some extent, men and boys have become the victims of this media-driven, socially constructed conception of maleness so much so that they have systematically neglected male victims in the publicity of human trafficking and in the academic discourse. (Jones, 2010, p. 1145)

Earl (2017) believes that “we are simply not looking for the boys and young men because it doesn't fit in our understanding of sex trafficking.” Another reason we are not looking for boy victims is due to our society's heteronormative gender rules, Mapp (2016), for example, notes, “men are tough, can't get bullied into engaging in sex unless they want to, feminine/gay boys want sex with other men therefore they can't be trafficked.” Heteronormative gender roles imply that men cannot be victims of sexual assault or human trafficking, so we are not looking for them as potential trafficking victims. Not only are trafficked boys invisible but they are further demonized by blaming and dismissing them: I literally had the son of a prosecuted male buyer and seller say to me “it's not really that big of a deal the boys who were trafficked were gay anyway!” This type of insensitivity and inhumane response is saturated with erroneous misconceptions that lead to further exploitation, homophobia, and egregious violations of human rights. Homelessness is another social crisis that directly contributes to sex trafficking of young boys and men; one being

that many young males are rejected from their homes and/or foster homes once they come out as being gay, bisexual or trans, the disclosure leads to multiple placements or living on the streets (Yarbrough, 2012). And once on the streets, gay for pay is often a lived reality for many, sex is often used as a means to survive, a homeless youth is not necessarily gay because he engages in sex with other men; oftentimes, homeless youth are just trying to meet basic needs (Earl, 2016). A study of homeless youth in New York City found that nearly 50% engaged in survival sex (Dank et al., 2015). While the study focused on homeless LGBT youth, it included 17 individuals who identified as heterosexual, but engaged in survival sex with members of the same sex. Only 17 people in the study identified as cisgender heterosexual individuals engaging in sex with members of the same sex (YMSM and YWSW), and their involvement in the commercial sex market also stemmed from a need to survive. YMSM and YWSW reported facing economic challenges as a result of drug abuse in their families, insecure access to housing, and the death of one or both parents; many were living in shelters at the time they first exchanged sex for money and/or material goods (Dank et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the report found that boys were “three times more likely than young women” to engage in survival sex for a place to stay and transgender youth “8 times as likely” than nontrans youth (Dank et al., 2015). Homophobia, transphobia further subjects young men and boys to trafficking. In the report by Dank et al., the authors note that,

Additionally, LGBTQ youth experience homophobic and transphobic harassment, discrimination, and physical violence within the child welfare and foster care systems and emergency and short- and long-term shelters, and from health care providers, social services, law enforcement, and other government institutions.

While interviewing Nathan Earl (2017) survivor advocate, leader and founder of Ark Alliance, he mentioned the importance of not placing these young men and boys in categorical boxes, labels that may make a homeless youth feel compromised and/or further stigmatized: for example, instead of having them check off are you gay and/or bisexual during an assessment, rather propose a category that reads men who sleep with men. Homeless youth who engage in survival sex do not necessarily identify as gay or bisexual, therefore, we must stop trying to keep placing individuals in these astringent categorical boxes that do not apply with an individuals’ existing context.

Needless to say, society has the infectious power to affect how we view and interpret these social phenomena, whether it’s the role of a woman or the inability to see a boy or young man being trafficked. With that said, we (human beings) occupy society, therefore, it is up to us to live the change

we want to see, and it all starts by challenging long ingrained belief systems that no longer serve us as a society but rather continue to oppress us.

### **THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM, RACE AND TRAFFICKING**

Sex trafficking can happen to anyone regardless of race, age and/or sexual orientation but there is one thing that's certain, there is an over representation of young Black women being trafficked. Naramore, Bright, Epps, and Hardt (2015) found a disproportionate number of females and Black youth in the cohort arrested for trading sex. The Office of Victims of Crime has identified human trafficking survivors by racial background as follows: 40.4% are Black; 25.6% are White; 23.9% are Hispanic; 4.3% are Asian; and 5.8% as other. Contributing to a young Black females vulnerability of being trafficked or commercially sexually exploited is the intersectionality of foster care and Black females as result of their over representation in the foster care system. There is a direct causal relationship between foster care and trafficking. This is supported by a report by the Child Welfare Information Gateway that reflects this reality. While only representing 13.8% of all children in the United States, Black children make up 22.4% of all children entering foster care (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2016), moreover, of all minor sex trafficking victims nationally, 60% were found to have come from the foster care system (Mapp, 2016); and in Miami-Dade County, Florida, according to Miller (2012), 60% of the CSEC victims are from our foster care system. Similarly, 50% of children sold into trafficking in California are from the foster care system and 75% of all CSEC victims in NYC had spent time in foster care (<http://www.humantraffickingsearch.net>, 2014). Clearly, I think we can make some assumptions as to why we believe this subgroup is at greater risk and need of preventive services which I address below from a trauma informed intrapersonal experience. Nevertheless, when I apply a PIE perspective to magnify the intersectionality of Black females and the foster care system, a number of other issues emerge; for example, the dismantling of Black families, as well as prison to pipeline reality that targets and amasses the incarceration of Black men, leaving Black women to raise their children alone and increasing the vulnerability of poverty. Although I do not deconstruct the abovementioned oppressive systemic reality that is structurally interwoven to foster care and Black families, I did think it worthy to note. Moreover, I think it worthy to expand on in my following essay.

Nonetheless, by using trauma informed and person-in-environment concepts we see the overlapping complexities that feed such exacerbated

vulnerabilities in an individual's direct experience. We have the research to support this entangled relationship between trafficking and the foster care system. Therefore, the most obvious question is: What is it about the foster care experience that has the potential of leaving someone increasingly vulnerable to sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation? I think it's fair to hypothesize that if a maternal substitute did not take the place of birth mom, a child is left with that unmet need of a symbiotic relationship; moreover, if the child was moved around a lot, it interrupted any attempt at developing consistent, nurturing and trusting relationships. Bowlby (1979) postulates that "there is a strong causal relationship between an individual's experience with his parents and his later capacity to make affectional bonds" (p. 135). To no fault of their own, if these children were not given the opportunity to develop parental relationships or bond with consistent care givers, experiences like these left them hungry for the most innate, natural desire of all: to be loved, and unfortunately, pimps know this need all too well and exploit it. To further confound the situation, the plausibility of an attachment disorder developing is very probable. Attachment disorders lend to a propensity of having unstable, chaotic relationships, and a difficult time reading other people's intentions. For example, foster children often wonder if their foster parents are using them for monetary gain, it is commonly known that foster children believe this to be true, leaving them questioning people's motives, feeling used and having no choice but to surrender to the situation because there is nowhere else for them to go. Unfortunately, these depicted relational dynamics are very familiar and mirror that of an exploitive relationship. The Romeo Pimp takes care of the child or young woman's basic needs as long as she/he comes back with money. This exchange of money is grounded on the idea that her pimp will care and protect her, therefore, strongly mirroring that of a foster parent/child relationship. Distorted, warped ... perhaps, but uncannily familiar to a child whose concept of attachment has already been interrupted and disorganized. Mapp (2016) speaks to this dynamic

youth within the system, are more vulnerable to becoming sexually exploited because youth accept and normalize the experience of being used as an object of financial gain by people who control their lives and lack the opportunity to gain meaningful relationships and attachments.

### **WHAT DOES POVERTY HAVE TO DO WITH IT?**

Poverty itself is not the sole contributing factor to make an individual vulnerable; it truly takes a multiplicity of issues to heighten an already potentially fertile ground. Nevertheless, according to Mapp (2016) abuse,

family dysfunction and poverty increase the risk. With that said, whether you are being raised in a one parent home, which coincidentally is the highest rate of impoverished households in the United States: One study found that 60% of mother only households met the criteria for living below the poverty line (Kirby, n.d.), or a two parent home where each parent has to work 40 hours plus a week, undoubtedly leaves a child/children alone to entertain themselves on the Internet and/or numb themselves with insurmountable amount of television. Children spend 7.5 hours per day consuming media content and those with the highest use are Hispanic and African American teens (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010). It is no coincidence that Hispanic and African American families are among those with the least income, it is my belief that these groups are being methodically marginalized. According to Segue (2017) poverty has long been a generated structural systemic force that serves to keep the most disenfranchised oppressed so capitalism can continue to thrive. When we look at the over representation of Latino and African American families who fit this statistic: 4.2 million or 38% of Black children live in poverty, and were, “four times as likely as Asian or White children to be living in poverty” (Patten & Krogstad, 2015). Meanwhile, Hispanic children make up the largest group living in poverty, making up 5.4 million (Patten & Krogstad, 2015). Have no doubt that these systemic factors play a tremendous role in the vulnerability of a child, and vulnerability is what traffickers are looking for. If children are left to entertain themselves, because parents’ are desperately attempting to provide basic needs, the Internet becomes a source of support, and socialization to the outside world. However, the Internet can be a very dangerous place to leave a child unattended. The America Bar Association has noted the prevalence of recruitment through social media, and Craigslist had been identified as the, “largest source of prostitution in the nation” before changing their policies (Dixon, 2013; Kunze, 2010). And for those children who have no computer/phone and/or social media access we are then talking about children who are bored and in need of *being heard and seen*. I understand that we cannot watch our children 24 hours a day; that would be an unrealistic expectation. Nevertheless, when parents or a parent is overwhelmed by financial demands and/or work related responsibilities, it automatically places a child’s Internet activities and/or television consumption second on the needs hierarchy. Providing basic needs, such as food and shelter supersedes constant relational and emotional monitoring, and/or Internet trolling.

Poverty manifests itself in a lack there of, in an absence of, in needing and not having, and it represents itself financially, but even more so, emotionally; leaving the recipient of poverty somehow feeling overtly defined by what they don’t have, rather than who they are. The cost of poverty is

very real and it leads to the demise of our most vulnerable—it extends to generations, and it can lead an individual to compromise their own moral standards in order to survive, and/or to fulfill a very basic need of wanting what seems to be that others have. Judgment can also become impaired when one is saturated by urgency, therefore missing and/or misreading intentions which regularly would not have been missed. Poverty's entrenchment with trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation can be best described as one cannot coexist without the other—traffickers prey on the needy, needy of love and/or basic needs.

### **CONSUMERISM AND ITS TWISTED ENTANGLEMENT WITH TRAFFICKING AND COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

Consumerism is the theory that increasing the consumption of goods is economically desirable; consumerism is *also* a preoccupation with and an inclination toward the buying of consumer goods. Why would this definition be important in our deconstruction and stratifying of this befuddling crime against humanity? Human beings are not goods nor are they products, yet to traffickers, pimps, and the organized human trafficking circuits they are. For the sake of gaining a sobering grasp on the whole business aspect of the trafficking circuit and its entanglement with our concept of consumerism, we must start by looking at the relationship between supply and demand. Demand fuels supply, the more the demand, the more money a pimp stands to make. It has been estimated that a pimp can make “up to 20 times what he or she paid” (Skinner, 2008), and if the demand for a product is there, which evidently there is since trafficking is a multibillion dollar criminal industry, supply will be sure to be filled. The horrific truth is a person can be sold over and over compared with drugs and/or fire arms; a human being can be sold multiple times a day, every day. So from a marketing consumerist perspective, if the demand wasn't there ... there would be no need for the supply, in this case—a human being. The higher the demand the more intentional and bolder the recruitment becomes.

Consequently, there's this pervasive idea among buyers that if they pay for sex, then that makes everything okay; somehow the buyer washes his/her hands of any wrong doing as long as they pay, “I'm paying for it, he/she needs money, and I want sex, so everybody wins.” The issue with this so-called ethical defense is that it does not reflect the totality of the situation; moreover it only serves to placate the minds of those who buy sex. I have personally heard buyers justify paying for sex by believing that they are doing a good thing by helping a woman out in need. But here's the irony, the sex trafficking industry is a billion dollar one, and I have yet to

meet a sex trafficking victim, or a commercially exploited individual who is making anywhere near that amount. Many players are gaining from this crime: real estate agents who rent establishments, homes, apartments to traffickers, motel/hotel owners who turn a blind eye to the exploitation for the purpose of financial gain, cab drivers, drivers in general taking a girl from one place to another and lastly there are those in the adult entertainment establishments that house under age trafficking victims. Among the gay population, we also hear of young boys being called hustlers, so the idea is, if they're hustlers then they want this, it's their job—this represents another developed mindset to pacify the realities of human trafficking. If a boy is under the age of 18, you can call it what you want, it's illegal and it's called domestic minor sex trafficking. According to Earl (2017) survivor advocate and leader, when asked what he believed all buyers needed to know, he responded: "Consequence, buyers need to know the consequence of their contribution to an already vulnerable life." If buyers knew that the individual they were buying was trafficked, enslaved, made to perform against their own will, drugged and doped to the point of immobilization and complete disconnection—I suspect and hope that they would think twice before buying sex.

### **INTERPERSONAL TRAUMA AND ITS ROLE IN A SURVIVOR'S LIFE**

Survivors of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation are found to have a history of childhood sexual abuse. According to Shared Hope International (n.d.) 70–90% of sex trafficking survivors have been victims of childhood sexual abuse (CSA). We can therefore safely deduce that CSA leaves a child highly vulnerable to further exploitation in the form of commercial sexual exploitation or sex trafficking. Trauma experts van der Kolk (2014) and Herman (1997) have a number of hypotheses as to why the phenomenon of revictimization happens, and highlight how it has a direct relationship to the coping mechanism dissociation, a coping mechanism that survivors of early childhood sexual abuse and/or adverse childhood experiences use in order to survive. For example, although dissociation is a life-saving defense mechanism that permits psychological survival, and protects the person from emotional impact, it nonetheless increases the risk of further victimization since the survivor dissociates in response to actual danger cues (Mapp, 2016; van der Kolk, 2014). To underscore van der Kolk's clinical observations and analytical outcomes of this phenomenon he states, "if you *cannot* tolerate what you know or feel what you feel [because the reality is too flooding], the only option is denial and dissociation—the long term effect is not feeling real inside" (van der Kolk, 2014).

Therefore, coming near to the trauma and internalizing the physical and emotional feelings that accompany the tsunami of sexual assaults through trafficking and exploitation, shows to be too much even for the most adapted, developmentally protected one of us, hence leaving the victim to dissociate as the only viable defense in this attack. Additionally, trauma bonding is another survival mechanism that often presents itself with dissociation; trauma bonding occurs when a victim is in a state of cognitive dissonance which is incredibly debilitating and unsettling. For this reason, the victim is left to bond with their perpetrator rather than continuing to engage in the mental war of two polarized existences. Patrick Carnes (1997) has named this fierce attachment and bonding: betrayal bonds. I propose that revictimization occurs as a result of overly adapted defense mechanisms (dissociation and betrayal bonds) that have mastered the will to survive. Once meant to save an individual's life, now serve to ensure that the individual stays ensnared in a vicious cycle of compulsive re-exposure. An individual's inability to stay in a constant mental state of cognitive dissonance, two juxtaposed beliefs existing simultaneously, causes an individual to make meaning of their reality regardless of its distortion, even if that means bonding with the individual's rationale for exploiting them. Learned dissociation and trauma bonding originally occurred during childhood sexual abuse, and as such, it results in an individual being left prime for further abuse at the hands of a pimp and/or exploiter. The relationship between childhood sexual abuse, sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation is predictable. And, if something is anticipatory, we can then develop parameters to ensure that one does not lead to the other. Nevertheless, our need for familiarity drives us to seek out familiar scenes and people; hence, projecting us backwards in this upward fight to disentangle from compulsive re-exposure. Some will even say they feel empowered by choosing to sell their own body on their own terms, yet, as a clinician, I can't help but believe that unbeknownst to them they are still being informed by the (familiar) visceral, implicit unaddressed trauma that made them vulnerable to the revictimization in the first place.

This body of knowledge strongly suggests that victims of CSA who do not receive any intervention and/or support, are left highly vulnerable to being revictimized in the form of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. This may sound like a dismal prognosis; however, for the mental health profession and social workers alike, this leaves us with a window of opportunity to intervene, and here is where I fiercely advocate that mind and body integrative somatic approaches be utilized to address the trauma that has been locked in the body and continues to dictate much of their lived experiences. Therefore, we must be fully equipped to competently identify, assess, and intervene in the lives of

children who have experienced CSA so they do not occupy the above-mentioned statistic.

## REFRAMING THERAPY WITH SURVIVORS

The term clinical therapy takes on a whole new meaning when working with survivors. Let me be very clear, I am talking about survivors not victims who are still in the life. As mentioned above, PIE and TIC are used as frameworks to help shape our understanding of our clients' experiences, and informs our interactions with them. I think as social workers we need to broaden how we perceive clinical therapy; clinical therapy can be operationalized while conducting targeted case management and/or simply engaging in dialogue that has nothing to do with an individual's trauma. If we were to target and process a client's traumatic experience that would be considered trauma resolution work; that can never be done with someone who is still in the life, and/or someone who is not emotionally ready for that type of work. The most important thing to understand at this point is meeting the client where they are at and working off of Maslow's Hierarchy. Meeting survivors' basic needs is always first: the basic needs may look like connecting them to vocational and life skills training, GED courses, or private tutoring, and the obvious—consistent food and safe shelter. Whether you identify the above as intensive case management or therapy, all positive, safe relationships stand to be a therapeutic experience for a survivor. Expanding our scope of what a clinical relationship looks like is important to address in this piece: a clinical relationship does not have to look like a client pouring out all of their traumas in your office for one to identify it as "*therapy*." Therapy is an intentional dance between two people where one holds, releases, guides, advocates, refers supports and lifts up with gentleness; where resonance, attunement, mirroring and modeling is the framework which shapes the dance. Through mirroring, resonance and attunement (Siegel, 2010), a social worker and a survivor are engaging in an opportunity for a client to experience a corrective emotional experience. Corrective emotional experience, "coined [by Alexander and French] ... refer[s] to processes that result in a client's emotional and intellectual understanding of the difference between early conflict experiences that were unresolved and present-day circumstances and relationships" (Friedlander et al., 2011). Being able to learn to trust another human being after most have betrayed them, not seen them or straight up dismissed them is possibly the most empowering gift we can extend to a survivor. To be able to develop intimacy with a survivor absent of any sexual tension is a corrective relational dynamic that they need to experience. In this process, we begin to help a survivor delink the much

distorted strong association between having to perform sexually with another person of perceived power and/or a relationship that mimics intimacy. As a client of mine one said. "Every time my boss calls me into his office, I just assume he wants something from me, and when I realize he doesn't want any sexual favors ... I always leave feeling suspicious." Once we bring that dynamic into awareness and model a different outcome; the more consistent and predictable these intimate situations become.

Maslow's hierarchy is a great source of direction, as I mentioned above; one cannot engage in processing trauma when one does not have one's basic needs met. I am vehemently attached to this truth. Nobody wants to speak about painful experiences when one is hungry, scared, and still in the situation. We threaten the revictimizing of our clients if we push our clinical agenda without having the foundation ready (i.e., their social engagement online), and worse, we can physically place them in grave danger if we move too fast. Anyone working with this population must have an in depth understanding of trauma. Most critical in understanding trauma is that it is not the trauma itself that is most critical to understand, it is the reaction to the traumatic event that the person had which is most vital (Porges, 2015).

If the survivor has ample time out of the life (this is completely subjective and unique to each individual), has concrete support systems other than the social worker, well-adjusted coping mechanisms (some coping mechanisms although harmful, that is, cutting, using substances, dissociation, just to name a few served to help survivors in the past, have now evolved to healthier coping strategies) and is voicing a desire to work on his/her sexually traumatic experiences, and perhaps unaddressed childhood traumas, than, and only than ... should a well-trained social worker in trauma specific interventions, such as Somatic Experiencing, Sensorimotor Psychotherapy, EMDR and/or TF-CBT and Narrative Therapy with an added component of mind and body integration, should trauma resolution work be considered. I strongly advocate for all practitioners working with this population to employ a mind and body integrative approach, one that has a special focus on the body's response to the trauma(s).

## CONCLUSION

By utilizing a trauma informed care and person-in-environment approach we will quickly recognize that there are a multiplicity of systemic forces and personal experiences that exasperated the accessibility and vulnerability of a child or young adult being sexually trafficked and/or commercially sexually exploited. Anyone, at one time or another can be

vulnerable to trafficking and/or commercial sexual exploitation; however, as we were reminded in reading this essay, there are clear key elements that increase the likelihood of this occurrence happening to any one individual, and yet, it is still not obsolete that this cannot happen to anyone who does not share these personal and environmental identified vulnerabilities. In as much, by employing a TIC and PIE framework as a tool in assessment, it will enable social workers to accurately identify all areas of intersections in the clients' life that may have contributed to the existing situation. Once identified, this is where social workers can address the gaps, the traumagenic past, as well as oppressive systems that continue to hold space for further oppression in the form of exploitation and trafficking. Moreover, by having an overview of a clients' trauma history, it will better inform social workers with certain neurobiological, biological, psychological, emotional, spiritual, and physical truisms that are often associated with survivors of complex trauma. By discerning this information, as a result of the TIC and PIE employed approach, it will help guide a practitioners' interpretation of a clients' response more so than if they would have no knowledge and understanding of how trauma plays out in a client's life. Levenson (2017) states by using a

trauma informed approach, social workers that recognize the prevalence of early adversity in the lives of clients, view presenting problems as symptoms of maladaptive coping, and understand how early trauma shapes a client's fundamental beliefs about the world and affects his or her psychosocial functioning across the life span. (p. 105)

Dr. Levenson's statement propels me to think of choice in context to a survivors' experience with interpersonal traumas, structural and systemic discrimination—it makes me ponder the reality of how much of their so called *choice* is actually choice rather than a lack of choices. Moreover, how much of a survivors' choice is being, unbeknownst to them, informed by their unaddressed traumas and environmental forces that are manifested in oppressive systems. Therefore, in unpacking the idea of choice, trauma informed and person in environment approaches clearly delineates responsibility where it needs to lie—on those caretakers that failed to protect, institutionalized systemic forces that undoubtedly gained from an individuals' vulnerability and a society that relinquished all responsibility. What seems an obvious choice for an individual who has never endured trafficking and/or exploitation may not be conceivable for one who has lived to tell their story; it's incomprehensible to expect those in an exploitive situation to share in a similar worldview as someone who has never experienced such an atrocity and human rights violation. When someone does not have a physical, mental and/or emotional safe place, the word *choice* no longer applies—a choice is not a choice if you have no

viable options—the result quickly becomes a barrage of lack of choices in a world that has proven itself to be unfavorable.

My hope is that this chapter serves to accentuate that human sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation exists because as a society we have institutionalized oppressive systemic factors that uphold it, as well as debilitating paradigms, such as misogynistic, gender inequality, xenophobic, racist, classist and consumeristic mindsets that indirectly and directly contribute to the continuation of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. Moreover, that it highlight how the most disenfranchised in our society are the most vulnerable to this crime, and lack the very essence of basic needs (food, shelter, caretakers' presence/support and love) as a result of structural generated poverty from long ago (Segue, 2017). The implementation of TIC and PIE promises to represent and benefit the clients we serve most accurately, it allots for the exposure of all of the *isms* and the intersectionalities that our clients experience be taken in consideration when engaging and assessing this population. Thus, moving us in the right direction when serving survivors of commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking. We must do well with what has been given to us, and that means equipping ourselves as mental health professionals to better serve and support the radical transformational process of all survivors of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, and at the risk of belaboring my position—our work must not only focus on the intrapersonal piece, but just as intentionally work toward deconstructing and uprooting oppressive systems that sanction the exploitation of our most vulnerable. And as global citizens committed to making the world a better place, we have the power to eradicate human sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation in our life time—collectively we can create systems of liberation for all people, free of enslavement of all forms—if we choose to.

In closing, I highly recommend that all professors in higher education regardless of being in the helping field or not, integrate activities as well as material in their existing curriculum that addresses this social and human crisis that effects all of us. The following is a number of activities professors as well as schools can integrate:

- Introduce the idea of Human Trafficking;
- Fund survivor lead organizations as well as nonprofit organizations that have proven to be effective;
- Explore cultural perspectives that influence how we view CSEC & Adult Entertainment;
- Emphasize the need for quantitative data analysis for understanding the problem of trafficking;

- Focus on the importance of poverty in creating an environment where individuals become trafficked;
- Utilize screening tools in class to demonstrate how to screen for trafficking in a real-life scenario;
- Link the idea of trauma to what can lead to an individual being trafficked and the trauma they experience while being trafficked;
- Provide opportunities for survivors: Internships, Employment and Training Programs, Scholarships;
- Vote for policies and leaders that promote opportunities for survivors;
- Hold screenings of films on the subject in your home, school, or place of worship to develop awareness of the subject in your community;
- Promote awareness through projects like the Red Sand Project (Gochman, n.d.);
- Stop funding the adult entertainment industry;
- Take photos of your hotel room using TraffickCam;
- Include material on human trafficking in school curriculum;
- Volunteer with an agency that does antitrafficking work in your community;
- If you have special skills you may offer services pro-bono to trafficking survivors such as legal help and medical services; as well as employment if you are a business owner; and
- Call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center if you suspect trafficking at 1-888-373-7888.

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## CHAPTER 5

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# SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS REFLECT ON LEARNING ABOUT SEX TRAFFICKING

**Elizabeth Ringler-Jayanthan, Marni Barish,  
and Reynel Mirabal Tang**

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### ELIZABETH'S STORY

My journey in becoming an advocate for survivors of human trafficking, started during my time in the United States Peace Corps in Kyrgyzstan. During my service in the Peace Corps, I became aware of the problem of human trafficking in Central Asia. While human trafficking was a well-known problem in Eastern Europe, the problem was not well understood in the rest of the former Soviet states in Central Asia. As a result of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the subsequent economic collapse, many of the Central Asian countries were left with few employment opportunities—despite having high levels of literacy and educational attainment. Those with means left, causing a major brain-drain in the region. In a state of desperation many individuals in Kyrgyzstan are lured by fraudulent means into sex trafficking in the Middle East, and labor trafficking in Russia and other countries. In neighboring Uzbekistan, every year the government forces the population to harvest cotton without paying them. Exploitation is rife in a region where few opportunities exist for the local population.

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Upon my return to the United States, I attended the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, focusing on Human Security. This gave me a greater understanding of the problem of human trafficking internationally. Later, I started working in refugee resettlement, in which I had the opportunity to work with T-Visa (trafficking visa) cases, providing them with direct services. This gave me a keen perspective on working with international labor trafficking cases. The refugee resettlement agency I worked for partnered with the Project to End Human Trafficking in Pittsburgh, as well as Homeland Security and the FBI for referrals for cases. I also joined the Western PA Human Trafficking Coalition and became more involved in this area. After joining the Western PA Human Trafficking Coalition, I became aware of other local efforts in the region to address human trafficking, and started volunteering with an agency called Living in Liberty. Through my involvement with Living in Liberty, I first heard of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking and was introduced to the book *Renting Lacy: A Story of America's Prostituted Children*. I was stunned by this—I understood the lack of opportunities faced by those in Kyrgyzstan and how immigrants were tricked into a trafficking situation in United States, but I could not believe that people born in the United States were also trafficked. In 2015, I moved to Miami and started my master's in social work at Barry University. One of my key areas of interest was in working with human trafficking survivors. I began my field placement at the Life of Freedom Center, an anti-trafficking organization. This was my first opportunity to provide direct services to sex trafficking survivors or domestically trafficked individuals. I became aware of a common thread that ran through all of the stories of individuals I had worked with that had been trafficked—they were all vulnerable, lacked opportunities, and were tricked into a situation in which they were exploited. This was true of the people in Central Asia, the Central American labor trafficking cases I had worked with in Pittsburgh, and the domestic sex trafficking cases I worked with at the Life of Freedom Center.

At this time, I started working with Professor Zaoui. I had extensive experience in providing case management, but had no experience in providing therapy. I was offered the opportunity to work as her graduate assistant, in which I studied promising therapeutic techniques in working with trafficking survivors. Through this experience, I entered a deeper level of understanding in what happens in the brain of a trafficking survivor, the way they process trauma, and relate to the world. I have been able to implement the therapeutic techniques I have learned at Barry in working with trafficking survivors at my current field placement.

In October 2015, I had the opportunity to attend the Human Trafficking Summit in Tampa. Professor Zaoui organized Barry students to attend this conference and was able to secure scholarships for us. At this conference, I attended one talk in particular that was eye-opening for me—this

talk focused on the vulnerability of transgender females in sex trafficking, as well as the vulnerability of the LGBT community and boys in general. This talk was given by Nathan Earl, the Director of the Ark of Freedom in Miami, an agency that focuses on this population. Again, the theme of vulnerability emerged as he spoke about the risk trans females endure as a result of rejection from their families, lack of employment opportunities related to discrimination, and struggles with homelessness that can ultimately lead to being trafficked.

That December 2015, I was fortunate to attend the Human Trafficking Academy held at St. Thomas Law School. This training focused on the legal efforts that have been made to address human trafficking. At this training, we learned about international, national, and state laws that have been adopted to combat trafficking, but also assessment tools to screen for human trafficking. As a social worker, I may be in a position to be the first person to identify and report trafficking, so these were important tools for me to implement into my practice as a professional.

With all of the education I have received on human trafficking, as well as the direct practice in administering services to trafficking survivors, I am now in a position to educate others on what I've learned. This fall, I was able to present with Professor Zaoui at the Inclusive Communities Mini-Conference at Barry University, where our audience was largely other Barry students. I was also able to present at the Council on Social Work Education conference in Atlanta with Professor Zaoui. The focus of this talk was on how to identify, assess, and treat human trafficking survivors, as well as how to integrate material on human trafficking into social work curriculum. I also had the opportunity to lead a group of Barry students to a conference on Human Trafficking at the University of Miami, in which the Human Trafficking Institute in Atlanta provided students with tools to organize efforts at their universities to raise awareness of this issue.

My passion for this population has been enhanced and cultivated by the opportunities that have been afforded to me during my time at Barry University. I hope to transform this passion into making a real difference for trafficking survivors through direct service, educating the community on this issue, and by influencing policy through advocacy and research. While it is an audacious goal, we must aspire to end human trafficking in our time. As abolitionist William Wilberforce is quoted as saying, "You may choose to look the other way but you can never say again that you did not know."

### **MARNI'S STORY**

My inspiration to become a social worker, and enroll as a social work student came after a series of introductions to the plight of those affected by the issue of sex trafficking. My first introduction to this issue happened

while leaving the Former Soviet Union, when my path crossed with a mail order bride who shared her story with me. It was an introduction to a world that until that time, I had no idea existed; one where poverty, removal of protective factors, greed, and demand, created a context for others to be exploited. I had no idea at that time that this one meeting would change the course of my life forever.

An inability to ignore and proceed with life as usual grew within me and understanding came that there was a responsibility coupled with this knowledge. Working in outreach and awareness exposed me to first hand trauma stories that fueled a deeper desire for justice and restoration for victims. I knew my limited education was a barrier that hindered me from entering further arenas of healing with survivors of human trafficking. While my commitment to serve this population was solidified, next steps were unclear. In researching degrees, I came across the profession of social work and was struck by the many branches of reach and opportunity for impact on a micro, mezzo, and macro level. Equally striking, was the incredible core ethics and value for social justice and the dignity and worth of all peoples.

As a social work student, my internship afforded me an opportunity to work as a case manager with survivors of sex trafficking. Many of the principles and perspectives taught in my social work education assisted me in serving my clients. Survivors shared their stories that included profound injustices, exploitation of vulnerabilities, abuse and the breaking down of their humanity. Their needs ranged from case management, housing, legal, medical, education, mental health, and emotional support. Remembering a decade ago when awareness on human trafficking seemed sparse, I felt grateful for those offering service. Highlighted to me was the limited funding for long term residential programs, trauma counseling, and medical services, so often needed for survivors. I was inspired knowing that the social work profession is one that touches these various branches of need, educates and gathers together others in prospective fields to collaborate and advocate for change.

My social work education, offered me practical tools in working with those who have been affected by human trafficking. As a student, I was taught about the importance of empowerment and the awareness that power differentials exists. This was so valuable in working with a population whose experiences often included abuse of power and a sense of powerlessness. Yet, to look beneath the surface of a situation is to see the great resourcefulness, strength, and courage they possessed that caused them to survive. I am most thankful for the training in the strengths based perspective that deepened my belief that survivors cannot just heal but thrive. That lens had allowed me to witness and be inspired by some of the most courageous and resilient of people. Having had the opportunity

to see them pull from the resources within and regain their voice is one of my greatest joys.

My social work education has not only broadened my understanding of the issues surrounding human trafficking, it has better equipped me to seek out solutions, and forever changed the way in which I view and experience the world.

### **REYNEL'S STORY**

I have been a Child Protective Investigator (CPI) for the State of Florida for 2 years. During my time as a CPI, I have seen numerous human trafficking cases, although many of them were not identified as human trafficking when the Abuse Hotline screened it in. However, due to my MSW and my knowledge on human trafficking, as a professional, I have been able to identify human trafficking cases, or signs of someone being trafficked.

Many of the cases which have been screened as human trafficking already come with a protocol on how to handle them, which can limit what a CPI is able to do. CPI's have a total of 60 days to build rapport with the child and seek appropriate services for the child. During the 60-day period the CPI has to confirm or deny the allegations.

However, if the case is not identified as human trafficking, once there is the possibility of human trafficking, a CPI is to call law enforcement as well as the Florida abuse hotline to make a report of human trafficking. By the time that CPI speaks to the child about the allegations, the child would have already spoken to a detective from their jurisdiction, as a CPI's job is to provide the appropriate services to the child and their family.

Having an MSW has given me the tools to identify a child who has been trafficked or is currently in the life. I have gained the insight and knowledge to not judge the child while gathering the information needed to confirm the allegations. Furthermore, being educated on human trafficking has given me the tools to be sensitive when addressing the issues of human trafficking and having the child open up without feeling judged. At times, a child will disclose to me but not to law enforcement, as they do not feel comfortable with law enforcement.

As a CPI, one must be certified prior to working on human trafficking cases; the certification consists of a 6-hour training on human trafficking and how to identify a child who has or is currently being trafficked. Such as, being on the lookout for tattoos, expensive jewelry, how the child is dressed, and areas where a child might hang out, that have been identi-

fied as areas where there is prostitution. Following the training, one is able to work human trafficking cases.

As a CPI, I have noticed how other people have very little education or knowledge on human trafficking, especially when it comes to interviewing the child. There have been CPI's that ask the child "Have you ever had sex for money?" Once the child says "No" the CPI will automatically close the case.

Learning about human trafficking while obtaining my bachelor's and master's in social work has given me the necessary tools to identify a trafficked child, as well as building rapport and speaking to them without judgment. I believe that without the extensive knowledge and experience, one will not be able to help the child.

## CHAPTER 6

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# BUILDING PEACE CULTURE

## Shifting Gender Views as a Solution to Violence

**Lucia Klencakova and Mariely Valentin-Llopis**

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Education today, in this particular social period, is assuming truly unlimited importance. And the increased emphasis on its practical value can be summed up in one sentence: education is the best weapon for peace. (Maria Montessori, *Education and Peace*, translated by Helen R. Lane)

Life is about nuance. Every human being ought to reflect about life beyond those common concerns about wellbeing such as health, shelter, and finance. Wellbeing should include one more indicator, peace. Peace should be a measure of minimal discrepancy between peace within the self and peace with the other. Greater discrepancy signals the opposite of peace, violence. This includes violence against the self and violence against the other. A commonly mistaken indicator for peace is emotional health. The phrase “*I am in peace*” might refer to the absence of emotional distress, but omits whether the self is at peace with the other. The other is what makes community. In this way, peace becomes the responsibility of human beings, not institutions alone. Think about “peace talks” between nations, where only politicians are doing the talking. Talking about peace

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without educating communities of interest on what constitutes peace is as effective as throwing sand in the air.

Peace is all-encompassing. In this chapter, we discuss peace from a media and gender perspective. We explore the following four areas: (1) A brief overview of deep-rooted cultural mindsets that run counter to building a culture of peace in countries such as the United States of America, where cultural codes favor violence over peace (Galtung, 1990); (2) Peace journalism as a model for media role in peacebuilding; (3) The implications of deep-rooted cultural scripts on gender constructs in media; and (4) Solutions to a culture of violence by promoting media literacy as early as grade school. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said,

How are you training your sons to be focused on women's rights and women's opportunities the way you're focused on telling your daughter that she can be anything? (in Gray, 2016)

### **A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF PEACE CULTURE AND GENDER TRAITS**

In the United States, peace culture has been closely related to females while violence culture is more associated with males. Historically, militarism and political affairs had been the flagship of successful men. Conversely, women have been promoters of health care (nursing), education, and community affairs. Jane Addams, who pioneered peace culture in the United States, received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931 (see Addams, 1981). Years later, Emily Green Balch was also awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize. Over decades, both American women and American men have been awarded for their work in building a culture of peace. These American peace builders have set the stage for democratized discussions on peace culture in the United States and around the world. This is moving peace conversations from the elites to the masses. Since the advent of mass media technologies, promoting social change is about crafting media scripts.

For instance, The Pew Research Center (2015) reports that the American public sees little distinction between men and women on several leadership traits (see Table 6.1). Still, many Americans do make distinctions between men and women on certain leadership qualities. Survey respondents (65%) say being compassionate better describes women than men; and (27%) say men are more decisive than women (see Figure 6.1).

Furthermore, cultural orientations of care, cooperation, and relations are classified as feminine (Hofstede, 1998). On the other hand, cultural orientations of leadership, competition, self-actualization are classified as masculine (Hofstede, 1998). Hofstede's cultural dimensions' validity has

**Table 6.1.**

| <i>Culture of War (COW)</i>   | <i>Culture of Peace (COP)</i>   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power characterization as the monopoly of force</li> <li>• Exploitation of people</li> <li>• Exploitation of nature</li> <li>• Male domination</li> <li>• Hierarchical authority</li> <li>• Having an enemy</li> <li>• Secrecy and propaganda</li> <li>• Armament</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education for culture of peace</li> <li>• Human rights</li> <li>• Sustainable development</li> <li>• Equality of women and men</li> <li>• Democratic participation</li> <li>• Tolerance and solidarity</li> <li>• Free flow of information</li> <li>• Disarmament</li> </ul> |

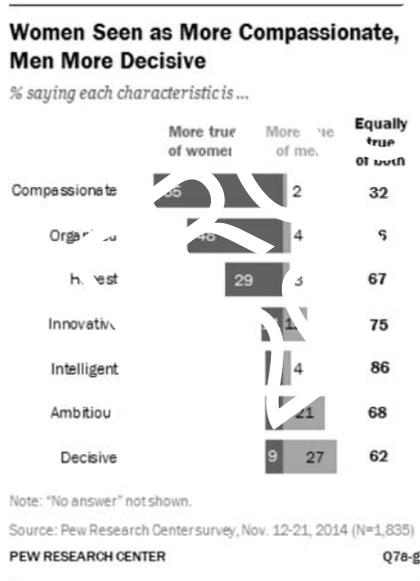


Figure 6.1.

been challenged by several social scientists, yet chronologically traits such as cooperation and care are attributed to females while competition and survival to males. It is important to note that the culture as a whole is being classified with a high or low degree of either masculinity or femininity. Changes in politics and social views affect the masculinity/femininity degree, thus, Hofstede’s cultural dimensions must not be read as static

but rather fluid. Following Hofstede's cultural dimensions (1998), the United States has a higher degree of masculinity than, for example, Norway. This means that Norwegians, both males and females, favor cooperation over competition, happiness over success, community over self, and peace over violence. More recently, the 2016 Global Peace Index ranked Norway among the top 20 peaceful countries. The United States ranked 103 (see Institute for Economic and Peace, 2016).

Bracciodieta (2010) explains that Norwegians' cultural codes contribute to their culture of peace. The author examines two words (or cultural codes) that represent Norwegian mindsets: *likhet* and *janteloven*. The value concept of *likhet* translates to likeness, similarity, identity or sameness, and equality. *Janteloven* literally means "Jante's Law" (see Chaglar, 2006). Bracciodieta describes it as "A set of ten rules that are designed to limit ambitions or attempts to be successful with the overall goal of preventing jealousy from arising amongst people" (2010, p. 93). Similarly, American cultural codes such as "self-made" represents a mindset that define aspirations and competitive spirit aside from family and cultural background. Other American cultural codes such as "celebrity" and "super-star" signify superiority, deference, competition, and success. These cultural codes, taken together, are the product of America's entertainment and sports culture (see Gabler, 2011; Postman, 1985/2006) which feeds itself on glamorizing celebrity lifestyles, stardom, and rags to riches narratives. This means that entertainment media and social media can play a significant role in reorienting American cultural values of competition and success to cooperation and mutuality. This cultural reorientation should center in espousing femininity traits rather than diminishing them as weak and submissive.

### **WHAT IS A CULTURE OF PEACE VERSUS A CULTURE OF VIOLENCE?**

Peace is defined as a set of values, attitudes and modes of behaviors promoting the peaceful settlement of conflict and the quest for mutual understanding (UNESCO, 1998). A culture of peace "is a commitment to peace-building, mediation, conflict prevention and resolution, peace education, education for nonviolence, tolerance, acceptance, mutual respect, intercultural and interfaith dialogue and reconciliation (Culture of Peace and Non-violence, 2017, para. 1). The United Nations (UN) General Assembly (1999) specifically declares that:

A key role in the promotion of a culture of peace belongs to parents, teachers, politicians, journalists, religious bodies and groups, intellectuals, those

engaged in scientific, philosophical and creative and artistic activities, health and humanitarian workers, social workers, managers at various levels as well as to non-governmental organizations. (Article 9)

Johan Galtung, Norwegian professor of peace studies and founder of *International Peace Research Institute*, *Journal of Peace Research*, and *TRANSCEND: A Network for Peace, Development and Environment*, called upon journalists and media to take responsibility for the promotion of peace as early as 1986. Galtung developed a typology of violence in his influential article “Cultural Violence” (Galtung, 1990). He classified violence into three categories: direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence. Direct violence attacks survival needs by killing, it attacks well-being needs by maiming, attacks identity needs by desocialization, and attacks freedom needs by repressing. Structural violence is characterized by exploitation of survival needs and wellbeing needs by means of sanctions, siege, and misery. Exploitation of identity needs is carried out by resocialization, creating conditions for humans being treated as secondary citizens, penetration, and segmentation. Freedom needs are exploited by detention, expulsion, marginalization, and fragmentation. Galtung (1990) asserts that, “The study of cultural violence highlights the way in which the act of direct violence and the fact of structural violence are legitimized and thus rendered acceptable in society” (p. 292). In this discussion of gender equality and peace culture, it is critical to understand the forms of violence and how culture veils violence as nonviolence.

For example, media portraits of male domination through representations of males as tough and prompt to violence when resolving conflict legitimizes distorted views of what “being a man” means in our society. Male children and adolescents growing under such media influence would struggle to adopt peaceful means of conflict resolution which culturally aligns with female behavior. To support this point, the Center for Diseases Control (CDC) reported that,

In a 2011 nationally-representative sample of youth in grades 9–12: 32.8% reported being in a physical fight in the 12 months preceding the survey; the prevalence was higher among males (40.7%) than females (24.4%). (Center for Diseases Control, 2012, para. 6)

Thus, cultural violence, in this case media violence, is veiling direct violence (physical harm) by distorting gendered male/female behavior (e.g., boys fight and girls gossip).

The main goal is for media to portray the roles of both males and females as compassionate, reflective, and empathetic. Media and media consumers alike are to commit to redefining cultural codes that run counter to peace. For instance, there is one American deep-rooted

cultural code which professes that boys should not hit girls. But what about boys should not hit boys? Violent behavior cannot be gendered because it is a veil to direct and structural violence.

### **PEACEBUILDING IN THE MEDIA: PEACE JOURNALISM**

In recent years, peace journalism has become an area of interest for communication scholars, especially those who are concerned with journalists' over-reliance on conflict as a news value. Consequently, journalists involved in war and conflict reporting must make a conscious effort to adhere to objectivity, a time-honored journalistic principle. However, research shows that war stories that journalists cover tend to suffer from sensationalism, identification with solely one side, and an overemphasis on material damage and human loss (Allen & Seaton, 1999; Toffler & Toffler, 1994). This type of reporting has been labeled war journalism where journalists use language of military triumph and an action orientation urging violence as a means to a resolution, which sometimes causes even more conflict (Lee & Maslog, 2005).

Considered a pioneer of the concept of peace journalism, Galtung (1986) advocated that journalists take a nonviolent approach when reporting conflict and laid out practices and criteria that would allow reporters to accomplish this. As such, peace journalism involves taking a proactive approach framing stories in a way that focus on peace, minimize cultural differences, and promote conflict resolution (Galtung, 1986, Lee & Maslog, 2005, Lynch & Galtung, 2010). Galtung (1998) was critical of the "low road" taken by news reporters who provided a superficial narrative with little background or historical perspective and challenged journalists to take the "high road" in their reporting which was thought to promote a culture of reconciliation and peace.

Using both sports and healthcare metaphors, Galtung (as cited in McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000) noted that traditional war journalism focuses on winning a zero-sum game; however, he suggested that war reporting should be modeled on health journalism, where the medical reporter not only describes a patient's battle with cancer (problem), but also apprises the patient about the causes of the disease (causes) along with various cures and preventative measures (solutions). Ultimately, Galtung (1998) believed a good war reporter would find "a clear opportunity for human progress, using the conflict to find new ways, transforming the conflict creatively so that the opportunities take the upper hand—without violence" (p. 23).

David Adams (2013) who initiated the Culture of Peace Program at UNESCO in 1992 and was the director of the United Nations Interna-

tional Year for the Culture of Peace (2000), emphasizes the role of media in building a culture of peace. He states:

The mass media have become the most important aspect of education for a culture of war in recent years. Television and radio not only provide the misinformation that justifies war and the preparation for war, but most importantly, they teach passivity. The relation between the viewer/listener and the television or radio set is by its very nature passive. The viewer/listener cannot ask questions or challenge, but can only “change channels” and what we find is hundreds of channels with more or less the same message, the message that only money can buy.

Adams’s observation on the relationship between media and media consumers suggests that teaching media literacy is key to reversing the pervasive effect of violent media programming. Following on Galtung’s (1986) peace/war indicators, pervasive media is such that it overemphasizes victory over peace, propaganda over truth, elites over common people, and conflict over solution. Absent from Galtung, Lynch, Lee, & Maslog’s peace journalism/war journalism indicators are that of male domination versus equality of women and men (see Table 6.1, Adams, 2013).

### **WHAT IS MEDIA LITERACY AND ITS EFFECT ON GENDER RELATIONS?**

The United Nations, social scientists, educators, and journalism practitioners recognize the pervasive influence of media over its consumers. Therefore, promoting media literacy is a step forward in this collective peace building journey.

James Potter (2013) defines media literacy as “a set of perspectives that we actively use to expose ourselves to the mass media to interpret the meaning of the message we encounter” (p. 25). More specifically, media literacy aims for developing four main skills (1) awareness, which refers to the ability to perceive information elements in media messages; (2) controlling for emotions elicited through media; (3) developing moral opinions about the ethical nature of media messages; and (4) aesthetic appreciation, which refers to cultivating an enhanced enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of media content. Potter further explains that media literacy is important as the line between the real world and the media world is being blurred. Thus, media consumers should question how the media world affects the real world. In sum, to become media literate we are to have strong knowledge structures in five areas: media effects, media content, media industries, the real world, and the self.

Developing a media literate society is vital to promoting a culture of peace where violent gender constructs are kept in check. Furthermore, media literate audiences move from plain cynicism to critical decision-making, thus, becoming agents of change. This agentic approach to media consumption should be taught in K–12 schools and higher education institutions. Going back to the deep-rooted cultural codes, how American celebrity culture affects gender perceptions. How effectively is media portraying gender equality? Next, we address these questions through two media films, *Mr. & Mrs. Smith* from 20th Century Fox and *Moana* from Walt Disney Animation Studios.

### CULTURAL VIOLENCE

As Galtung (1990) points out, violence, for the most part, is taking as an act of one person and then generalizing trait associated with the act to the whole culture. Considering the White man ideology and perhaps a skin complexion immediately strikes a thought of lightening dark skin and tanning light skin. Our society became a place that fosters the let-me-create-something-perfect, perfection that does not exist, so that members of our society feel imperfect all the time. As you continue “improving” and getting closer to the perfection, is it possible that you become feeling superior to other people. Does our society encourage Othering? In theory, it is believed that we communicate with each other based on our inner tendencies; we can either communicate with ego or eco intentions. In fact, ego motivations cause us to use others as a mean to an end, whereas the eco motivations, that is, the Communication Ecosystem, promotes human connection for the sake of everyone’s wellbeing.

Ego motivations, then, similar to the cultural violence, justify hatred towards others without realizing that each person has their own subjective views of this world. Panzaru (2012) confirms that “meaning is not transmitted to us, we [humans] actually create it” (p. 409). In other words, because one feels superior and wishes to remain in that position, s/he will justify violence against others and that way force others to conform to his or her ideologies (for further reading on this topic, refer to Stuart’s Hall intercultural theories). Galtung exemplifies a similar idea and calls it a socialization of a child; if a child is constantly bombarded with messages of inequality in his or her family, school, society in general or media, this child stands no chance at changing his or her mindset about something. This child is literally being brainwashed with superiority ideologies that eventually become his or her beliefs. Then, it becomes almost impossible to break through the ideology barrier and see the world through their own eyes.

The gap between people is created, the gap that we as peace and intercultural scholars want to eliminate. It is our goal to raise awareness of what increases inequality and promotes differences that we refer to as war language which often causes even more conflict (Lee & Maslog, 2005). Gender and racial segregation caused us to become a society of finger-pointers, I am better than you and I will blame you for issues we are facing. As Galtung explains, this attitude forces us to become alienated and alienate others, if we get rid of the other, our problems will diminish or disappear altogether. We are creating a fake sense of exclusivity, in which we fundamentally err by attributing the fault to the other person (Moran, Jolly, & Mitchell, 2014; Ting-Toomey, 1999). Just as the White supremacy theory tries to pin fault on minorities, the patriarchal ideology creates gender bias by promoting typical gender narratives, he is assertive and an authority, she is too emotional or the Iron Maiden. We ought to start promoting diversity as a way to be an inclusive, equal and peaceful society.

### **MALE VERSUS FEMALE SOCIETY**

Here is a fascinating observation: women in male-dominated industries such as broadcast, business or politics still, to this day, have to make powerful nonverbal statements to demonstrate their authority while men are already considered an authority (Tan & See, 2009). Women either become masculinized trying to assimilate to a male-dominated corporate sphere or place too much emphasis on physical appearance and attractiveness to score higher ranks (Brower, 2013; Potvin, 2003; The Herald, 1999). And instead, a 2011 White Paper revealed that employers are, in fact, interested in female leaders because women possess qualities that are increasingly valued in the world of business (Young, 2011). Among those valued qualities are building bonds, empathy and open communication. Why do we continue to believe that women are not worthy of being perceived as an authority when the reality is that feminine qualities make our society a better place for everyone? Unquestionably then, feminism that fosters environment “where everyone’s needs are respected, where everyone has [equal] rights” can, too, be considered a culture of peace (hooks, 2015, p. 103). And just as culture of peace, feminism too promotes cooperation, equality and inclusion of the other. But relationships cannot function well if the fear of manipulation, oppression or punishment exists (Maddock, 1993).

### **ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY AND ADVERTISING**

If you ever wonder whether the portrayal of beauty and female objectification in media hinders both males and females, then look no longer, for

the answer is an unequivocal yes. Females are under constant scrutiny and pressure to conform to the idealized images (Bartky, 1990). Body images that force women to strive for the ideal that does not exist affect us negatively in every way. Many women declare youth and being thin as a sexually desirable body, and they only feel sexually desirable when attractive to others (Montemurro & Gillen, 2013). Is it that women need attention and to be perceived as attractive that make them content with their own body, or is it a constant media reminder that females have to look a certain way to be sexually accepted so that they can feel attractive? Many women declared that after a certain age they felt unappealing and stopped trying to achieve an “unachievable ideal” (Montemurro & Gillen, 2013, p. 15).

But appearance and sexual desirability is a gendered phenomenon: women base self-images on looks, and men on sexual skill and appearance (as cited in Montemurro & Gillen, 2013), which becomes apparent in the way the promotional material for cosmetics, the entertainment industry, and clothing is structured. For instance, on a flyer for a nightclub, in spray tan or a branded perfume advertising on TV, or in a music video, for the most part, women are sexy, acting provocatively, are perfectly groomed and available for a man who is well dressed with expensive jewelry, posing as a boss that signifies he is the owner of her body.

Moreover, breasts are overly sexualized in Western cultures, and any changes associated with this part of the body impacts females negatively. Montemurro and Gillen (2013) concluded that many women going through physical changes are also affected psychologically. Therefore, seeing a young woman in media that objectifies her and highlights breast and nakedness as her sole value, will ultimately lead to all women going through bodily changes feeling undesirable which will further lower their self-esteem.

Before we analyze how the film industry contributes to the everlasting female oppression, we would like to establish what exposure to falsified media messages and images do to our population. Manipulation through visuals is one of the strongest types of persuasion because images affect us both psychologically and physiologically, and “are digested 60,000 times faster than text” (Panzaru, 2012, p. 410). Is that why the majority simply accepts that objectifying female bodies is “normal,” instead of interrogating what it does to young female naiveté? After a flyer analysis,<sup>1</sup> it became obvious that the main message in those flyers is that women must be young and half naked to be worthy of male attention, and only a club that is filled with provocative undressed women can be sexy, fun and successful.

The advertising strategy of the entertainment industry is to provoke desire and to influence its audience; advertising images have the power to influence us by more than 40% (Panzaru, 2012). Since we are being

seduced by a particular idea that sells a particular identity, these flyers are selling the seductive idea of the female body and force us to scrutinize all women under the same magnifying glass of being a sexual object and only worthy of our time if they look or act that way. Advertising basically encourages thinking that this is the representation of real life and promotes sexuality as a sole female value. And if advertising is to provoke desires, manipulate and convey message in as little as few seconds, it can be assumed that consumers too are forced to form their impressions on the object in 3–5 seconds (Gibson & Poposki, 2010; Forbes Magazine, 2013). Thus, if flyers or media messages portray success of a club with a half-naked body, what will a young woman think that her body represents? Would that mean that women overall will be objectified as a source of income for a club owner, and they may even feel forced to go along with the idea of dressing provocatively and acting promiscuous so that they would fit in or worse, get hired?

As Barthes (1977) stated, visual images reflect ideologies of our society and Panzaru (2012) added, “visual mediums are perceived as portraying reality while in fact they are constructing it” (p. 411). Is our perception of reality distorted or are we truly creating perfection that does not exist? Following Barthes’ idea of photography being a replica of reality, the real concern here is the beautification of the reality, where humans would rather live a beautified version of their lives than to accept reality for what it really is. In the era of technology and social media, there is plethora of supporting evidence for the idea above as people post on their social media the nicer version of the reality to portray their dreamt version rather than the reality itself. This is true injustice to reality because the real life and its issues are hidden behind the smiles and pretense of perfection. We become victims of technology that continues to distort our perception of reality and confuse young generations. We buy into the idea of consumerism and continue purchasing and clutter our life to feel more important and we further segregate the population into who has more of what—this is the era in which humankind is being oppressed by media and technology, and false images.

Advertising is a reminder of the social as well as cultural changes; advertising represents culture’s values, desires and morals (Barroso, 2014; Dali, 2013). Do those flyers mirror our beliefs? As Scrivano (2010) highlights, our brains often find a relationship between a sign and a meaning; if a meaning behind these messages is entertainment, isn’t it a little dangerous to suggest that a female is an object of entertainment? Doesn’t it suggest to males that entertaining oneself means owning a female body which can lead to sexual violence; meaning sexual assault is alright as long as it is within the confines of having a good time? The advertising, and overall media promotion, represents having a good time with provoc-

ative images which sets expectations for women to be objects of fun and desire, the attraction for a male who is the boss, the owner, the object of her attention. The advertising message is to communicate archetypes that would fulfil our society's expectations (Barroso, 2014). Do advertisers simply assume that objectification of women is still an accepted norm or is it consumers who continue to accept it?

And why do women disrespect themselves, allowing others to disrespect them by spreading the message of accepting foolishly this position in a patriarchal society? When trying to form a good impression of the self, one compares the self to the other and adapts (Gibson & Poposki, 2010). Thus, a woman seeing other women dressed provocatively may end up disrespecting herself in a hope of fitting in. If we go even further, a male unaware of semiotic meaning behind an image can unknowingly disrespect women thinking that it is the only way to enjoy night in a club. And since almost every entertainment or beauty advertisement has a beautiful female and sexy strong male, a young person with minimal awareness of what is "normal or correct" may assume that success lies in being a male authority figure desired by half-naked pretty thin ladies with perfect hair, make-up and skin. What example are we setting for generations to come?

Visual images should be accompanied by a text, otherwise they are ambiguous (Barthes, 1975). Essentially, advertising is highlighting beauty ideals and unattainable expectations to sell us the product that will definitely not change our life. So really, its only goal is to appeal to our emotions and desires to make us believe that we need something that we don't. Once it had become a norm to dress provocatively and reveal as much of our bodies as possible to fulfil others' desires or to be admired, we know our society is in trouble. Based on *The Pleasure of the Text*, "the book creates the meaning, the meaning creates life" (p. 36), it can be assumed that while language is a powerful tool, most messages are communicated nonverbally. Images decrease language's meaning to unimportant and we begin believing that images are reality and we should adhere to media-presented reality.

## FILM ANALYSIS

Maggie Humm described the female stereotype in films as the "good" mothers or the "bad girl" (as cited in Leach, 2012). Typically, we would see the male-female/gatherer-nurturer dynamic, or the controlling female who is a negative character in a movie—she would either be a hero or the hero's enemy. Considering films released in the last few decades, it could be agreed that viewers are offered female characters that are in need of a

man to save them or masculine-hardcore and often sexy villains. For the purpose of demonstrating how this affects us as viewers, analyses will be performed on two films. Since we already know that women can be either good or bad, I decided to analyze *Mr. and Mrs. Smith*, a 2005 movie starring Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, where Jolie is both a good wife and a sexy hardcore hitwoman. And to demonstrate how we change our perceptions of females when they do not fall under those two categories, we selected *Moana*, a 2016 Pixar movie.

The first thing to notice with *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* is the ever sexist movie title—why is it “he” and only then we consider the woman? This is the stereotypical take your husband’s name after marriage; the bride is left with only two and equally sexist choices, keeping her father’s name or taking on her spouse’s last name. The storyline, however, is atypical, for it does not support stereotypical female roles, in fact, Jolie goes through an unusual film transformation. While he is a good man and husband, he too is a hired murderer sent to kill his wife. She, on the other hand, is a housewife cooking for her husband; she is then revealed to be a highly sexualized, emotionally unavailable and physically strong killer, she even becomes powerful enough to compete with her husband as they find out about each other’s daily work activities, and then they both declare love for each other so strong that they cannot kill one another. She is transformed from a nice quiet and obedient housewife to a strong female who fights her husband, even physically, and after he declares his intense feelings for her, only then she can melt that stone cold heart (Leach, 2012).

The ridiculousness of this film is in teaching us that women have to assume a typically male role, being unemotional and authoritarian, in order to demonstrate equality to a man and the amount of strength they carry. Our culture is attacking the female emotional and nurturing side, and disregards those female strengths and qualities. Why cannot female strength lie in the fact that women can carry a child, raise a child, be strong emotionally, inclusive and supportive of others? Going back to Young’s (2011) White Paper “Women Better Leaders in 21st Century,” that highlights feminine traits as a powerful key to a company’s success; why does our society continue to declare male assertiveness and competitiveness as characteristics that a woman has to possess to be treated equally to a man?

Why can we not simply say that females have other qualities than males, both are essential to society’s success and well-being, and teach our children to work with those differences as if they were a key to everyone’s happiness. We are supporting oppression of true female qualities by highlighting extreme concepts where male domination forces women to take on male roles to succeed or be taken seriously. The films that highlight machismo as a force that makes us successful, force women to pretend or

assume male attributes. I am not suggesting that women are not strong, even physically stronger than some males, or that women cannot be assertive, I am solely pointing out that when women are, it is wrong, and when they are not, it is wrong too. Our society highlights the differences further alienating both genders. Culture of war that prefers male domination and patriarchy, builds on differences; essentially, one's well-being and saving one's own face is more important than mutual face saving (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

Jane (Jolie), in *Mr. and Mrs. Smith*, uses language that disassociates her from her feelings towards her husband. Perhaps, to highlight her refusal to show vulnerability (Feminist Film Critique, 2005). The film aims to support the feminist cause by reversing stereotypical gender roles: a sensitive man coupled with a macho woman, without realizing that a gun does not make a woman strong and the dialogue with a woman without a heart gives her a "veneer of attitude without any substance" (Feminist Film Critique, 2005). This is yet another example of completely misunderstanding the essence of feminism and culture of peace. The film confuses a viewer by portraying women as strong only if they are sensual and acting as men. To some degree, film characters represent anxieties of their times (Brook, 2016). To set the record straight once and for all, the feminist theory aims to reach equality and that can only be done if we stop highlighting differences as negatives and embrace diversity, perhaps, use building a bridge between differences as a necessary tool to reach peace.

Disney and Pixar also recognized the need to change their films from *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty* to more female-empowering characters that do not rely on Prince Charming. Aside from the fact that all original princesses were White and dangerously thin, they all also waited to be rescued by a man. Pocahontas, the Native American princess, Mulan, the Chinese heroine princess, in the nineties, and then the first African American princess, Tiana in *The Princess and the Frog* in 2009, broke the stereotypical chain of film industry's fairy tales. Then in 2012 came *Brave* and *Frozen*, where the main characters were women "with ideals other than romance, representing a part of a distinct lineage of Disney princesses" (Brook, 2016). Disney is now more than ever featuring diverse and more assertive female protagonists. "In some cases, inclusion has even been the explicit theme of the company's [Disney] work. *Zootopia*, for instance, took on the issues of prejudice and segregation" (Lang, 2016).

The 2016 addition is *Moana*, about a Polynesian emancipated female that embarks on a perilous journey to save her people from a disaster. In short, girls are not the ones being saved, "girls are the ones doing the saving" (Cheng, 2016). This is a story of a brave Pacific Islander princess that explores the ocean and discovers true friendship and own strength. Critics also point out that *Moana* is one of the most important movies for

young girls in the modern era of storytelling (Brook, 2016; Cheng, 2016; Lang, 2016). While comparing few on surface female empowering films, I noticed that many filmmakers truly tried to pay tribute to women. However, many failed to portray female strength and instead hinted on the issue while not offering any solution to change the status-quo. Few made a woman look strong but only if a man was present. In *Beauty and the Beast*, Belle is brave, intelligent and capable of saving herself, yet she offers herself to save her father and falls in love with the Beast. The macho man literally allows her to save him by falling in love with him, thus, the never-ending cycle of a female sacrificing herself for a male.

Instead, Moana offers true cooperation by asking Maui (a man) to help bring life to her island. Moana's physical appearance is also reinforcing a healthy image of beauty; she is of average height, does not have unusually long limbs or a tiny waist (Brook, 2016). Although some critics have argued that *Moana* sets girls up for disappointing romantic and unhealthy lives, I see the movie as highlighting existing differences proudly. We all may not find love, we may not be saved by a Prince Charming, some may not even want to be saved, and we all cannot have flawless skin, a "perfect body" or any of the other ideals that may or may not exist. In fact, Moana focuses on saving her island rather than finding love and cooperation as a solution rather than cultural differences. The film does not disregard the need for love nor does it say that all women should look like Moana; the film merely tells a story of a girl who asks a friend to help her save her people. This is a true proactive approach that focuses on wellbeing, cooperation and peace (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2000).

There are still other issues that need to be addressed, such as the generalized view of Pacific Islanders in the appearance of Maui that gives a distorted view of all male Polynesians (Kushi, 2016). In any case, the awareness is the beginning. Culture of peace, as Galtung calls it, highlights cooperation and similarities, it aims to promote differences as a benefit and build on things that link them not disregards them by saying this is better and this is worse or wrong. Feminism as well as peace culture only have one goal, to raise awareness that my wellbeing is as important as yours and that our differences should not be seen as a problem but as a benefit. And until we understand that we are all in this together, there will never be peace on Earth.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To simply critique sexist images without offering alternatives is an incomplete intervention. Critique doesn't lead to change. (hooks, 2015, p. 35)

In this chapter, we focused primarily on cultural violence. We aimed to demonstrate that gender bias is not only still prevalent but widely accepted. By pretending that oppression is not happening, we reinforce the culture of violence. A woman is equal to a man; it is not her job to prove herself to a man. Instead, all of us have to make sure that women are not becoming obsessed with demonstrating their equality while renouncing their femininity. We presented several compelling arguments of media effects on gender relations after which we suggested that simply appreciating media as an entertainment and to some extent, information sharing would be ideal. We urge you to raise awareness of semiotics behind media depictions, encourage your students to question things that do not feel right and also initiate collaborative ways to contribute to social change.

To undo gender bias, we need to shift our perception of strictly male-female qualities and remain objective when digesting media messages. Everyone has an equal chance if we embrace diversity and build on similarities. Let's teach others and our children how to support one another and find healthy ways to cooperate. Let's teach our children that difference is only skin deep and that differences in character or surface do not make us superior or inferior. Let's shift our perception from we-are-different to this is how similar we are. The benefit of that is that we learn and grow together and we include everyone in the process of wellbeing and peacebuilding. As educators, we can teach our students to reframe stories, to think and evaluate our world critically without judgment and from a peace point-of-view. Below is a short guide for you to use in the classroom, considering two of the films that were previously analyzed in the chapter.

### **EDUCATOR'S GUIDE FOR MEDIA LITERACY AND THE CRITICAL PROCESS<sup>2</sup>**

- Step 1. **Description.** Consider a list of movies where traditional and non-traditional gender roles are depicted such as the ones discussed in this chapter.
- Step 2. **Analysis.** In the classroom, write out mutually agreed upon definitions of peace and violence. Note patterns in the film that convey either peaceful resolution or violence. Make a list of movie characters brokering peace and their gender alongside a list of movie characters initiating violence and their gender.
- Step 3. **Interpretation.** What do the patterns mean? How can the viewers distinguish between peace and violence? Which nonverbal cues and words signify either peace or violence?

- Step 4. **Evaluation.** Violence is in many instances equated with entertainment value. Hollywood studios are not motivated to create non-violent content thus risking revenue. Could you think of one high-violence-content movie that could have been better without explicit acts of violence? How could you script male and female roles to convey collaboration rather than competition?
- Step 5. **Engagement.** We can bring about change through several ways. Begin by exploring other film genres that promote collaboration and nontraditional gender roles. You may find some interesting films by visiting: [www.foreignfilms.com](http://www.foreignfilms.com). Gather with friends and share your interest for movie titles that promote peace and nontraditional gender roles.

## NOTES

1. In 2016, Lucia Klenckova conducted an entertainment flyer analysis with Dr. Nickesia Gordon for a Gender and Women studies conference. Almost 50 flyers were analyzed and revealed disturbing amount of women that were represented on a flier as a male or a club property.
2. Adapted from Campbell, Martin, & Fabos, 2015, p. 259.

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## CHAPTER 7

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# MY GENDER PORTFOLIO

## Applying Object-Based Reflection in Teaching Communication and Gender

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In the field of communication, much of the research on gender in relation to communicative acts tends to focus on how men and women differ in their communication styles (Tannen, 2007, 2011). While these bodies of work offer valuable insight into the interpersonal communication dimensions of gender, they do not necessarily examine “the variety of ways in which communication of and about gender enables and constrains people’s identities” (DeFrancisco, Palczewski, & McGeough, 2013, p. xvi). As such, they may perpetuate rather than disrupt the traditional gender binary. By reinforcing categories of difference, this approach fails to provide the language, both verbal and visual, that individuals may need to represent their actual lived experiences in relation to gender identity. A Communication and Gender course can address a university’s commitment to inclusive community by encouraging students to be reflective about their choices of and responses to various gender representations. Taught from a critical point of view, such a course motivates students to think about how their communication functions to constitute gender.

This reflective process helps to develop a deeper consciousness of how and why identities may vary according to different standpoints individuals

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may occupy. Highlighting standpoints “problematiz[es] absolutes and universals, focusing attention instead on the situated, local, and communal constitution of knowledge ... not by privileging one side of the dichotomy, but by deconstructing the dichotomy itself” (Hekman, 1997, p. 356). The gender portfolio assignment is designed to help students develop this awareness and encourages them to appreciate diversity from a dialectical point of view. Critical reflection plays a key role in this process and the gender portfolio acts as an object through which students might reflect on concrete knowledge and potentially make connections with their own lives. Further, using the portfolio as an object for reflection recognizes students’ ability to be “self-reflexive about communication processes and creative in generating new ways to play with [interact with] symbols” (DeFrancisco et al., 2013, p. xvi).

## **COMMUNICATION AND GENDER COURSE OVERVIEW**

The course described herein provides an overview of the role of communication in the construction of gender. Students are introduced to various theories, including standpoint theory, grounded theory, queer theory, and performance theory, as they explore the process of identity formation from a communication perspective. On a subject as personal as gender, multiple perspectives exist, many of which do not necessarily fit traditional ideas about how to enact gender. The class is designed to explore a wide variety of standpoints on gender and give students an opportunity to examine ideas about selfhood, as well as to discover and outline some of the various perspectives on gender. Students examine their own understandings of gender as it is constructed, performed, evaluated, and negotiated through communication.

## **CRITICAL REFLECTION AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

High impact educational practices involve “engaging in deep approaches to learning” (Kuh, 2008, p. 14), that help facilitate student engagement with the curriculum as well as broad social issues. According to Kuh (2008), these activities “typically demand that students devote considerable time and effort to purposeful tasks ... [and] require daily decisions that deepen students’ investment in the activity as well as their commitment to their academic program and the college” (p. 14). The Association of American Colleges and Universities has identified several activities that count as high impact, including Service and Community based Learning, Internships, Capstone Courses and Projects, Undergraduate Research,

Diversity/Global Learning, and Writing Intensive Courses, among others. Embedded in all of these activities is the idea of critical reflection. According to Mezirow (1997), it is important that we critically reflect on “the assumptions upon which our interpretations, beliefs, and habits of mind or points of view are based” (p. 7).

In teaching a course related to gender, Mezirow’s statement is especially pertinent. The politics of gender are well noted, including points of view that limit the range of gender expressions as well as marginalize and oppress those who do not adhere to established codes of performing gender identities. Traditional views of enacting gender are pervasive, restrictive and often unjust. Institutions of higher learning, through courses that emphasize social justice education (Bell, 2016), can impact the conversations about gender in meaningful ways by incorporating pedagogical practices that encourage personal and social transformations. Critical reflection provides a pathway to such transformations since the process creates experiences that potentially allow us to reevaluate our misconceptions about particular groups (Mezirow, 1997). Subsequently, we may, as Mezirow points out, “become more tolerant or more accepting of members of [culturally different groups]. If this happens over and over again with a number of different groups, it can lead to a transformation by accretion in our governing habit of mind” (p. 7).

Critical reflection can occur in a variety of ways, including when we are involved in communicative learning. We may engage in critical reflection “when reading a book, hearing a point of view, engaging in task-oriented problem solving (objective reframing), or self-reflectively assessing our own ideas and beliefs (subjective reframing)” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 7). A course on communication and gender is an ideal forum for communicative learning to occur. Not only do students get to reflect on the ways in which gender is communicated, but they also are able to examine their own assumptions about gender identities. One useful tool that we have incorporated in teaching the course is object-based reflection.

### **WHAT IS OBJECT-BASED REFLECTION?**

Object-based reflection involves individuals utilizing an external item to respond to critical prompts that elicit responses and connect to an individual’s positionality. Connections may be made to experiences in the community, community-based issues, and/or challenging topics of power and privilege (Green, 2017). Object-based reflection derives from object based learning, OBL, a concept informed by David Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle. According to Kolb, “our senses provide concrete knowledge of an experience. If we reflect on that concrete knowledge, we can transform it

into a concept about what happened and why” (Marie, 2010, p. 188). An object can provide that concrete reality or experience from which an individual may derive a better understanding of their own positionalities through critically engaging with and through that object. Objects can be any external item such as a photograph, video, poem or other artifact. In this case, the object is a gender portfolio. More will be said on the portfolio assignment further on in the chapter.

## **WHY IS OBJECT-BASED REFLECTION USEFUL FOR TEACHING GENDER IN A COMMUNICATION CONTEXT?**

### **Meaning-Making Processes**

According to Mezirow (1990), “to make meaning means to make sense of an experience; we make an interpretation of it” (p. 1). Critically reflecting on those experiences can trigger learning. Object-based reflection, as a result of its critical bent, creates opportunities for such learning to occur since it positions learning in the context of meaning-making and critical reflection upon experiences, beliefs, perspectives, and attitudes (Green, 2017). As Chatterjee (2010) states, “Objects can be employed in a variety of ways to enhance and disseminate subject-specific knowledge” (p. 180). This “subject-specific” knowledge can be interpreted as the basis of the meaning making process. Mezirow (1997) also argues that “discourse is necessary to validate what and how one understands, or to arrive at a best judgment regarding a belief. In this sense, learning is a social process, and discourse becomes central to making meaning” (p. 10). Object-based reflection, framed by a communication context, provides ample openings for students to grapple discursively with their own assumptions about gender and to make sense of them. Further, critical reflection engendered by engaging with an object perhaps leads students to question what might be certain taken for granted frames of reference concerning gender performances. They can begin to make sense of various gender experiences, which may be their own or those of others, and use those interpretations to guide their decision-making processes (Mezirow, 1990), as well as possibly correct existing distorted views about gender.

### **Experiential Learning**

Barry University’s Centre for Community Service Initiatives (2014) defines experiential learning as “a process in which students acquire and apply knowledge, skills, and values in a relevant setting. The process

involves linking theory to practice through student engagement and critical reflection” (p. 1). Green (2017) argues that various forms of experiential learning such as service-learning and undergraduate research force students to adapt to new situations, learn new skills and gain new knowledge. Borrowing from Kolb’s model of experiential learning, Green goes on to outline three distinct phases in which experiential learning unfolds: first, “concrete experience (CE) forms the basis of observation and reflection (RO),” second, “these observations are in turn used to develop one’s ideas, including generalizations and theories (AC)” and third, “from this development of ideas, new implications for action can be discerned (AE)” (p. 18). The gender portfolio activity provides an opportunity for all three phases of experiential learning as delineated by Green to be realized; (1) Students enter the course with their own concrete examples and expectations of gender, which forms the basis of their observations about not only how they enact gender but also others’ performance of gender. They then draw upon these examples as entries for their portfolios, which leads to the second phase; (2) students reflect upon their entries, perhaps questioning assumptions or even reaffirming ideas previously held about gender. At this stage, they also connect these thoughts with the theoretical concepts discussed in class potentially creating new understandings about their gendered experiences, which then ushers in the third phase; (3) Students decide what to do with any new knowledge discerned from the process or what action to take based on any discoveries. The portfolio therefore allows students to process their experiences of gender in ways that may lead to deeper understanding of the subject matter being taught as well as personal and social transformation.

## Critical Thinking

Object-based reflection encourages students to engage in critical thinking. In a case study documenting how object-based reflection is used in a Graphic Design class, Hardie (2015) observes how “the activity encourages design analysis and critical reflection: learners are invited to consider the impact that designs can have; the messages that they can communicate, and how objects can be interpreted” (p. 5). As Fook and Askeland (2007) report, participants who engage in such activities often report “transformative changes as a result of undertaking the critical reflection process” (p. 521). Also, providing opportunities for critical reflection in the classroom helps to create an environment in which deep and effective learning can occur. Using object-based reflection as a pedagogical strategy in teaching communication and gender therefore offers students a chance to identify and question previously unquestioned cul-

tural norms about gender (Fook & Askeland, 2007). By discursively engaging with objects students may begin “questioning and challenging rather than reinscribing the narrow or dominant versions of gender and hierarchical constructions of masculinity that constrain boys’ (and girls’) academic and social outcomes” (Keddie, 2006, p. 102).

### **CLASSROOM METHOD: MY GENDER PORTFOLIO**

The object used in our Communication and Gender Course was a gender portfolio. Students create this notebook as outlined below and share them with the class in an oral presentation at the end of the semester. As previously stated, the portfolio allowed explorations of assumptions upon which interpretations, beliefs, habits of mind or points of view about gender are based. Students use their own experiences of gender to inform their portfolio activities, which is the essence of experiential learning. They also critically reflect on or think about the implications of those experiences as they try to make sense of or create meanings for said experiences.

The portfolio acts an object in two ways. First, at the meta-level, the collection of narratives and visuals act as a body of work that documents and illustrates students’ experiences with gender. In this sense, it is not unlike a book or novel, which provides opportunities for critical reflection not just from the producer but also those who become privy to its content. Students, in reading each other’s portfolios, are encountering them as objects that delineate the experiences of the producer. Students can then critically reflect on each other’s portfolios, the result of which can be new or deeper understanding of their classmates in particular, and gender in general. Second, at the granular level, students use specific objects as part of each entry. These objects may be videos, articles, photographs, newspaper headlines and so on. Each object provides a discrete opportunity for critical reflection that contributes to the overall account of each student’s experience with gender.

### **Gender Portfolio Description**

Throughout the semester, students in the Gender & Communication course developed a portfolio in which they collected artifacts or summaries of artifacts related to gender that illustrated theories and concepts covered in class. These included descriptions of scenes from movies or TV shows, songs, poems, articles from magazines or newspapers, websites, toys, excerpts from books, advertisements, greeting cards, photographs,

**Table 7.1. Entry Topics Derived From Course Text**

| <i>Chapter</i> | <i>Topic</i>               |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| 2              | Theories of gender and sex |
| 3              | Gendered/sexed voices      |
| 4              | Gendered/sexed bodies      |
| 5              | Gendered/sexed language    |
| 7              | Gender and family          |
| 8              | Gender and education       |
| 9              | Gender and work            |
| 10             | Gender and religion        |
| 11             | Gender and media           |
| N/A            | Gender performances        |

*Source:* Palczewski and DeFrancisco (2014).

paintings, comic strips, as well as descriptions of personal experiences. For each entry, students collected two or three artifacts that illustrated, challenged, or in some way related to the following concepts (see Table 7.1). Students then organized and displayed the items in creative ways (digital or hard copy in form) and shared the portfolios with the class. Both in the portfolio and especially during their presentation, students were required to reflect on the artifacts in relation to their own understanding of and relationship with gender identity. The presentations generated substantial student discussion of critical course concepts during a mandatory question and answer session. All students in the class were communication majors (i.e., public relations, advertising, broadcasting and emerging media, or communication and media studies) and had completed previous communication classes, including Introduction to Communication, but they ranged from sophomore to senior standing. While all students appeared to enjoy this assignment, the level and depth of assignment development varied. Below are excerpts of students' reflection based on their portfolio activities. Students gave permission for their names to be used but in order to retain some degree of "anonymity," only their first names were used (Table 7.1).

### **Student Reflections From Workbook**

One theme exhibited throughout the notebooks is how students were struck by the extraordinariness of ordinary behavior. Many commented on how for the first time, they were seeing behaviors, their own and those

of others, in new ways. In other words, although they stressed that they had always been aware of how gendered our culture is, they didn't quite understand the implications, limitations, and causes of the traditional gender binary until now. Many had grown up fully entrenched in a purely biological view of gender/sex, and spent the semester coming to terms with how social construction and communication play a role in their gender identity/thinking.

Critical/cultural theories emphasize the role broad cultural institutions and norms play in the construction and maintenance of gender.... Social learning theory poses that gender is learned. We learn through observing, analyzing and modeling others, which I believe is a very popular thing to do in this day and age—whether it be copying beliefs, fashion, etc. (Nina)

Recently I received a notification to update my Facebook profile. Since I rarely use Facebook I decided that information is probably very old so I should update it. When asked my gender, there were three options: Male, Female, and Custom. This led me to discover that Facebook actually has 71 different gender options! In 2014, they added 50 different gender options and this year they added 21 more. They also have an option for which pronoun they should use when referred to you to your friends. (Luis)

Sometimes the greatest realizations were simple yet profound. As Emma stated in relation to an entry on the absurdity of difference between male and female nipples in our society (see Figures 7.1 and 7.2): “people, whether they realize it or not, tend to reenact the behaviors they are praised for and suppress those that are unfavorable to society” (Figure 7.1).

Students repeatedly observed that gender was an ever present factor in their lives, contributing to a “subconscious” stereotyping (see Figure 7.3) even in relation to seemingly random decisions:

I currently work for an after school care company, in which the majority of the staff consists of women. In fact, at the site where I work, I am the only male. Even though I have more experience with younger kids than the female who was assigned the younger group, I was placed with the older kids, having no experience with the age, because I am a man, and was told “guys are more strict, so you should be alright.” While I didn't doubt my ability to be able to work with this age group, I was a bit shocked that gender stereotypes actually do apply at work. In addition to having the older kids, I am responsible for taking out the trash at the end of the day because “the custodians by the dumpsters are creeps, and they always check out the females, plus you're the man.” (Luis)

One student was particularly struck by the typical practice of gendering babies pink and blue so those who see them can immediately identify







Figure 3.

laughter. Maricón, in Spanish, means homosexual. Soon enough about of a fourth of the group referred to me as maricón with a teasing voice until I eventually broke my silence and told them I didn't see anything wrong with the meaning of that word so I was not offended by it. I then explained to them that they only think it's bad, because someone told them it was. Not because they have had negative experiences with gay people. They agreed, and the joke quickly died down. (Luis)

Other reflections illustrate how students, after grappling with the subject, experience some degree of transformation:

My personal interactions with people who may identify with another gender or sex, is less confusing because I now realize we are all human. God created us all to be different and unique in our own way. I believe I am better

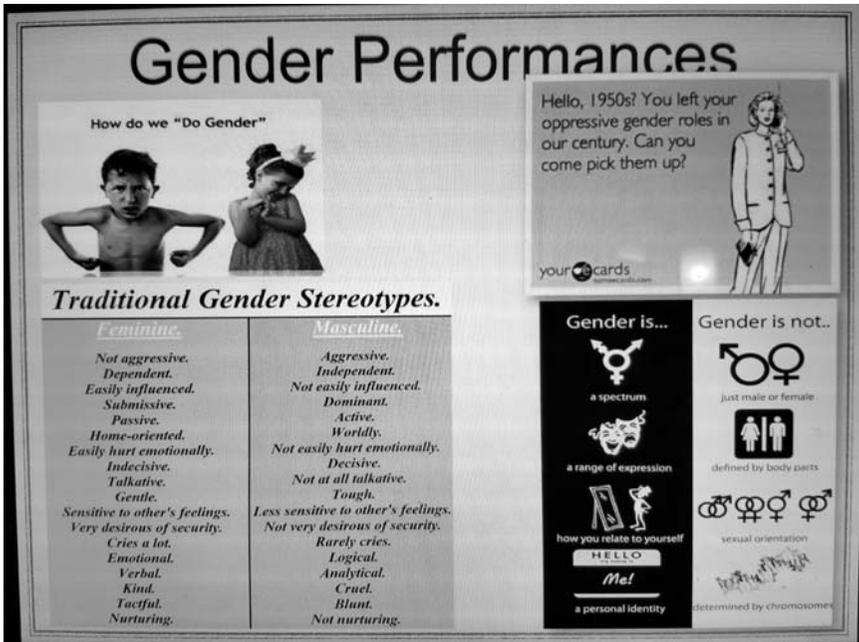


Figure 7.4.

equipped at being able to communicate with others efficiently and compassionately. (Laborah)

It is harder for an individual to move away from cultural norms, as it seems to have a stronger hold on our actions, thoughts and beliefs. It is not natural for a woman to act a certain way or a man to act a certain way.... How we act is natural to our own individual experiences and the gender that we identify with should also be according to our own experiences, if we even choose to identify with a gender. (Dio)

### LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through our experience teaching Gender & Communication as well as through using the object-based portfolio, we have identified several recommendations that may be useful to peace educators.

1. *Establish safe space rules:* Students must feel comfortable sharing (or not sharing) what may be deeply personal experiences without fear of backlash from other students or instructors. A safe space rule

should be written into the syllabus and discussed in class to help establish an environment that facilitates constructive feedback and freedom to agree or disagree with each other respectfully.

2. *Provide prompts to help reflection process:* Critical reflection requires conscious effort and students are sometimes unsure where to start. Providing a prompt for portfolio entries, perhaps in the form of a question or open ended statement, can help stimulate their thoughts and provide guidance.
3. *Explore portfolio formatting options and concept integration with students early in the semester:* Students have the option of creating a digital or traditional paper portfolio for the assignment but often do not know how to organize their entries. Discussing possible layout plans as well as explaining ways in which they can connect their narratives to the course concepts is very helpful.
4. *Be open about the content of portfolio entries:* Students sometimes use mature language to express themselves and, as well, utilize materials in their entries that may be graphic in nature. For example, one student referenced the urban dictionary's definitions of terms often used to describe women in sexual ways, many of which are very graphic. The instructor has to determine, along with the students, what is comfortable and permissible in a classroom environment.

## CONCLUSION

Using the “my gender portfolio” assignment as the basis for object-based reflection in teaching Communication and Gender helped to create successful course outcomes. As an example of a high impact learning activity, the portfolio facilitated student engagement with the curriculum as well as the broad social issue of gender equality and personal issues of gender identity and performance. Tangibly, the portfolio fulfilled Green's (2017) six criteria for high impact activities, namely, increased deep learning resulting in higher grades and increased ability to retain, integrate, and transfer information, increased student time on task, interaction with faculty and peers, increased interaction with others different from themselves, frequent feedback and applied learning (Table 7.2).

The “my gender portfolio” also facilitated what Mezirow (1990) refers to as communicative learning (i.e., “understanding the meaning of what others communicate concerning values, ideals, feelings, moral decisions, and such concepts as freedom, justice, love, labor, autonomy, commitment, and democracy,” p. 8) and in this instance, gender. As an object, the

**Table 7.2. High Impact Outcomes From Course**

| <i>High Impact Criteria</i>   | <i>Course Results</i>  |
|---|--|
| Increased deep learning resulting in higher grades and increased ability to retain, integrate, and transfer information | One hundred percent of cohorts in inaugural course received a final grade of B and above. One hundred percent of cohorts received a final portfolio grade of B and above                 |
| Increased student time on task  | Students worked on portfolios throughout the semester with regular updates on their ongoing reflections  |
| Interaction with faculty and peers  | Regular portfolio updates and class presentations provided opportunities for feedback from instructor as well as peers   |
| Increased interaction with others different from themselves   | Several students identified with gender identities that fell outside the traditional binary and class discussions provided interactions among students from differing gender backgrounds |
| Frequent feedback   | Scheduled and informal portfolio updates and presentations provided opportunities for ongoing feedback   |
| Applied learning  | Portfolio entries required students to draw on their own gender experiences as well as apply theoretical concepts from the course in their reflections.                                  |

portfolio required students to consider the role of communication in constituting gender either from the position of perpetuating injustices or encouraging empathy, understanding, and positive communication about various standpoints.

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## CHAPTER 8

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# DATING VIOLENCE EDUCATION

## Teaching Campus and Community Through Experiential Learning

**Laura Finley and Marissa Dorsett**

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One of the most pervasive human rights violations across the globe is domestic violence, often referred to as intimate partner violence. Nearly one third of the world's women will experience abuse in their relationship, according to the World Health Organization (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005). Numerous studies have found that women are at greater risk in the home than anywhere else (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005). While women of all ages are vulnerable to abusive relationships, college-aged women in the United States are uniquely at-risk (Fisher, Daigle, & Cullen, 2009). It is essential, then, that campuses educate students about the risk factors for abuse, the underlying causes of it, the dynamics of abusive relationships, and resources for help. Further, given that dating violence is a community problem, not an individual one (Davidson & Bowen, 2011), campuses should also work with community agencies and activists to ensure that prevention efforts are comprehensive and multifaceted. A growing body of literature emphasizes the need for such topics to be

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addressed in ways that invoke a sense of agency, that pedagogy of hope described by Giroux (2017) in the introduction. That is, rather than a “just the statistics” approach, a robust campus dating violence educational program should inspire students to help those in need and to engage in activism that can prevent abuse. Using experiential learning is one way to both educate and inspire, as well as to couple campus and community.

This chapter provides an overview of the scope and extent of dating violence on college campuses. It then offers a critique of typical campus programs, addressing limitations in the degree and methods in which they are implemented. Next, I offer a detailed description of an innovative campus-community dating violence prevention program called the College Brides Walk, which has been in operation in South Florida since 2011. In doing so, I offer input acquired from students who earned service-learning credit with the College Brides Walk, and, in particular, from a student whose service included participation in a special kickoff event. The chapter concludes with recommendations for campus dating violence prevention programs.

## **SCOPE AND EXTENT OF DATING AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS**

Dating violence is “the physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional violence within a dating relationship, including stalking. It can occur in person or electronically and might occur between a current or former dating partner” (Teen Dating Violence, 2014). Although it has received far less attention, dating violence is as prevalent on college campuses as is sexual assault, and sexual assault often occurs within abusive relationships (New, 2014). Indeed, six in ten campus rapes occur in dating relationships (New, 2014). Some 30–40% of college students had experienced some type of abuse from a dating partner (Leonard, Quigley, & Collins, 2002). Another study found that 43% of dating college women had experienced violent and abusive dating behaviors, with 16% reporting sexual abuse by a dating partner (Fifth and Pacific Companies, 2010). The International Dating Violence Study, a 2006 initiative involving 9,549 students from 36 universities in 19 nations found high rates of both minor and major assault perpetrated by men and women alike (Douglas & Straus, 2006). Despite these shocking numbers, it is clear that dating violence, like sexual assault, is significantly under-reported on campuses, with only an estimated 5% of incidents reported to law enforcement (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997). Victims do not report their abuse for a host of reasons, including but not limited to: not realizing that what they are experiencing is abuse, not knowing where to report, fear that they will not be

believed or that nothing will be done, concerns about stigma and retaliation, and love for their abuser (Baker, 2015).

The threat of physical harm is often greatest when a victim breaks up with the abuser, what some call, "breakup violence." Liz Claiborne, Inc. (2005) found that 20% of teenaged girls said that their boyfriends threatened violence or self-harm when they tried to break off the relationship. Other studies have found that nearly three-quarters of domestic violence-related murders occur as the victim is leaving the relationship.

Several factors increase the risk that someone will be involved in an abusive relationship. Experiencing abuse as a child increases the risk of later involvement in abusive relationships (as a victim or offender) two to three times. Teen use of alcohol, marijuana, and early engagement in sexual activity also increase the risk of abuse (Eaton, Davis, Barrios, Brener, & Noonan, 2007). Those who have been abused, or who are abusers, are likely to be involved in subsequent abusive relationships.

In 2014, the White House issued new guidelines, as part of the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization of 2013, requiring campuses that receive federal funds to report incidences of dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. Sexual assault reporting was already required under the Clery Act (New, 2014). Campuses must also include in their reporting their policies and procedures related to dating violence incidents on campus (New, 2014). Activists predict that the next wave of activism on campuses will bring greater attention to domestic and dating violence (Baker, 2015).

While some colleges and universities do coordinate dating violence prevention programs, and most interpretations of Title IX indicate that doing so is required by federal law (Baker, 2015), there is no specific source that identifies which campuses are and which are not doing so, and, for those that are, the extent and effectiveness of their efforts. Some may be utilizing only secondary prevention, not primary prevention strategies. Primary prevention programs "aim to circumvent violence in dating relationship before it occurs, often through either targeting the entire population within a school or utilizing data with regard to risk markers to present prevention programs to those individuals most likely to later become involved in violent intimate relationships" (Cornelius & Resseguie, 2007, p. 366). In sum, it is intended to prevent abuse from ever occurring. In contrast, secondary prevention programs are "designed to address violence that is already occurring in a relationship, and are successful when either the victims leave violent dating relationships or the perpetrator(s) cease initiating violence" (Cornelius & Resseguie, 2007, p. 366).

Given that many instances of dating violence are witnessed by outsiders, or that peers and colleagues are in some way aware that the relation-

ship is not healthy, many campuses utilize bystander intervention programs. These are designed to educate and inspire bystanders to speak up or otherwise act to disrupt the abuse. Many of these, however, are focused more on sexual assault (Green Dot, for instance) or are designed for implementation at the high school level.

Evaluations of popular prevention programs have generally found them to be useful, albeit often limited (Leen et al., 2013; Ting, 2009). One popular program, Expect Respect, resulted in increased knowledge, better communication skills and anger control techniques, and more identification of alternatives to violence (Ball, Kerig, & Rosenbluth, 2009). A few studies have found changes in behavior, although this is harder to measure (Foshee et al., 1998; Foshee et al., 2004; Wolfe et al., 2003). The Red Flag Campaign is a popular bystander prevention initiative focused on dating violence. A 2015 evaluation of it found that those who were exposed most frequently to the program's messaging showed improved bystander attitudes and greater bystander efficacy (Development and Evaluation, n.d.). These programs are sometimes expensive, however, and are often implemented by student affairs officials on campus. As such, they may not reach all students. For instance, commuter students tend not to participate in programs initiated by student affairs. Break the Cycle, a non-profit organization, offers a dating violence curriculum that has been adjusted for the college-aged population, although it remains unclear how widely it has been adopted.

Dating violence may be addressed in particular academic programs or courses, for instance, sociology, psychology, gender studies, nursing, and social work. Even still, students may receive only a lecture or reading on the subject, and students studying other disciplines will not receive this information at all.

Because dating violence is related to broader issues of sexism, patriarchy, and inequality, it would be best to address it through cross-campus, interdisciplinary means, "yet owing to the siloed nature of most universities and colleges, it would be unusual to find any such curricula: (Finley, Wong, Rudge, & Hunt, 2015, p. 160). Most campuses operate under an individualistic model, which separates disciplines into segments and emphasizes that learning is a solo enterprise, not something done in community (Astin & Astin, 2000; Finley, 2004; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Sperber, 2000). Since most professors are not actively involved with community programs to address dating violence, they typically can only view such topics from an academic or "knowledge" focus (Danis, 2003; Danis & Lockhart, 2003; Finley, 2013; Gardner, 1993).

Another concern is that curricula about dating violence, as with other subjects, is often presented using passive methods. Typical college courses use what Eisler (2000) called dominator methodologies, where "the 'sage

on the stage' (the professor) transmits information via lecture to his or her students, who sit, behinds in their seats, facing front, passively receiving said words of wit" (Finley, Wong, Rudge, & Hunt, 2015, p. 161). Like Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's critique of banking education, this type of teaching is, essentially, for short-term purposes and fails to incite excitement or develop students' sense of agency. Studies have shown that students are interested in learning about dating violence and that they crave more creative, engaged, thoughtful, and reflective assignments regarding domestic violence (Bent-Goodley, 2008).

Many universities host speakers and other one-time events focused on dating violence. While these are welcomed, they are not nearly enough. One brief presentation is not nearly enough for people to learn about abuse, let alone to feel equipped to assist (Finley, 2013). Some even pay large sums to speakers who are great, but who are not local and, because of the cost, can only minimally engage students (Finley 2013).

Additionally, when campuses do address dating violence, they often emphasize how "not to be a victim." Women are encouraged to enroll in some type of self-defense course, for instance, or informed about where they should and should not walk on campus and with whom. This is a dangerous approach, as it places the onus or responsibility solely on the would-be victim. This approach does nothing to change the mentality of perpetrators (Finley & Esposito, 2012).

It is clear, then, that many campuses remain ill-equipped to address the scope, extent, and complexity of abuse (Daigle, Fisher & Cullen, 2008). A review of high profile incidents as well as the academic literature makes it obvious that many campuses still lack clear policies, fail to provide appropriate services for victims, and implement little in terms of prevention programming (Daigle, Fisher, & Cullen, 2008).

One program that I am proud to say is addressing many of these concerns is the College Brides Walk.

## **THE COLLEGE BRIDES WALK: HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION**

The idea behind the College Brides Walk is to unite campuses and communities in a geographic area (in this case, South Florida), to teach high school and college students about dating violence and to encourage healthy relationships. It was started by Myhosi "Josie" Ashton as the Bride's March in 2001. After hearing about the September 26, 1999 murder of Gladys Ricart on the day she was set to wed another man, Ashton approached the Ricart family, seeking to learn more and eventually obtain their endorsement of her idea. Ricart was murdered by her abusive ex-boyfriend, Agustin Garcia, who shot her in the head in front of her

family as they posed for photos before they were to head to the chapel for the ceremony. Garcia was convicted of second-degree murder, owing perhaps to the media attention to the case, which repeatedly questioned what Ricart had done to “inspire” Garcia to murder her.

Ashton was outraged, and had a vision of herself, wearing a bridal gown in Gladys Ricart’s honor, and walking publicly so as to be a public spectacle that would invite questions. She would then be able to correct the many misconceptions about domestic and dating violence, such as that victim’s “bring on” their victimization. With the blessing of the Ricart family, Ashton obtained permission from Florida International University to earn internship credit for what became a more than 3,000 mile walk from New Jersey, where the murder occurred, to Miami. As predicted, her march did invite attention from onlookers, media, celebrities, and even some politicians.

I met Josie Ashton in spring, 2010. I had been working in the field of domestic violence advocacy and education for 5 years and we were both invited to speak on the issue at a local venue. We hit it off immediately, and inspired by her march, which had been repeated in several cities at that point, we decided we needed to bring the idea to a college campus. We’re both acutely aware of the increased risk at this age group, and also understand the limitation in campus programming outlined in the previous section. After reaching out to interested colleagues at other campuses and a series of brainstorming sessions, the College Brides Walk was born!

We decided to host the event at my university (Barry University) because it had the least amount of red tape. Admittedly, we were all pretty clueless about how to plan and execute a major campus event, as none of us had any real event planning experience, but we muddled through. While we definitely wanted to include the walk component, we knew that to have maximal impact we needed more. So, we developed a series of opening presentations and closing speakers to educate the attendees about dating violence. We wanted to make sure that students are aware that males are victims as well, so included a male survivor as a speaker. We knew it was imperative that attendees learn about resources on and off campus, so we invited all the groups and organizations we knew to attend. We were elated to find that we had more than 300 attendees who overflowed the room we had reserved!

Over the years, we have developed new partnerships to increase attendance and have adjusted the format based on feedback from attendees. In 2017, we have eight campuses on board, as well as a relationship with the Women of Tomorrow Scholarship and Mentoring program, which runs female-only clubs in schools around South Florida. We also have connections at other local schools and with more area non-profit organizations. Since 2015, we have had more than 1,000 attendees each year. Addition-

ally, we have built a peer-education program that trains college students to deliver educational presentations throughout the year.

Our goal is more than just a one-day event but an ongoing campaign that reaches widely into South Florida. Rather, we want to make sure that the attendees leave not only having learned about dating violence, but feeling as though they know what to do to help a friend who is being abused. Even more, we hope they feel eager to engage in further activism on the issue. To increase the likelihood of the latter, since 2013 we have offered students in service-learning courses credit for working with us. Different from volunteerism, the goal of service-learning is to bring classroom concepts to life. Service-learning allows students to apply what they have learned. Research has found that service-learning increases student's interest in and knowledge of the subject matter, increases civic engagement, and benefits the community organizations or agencies as well as the host university or college (Alberle-Grass, 2000; Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2000; Jacoby, 1996; Koliba, 2000).

At Barry University, students taking Introduction to Theology (THE 201) and Perspective Consciousness and Social Justice (SOC 200) are required to complete 10 hours of service. I teach SOC 200, and I approached my colleagues as well as those in the Department of Theology and Philosophy with the idea of the College Brides Walk being offered as an option for completing the hours. All eagerly agreed. Each year since we have been incorporating the service element, we have had more than 200 service-learners.

Students can earn their required hours in various ways. They can help plan the event, coordinate marketing and social media campaigns, provide outreach presentations, develop posters and other materials, assist with the workshops we host on the day of the event, help lead the actual walk, and set up and clean up. Students are also able to earn hours by assisting with the various kickoff events we host at each of the participating campuses. The organizer at each location plans their own event, so some are more academic (speakers, for instance) while others are more interactive (sign-making). Many have included some type of performance art, as we know that the arts have the ability to reach all types of learners and to allow them to make emotional connections (Herman, 1992). Such an approach, we contend, "can leave a long lasting, even transformative impression on students that outlives the details of course content" (Murphy-Geiss, 2008, p. 378). Knafo (2000) explained,

By attending to the art of women who have dared to break the secrecy and silence associated with violent acts committed against them, the viewer must be willing to bear witness to horrible events and to hold traumatic reality in consciousness. (Knafo, 2000, pp. 661–662)

Service-learning students are all required to attend the opening session, which features speakers and performers who address various issues related to dating violence. In 2017, we implemented a mandatory orientation as well, so that service-learning students arrived better prepared to understand the issue and to assist. We encourage the students during the orientation to come up with their own ideas on how they can contribute. Many do, and these have been some of the greatest additions. For instance, students have helped coordinate a Public Service Announcement competition, created spoken word and dance performances for the opening session, painted t-shirts and wedding dresses to display, and developed chants for the walkers.

After they complete their service hours, students in THE 201 and SOC 201 (as well as few other courses at the university) are required to write a 5–7 page paper that describes the service, connects it to class concepts, and offers their feedback. In 2017, we began offering a mandatory debriefing session to help the students identify the connections to their coursework and to obtain their thoughts about their participation.

As an organizer of the event, I am around at all the service activities prior to the day of the event and on the actual day. I lead the orientation and debriefing sessions as well. Further, as an instructor for two sections of SOC 200, I read some of the student papers. I also offer to review papers written by students in other sections, so am able to read several more that way.

Several themes have emerged over the years that I have assessed feedback from the service-learning students. Students seem to very much enjoy participating in this event. In fact, many mention that it feels odd to say that it was a “fun” day, given the somber nature of the topic, but that they like the fact that so many other groups descend on our campus and that we are all working together to raise awareness. Students also comment that they enjoy the fact that this service opportunity does not require them to leave their campus, as many do not have transportation and thus have said that service requirements are often very difficult for them to achieve. Further, many comment about the fact that this issue receives too little attention. Quite frequently, students disclose through their service or in their papers that they were victims, or that someone they know has been in an abusive relationship. The two most oft-cited positive impacts of their service are hearing speakers and reading the signs we have made that pay tribute to individuals like Gladys Ricart, who lost their lives to dating or domestic violence. We have accumulated hundreds of these over the years, and we display them throughout the walkways on campus. Each bears a photo and brief description of what happened. Students remark that reading these stories, and hearing those of survivors, makes the issue more “real” than can any statistics. Addition-

ally, students often mention that they had no idea about the wealth of resources available on their campus and in the community.

Although the degree to which the students are able to connect the service with their class content varies dramatically, at the most basic level they are able to see how dating and domestic violence are human rights concerns as articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They all comment about the connections between abusive relationships and patriarchy, as well as with media and its tendency to portray women misogynistically. I have offered a detailed description of these learnings elsewhere (Finley, 2015), but for the purpose of this chapter merely want to share that students do seem able to better understand several key concepts as a result of their service.

We also ask students to provide feedback about the event and, as mentioned, rely on that to make improvements. Students have tended to mention logistical things, rather than big picture issues. For instance, many wish we were able to provide “better” food (we feed everyone, but on a limited budget we scrap together). On a positive note, many have requested that the university more fully support the program by allowing all students who wish to participate to miss classes for the day. Less positively, students seem to find it difficult to assess what might need to be done at a major event, instead needing to be given constant direction. Since there are so many people and only a few organizers, this can be challenging. We will continue to identify ways we can better organize so that there is limited if any down time for the students completing their service hours.

Perhaps one of the most positive things about the event is that students often return each year to participate. While many are first introduced to the College Brides Walk as a service requirement, we have dozens who participate annually, well past any requirement to do so. We also have students who bring boyfriends, friends, and family from other areas, one as far away as Chicago. We believe this is a testament to the power of the event to both educate and inspire.

One student who initially participated as a service-learner but who went on to participate in other years shared a reflection about her involvement in putting on a production of *The Vagina Monologues* as a kickoff event in 2016.

### **MARISSA DORSETT'S REFLECTION**

My name is Marissa Dorsett and I decided to participate in the *Vagina Monologues* my senior year of college in order to bring awareness to sexual violence against women in society today. I first heard of the *Vagina*

Monologues my junior year of college when my professor offered to take students over to Florida International University (a nearby campus and partner in the College Brides Walk) to watch it as extra credit. I jumped at the opportunity because one, all money collected went to a good cause, and I mean who wouldn't want to watch a show with the name vagina in it? It was an amazing experience that had me feeling numerous emotions after hearing funny stories about how women felt about their vaginas to horror stories of the Bosnian women that were raped as a war tactic. I've always been for women rights, especially the rights to their body. I became even more interested my first year of college upon taking Dr. Finley's Sociology class and participating in my first ever College Brides Walk. I think it never really occurred to me how many people don't truly know the things women go through here in America and how in their own backyard and even in the class room may sit a victim of sexual abuse. When Dr. Finley sent out the email asking for help with the Vagina Monologues that Johnson and Wales University was holding as a kickoff event, I couldn't help but jump at the opportunity to be part of what I feel is a powerful performance to raise even more awareness of the violence against women. I feel my role in the Vagina Monologues brought a lot of awareness to what women are expected to be in society, how our bodies don't even seem to belong to ourselves and more to society. It is like we are objects in the world or even game pieces and men decide what happens with us. Vagina Monologues shows women overcoming these statistics, facts on violence against them, and stories of women still struggling with the abuse they have felt. The Vagina Monologues also played a huge part in my senior thesis which was about prostitution and victims of sex trafficking and caused me to get even more involved in the fight for women rights. Right now I volunteer in Orlando giving out items to women in street work as well as donating time at shelters for battered women. Vagina Monologues helped me define more of what my goal as a lawyer upon graduating law school will be and how I can better the society for everyone, including women.

## CONCLUSION

The College Brides Walk is a labor of love for myself and the other organizers. Despite significant challenges in terms of receiving financial and other types of support, we truly believe it to be impactful at not just teaching about abusive relationships, but in creating a campus-community climate that makes dating violence less likely.

We have attempted over the years to conduct evaluations of the event, but have not had the time or personnel to do much more than satisfaction

surveys and assessments of the student service-learning papers. Clearly, a more rigorous evaluation would help improve the event and showcase what is working.

For those wishing to begin a similar program, we recommend ensuring complete institutional support before commencing. While we were given permission to do the event initially, we were never provided financial support or any other investment on the part of the host or other universities. Hence each year we piece together funds to keep it going. Students even comment that it would be more effective if it was clear the university stood 100% behind us, but that the lack of money and other indicators make it clear that this is not entirely the case.

Second, we are proud of the fact that we continue to work with so many different colleges, schools, and organizations. We highly recommend that others seeking to build similar programs reach out similarly so as to involve necessary stakeholders.

Third, as with anything, we have had to change and grow over the years, and that flexibility is what keeps the event relevant and interesting. We continue to receive media attention about it every year, not because it is new but because there is always some different spin on it. For instance, one year when Florida was considering a bill to criminalize revenge pornography, we featured a speaker whose work was focused on that issue. In 2017, our event was held just one month after Donald Trump took office as the 45th president. While we do not lobby for candidates, we felt it was imperative that we mention the proposed changes to healthcare, cuts to legal aid, and other violence against women programs that would dramatically affect victims.

Finally, we continue to seek ways to reach out to male audiences. We have attempted to enlist fraternities and athletes, but have been only mildly successful. We recommend that any groups seeking to start a dating violence education and prevention program strategize carefully about reaching out to male leaders and groups.

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## CHAPTER 9

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# TRANSFORMING CAMPUS CULTURES FOR LGBTQ+ STUDENTS

## Moving From Places of Trauma to Places of Affirmation and Healing

**Ashley Austin, Irene Kepler,  
Shelley Craig, and Britney Philippeaux**

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Although population approximations vary widely, an estimated 2–11% of adolescents and adults identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning/Queer (LGBTQ+)¹ (Gates, 2011). Estimates of LGBTQ+ identified students on college campuses are significantly higher on campuses that have LGBTQ+ centers and those institutions that have targeted recruitment of the community. Kennesaw State University had seen the annual number of visits rise from 158 in 2012, when the center opened, to 494 in 2016 (Kennesaw State University, 2017). Unfortunately, research continues to be limited on the actual number of students who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. Researchers who investigate sexuality have differing opinions on the overall sensitivity of the issue they intend to study as do the funding agents and approval boards. How-

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ever, perceptions of sensitivity are influenced by societal and cultural norms and are highly subjective to each experience at any given point in time (Noland, 2012).

Members of the LGBTQ+ community have distinct sexual and gender identities with corresponding needs and experiences (LeVay & Baldwin, 2012), however, they are often lumped together as if the LGBTQ+ community presents a singular issue in our culture. While this may be understandable from a civil rights standpoint, each subculture of the community holds individual values and experiences separate and unique from the group as a whole, thus the case for more research on campuses across the nation. Regrettably, there is a strong belief from many members of Institutional Review Board (IRB) in the United States that the topic of sexuality and gender identity is more sensitive than other subjects of research. Scholars doing research regarding sex acts or sexual and gender identity have reported difficulties obtaining IRB approval (Noland, 2012).

Pew research data suggests that most LGBTQ+ individuals first recognize that they might be LGBTQ by age 12, become certain they are LGBTQ+ by age 17, and come out to others as LGBTQ by age 20 (2013). As such, it is clear that educational experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals exist within a context of an emergent and evolving identity development (Wilkinson & Pearson, 2009). Despite growing awareness and support for LGBTQ+ identities in society over the last decade, LGBTQ+ individuals continue to experience identity-based stigma, discrimination, and marginalization at staggering rates (Alameida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar, & Azrael, 2009; Grant et al., 2011). Researchers over the past several decades posit that suicidal ideation and behavior is a significant difficulty among LGBTQ+ populations, in particular among the youth of the community (Haas et al., 2011).

As key socializing institutions, schools represent critical contexts which can support or impede the healthy emotional, social, academic and professional development of LGBTQ+ identified students (Craig, Austin, Rashidi, & Adams, 2017). Campus Pride is a non-profit organization that contracted with the State of Higher Education for LGBT People in 2010 to promote more safe and inclusive college campuses across the United States, as well as to explore existing barriers to LGBTQ+ affirmative experiences (Campus Pride, 2016). LGBTQ+ students were found to be significantly more likely to experience harassment (23%) than non-LGBTQ students (12%), and LGBTQ students were considerably less likely to be comfortable with the overall campus climate (70%) than were non-LGBTQ students (78%) (Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Frazer, 2010). Current research has begun to focus on the continuum of bullying from K–Higher Education and the impact of these experiences on the lives of LGBTQ+ young people.

## **EDUCATIONAL CLIMATES FOR LGBT STUDENTS**

Educational climates have a profound influence on the mental health of LGBTQ students. Mounting research indicates notable rates of homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexism on college campuses (Rankin, 2003; Woodford, Krentzman, & Gattis, 2012), which contribute to increased mental health problems and educational barriers for LGBTQ+ students (Evans & Broido, 1999; Woodford, Han, Craig, Matney, & Lin, 2013). In fact, LGBTQ+ students victimized (e.g., verbal, physical, sexual assaults or attacks) in school have lower self-esteem, higher rates of suicidality, substance abuse, depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress disorder (D'Augelli, Pilkington, & Hershberger, 2002; Walls, Freedenthal, & Wineski, 2008; Woodford et al., 2012). Oswalt and Wyatt (2011) conducted a survey of LGBTQ+ college students and found that they were more at risk for mental health issues due to “environmental responses to their sexual orientation” (p. 1257), thus being directly impacted by their college and universities affirming or non-affirming policies, practices, and procedures in place.

Importantly, negative perceptions of campus climate, even without direct experience of victimization, have been significantly associated with emotional distress and academic disengagement (Rankin et al., 2010). For instance, Schmidt and Nilsson (2006) found that even when LGBTQ+ young people do not experience direct victimization in school, a hostile school climate forces them to focus their energy on suppressing and masking their LGBTQ+ identities rather than being able to direct that energy toward their classes or career development. Most students in hostile academic climates never report incidents of victimization to the administration for fear of retribution, such as lowered grades or disrespectful classroom treatment (Rivers & Taulke-Johnson, 2002). Experiencing homo/transphobia or heterosexism in the form of bullying, harassment, and more fear for safety than other students has been linked to disengagement from school, missed days of school and greater dropout rates, as well as generally lower academic success (Kosciw, Palmer, Kull, & Greytak, 2013; Woodford, Kulick, & Atteberry, 2015). For instance, Woodford and Kulick (2015) reviewed data collected on sexual minority college students. They found that heterosexism on campus specifically led to increased rates of withdrawal from courses or entire degree programs, as well as increased need for academic support due to emotional stressors created by the classroom or campus environment.

## **HOMO/TRANSPHOBIA IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS**

Results from the 2015 Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN) National School Climate Survey of 10,528 students between the

ages of 13 and 21 indicate that LGBTQ students are overwhelmingly exposed to anti-LGBTQ attitudes and behaviors within school settings (Kosciw, Greytak, Giga, Villenas, & Danischewski, 2016). According to the GLSEN survey findings: 67% of students heard 'gay' used in a negative way (e.g., that's so gay) frequently or often at school, and 59% listened to the use of negative anti-LGBTQ terms (e.g., dyke or faggot) frequently or often; and 41% heard negative remarks specifically about transgender people (e.g., tranny, he/she, it) frequently or often. Of note, over half of students reported hearing homophobic remarks from their teachers or other school staff (56%) and negative remarks about gender expression from teachers or other school staff (64%) (Kosciw et al., 2016). Key findings from the National Transgender Discrimination Study (NTDS) which surveyed over 6,000 transgender adults indicated that during K-12 education, transgender individuals reported disturbingly high rates of overall harassment (78%), physical assault (35%), and sexual violence (12%), including harassment (31%), physical assault (5%) and sexual assault (3%) perpetrated by teachers or staff (Grant, Mottet, Tanis, Harrison, Herman, & Keisling, 2011). Studies exploring homo and transphobia on college campuses suggest that homophobic and transphobic attitudes and beliefs continue to permeate campus experiences (Austin, Craig & McInroy, 2016; Ellis, 2009; Rankin, 2003). Emerging studies report experiences of exclusion, marginalization, and stigmatization across college campuses, with many students, faculty, and staff holding homo/transphobic and heterosexual beliefs or biases. A study conducted by Rankin (2003) suggests that 74% of surveyed students ( $N = 1,669$ ) perceived their university climate to be homophobic. Among these participants, 60% of LGB students indicated that they needed to conceal their sexual minority identity on campus in order to avoid discrimination. Similarly, findings from a recent qualitative study of LGBTQ+ social work students ( $N = 1018$ ) highlight pervasive experiences of implicit and explicit homophobia within academic settings (Dentato et al., 2016).

Examples of institutionalized homo/transphobia and heterosexual/cisgender biases are policies and practices within universities which exclude and/or fail to protect LGBTQ+ students, faculty, or staff. Many universities, schools, and programs still do not include sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression in their non-discrimination policies (Martin, Messinger, Kull, Holmes, Bermudez, & Sommer, 2009). More explicit and egregious forms of homo/transphobia are evident in the policies and practices of the more than 200 American colleges and universities with religious or military affiliations that continue to reject admission to openly LGBTQ+ students (Soulforce, 2014). Findings from a recent qualitative study of the experiences of LGBTQ+ students ( $N = 271$ ) who had attended religious and/or fundamentalist colleges or universities under-

score the deleterious impact of explicitly homo/transphobic policies and practices in education (Craig et al., 2017). Data revealed that many students endured great suffering as a result of the marginalization, isolation, fear, and shame generating practices while attending these colleges and universities. The suffering was so severe for many participants that suicide was often seen as the only viable means of escape and solace. Other policies and practices create particular challenges for transgender students. For instance, the NTDS (2010) found that during experiences of higher education: 19% of transgender individuals were denied access to gender-appropriate campus housing, 5% were denied campus housing altogether, and 11% reported losing or being unable to get financial aid or scholarships because of gender identity/expression. There continues to be a paucity of universities that provide gender inclusive restrooms for transgender and gender nonconforming students which create barriers to safety and perpetuates the marginalization, invisibility, and health of transgender students (Martin et al., 2009; Seelman, 2016). These experiences of implicit and explicit homo/transphobia and heterosexism directly violate implicit assumptions about what to expect from institutions of education and negatively impact the overall wellbeing of LGBTQ+ students (Fisher, Komosa-Hawkins, Saldaña, Thomas, Hsiao, Rauld, & Miller, 2008; Wickens & Sandlin, 2010).

### **LGBTQ+ AFFIRMATIVE CAMPUS CLIMATES**

Conversely, the positive impact of safe, supportive and affirming school climates and educational contexts on the resilience, coping and academic success of LGBTQ+ individuals is consistently demonstrated in the literature (Hatzenbuehler, Birkett, Van Wagenen, & Meyer, 2014; Woodford et al., 2013). LGBTQ+ affirmative contexts embrace an accepting, supportive, and validating stance toward sexual and gender diversity. An LGBTQ+ affirming framework acknowledges but also celebrates the multidimensional spectrum of sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions, recognizing how diversity enriches critical dimensions of higher learning such as knowledge, awareness, and understanding (Almeida-Neveu, 2010). In fact, research suggests a climate of acceptance is fostered among non-LGBTQ+ students who had direct interaction, and particularly among those who developed friendships with LGBTQ+ students (Engberg, Hurtado, & Smith, 2007). Similarly, Engberg and colleagues found that affirmative attitudes were greater among students who participated in courses that explore dimensions of diversity such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and culture. Research also suggests that faculty attitudes and behaviors, as well as the visible

inclusion of LGBTQ+ content within courses, can serve to offset anti-LGBTQ+ experiences (Desurra & Church, 1994). Moreover, in research with LGBTQ+ identified social work students, the presence of out LGBTQ+ faculty and/or openly supportive faculty allies emerged as a meaningful indicator of an affirming educational climate (Austin et al., 2016; Dentato, Craig, Messinger, Lloyd, & McInroy, 2013; Dentato et al., 2016).

## **BEST PRACTICES FOR CREATING LGBTQ+ AFFIRMING CAMPUSES**

LGBTQ+ students have a greater need for supportive services when entering and attending university programs (Angeli, 2009). Inclusive admission procedures that explicitly affirm a commitment to equity for LGBTQ+ students are critical (Moxley, Najor-Durack, & Dumbriague, 2000). The lack of LGBTQ+ inclusive practices and policies at schools and universities across the country is often made evident during the initial information gathering stage among prospective students. For example, a climate of exclusion may be evident the instant a transgender or non-binary identified prospective student is required to check male or female on admission forms. When an LGBTQ+ person is a prospective student for a particular university, the following questions become important: Can I be myself? How does the university and/or school support LGBTQ+ persons? Is it a safe, welcoming and inclusive climate for LGBTQ+ students? Due to the fact that admissions and recruitment are in most cases the first points of contact for students, it is critical that recruitment and admissions personnel are proactive regarding the needs and experiences of LGBTQ+ students. Table 9.1 offers several specific strategies for creating LGBTQ+ inclusive and affirming admissions and recruitment processes.

In addition, the development and enforcement of socially just educational policies can foster the inclusion of marginalized students in university settings. For students across the country, university policies convey the intended culture of a particular institutional environment. From issuing LGBTQ+ inclusive nondiscrimination statements to providing students the freedom to change their first names, institutional policies pave the way for an LGBTQ+ affirmative educational environment. Promoting institutional equity that includes and supports LGBTQ+ students, faculty members, and staff members require that schools and universities be proactive in their institutional policies (Newhouse, 2013). An audit of organizational structures, culture, and policies may help universities identify explicit and implicit messages regarding heterosexual and/or cisgender privilege that ultimately marginalize LGBTQ+ students and create a cul-

**Table 9.1. Strategies for Creating LGBTQ+ Affirming Educational Contexts**

| <i>Dimension of Educational Context</i> | <i>Recommended Strategies</i>   |
|---|---|
| Admissions and recruitment              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt a recruitment philosophy that recognizes that students learn best when they interact with a broad spectrum of individuals, including those similar to and different from themselves, and that recruitment of diverse students, including LGBTQ+ students, enhances opportunities for learning and growth.</li> <li>• Engage in recruitment efforts aimed at increasing the number of students, faculty members, and staff members who identify as TGNC, especially people of color.</li> <li>• Formulate clear and transparent LGBTQ+-inclusive policies for student enrollment and admission.</li> <li>• Train recruitment and admissions representatives on trans-affirmative issues. An ill-informed admissions representative is a notable indicator that TGNC students are not a priority for that institution.</li> <li>• Ensure that admissions applications include an optional question such as “Do you identify as an LGBTQ individual?” or “Would you consider yourself a member of the LGBTQ community?” Including such questions explicitly conveys school and university commitment to diversity and facilitates efforts to connect underrepresented students with valuable resources and support on campus.</li> <li>• Allow prospective students to identify as LGBTQ+ and/or list preferred names and pronouns on all admissions materials.</li> <li>• Provide visible inclusion and support for LGBTQ+ individuals in the admissions offices and on marketing materials/web pages (e.g., safe space stickers, gender-neutral restrooms, posters promoting LGBTQ+ events).</li> <li>• Give prospective and newly admitted students the opportunity to select areas of interest from a broad list and an LGBTQ+ inclusive list of campus activities.</li> <li>• Offer regularly scheduled events aimed at creating a welcoming environment for LGBTQ+ students (such as orientation activities for TGNC students and discussions of TGNC-affirmative issues).</li> </ul> |
| Institutional equity                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGBTQ+ inclusive nondiscrimination policies.</li> <li>• Immediate investigation of complaints by students or faculty or staff members who report experiencing harassment, bullying, or violence by gender identity.</li> <li>• Existence of gender-inclusive facilities such as gender-inclusive/unisex restrooms, housing, sports/health facility changing rooms and healthcare.</li> <li>• Financial and public relations support for regularly scheduled university occasions highlighting events such as PRIDE Month, LGBTQ+ history month, Transgender Day of Remembrance.</li> <li>• Scholarships and other financial resources available specifically for LGBTQ+ students to promote campus diversity.</li> <li>• Equitable employment benefits for university employees regardless of sexual/gender identity and family composition.</li> <li>• Library resources that are current and include discourse on LGBTQ+ identities and those documenting LGBTQ+ history and culture.</li> </ul>   |

*(Table continues on next page)*

**Table 9.1. (Continued)**

| <i>Dimension of Educational Context</i> | <i>Recommended Strategies</i>  |
|---|--|
| Advising, support, and mentoring        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide faculty and student affairs representatives who are well-prepared to engage in the advising and coaching necessary to help LGBTQ+ students navigate oppressive social systems (e.g., communities and/or places of employment).</li> <li>• Provide staff members who are competent to provide advocacy and support services for LGBTQ+ students and university employees as part of their formal job description/duties (e.g., LGBTQ+ outreach and student engagement in the context of a multicultural center).</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for faculty and LGBTQ+ students to engage in mentoring and networking.</li> <li>• Foster student relationships with alumni, faculty and/or advisors who can serve as supportive and affirming role models or mentors to LGBTQ+ students.</li> <li>• Provide institutional support and resources for student social group that provide community, safety, and support for LGBTQ+ students.</li> </ul>   |
| Training and staff development          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for faculty and staff should focus on creating safe, LGBTQ+ affirming campus climates and should provide specific steps to address homo/trans phobia and heterosexism when it arises in the classroom or other campus settings.</li> <li>• Because of faculty, staff and administrators often are unaware of their institutional nondiscrimination or grievance policies based on sexual orientation/gender identity; training should include specific guidance regarding the existence of such policies and their use to promote equity. State and federal nondiscrimination laws and workplace protections also should be discussed.</li> <li>• Training should provide faculty and staff with information about accessing LGBTQ+ affirmative campus services (e.g., employee assistance programs, health-related services, student and/or faculty groups).</li> <li>• The impact of understanding intersecting identities as they pertain to members of the LGBTQ+ community (i.e., race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, urban/rural location, religion, and spirituality) is critical.</li> </ul> |

ture of inequity. See Table 9.1 for specific recommendations related to institutional equity.

Competent and affirmative advising and mentoring opportunities are particularly important for creating and LGBTQ+ affirming campus climate (see Table 9.). Research indicates that support and encouragement from a faculty member or a peer mentor has a marked effect on the experiences and persistence of LGBTQ+ students (Renn, 2007). Brown et al. (2004) found that LGBTQ+ students had more positive experiences when there were culturally competent Residence Advisors, Multicultural Advisors, or LGBTQ+ student centers housed on campus. As of 2014, there were over 200 LGBTQ+ student centers, some operating in the 27

states that do not include gender or sexual identity in anti-discrimination laws (Sanlo, 2014) and which may serve to buffer some of the adverse effects of structural homo/transphobia at the state or city level.

Universities are encouraged to consider and address these potential gaps in support, as well as acknowledge and attend to the distinct needs and experiences of LGBTQ+ students. Student mentorship programs must find ways to support the full range of educational needs and experiences of LGBTQ+ students. An important component of mentoring is to link students to LGBTQ+ specific resources (e.g., affirmative university groups or events) that promote their leadership and advocacy skills (Renn, 2007).

In general, there is a paucity of LGBTQ+ competent and informed faculty and/or staff on university campuses. As such, training focused on enhancing LGBTQ+ specific knowledge and awareness among faculty and staff across the campus is important. Competency training often focuses on strategies for supporting LGBTQ+ students and for creating a more inclusive and affirming educational environment. Because LGBTQ+ training is often voluntary and attended by faculty and staff who are already aware of LGBTQ+ affirmative services, it is critical that training specifically targets staff and faculty who are less familiar with LGBTQ+ issues.

### **CALL TO ACTION**

Homo/transphobia, discrimination, and heteronormative ideology within educational settings persists, as does the negative impact it has on the experiences and lives of LGBTQ+ students. As such, a commitment to implement strategies and practices for creating LGBTQ+ affirmative educational climates that foster well-being and academic success among LGBTQ+ students are paramount. It is imperative that educational institutions dedicated to inclusive excellence, social justice, and human rights commit to making affirmative changes on their campuses. Targeted action aimed at eliminating homophobic and transphobic student environments and promoting safe and inclusive campuses requires a commitment to change classrooms, curricula, degree programs and administrative practices. Moreover, with the awareness that LGBTQ+ individuals experience traumatic anti-LGBTQ+ stigma, discrimination and even violence in educational settings, often as early as primary school, creating trauma-informed classrooms and educational contexts (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014) is an increasingly important goal for institutions of higher education. Trauma-informed organizations make the commitment to create policies, prac-

tices, and climates which aim to prevent retraumatization (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014). Campuses that do not actively affirm and support LGBTQ+ students may, in fact, lead to the traumatization or retraumatization of students. Campuses with a commitment to create safe places for learning, growth, and development among all students must inevitably attend to the needs of their LGBTQ+ students.

There is a significant gap in research of the LGBTQ+ university student's narrative experience (Fine, 2011). The gap includes descriptions of the transition out of high school to institutes of higher education as well as how LGBTQ+ students experience the classrooms, dorms and overall campus culture in institutions of higher education. Three narratives were chosen for this chapter from students attending Barry University, a Catholic University in South Florida. These narratives give voice to the unique as well as shared experiences of being an LGBTQ+ university student.

**ERICK PAULINO, MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENT,  
MIAMI SHORES CAMPUS**

Social workers are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that trauma is one of the main reasons why clients come to see them, and that service delivery must assess for trauma history and be proactive in preventing the likelihood that clients may experience retraumatization in clinical settings. This approach to clinical practice is, of course, one of the defining characteristics of trauma-informed care. I have been fortunate enough to attend a school of social work whose curriculum is trauma-informed. This has greatly enriched my educational experience and allowed me to contribute uniquely to the life of the agencies where I conducted my internship as part of my field education. I understand that the significant question to ask clients is not what is wrong with them but what happened to them. But while trauma-informed practice guides curricula at some schools of social work (it should really guide curricula in all schools), my own experience as an openly gay man in a social work graduate program leaves me wishing that the same principles of trauma-informed care extended beyond curricula to inform school life broadly. Of course, LGBT-affirmative policies are one step in that direction—policies which my school, in alliance with the recommendation of the CSWE, fortunately, embraces despite its Catholic foundation. However, I believe that schools should recognize that trauma is not only one of the reasons why client systems interface with social work systems; trauma history is also a factor contributing to why people choose to pursue a graduate degree in social work. I write this because my own trauma history with anti-gay violence

throughout my childhood (and my own resilient and ongoing recovery from that trauma) is one of the reasons why I decided to become a social worker. However, despite my school's LGBT affirmative stance, I have often encountered homophobic treatment in the classroom setting from classmates who have implicitly or explicitly said homophobic remarks. Harkening back to the years I was subjected to homophobic bullying in middle and high school, the pain caused by the homophobia of a classmate (or three) is compounded by the inaction of professors who failed to intervene or follow-up with expressions of care, concern, and sympathy. Given my experience, I believe that trauma-informed care should not only inform social work curricula; it should also inform pedagogy and all aspects of school life—from administrative policies to classroom management and professor-student interaction. Fostering a trauma-informed school culture means creating school environments that are sensitive to students' own trauma history and that are proactive in preventing the likelihood that students, particularly students who are survivors of trauma, may experience school settings that are (re-)traumatizing. Trauma-informed care cannot just be another tool exported from schools to the professional arena. Trauma-informed care must be imported from textbooks to schools to inform all aspects of school life, including professor intervention when students demonstrate behavior or use language that are inconsistent with the inclusive and social justice values and standards that should guide social work education and professional practice. When trauma-informed care is centered in practitioner formation as much as clinical training, students are warned that particular topics may trigger traumatic responses, and students who are trauma survivors feel that their educational experience reflects an important component of trauma-informed care: safety. A safe and trauma-informed classroom environment is one where students who are trauma survivors feel respected and that their own trauma history is valued as a unique contribution to the classroom space.

**JENNIFFER PEREZ CLAYTON,  
MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENT, FORT MEYERS CAMPUS**

Being a student at Barry University was difficult initially. Imagine being a Hispanic, gay woman at a Catholic University; there is an ironic situation. I was terrified to be open about my sexuality due to the stigma associated with it. In addition to that, I had a horrible experience at the school where I completed my undergraduate degree. During one of my courses, the topic of homosexuality was discussed; my professor proceeded to tell the class that homosexuality was an abomination and that the Bible con-

tains “Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve.” I was completely and utterly shocked as my classmates knew my sexuality. I felt singled out and attacked. This weighed heavily on my mind as I began classes at Barry knowing that eventually the ever-elusive questions would be asked: Are you married? Can I see a picture of your husband? What’s your husband’s name? Would the same thing happen at Barry University? Would I be made to feel ashamed? I just did not want to relive that, and I hoped that Barry University would be a place of diversity, inclusiveness, and acceptance.

Classes began, and so did my anxiety and fear. Throughout my papers, I used the term spouse to describe my marriage, never letting my classmates or professors know that I had a female partner. This helped me remain under the sexual orientation radar. I was able to maintain that neutrality until one of my classmates decided to ask me out. I found myself at a crossroads; do I tell the truth or do I just decline? I chose to be honest. I told my classmate that I was married, that I had a wife. He was shocked, not because I was gay, but that I was not single. I had no idea how this information would be received, but I felt that I was important to give my new classmates a chance and not assume that this situation would be like the last. To my surprise my classmate was respectful and supportive, and so was everyone else that heard the conversation. At that moment I began to feel safe and proud; proud that I had a wife and proud that I was in an environment of diversity and respect.

Barry University gave me a place to learn as myself, not as someone I had to pretend to be. Feeling comfortable, respected, and safe allowed me to focus more on my education than on my sexuality; I felt like any other student at Barry University.

Another experience that gave me hope as a gay student at a Catholic university was the fact that one of my professors was an openly gay man. I felt even more excited about my future at Barry University and my future as a social worker. I began to see my classmates as future social workers, professional students who were unbiased, nonjudgmental, and open-minded. Throughout the rest of my educational experience at Barry University, I felt safe, supported, and at home. There were no negative comments, no condescending remarks, and for the first time in a long time, I felt accepted by my peers.

There was an amazing experience I had that I must share. I had to do a recorded interview to role play a therapy session with a client; I chose to interview my wife. The interview lasted about 20 minutes, and we discussed her childhood, her high school years, and her sexuality. We had the option to make up a scenario, but my wife chose to discuss real events. The interview went well, and I was happy with the outcome. Part of the assignment was to play it for my classmates and my professor. My teacher

loved my interview and was so proud of my progress. She commended my wife and I for the honesty in the video and what happened next was incredible; she asked if she could use the video for future classes! I was so surprised. With the permission of my wife, I gave my professor permission to use my interview. A Catholic university wanted to use the interview of a gay student and her wife. I was honored to allow the use of the video and honored to be a part of this school. Barry University was and is involved in several LGBT events, promotes LGBT students, and creates a space of safety in the learning environment for all.

### **MATTHEW HOGUE-SMITH, MAPTM CANDIDATE**

When I first came to Barry University in the year of 2012, I had two profound experiences that shaped who I was then and who I am today. The first being a Facebook message from my soon to be roommate saying he would beat me up if he found out I was a faggot. The second was the bright and loving presence of Sr. Mary Francis, OP welcoming me to Barry University. The first experience could have shaken me and created a toxic environment which would have driven me out of the university which is the case of many LGBTQ+ students at Barry. However, the love and compassion of one person overrode the negative.

When I arrived on campus, I was already out of the proverbial closet and firmly grounded within my sexuality. However, I was only in the baby steps of my faith development. Before classes even begun, I found myself attracted and heavily engaged with campus ministry thanks to Sr. Mary Francis. The staff at the time knew of my sexuality and my desire to discern what “God” was calling me to become. The best way to describe my interpretation of the relationship between the Catholic-influenced campus ministry and I is with a characterization of an adopted child. The staff loved me and guided me as if I was one of their own, but knowing deep down within myself that I was not and could not be fully them. The mediation of grace from the staff and the campus minister is what fueled my desire to grow in relation and shake my unrequited love with the church.

Fast-forwarding to the present, even though the campus minister during mass cannot share the Sacraments with me, the presider is a reminder of the grace I received during my undergrad which fuels my desire to mediate that same grace to the LGBTQ+ community. When I was appreciably granted a graduate assistantship at campus ministry this past year, I felt a strong calling to help shine a brighter light on the dimmed area of the LGBTQ+ community on campus. During this time, campus ministry became a “safe place” and held the first TDOR prayer service. However, I feel there are still a plethora of hoops that have to be

jumped through to break open the word and have an active queer ministry on campus.

**BRITNEY PHILIPPEAUX, CRIMINOLOGY BA  
AND FORMER VICE PRESIDENT OF PRIDE**

It was a great experience being able to be Vice President of Barry University's PRIDE organization. I was able to make great connections and amazing collaborations. With Barry being a Catholic institution, it was a bit hard getting support from some of our administration. Barry pride's itself on being an inclusive community that serves, protects and reflects with those who experience social injustice, yet the religious tradition has and still marginalizes LGBTQ individuals.

In 2016, PRIDE was able to execute many projects that seem impossible in the past. The first collaboration PRIDE did was with Barry Social Work Program and the Multicultural Program. We organized our very first PRIDE week, where we had a Mix-N-Mingle, Happy Hour Celebration, Sexual Awareness Event, and a Peace of Cake event coordinated with Dr. Finley, all of which focused on the injustices faced by the LGBT community, whether it be in the military, in relationships that deal with domestic violence, families that don't accept their decision in their sexual orientation, and many more. We collaborated with the Social Work Program for Transgender Day of Remembrance, where we stood in solidarity and remembrance for those who were killed because the gender they chose to identify with.

Being a part of PRIDE, I gained the courage to invite my mother to one of our meetings so that she could get a better understanding of the lifestyle I chose and to see how we are not different than anyone else. As such, we would just like to have support and love from those who are dear to our hearts. This experience was an eye-opener for her that day, because it was the day in which most of the members shared their coming out stories. She was able to hear some of the members get dismissed by their families, some members have threats on their life, and other have a sexual transition out of the closet. One member even spoke on the views of parents and how it will take longer for them to accept this choice but we must give them time to come around as parents are coming out as well. This was a new concept to me. I never thought of parents having to come out, but I understand now.

Once someone has opened up themselves to their family, it now changes the perception others have on the family as well; which is why most families deny their children because of the fear of being ridiculed and viewed as bad parenting. A supportive family member makes a huge

difference on the individuals coming out stage and how they grow into loving this person they are learning to love and accept.

Although my mother isn't there yet herself, this opportunity has opened her eyes a lot more and has given me the chance to be more open with her and my family about my relationships and events that I host and are a part of involving the LGBT community at school and in Florida.

PRIDE has become an outlet for me and many other ladies and gentleman to speak out about topics that have been hidden for so long and to connect with others that have similar experiences. This why it's always such a great opportunity to collaborate with different organizations and bridge the gap within the different communities.

However, with all the hard work PRIDE had been doing to bridge the gap among Barry students and facilities, and show the community that Barry is an accepting and supportive institution that prides themselves on being an inclusive community, it saddened me to see that we didn't really have the support from the university as we thought we might.

We made such great strides showing our local community that, although we are a Catholic institution, we do stand up for the LGBT community. We participated in the PRIDE parade for the first time ever this year and received no appreciation from our chair. Usually Barry will advertise the great accomplishments on the Barry website, yet only a few were aware.

At the Barry University club/organizations award ceremony, PRIDE was awarded Barry PRIDE, I received Student Organization Member of the Year, Diomaris Bello received President of the Year, and we earned Best club events overall for the 2015–2016 school year. These were amazing awards but it was only presented in front of the student body; all the faculty and administrators who attended the event were inside the Hilton, conversing by the bar. A little recognition would have been nice.

Another scenario that just seemed unsupportive was when the university president spoke out about the Orlando Shooting and did not even mention how detrimental that must have been for our LGBT community within our campuses in Miami and in Orlando. She only addressed the fact that it was the largest shooting in the United States now and so close to home. And, unfortunately, her email was only sent out to faculty. Even the event held on Barry campus to mourn the deaths of the individuals that were at Pulse nightclub that night was only extended to the faculty.

This just showed that the Barry community as a whole does not want to represent the LGBT community because they are scared to lose the support and donations from non-LGBT members. These scenarios, which are only a few, proved to us that there's so much more to be done at Barry University. Unfortunately, that was my last year at Barry as I just gradu-

ated, yet I will try to be an active alumni and continue making the changes I can with the help of a few friends I have still there.

## CONCLUSION

Each narrative presented affirms the research included in this body of work regarding the continuum of bullying, pervasive heteronormativity, the fear of religious institutions and the need for out and affirming faculty and staff. Moreover, these narratives shed light on understudied topics including the need for trauma responsive universities, intersecting religious and queer identities. These lived experiences underscore the importance of discourse and advocacy centered transforming institutions of campus climates into places of healing and affirmation for LGBTQ+ students across the nation. It is the aspiration of the authors and the contributors of this chapter that all institutes of higher learning will incorporate LGBTQ+ affirmative policies and procedures into their strategic plan from recruitment through graduation.

The data conveyed in this body of research identifies a significant need of inclusion and safety that is not currently met for all our LGBTQ+ students. The strategies put forth in Table 9.1 serve as evidence based recommendations that will allow LGBTQ+ students to be embraced and affirmed in educational settings, just as their heteronormative counterparts.

## NOTE

Recommendations are derived from published guidelines for affirmative social work education for sexual and gender minority clients co-written by the first and fourth authors. See Austin et al. (2016) and Craig et al. (2016) for details.

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## CHAPTER 10

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# MUSLIM WOMEN'S PURSUIT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

## Challenging Gender Equity

**Rafael Harley and Nekeisha Bascombe**

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The study described in this chapter sought to address, examine, and explore through the lived experiences of Muslim women pursuing higher education how identity and gender bias can affect the pursuit of college degrees. It was important to discover ways in which gender bias toward Muslims can be lessened. The study utilizes a qualitative phenomenological research approach. Data was collected from multiple sources where themes, patterns, and discrepancies of how identity affects Muslim women's pursuit of higher education were identified. A revised version of Van Kaam's method of analysis of phenomenological data (as cited in Moustakas, 1994) was used to support Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological design. Applying this approach allowed the participants in the study to discuss identity and education without having to separate their individual experiences from their religious practices. Seven themes emerged from the study which can aid institutions of higher education on areas of identity, diversity and, inclusion as they relate to Muslim women. The findings in this research will help promote awareness of and an under-

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standing of Muslim women's identity formation and its effect on the pursuit of higher education.

## **BRIEF HISTORY OF WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Getting access to education has long been a major problem for women. Dating back to early civilization, boys were known to receive preference over girls in regards to schooling and what they were taught: boys—reading, writing and hunting, while women were being limited to domestic responsibilities (Sexton, 1976). Today, education is recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a fundamental human right that brings equal benefits to human society as a whole, where women have the right to the same or equal opportunities as men, and should not suffer or receive discrimination which would restrict them from learning (Calvo, n.d.). Traditionally, Higher Education (HE) was not viewed as a place where women and men could receive equal learning, as men were the only ones that had access to this level of education and were more visible publicly, while women were known to be in the home (Calvo, n.d.). Women have made substantial progress in HE, as many women are now receiving advanced degrees (DiGeorgio-Lutz, 2002), even in fields that were once male-dominated like science, mathematics, and engineering.

Higher Education in the United States is over 300 years old (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). During the latter part of the 19th century, the features of HE in the United States began to change, and become a system where the very definition of an educated man was taking a shift to only those that had attended college (Graham, 1978). Before 1848, women in the United States had no access to Higher Education; while some women may have attended a seminary or academy, they were not allowed into colleges or universities (Lowe, n.d.). Darwinian evolution regulated women to a permanently inferior condition, physically and mentally, and suggested that women were too far behind men in human evolution to catch up to the men (Solomon, 1985). The status of women in regards to HE has been a matter of international concern for decades (Calvo, n.d.). By the end of the 18th century, there were similar views regarding women in the U.S. colonies and Europe; that women performed a significant social role and that they needed schooling of a useful variety so they could perform their duties better (Sexton, 1976).

The first wave of the feminist movement during the 19th century focused on addressing several women's issues ranging from education, employment opportunities to the reform of law regarding married women's (Jones, 2012). However, when the first women's college emerged

during this era, the idea that women should be allowed the same educational opportunities as men remained controversial and women were still very limited in their collegiate options (Jones, 2012). For example, in Cambridge, the question of awarding degrees to women created a controversy which almost incited riots by university men who opposed the move (Jones, 2012).

A former Harvard professor, Edward H. Clarke, gave the most famous attack in his book *Sex in Education*, where he publicly argued that the minds of females would strain if they became educated beyond their capacity, which would make them unfit for household roles (Sexton, 1976). In 1870, only 0.7% of the female population went to college, and by 1920, amounted to 7.6% (Lowe, n.d.).

Female graduate students were more likely than male graduate students to drop out of school because of the pressures they received from their spouses or family. This can be seen as a form of discrimination, as women are expected by society to take on the roles of child rearing (Sexton, 1976), making it difficult for them to continue their degree process or attend HE. Because fewer jobs were available for women, they often found it difficult to finance their education (Sexton, 1976), and they could not fulfill a full-time job whilst having the responsibility of taking care of the household. Despite these challenges, education has indeed changed the lives of women in America, and there is an ongoing fight to achieve equal status with men either within or outside the realm of education (Solomon, 1985). Education gives women an identity outside their family and creates many opportunities for them, and in some instances a sense of social mobility (Solomon, 1985).

Many women have had to negotiate their educational future with their family, and assent was determinant on financial resources and recognition of the value of the education the girl/woman was seeking to attain (Solomon, 1985). Shifts in the expectations of society for women happened during the 20th century, especially during the years 1920 to 1960 (Graham, 1978). By 1940, some educated women believed that it was up to the individual herself to make choices and take action on critical matters in her life: to marry or not, work or not, and even to combine marriage and career or not (Solomon, 1985). By 1960, the postwar era saw a generation of college educated women that had the largest number of Jews, Catholics, and the smaller Protestant sects (Solomon, 1985).

Higher education in a sense cannot escape from its historical journey, as it transitioned from serving royalty and the upper classes, and the church, to serving all persons and all institutions in the more democratic and industrialized societies of modern times (Kerr, 1993).

## WOMEN IN ISLAM AND EDUCATION

Since the earliest days of Islam, education has always been considered important. The very first educational institutions of the Islamic world were very informal, where mosques were used as the place for people to gather and listen to scholars, gain knowledge and read books (Lost Islamic History, 2008). As far back as the year 900, many young students were educated in a primary school called “maktab” which was attached to the mosques (Lost Islamic History, 2008). The rise of the institution known as the “madrasa” resulted, to a certain degree, in the formalization of the educational process, and before the 11th century, mosques provided the principle venue for the teaching circles in which all Islamic higher education occurred (Keddie & Baron, 1991). Between 1250 and 1517, madrasas emerged in Cairo as the leading institutions of Islamic education, and many women were benefactors who supplied endorsements necessary to establish and maintain the schools. A minimum of five such schools were founded by women (Keddie & Baron, 1991). Moreover, during this era, women were often vested with the supervisory roles in administration at the madrasas, and it was these elite women who were hardly strangers to the world of institutionalized education (Keddie & Baron, 1991).

Even though elite women had administrative roles and endowed schools, they had no roles as professors or students at these madrasas (Keddie & Baron, 1991). However, changes in the economy and society in the past 2 centuries, along with Western cultural impact, have brought about forces within Middle Eastern societies that resulted in changes to women’s education (Keddie & Baron, 1991). Wealthier families in the region who were in contact with Westerners saw the advantages of educating women and allowing their participation in the wider world; thus, there were women’s schools and women’s or mixed universities built in almost every Muslim country (Keddie & Baron, 1991). Yet still, Quranic verses concerning the pursuit of knowledge are gender-neutral, and hadith literature is undecided about whether women could pursue knowledge, how they are to do so, and what guidelines should define their behavior as students and teachers (Sayeed, 2011).

The growth of women in HE has been almost twice as fast as men, and in some wealthier countries, there are already more women in HE than there are men; for instance, in North America and Western Europe, the growth has been significant, but for some regions in Sub-Saharan Africa and in the South and West Asia, women are not likely to partake in HE (London International Model United Nations, 2014).

In looking closely at the Arab countries, mass education in state-run schools developed mainly in the latter half of the 20th century with two

main objectives; to combat illiteracy and teach a sense of national identity (Al-bab, 2009). Modern education for women in the Arab world is relatively recent, being a product of the 20th century (al-Qazzat, n.d.). Most of the Arab world was under colonial domination, which made the progress of women in education until recently slow and very limited; the colonial powers were not interested in expanding educational facilities or making them available to women and, thus, the illiteracy rate among Arab women remained extremely high (al-Qazzat, n.d.).

Several studies in the Arab world show that the most powerful weapon for improving their states, as well as the most potent force of social change is the education of women (al-Qazzat, n.d.). In 1960, many Arab countries, including Kuwait, Qatar, Yemen, and United Arab Emirates (UAE), had no college education, but today, practically all Arab states except for Oman and Djibouti, have developed their own college system allowing female participation (al-Qazzat, n.d.). In Turkey, the first slow steps towards education for women began in 1863 with the foundation of a college for the training of women teachers in Istanbul, which was followed by the opening of primary schools for girls (Keddie & Baron, 1991).

The United Nations statistics website indicates that women's attendance in university is slightly higher than men in some of the Arab states, which could indicate a huge step towards eliminating gender disparity in all levels of education in the future in these countries (Davies, 2012). Further, it can challenge the myth that women in these states are not allowed to pursue higher education based on religious beliefs or traditions relating to their culture.

## **THE FUTURE OF WOMEN AND EDUCATION**

For Middle Eastern countries, improvements in tertiary education for women is evident, although a lot of work still must be done to ensure gender parity when it comes to the education of women and men. Overall, even though there has been a lot of advancement for women over the years with gaining access to higher education, women still face a lot of challenges in regards to the degrees and discrimination they may encounter whilst pursuing their degree. They would have to possess some level of ambition and motivation to continue.

## **A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF MUSLIM WOMEN AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

The remainder of this chapter will focus on a phenomenological study that was used to explore and examine the pursuit of higher education among Muslim women and the identity issues and bias they may have

experienced. We present several themes that emerged from the study that can be used as a guide for higher education diversity and inclusion departments, as well as present information to address potential fears and misunderstanding regarding Muslim women.

The qualitative research was conducted in 2015 and arose out of the desire to reduce the stereotypes and lessen the discrimination that is often attached to Muslims in general and Muslim women who are pursuing higher education. Data was collected using a demographic questionnaire, dimensions of identity worksheet, a focus group, and semi-structured interviews. The focus group comprised of three participants and there were 18 individual interviews among six participants (three interviews each). Utilizing the modified Van Kaam method of analysis for phenomenological data, the researcher was able to separate and code the relevant data to identify common themes in participants' responses. From the focus group, several themes were identified and subsequently validated from interview responses as being relevant to participants' identity development and subsequent pursuit of higher education.

## Participant Profiles

To develop a context for the discussion of themes, interview introductions, dimensions of the identity worksheets, and demographic questionnaires were used to develop a demographic profile of each participant, which is highlighted in Table 10.1. Presenting the demographic makeup of the participants helps to provide a vivid picture of the contextual influences and identities that are represented in the study. This would allow readers to visualize the experiences of Muslim women who even though they have a commonality based on their religion, identify differently with how they view their lives and the world they are a part of.

**Participant A.** Participant A can be described as a very vibrant, hard-working, and opinionated student at a large south Florida university. She was married (arranged by her parents) at the age of 17. Not long after marriage, she lost her only child shortly after giving birth and has questioned her religious beliefs ever since. She is the daughter of an Imam at a South Florida Mosque. Born in the Ivory Coast (Africa), she came to the United States at the age of 14. Participant A lists her external identities as being African, upper class, heterosexual, and less religious than before but still a practicing Muslim. The contextual influences that shaped her identity were few, as she is an only child and was not allowed to have an opinion in the home, thus finding herself being more opinionated outside of home amongst friends at school.

**Table 10.1. Demographic Makeup of Participant**

| <i>Pseudonym</i> | <i>Location</i>    | <i>Sect</i> | <i>Nationality</i>   | <i>Socioeconomic Status</i> | <i>Education Obtained</i> | <i>Convert</i> | <i>Lived in Middle East</i> | <i>Lived in Africa</i> |
|------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Participant A    | Miami, FL          | Sunni       | African American     | Upper Class                 | BS                        | No             | No                          | Yes                    |
| Participant B    | Boca Raton, FL     | Sunni       | Palestinian American | Middle Class                | MS                        | No             | Yes                         | No                     |
| Participant C    | South Florida      | /           | Palestinian American | Middle Class                | BS                        | No             | Yes                         | Yes                    |
| Participant D    | Boca Raton, FL     | Sunni       | Latin American       | Middle Class                | BS                        | Yes            | No                          | No                     |
| Participant D    | Ft. Lauderdale, FL | Sunni       | /                    | Upper Middle Class          | PhD                       | No             | Yes                         | Yes                    |
| Participant F    | Davie, FL          | Shiite      | Sudanese             | Middle Class                | BS (in progress)          | No             | No                          | Yes                    |

**Participant B.** Participant B's identity formation was directly influenced by the traditional practices observed in the home—particularly the submissive nature of her mother to her father. She perceived her identity as being influenced by Western culture, as well as traditional Palestinian practices in Islam. Because of this meshing of customs, she is not in complete agreement with Sharia. Referring to herself as Palestinian American, Participant B is 24 years of age, married, and currently attending a South Florida University. Her family is originally from Palestine but she was born in Florida. She moved to Palestine when she was 4, then to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) when she was 12. At the age of 14, she moved back to Florida. Participant B has five sisters and two brothers.

**Participant C.** Participant C is a mid-twenties Muslim born in the United States. She is a first-generation college student currently in her sixth year of college. Participant C also works as a health administrator. She identifies as Sunni. She described herself as adventurous, calm, caring, confident, friendly and sociable, happy, responsible, and logical. She considered some of her negative traits as being argumentative, blunt, clumsy, impatient, and secretive. She reported some of her external identities as Palestinian American, Arab, middle class, and heterosexual.

**Participant D.** A self-described hardworking individual, Participant D stated that she identifies as being not realistic and having high standards. She views herself as being what others may see as a minority: a Latin woman who happens to be a converted Muslim, wears hijab, and speaks Spanish. She is not bothered by what others think about her but considers herself sensitive, and caring. She described her external identities as female, Muslim, and Latina.

**Participant E.** Participant E is from the Middle East and was born into Islam. Her core, external identities, and contextual influences were not influenced by Western culture. She came to the United States after both parents were killed in a suicide bombing which changed her outlook on life. Participant E is widowed and a mother of two children (both girls). After her husband's death, she returned to her parents' home and subsequently moved in with her brother in the United States following their deaths. Participant E defines herself as a strict Muslim, submissive, and peaceful. Her external identities are simply Muslim and Arab. Her family is from the Middle East, where she was born and raised and identifies as Sunni. She entered college because her brother became sick and feared that she would not be able to take care of herself, her two children and his son. Her brother provided the list of things for her to study, of which she chose nursing.

**Participant F.** Participant F states that she has not and will never be influenced by Western culture, was born and raised in Northern Sudan

(Africa). She is in her mid-30s and has been in the United States for 5 years. She is married with two children and identifies as Shiite, which means that she believes that the fourth Caliph and his heirs are the true successors of Muhammad—as opposed to Sunni Muslims who believe that all four Caliphs inherited the overseeing of the religion. She was very soft-spoken and described herself as dedicated, calm, loving, happy, and a great thinker. Her external identities are female, Muslim, Sudanese, middle-class, and heterosexual.

Participant F's contextual influences were stated as having one sibling—an older brother. She states that he could express himself more than her and she is OK with that. She views it as a respect that keeps order and doesn't look down on tradition. She believes tradition made Sudan stronger and her family stays strong because of their teachings and culture. She is happy to follow her husband, who she stated has never led her down a wrong path. She shared the idea of the study to her husband before partaking in it and he agreed to it, as he believed it would help Muslims. She views Sharia law as clear, fair and necessary.

## RESULTS

The findings of the study generated seven themes which the authors hope could act as frameworks towards understanding the concept of women in higher education, especially when they identify as Muslim and the challenges they face/encounter. The research questions for the study included:

1. What is the experience of gender in Muslim women's identity formation?
2. What is the experience of traditional beliefs in Muslim women's identity formation?
3. What is the experience of Islamic laws in Muslim women's identity formation?
4. What is the nature of the relationship between Muslim women's identity and their pursuit of higher education?

The seven overall themes that emerged as being relevant to the research questions were: Individual ideas about gender; Minimized expression; Shari'a and economic status; Shari'a yields order; Shari'a vs. Culture; Accepted laws; and, Identity and education.

## Themes explained

The following section presents a description of the meanings of themes as they relate to the research questions.

### Theme 1. Individual Ideas About Gender

When Muslim women perceive themselves as experiencing gender inequality, several effects on their identity formation may develop. First, those experiences may make the Muslim woman want to counter what she views as negative effects on gender. For example, Participant A stated,

When I think about it ... I had to kinda do stuff against what I was taught about men and women in Islam. I kinda always questioned the “him teaching us everything” part because Islam is supposed to give every Muslim a right to education. My only thing was, a lot of things that happened was abusive and that kinda made me decide that when I got older I was gonna do what I felt.

Likewise, Participant B explained that,

Um, I think it's expected especially for women to be a housewife in the older thinking process and to bear children. Um, so I think education is a way to get away from that gender inequality the what they expect of a woman in a household I think.

Participant D stated,

I'm what others will consider the minority. I'm a Latin woman who happens to be a revert Muslim, wears hijab, and speaks Spanish. I do not care about what other people think about me. I'm very sensitive, caring, and what others think of me is none of my business. So men can say whatever. I decide who I will be.

It was then, as she made that statement, that the author realized that she was the outlier in the study. Everything about her—from attitudes to experiences and cultural/ethnic background—was noticeably different from the other participants.

### Theme 2. Minimized Expression

Participant C clearly felt that she couldn't be open about her feeling when she responded, “Growing up, I hid things I knew would disappoint-

ment my parents. Now that I'm older, my first reaction is not to share my personal life, wrong or right, even with the closest friends and family members."

### **Theme 3. Shari'a and Economic Status**

This theme was perceived by three participants who stated:

So, it depends on the social-economic status of the family and where they're actually coming from. We were in other parts of the country and men and women can do whatever they want, you know, people who doesn't have money. (Participant D)

"It's OK for women to be mistreated. This is only in the lower socioeconomic parts" (Participant A); and, "I'm from a small but like rich town, so they are taking longer to follow that" (Participant B).

### **Theme 4. Shari'a Yields Order**

Shari'a it's like a um blueprint my father told us. God gave men and women rules to like live by, you know? It's like what we say all over. Rules there so, like, everything is in harmony. Everything is ordered, so you have less a chance for chaos. Imagine no traffic rules... People dead everywhere from everybody speeding and driving crazy! Shari'a is like rules for us to have order and consistency in our practice as Muslims. (Participant A)

Participant D explained

As we are learning about something, we want to do it right. So people feel—I feel strong as a Muslim because of it. A um strong person can hold to blueprint. Shari'a is a blueprint for our lives—you know Muslims' living.

In a similar voice, Participant E answered

It is our legal system like they have one here in the United States. It really is alternative to what Western practices are. For whatever they think is best. Even some places outside Islam practice our law because it holds order.

### **Theme 5. Shari'a Is Not Culture**

Participant B replied, "I think each country has their own culture," while participant D stated,

So, well, there's a big difference when it comes to Sharia Law and when it comes to culture. And ... I can see the difference between what is actually and what's it—it's—is in the Quran and the—and the Sunnah compared to the culture because a lot of who are born and raised Muslim, they don't understand... At the same time because I have born a Muslim and this is what the Quran says or this is what the Sunnah says I understand. They don't have a understanding of what the Shari'a says because they were brought up this way. That's the way it's supposed to be. So, they—they're not as able to separate the two as someone that converts to Islam. So typically, they—they're not as, uh—as able to separate the two to differentiate between the two.

Participant D feels that Shari'a has, "Helped her be a better person. As long as Shari'a is not mixed with culture." She continued,

I might be the exception, but depending on what law we are talking about. Some of it I take with a grain of salt. A lot of it is the cultural influence in that country. That's why I said tradition is important because then Shari'a is the same. (Participant E)

Participant F supported this theme by stating, "People don't know that different Islamic cultures practice different levels of Shari'a because of that—different ways for the same laws."

## **Theme 6. Accepted Laws**

Shari'a it's like a um blueprint my father told us. God gave men and women rules to like live by, you know? It's like what we say all over. Rules there so, like, everything is in harmony. Everything is ordered, so you have less a chance for chaos. (Participant A)

Participant D explained,

As we are learning about something, we want to do it right. So people feel—I feel strong as a Muslim because of it. A um strong p-person can hold to blueprint. Shari'a is a blueprint for our lives—you know Muslims' living. (Participant E)

"It is our law. It is even accepted outside of Islam in some places. There is nothing much to say about Shari'a. It is law and good Muslims, even a good um citizen follows law," Participant F responded to the question.

## Theme 7. Identity and Education

So women at the Masjid sometimes I can tell look at me funny. Everybody know I got divorced and all that and graduating college but I am too happy to be looking back and wondering what they talkin' bout. I'm doing me. So everything I was suppose not to do is everything that make me do it. (Participant A)

Participant B said, "When Muslim women have strong identities, I think it all encourages it. It has a positive influence on Muslim women's education." In line with the perceptions of Participants A and B, Participant C felt that gender inequalities, traditions, and Shari'a, "Makes the Muslim women more powerful as women and it definitely pushes you to want to pursue and higher, a higher education or higher degree." With a more involved response, Participant E stated,

I never looked at my identity this way. If you would have asked me if my identity played a role in my decision to go to college before discussing the three things we talked about, I would have said no. But when you consider them, it means that Muslim women are just now beginning to be seen for what they're worth. We want more for ourselves. Muslim men are realizing the benefit to another income, so they don't view Shari'a and gender inequalities like they used to.

She continued, "Traditions are still most important, I think, but all of them help to shape a stronger, more determined Muslim woman."

### Patterns Identified

**Gender Inequalities Positively Affect Muslim Women's Identity.** In line with the results reflected in Hamdan's (2006) study, which showed that some of the women felt indebted to their education in the Western culture, because they learned to be outspoken, and question the ascribed gender roles that Arab nations generally lay out for Muslim women, five out of the six participants (Participants A, B, D, E, and F—all who experienced gender biases in some manner) perceived gender inequalities as positively affecting Muslim women's identity formation in that it strengthened their resolve to become stronger, more independent and determined Muslim women. Essentially, those experiences may prompt the Muslim woman to want to challenge what she views as negative effects on gender. For example, Participant A stated, "When I think about it... I had to kinda do stuff against what I was taught about men and women in Islam." Likewise, Participant B explained that, "...I think education is a

way to get away from that gender inequality the-the what-what the-what they expect of a woman in a household I think.” As a result of having experienced gender biases, all five women felt that it helped them to identify as stronger, more independent Muslim women.

**Traditions Negatively Affect Muslim Women’s Identity.** All but two participants perceived traditions as negatively affecting Muslim women’s identity formation. Participants A, B, C, and D felt that traditional beliefs hindered their identity development; however, they also felt that because of those hindrances, they became more determined to break away from those traditional practices. These participants also felt that traditional practices most negatively affected Muslim women who are from Islamic States. They all experienced traditional practices of lesser impact here in the United States.

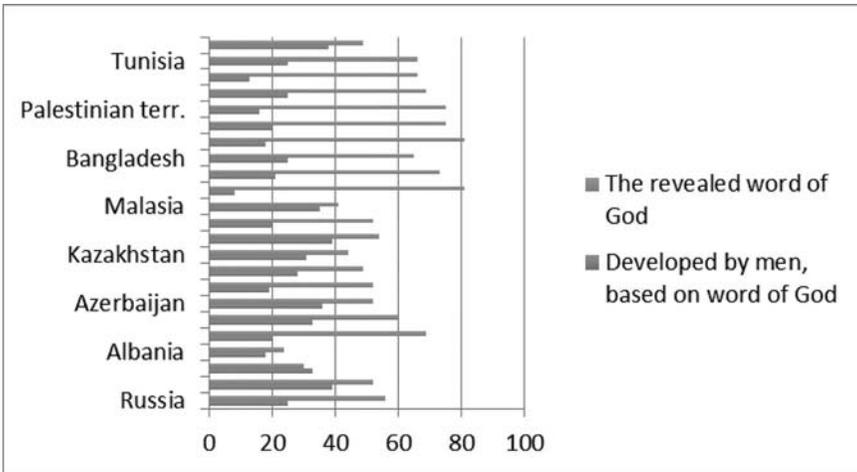
**Shari’a Positively Affects Muslim Women’s Identity.** Participants’ perceptions of Shari’a are consistent with a study conducted by the Pew Research Center (2013), which reported that

Most Muslims feel that Sharia is the revealed word of God rather than a body of law developed by men based on the word of God. Muslims also tend to believe sharia has only one, true understanding, but this opinion is far from universal; in some countries, substantial minorities of Muslims believe sharia should be open to multiple interpretations. Religious commitment is closely linked to views about sharia: Muslims who pray several times a day are more likely to say sharia is the revealed word of God, to say that it has only one interpretation and to support the implementation of Islamic law in their country. (p. 41)

Three of the six participants perceived Shari’a as being the divine word of God and subsequently positively influencing Muslim women’s identity formation. The percentage of Muslims that accept Shari’a as the divine word of God based on the Pew Research Center’s (2013) report, which investigated age, gender, education and support for Shari’a, can be seen in Figure 10.1. The Pew Research Center’s (2013) findings are important to this research because it validates the findings in this instance of participants’ support of Shari’a—a key variable in the development of their educational identities.

Because most Muslims view Shari’a as the revealed word of God, it is often viewed in a literal context, as is the case with the participants in this study. Thus, those participants perceive Shari’a as positively affecting the ways in which they formed their identities.

**Shari’a Has No Effect on Muslim Women’s Identity.** “I don’t know enough about it” and, “It doesn’t pertain to me,” Participants B and C stated, respectively, when asked about the effect of Shari’a on how Muslim women formed their identities. Both participants spent most of their for-



Source: Pew Research Center (2013).

Figure 10.1.

mative years in Western culture and were heavily influenced by U.S. customs. For them, Shari'a law was almost a foreign concept.

**Identity Affects Muslim Women's Pursuit of Higher Education.** Whether there are negative effects in identity formation that strengthen the Muslim woman's resolve (as with Participant A), or positive influences to how their identity was formed (as seen with Participants B, C, and D), and even a very neutral effect because of what is "supposed" to be accepted (the cases of Participants E and F), all resulted in their willingness, a longing even, to pursue higher education. Participants' reasons for educational pursuit were all shaped in positive and negative manners of identity influences; however, the result of the themes identified still resulted in a pursuit of higher education by each.

## Discrepancies

**Gender Inequalities Have No Effect on Muslim Women's Identity.** Participant C was the sole respondent that felt that gender inequalities have no effect on Muslim women's identity formation. She stated repeatedly over the course of the three interviews held with her that she didn't experience any gender biases. Her experiences with biases relating to gender had much to do with an influx of Western culture into the city where she lived in Ecuador.

**Traditions Positively Affect Muslim Women's Identity.** Participants E and F repeatedly perceived their experiences as being a stricter, but better practice of Islam. Their perceptions were typically and consistently in direct opposition to the other four women. This meant that only two participants perceived traditions as positively affecting Muslim women's identity formation. It should be noted that those two participants only recently moved to the United States and have experienced less of Western culture than the other four participants.

**Shari'a Negatively affects Muslim Women's Identity.** The sole participant to view her lived experiences with Shari'a as having a negative effect on how her identity was shared was Participant A. She stated that because men interpret Shari'a, she finds it difficult to agree with a lot of the explanations of how the laws should be implemented and that they are weighted against Muslim women. Again, this was, as she perceived it, just another reason to not conform to what she was previously taught and to pursue her own agenda, absent her father's wishes.

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The individual themes that emerged throughout the research process all contributed to participant's identity formation. The ways in which they perceived their identity was instrumental in their decision to pursue higher education. The purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of a sample of female Muslim students at several south Florida universities to determine how their identity formation affected their pursuit of higher education based on three distinct external contributors to the development of their identities: Gender bias, tradition, and Shari'a.

This phenomenological study found that gender inequalities, traditions, and Shari'a affect the way Muslim women's identity is formed; all three were described by participants as having contributed to their pursuit of higher education. It was important for the researcher to investigate the perceptions of gender for those Muslim women that have pursued higher education.

Three participants reported making their own meanings of the manner in which gender roles should be carried out. Thus, those participants developed their own ideas about gender roles. Because of the negative experiences of gender inequalities for the three participants who reported making their own meaning of gender roles, it was necessary for them to develop an understanding of gender that was more specific to their purposes. These included such things as shared responsibility within the household for men and women, the opportunity to pursue higher

education without fear of reprimand, and the need to have an equal voice in discussions of family and religion.

By investigating college-aged Muslim women's perceptions of the manner(s) in which gender inequalities influenced their identity formation and subsequent decision to pursue higher education, researchers may be able to develop awareness programs that have a positive influence on identity development and promote social change in higher education for Muslim women. The following are recommendations:

1. Limit the barriers to gender equality by hiring Muslim women for instructional positions in madrasas.
2. Reduce the level of gender inequality in Islam by promoting increased participation in education by Muslim women. This must include participation in research specific to Muslim women, research positions in colleges and universities, and promoting the pursuit of advanced degrees by Muslim women.

Researchers and educational practitioners should develop programs that help this overlooked group maintain pace with other groups in acquiring an education. Organizations such as the Canadian Muslim Women's Institute have begun to do just that through a sewing program for fair trade and fair wages. The program, The Canadian Muslim Women's Sewing Training Program and Social Enterprise is made up of two components: a 1 year training program and the establishment of a social enterprise called "SewFair." The organization states the following on their website:

The program has brought women of many diverse cultures together and has broken the isolation many of them experience as they move to a new country where they do not know the language, have no friends, are missing the families they left back home combined with the trauma of war. It is almost like a support group with economic benefits. (The Canadian Muslim Women's Sewing Training Program and Social Enterprise, 2015)

Women's rights issues that are specific to Muslim women's identity formation is an area that can benefit from research-based programs, such as the Canadian Muslim Women's Sewing Training Program and Social Enterprise that promote independence for Muslim women. It is an area that warrants increased investigation (Astin et al., 2005). Several researchers have insisted that identity as related to higher education has become increasingly important in recent years, particularly with today's college students (Astin et al., 2005; Garza & Herringer, 1987; Nash, 2001). The author recommends that, in developing programs to help Muslim women maintain pace with their male counterparts, researchers should first

familiarize themselves with the Muslim woman's struggles and then use that awareness to develop ways to reduce the gender gap.

Fear of retaliation has forced many Muslim women to remain silent about their opposition to many traditional Islamic practices. Although these practices vary by region and even economic status, participants in this study perceived both as having contributed to how they formed their identities and the subsequent effect on the decision to pursue higher education. To improve their understanding of their identities and the pursuit of higher education, the author recommends that educational practitioners and community activists develop mentoring programs where Muslim women college graduates can mentor other Muslim women that are struggling with the decision of whether to pursue higher education.

Both negative as well as positive traditional influences were perceived as contributing to their decisions to pursue higher education. For those participants, whose lived experiences of traditional practices were negative, they became stronger, more independent Muslim women. Additionally, lived experiences of positive traditional practices that were in direct opposition of the more oppressive practices experienced in lower socio-economic areas strengthened participants' resolve to make a better life for themselves by pursuing higher education.

Practitioners should have further discussion with Muslim women to develop an understanding of the manners in which traditions affect their identity formation. Those discussions should be used to promote awareness for Muslim men regarding the effects of practices that have historically hindered the advancement of Muslim women. Multilateral international treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) provide an international platform by which this major change in mindset can begin to be debated. The Qur'an is the primary source of Shari'a, and since it is the voice of God, it is not amendable in any way. While the text of the Qur'an is immutable, its interpretation is not. Leading scholars must begin to argue that a more open reinterpretation of the Qur'an and the hadith (the two primary sources of Islamic law) is both legitimate and necessary. It is important to begin to follow Ijtihad when reinterpreting the Qur'an. Ijtihad is an interpretive technique in Islamic law that may aid reformers in advancing women's rights within Islamic states; it is resolving an Islamic legal issue through personal thought and reflection (Hursh, 2012). Ijtihad allows a qualified individual to make a legal determination when there is not consensus as to what the Qur'an and the Sunna require. Ijtihad does not allow Muslims to interpret Islamic law however they want

or to apply this technique. Nonetheless, used strategically, Ijtihad may allow for progressive reform and an expansion of women's rights.

Of equal importance to the advancement of Muslim women in higher education is the investigation of Muslim women's rights. This is evident in this study as well as one conducted by Lee (2009), who states "human rights abuses have forced Afghan women to live in fear and terror, despite the guarantee that women have fundamental rights, they are faced with many challenges in this country" (pp. 531–532). Women in Afghanistan are "victims of discrimination and human rights abuses because Islamic societies often interpret human rights for women to conflict with Islamic law" (p. 533). Despite "equal rights for men and women being written in the 2003 Constitution, Afghan women are not afforded rights equal to men" (p. 533). Many women are "unaware of their rights under the Afghan Constitution or Islamic law, and even legal professionals are confused about the applicable law because of delays in compilation and dissemination of the law" (p. 547). Lee (2009) concludes that "to address gender discrimination and gender violence in Afghanistan, legal reform must be addressed in regards to the cultural beliefs and frame constitutional laws are consistent with Islamic laws" (p. 561).

To better understand the effects of Shari'a on Muslim women's identity formation and subsequent pursuit of higher education, the manners in which Muslim women perceive Shari'a as affecting the natural order of Islam, the author strongly recommends that higher education professionals do the following:

1. Women's rights issues that are specific to Muslim women's identity formation should be included in investigations of research-based programs that promote the pursuit of higher education by Muslim women.
2. Higher education professionals should develop programs specifically designed to help Muslim women further understand Shari'a where it is perceived as accepted law, faith development for Muslims, and their decisions to pursue higher education.

The investigation of the effects of identity on the pursuit of higher education can expand what is known about Muslim women pursuing higher education. This demographic has been underexposed and, as a result, underdeveloped. These results may allow higher education professionals to develop programs specifically designed to help Muslim women further understand their identity development, faith development, and their decisions to pursue higher education. To assist in the development of such programs, the author recommends that researchers develop aware-

ness programs that have a positive influence on identity development and promote social change in higher education for Muslim women.

In conducting this phenomenological study, the author was able to make meaning of the lived experiences of six Muslim women currently attending colleges and universities and determine how their identities affected their pursuit of higher education. Table 10.2 summarizes the patterns, discrepancies and themes generated from the study.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

One of the implications for practice would be for researchers to be educated on and to educate their students on perspectives other than their own common understandings. The findings of this study could aid in raising awareness of the effects of identity on Muslim women's educational pursuit. In turn, awareness programs can be developed to help Muslim women better understand the effects of their identity on educational pursuit and to promote increased participation in higher education. Additionally, the results of this and subsequent studies may increase the available literature regarding Muslim women's identity. The gender inequalities gap can be narrowed where interest in this topic is increased for those who sympathize with the treatment of Muslim women (e.g., Muslim men, charities, financial institutions that support women's rights initiatives, Islamic as well as non-Islamic governments, and non-Muslims).

Another implication for practice is increased understanding of Islam. When instructing courses on education, educators should develop and promote the investigation and discussion of religions that are experiencing misconceptions. Several participants felt that Muslims are all too often misunderstood and that an awareness of the true practices of the religion was necessary even prior to the events of 9/11. To allow misinterpretations to continue could hinder the voice of Muslim students in and outside the classroom. This can lead to less engaged learning.

Interfaith discussions are necessary for students to be able to better understand and accept one another. Patel and Brodeur (2006) discussed the necessity of having meaningful conversations about varying faith identities. Patel and Brodeur (2006) wrote, "Learning to talk about the variety of religious identities, among many other kinds of overlapping identities, requires active and self-reflective interfaith activities" (p. 3). Learning to have discussions about religions other than one's own could foster a more active and meaningful learning environment.

Although all the participants in this study identified as Muslim, it is important for educational practitioners to understand that the lived experiences of individual Muslim women—and Muslims overall—can be very

**Table 10.2. Summary of Patterns, Themes and Discrepancies**

| <b>Research Question 1:</b> What is the experience of gender in Muslim women's identity formation?              |  |  |                       |
|---|--|--|-----------------------|
| <i>Patterns</i>   | <i>Participant(s)</i>                            | <i>Discrepancies</i>   | <i>Participant(s)</i> |
| Gender Inequalities Positively Affect Muslim Women's Identity   | A, B, D, E, and F                                | Gender Inequalities Have No Affect on Muslim Women's Identity  | C                     |
| <i>Themes</i>   |  | <i>Thematic Statement</i>  |                       |
| Individual ideas about gender   |  | Muslim women that perceive themselves as experiencing gender inequalities will sometimes develop their own ideas about gender roles                      |                       |
| <b>Research Question 2:</b> What is the experience of traditional beliefs in Muslim women's identity formation? |  |  |                       |
| <i>Patterns</i>   | <i>Participant(s)</i>                            | <i>Discrepancies</i>   | <i>Participant(s)</i> |
| Traditions Negatively Affect Muslim Women's Identity  | A, B, C, and D                                   | Traditions Positively Affect Muslim Women's Identity   | E and F               |
| <i>Themes</i>   |  | <i>Thematic Statement</i>  |                       |
| Minimized expression  |  | Where traditional practices are strong, Muslim women can become less open about what they are feeling  |                       |
| Shari'a and economic status   |  | Traditional practices and the practice of Shari'a can sometimes be traced back to the economic levels and geographic locations of particular communities |                       |
| <b>Research Question 3:</b> What is the experience of Islamic Laws in Muslim women's identity formation?        |  |  |                       |
| <i>Patterns</i>   | <i>Participant(s)</i>                            | <i>Discrepancies</i>   | <i>Participant(s)</i> |
| Shari'a Positively Affects Muslim Women's Identity  | D, E, and F                                      | Shari'a Negatively Affects Muslim Women's Identity   | A                     |
| B and C   | Shari'a Has No Effect on Muslim Women's Identity |  |                       |
| <i>Themes</i>   |  | <i>Thematic Statement</i>  |                       |
| Shari'a and economic status   |  | Traditional practices and the practice of Shari'a can sometimes be traced back to the economic levels and geographic locations of particular communities |                       |

(Table continues on next page)

**Table 10.2. (Continued)**

|   |   |  |                                    |
|---|---|--|------------------------------------|
| Shari'a yields order  | Shari'a helps to maintain order in Islam  |  |                                    |
| Shari'a is not culture  | Muslims aren't always able to distinguish between Shari'a and culture   |  |                                    |
| Accepted Laws   | Although some non-Muslims view Shari'a as cruel and unusual punishment, Muslims that practice Shari'a view it in the same manner as citizens of other countries view their own laws |  |                                    |
| <b>Research Question 4:</b> What is the nature of the relationship between Muslim women's identity and their pursuit of higher education? |   |  |                                    |
| <i>Patterns</i>   | <i>Participant(s)</i>   | <i>Discrepancies</i>   | <i>Participant(s)</i>              |
| Identity Affects Muslim Women's Pursuit of Higher Education   | Participants A, B, C, and D   |  | Note: Participants E and F neutral |
| <i>Themes</i>   |   | <i>Thematic Statement</i>  |                                    |
| Identity and Education  |   | Muslim women with strong, rather than submissive identities are more likely to pursue higher education |                                    |

different, as there are degrees to which Shari'a is practiced, variations of traditional practices based on region and socioeconomic status, and truly varied experiences of gender inequalities. Examples of this could be the Muslim woman's decision to wear, or not wear the hijab, consuming only halal food, the observance of Ramadan, or simple interactions between men and women.

Finally, this study only highlights a viewpoint of the meanings of the lived experiences of six Muslim women attending colleges or universities in south Florida. For a richer understanding of the phenomena being studied a more expanded approach is needed. This one qualitative study cannot explain all phenomena, as there is little research that examines the lived experiences of Muslim women's identity formation as it affects educational pursuit. As such, researchers should investigate more thoroughly the lived experiences of Muslim women, Islam as a religion, Shari'a as accepted law for Muslims, gender inequalities, traditional practices in Islam, and educational pursuit for Muslims.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This phenomenological study offers a rich comprehensive description of the positive and negative lived experiences of six Muslim women, as well

as an understanding of their beliefs, ideologies, and practices. The results of this study may help to increase awareness and develop an increased understanding of their pursuit of higher education. Little is known about the process of identity formation among Muslim women in pursuing higher education. Since few studies have specifically investigated the effects of identity in pursuing higher education for Muslims, this researcher makes several recommendations for future research.

The first recommendation for future research, then, is that gender inequalities that are specific to Muslim women warrant the attention of educational sociologists. The need for theories specific to gender when inequalities exist for Muslim could help to explain both positive and negative effects on identity formation in Muslim women. Second, the decision-making processes in education require more attention. The presence of Muslim women in research and madrasas must improve. Because studies often rely heavily on available literature, the individual views of Muslim women are necessary to accurately understand educational experiences and outcomes. Third, all aspects of the educational experiences of Muslim women must be considered in the general account of educational inequality. This research has shown that gender inequality is both a matter of inequalities in access as well as differentiation in educational experiences and outcomes. Processes and outcomes must be measured directly with the general analysis of education for Muslim women. There are several studies that describe educational processes, but few have fused those processes with an account of gender inequalities for Muslim women. Finally, international comparisons of Muslim women's identity and the effect on the pursuit of higher education warrant further research. A logical first step would be to assess the role of identity in educational pursuit across countries. Although the assessment of outcomes may be more complicated than those in this study, the linkages between identity and education across borders should be investigated.

The challenge facing further research on Muslim women's identity formation and the effects on educational pursuit is to find ways to look beyond simply documenting gender effects but to develop more theoretically sound accounts of their experiences. The substantial research that exists in various fields for women in education should be used to catapult the investigation of the Muslim woman and her pursuit of higher education.

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## CHAPTER 11

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# MY JOURNEY AS A MALE FEMINIST

**Matthew Johnson**

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My first moment of awareness on the gender front came in my freshman year of college. It's not a particularly vivid memory, but the shock I felt and subsequent feelings of shame and disgust have stayed with me.

I was in the communal bathroom of my dorm one night, and I found myself sucked into a group of four or five underclassmen. One was talking about a recent sexual conquest he had. It may have even occurred earlier that night or the previous night. I don't think it dawned on me until later that he was describing a rape.

None of us stood against him.

Since then I have been on a journey of sorts to understand myself as a (straight) man in relation to women. I have attempted to bridge the divide between my sexual attraction toward women and my equally strong desire to treat women as people.

It was also during my undergraduate years that I began identifying as a feminist. Possessing the need to walk the walk, I organized numerous protests and demonstrations on behalf of the cause. I also joined a group, called the "Men of Strength Club," supported by the DC-based Men Can Stop Rape, to discuss issues of masculinity and violence against women. My group reached out to other men and raised awareness on campus. I was more than content with my role as a male ally. I remember speaking

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passionately and spontaneously at Take Back the Night one April because I was moved to tears when I heard a previous speaker talk about the horror and cruelty of domestic violence. In my head it was as if all the violent acts she was describing were being committed against the woman I loved at the time. I was deeply moved and wanted nothing more than to do my part to challenge the prevailing standard of masculinity.

Right after college I completed the training to become a crisis counselor for the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network. I served as an online counselor for almost 3 years and spoke to hundreds, if not thousands, of people until I became overwhelmed with personal and professional strife and could do it no longer. Yet, I went on to serve as a volunteer with the DC Rape Crisis Center and eventually succeeded in the popular push to change its policy that banned male volunteers from providing direct service to survivors. Directly serving sexual assault survivors in crisis was the hardest but most rewarding thing I have ever done, and I was often overcome not only with compassion fatigue but also with what I like to call “compassion joy.”

I went on to devote my master’s thesis to a study of grassroots efforts to address sexual violence within tightly knit communities of activists. Many such activists were anarchist in orientation and emphasized the autonomy of the survivor while viewing the police and courts with suspicion. They sought wider social change along with micro-level justice.

Some of the research was based on my own efforts to hold a known sexual predator accountable and increase support for his victims. Although most non-legal responses to sexual violence still rest on shaky ground due to a lack of evidence to support their effectiveness, problems with training and implementation, and safety concerns, I came away with the hope that one day communities across the United States will have the capacity to respond to incidents of sexual violence without reliance on unproductive and unaccountable institutions of the state.

As I neared my 30th birthday (November 15, 2016), I became more and more conflicted about my position as a still-young male in this society—who bears the cross of wanting to be loved by women and wanting to protect them from the savagery of other males. I was not only concerned about the rise of the chauvinist Donald Trump but also concerned about the lack of effective responses that could convince less educated moderates and conservatives not to support him. I came to view the political ascendancy of a man who bragged about grabbing women’s private parts and the upset of his immensely more-qualified female rival as evidence that political correctness had failed, and the only hope of the sensible people of this country was to speak plainly, forcefully, and truly. This emboldened me to document even the baser moments of my personal journey from an apolitical, female-dominated suburban household to a

free-thinking feminist intellectual no-man's-land who is at much at odds with the fringe as he is the mainstream.

I decided to write a novel (more accurately, a collection of poignant scenes) that represents this journey through the eyes of a fictional male feminist author and commentator who (approvingly) predicts the end of male dominance in Western society. Like me, he was raised by a single mother with few male role models and suffers from a life-long crisis of masculine identity. After a series of personal misfortunes culminating in his estrangement from his wife, who cheats on him because he is not “manly” enough, Leonard becomes increasingly hostile toward women and eventually becomes a spokesman for the Men’s Rights Movement. After successfully gaining custody of his children due to his significant resources, he becomes thoroughly corrupted by power and becomes physically and sexually violent. The central question is whether he can be redeemed and forgiven by his family, former friends, and feminist allies. I will not spoil the ending.

None of this is meant to assign blame for masculinity’s pitfalls or seemingly irreconcilable differences between men and women. It is meant to cut through political correctness with a sword and demonstrate just how deep the pain and contradictions are inside the men of today. I would posit that these deep contradictions are what lead men astray, but I do not claim to know what the right path for men is.

When I first identified as a feminist, I thought it was protecting women from men’s violence. I considered this the gold standard of manhood without recognizing the inherent paternalism in this line of thinking as well as the implication that men are not only more violent than women but also better (stronger) protectors. The real shock occurred when I came to terms with my own history of victimization at the hands of women—starting with my grandmother’s tyranny over the household and ending with an emotionally abusive relationship. In between all that I was sexually assaulted at age 14 by two women and, as a result, experienced a deep but unrecognized shame toward my own sexuality for several years. I am convinced that these feelings of shame, along with the absence of my father (and my resulting resentment toward him), would have led to destructive behavior if not for the support of my mother, who never allowed our gender differences to separate us as people. I believe strongly that this is what feminism is at its core, and I will continue to fight for it.

### **EXCERPT FROM *LOST LITTLE BOY***

“There’s no achieving accountability with a woman,” said Leonard, with a fierce glare in his eyes. He stared hard as his teenage son, his face only

inches away. They were in the kitchen just after finishing breakfast. Leonard had had two cups of black coffee and a dry piece of toast. It was nothing like his usual cage-free omelet with a side of meatless bacon. His pajama pants were rumpled with the waistband drooping in at least two places. He wore no shirt, and there was so much fuzz entangled in his chest hair that it looked as if he had slept with a dryer filter. Caleb, dressed for school, was attempting to finish a bagel with cream cheese. He was leaning against the door of the refrigerator.

“If you ever get mad or upset at a woman, the issue changes from *why* you got upset to how you handled it—and, if you handled it well—the issue becomes that you *got* upset. It’s never, ever about what the woman did. She’s an angel. A *fucking* pure, prepubescent princess!”

Caleb was uncomfortable. He had never seen his father like this before. Yet, part of him was relieved to know he was not alone in his negative feelings toward his mother for having an affair and ultimately deciding to leave the family.

“This permanent victimhood mentality is nonsense. *Fucking* nonsense,” Leonard barked as his son winced and almost dropped the bagel. “A victim is gender neutral. A victim can be anyone, anytime, anywhere. Feminists themselves admit this. This isn’t the age when people didn’t realize a man could be raped.”

Caleb slowly nodded.

“Do you think it hurts any less to have someone ram something into your asshole than it does your cunt—without consent?”

Caleb was stunned at his father’s language and could not follow his train of thought. It was as if he were no longer talking about his mother at all.

“I told your mother to go to hell, and she accused me of threatening her. *Threatening* her? Really? She threatens to break up my family. Threatens you and your sister with years of expensive therapy and trauma. Threatens us all with internal divisions when we used to be a team—an impenetrable fortress even. And why? So she can *fuck* a meathead? Some fitness freak, macho piece of shit who can’t count to ten without looking at a number line? I have a PhD!” He leaned toward the table, grabbed his coffee mug, and flung it at the far wall with all his might. It slammed into the window sill and seemed to break cleanly in half.

“I paid all the bills for ten years! I paid for this family on books, articles, TV appearances talking about how male dominance is ending and it’s a *good* thing! Now we’ll finally be equal and happy ...” his voice trailed off. He

grabbed his son, now terrified, roughly by the shoulder and looked him dead in the eye.

“It’s *not* a good thing, son,” he said.



## CHAPTER 12

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# ORIGINAL VIOLENCE

**John Chapin and Grace Coleman**

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Pioneer feminist Gloria Steinem refers to intimate partner violence as “original violence” (i.e., the first violence we are exposed to as human beings that sets the stage for the oppression that follows). Steinem furthers that domestic violence normalizes other forms of violence and aids in normalizing hierarchy. When most people think about intimate partner violence, or “domestic abuse,” they picture a middle-aged woman with children in a women’s shelter. In actuality, college-aged women are among the highest risk group. Working back from the middle-aged women in the shelter to the college-aged victim of rape, to the cyber bully of high school, to the playground bullies of middle school, paints a vivid picture of original violence. To understand why the bully bullies is to understand why the frat boy rapes and the husband batters. The children in the violent home witness the role model, and the cycle continues. This chapter explores what makes a bully and how this develops from middle school through college.

According to the National Coalition against Domestic Violence (NCADV, 2016), a woman is beaten every 9 seconds in the United States, a startling statistic for what some define as the freest country in the world. With nearly seven women being harmed every minute, intimate partner violence stands out as the leading cause of injury to females in the United States. The statistics on femicide in the United States become even more unnerving. A 2015 article in the *Huffington Post* (Chemaly, 2012) point-

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edly shared that the number of women killed by a current or former partner in the United States was nearly double the number of lives lost in Afghanistan and Iraq during the same 11-year time frame. Hudson et al. (2012) further this concept in their book, *Sex and World Peace*, documenting a statistically significant relationship between a state's peacefulness and the treatment of women within its borders. They concluded the best predictor of a state's peacefulness is how well its women are treated, not its level of wealth, its level of democracy, or its ethnoreligious identity. Democracies with higher levels of violence against women are as insecure and unstable as non-democracies. Little work has been done to draw the connection between the treatment of women and girls and a nation's inclination to engage in war. More thought should be given to the intersectionality of the overall security of our nation and the security of women and girls at home, in school, at places of work, and in the community at large.

Despite the staggering statistics, the vast majority of resources in many communities are dedicated to intervention efforts and not prevention efforts. Clearly, resources need to be invested in primary prevention measures with younger populations to address the institutionalization of violence, prior to the violence being normalized and thus internalized within our societal fabric. An examination of this internalized messaging presents itself long before its manifestation in college. Rather, it begins in elementary, middle, and high school. Its manifestation in primary educational structures is indicative of earlier exposure to violence in the home.

Bullying is defined as intentionally aggressive, usually repeated verbal, social, or physical behavior aimed at a specific person or group of people (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). Some bullying behaviors are criminal, such as harassment or hazing, but "bullying" alone is not illegal. College students (Whittaker & Kowalski, 2015) and adults (Misawa, 2015) also experience bullying on campus, at home, and on the job, but it begins in grade school; one in three U.S. students say they have been bullied at school, in classrooms (29%), in hallways or lockers (29%), in cafeterias (23%), during gym class (20%), and in restrooms (12%). Bullying is linked with skipping school, dropping out, suicide, and school shootings (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). Victimized youth are at increased risk for depression, anxiety, sleep difficulties, and poor school adjustment. Youth who bully others are at increased risk for substance use, academic problems, and violence later in adolescence and adulthood (CDC, 2015).

Much has been written on the effects of bullying, but why do bullies bully? A review of over 30 years of research suggests a range of thinking, from bullies lacking sophisticated social skills to lacking empathy for others. As with other forms of violence, bullies resort to coercive strategies to

dominate and control others. This same mechanism can be seen in the elementary school, the college campus, the boardroom, and the bedroom. Bullies are motivated to be visible, influential, and admired, and, indeed, are often perceived as more popular by peers. Bullies tend to have high/inflated perceptions of themselves (Juvonen & Graham, 2014). Even elementary school bullies overestimate their peer status, as well as academic and athletic abilities. This overestimation has been attributed to a number of perceptual biases, including hostile attributional bias, allowing themselves to discount the harm they inflict on others, because they perceive hostile intent or some kind of affront from bullied peers (Juvonen & Graham, 2014).

The current study attempts to shed light on bullies and victims by exploring the experiences and perceptions of self-disclosed bullies, using optimistic bias as a theoretical framework.

### **OPTIMISTIC BIAS**

In lay terms, optimistic bias (Weinstein, 1980) is the belief that bad things happen to other people. More than 30 years and over 100 published articles later, optimistic bias has been documented in a broad array of contexts: For instance, patients with heart disease believe they are more likely to survive than other heart patients (Ferrer et al., 2012); investors believe their stocks are less likely to crash (Ko & Moon, 2012); students with ADHD believe they are less likely to fail than other students with ADHD (Swanson, Owens, & Hinshaw, 2012).

In recent years, optimistic bias has been applied to violence and victims. A study of 600 adolescents found optimistic bias regarding dating violence. Adolescents believe they are less likely than peers to become victims (Chapin & Coleman, 2012). Similar results have been reported regarding campus assault (Mayhew, Caldwell, & Goldman, 2011), information security (Rhee, Ryu, & Kim, 2012), and sexual assault (Chapin & Pierce, 2012). Studies of optimistic bias measure risk perception (“Compared to other computer users, how likely is it that your data will be stolen?”). This study makes an important distinction by exploring the perception of oneself as the perpetrator, instead of as the victim.

Optimistic bias studies have routinely linked the perceptual bias with behavior: that is, heart patients who believe they are less likely to suffer future attacks are less likely to strictly adhere to dietary restrictions, and are thus more likely to experience future heart attacks (Ferrer et al., 2012). This study explores the behavioral component of the perceptual bias to bullying behavior.

## **Predicting Optimistic Bias**

### ***Knowledge***

Expertise, even perceived knowledge of a topic, has been consistently linked with optimistic bias (e.g., Chapin & Coleman, 2012; Sargeant, Majowicz, Sheth, & Edge, 2010; Sidebottom & Bowers, 2010). Only one of these studies related to violence. Optimistic bias regarding dating/relationship violence was predicted by higher scores on a pre-test measuring knowledge of IPV (Chapin & Coleman, 2012). All of the studies share a common conclusion: A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. The more people think they know about a topic, the more invulnerable they feel, and the less likely they will take appropriate precautions.

### ***Experience***

Unlike knowledge, once people experience negative consequences, their risk perception becomes more realistic. A study of people living in regions with frequent hurricane warnings exhibit optimistic bias, but once they have lived through an actual hurricane, their risk perception becomes more realistic and they are more likely to evacuate during the next storm warning (Trumbo, Luek, Marlatt, & Peek, 2011). Similar results have been reported in a number of contexts, including sexually transmitted diseases (Wolfers, de Zwart, & Kok, 2011), acute gastrointestinal illness (Sargeant et al., 2010), and H1N1 (Hilyard, Freimuth, Musa, Kumar, & Quinn, 2010).

### ***Demographics***

Results have been inconsistent about the impact of demographics on optimistic bias. Each study shows that the perceptual bias is more pronounced in one gender. One study found that men exhibit more optimistic bias than women regarding sexual assault (Chapin & Pierce, 2012), while another found no difference (Fontaine & Smith, 1995). Results have been similarly inconsistent regarding race (Doodoo & Hugman, 2012; Chu, Hsieh, & Tokars, 2011) and age (Chapin & Coleman, 2012; Gruhn & Smith, 2011).

Based on the preceding review of the literature, the following hypotheses are posited:

H1: Most participants believe they are less likely than peers to be bullied (optimistic bias).

H2: Most participants believe they are less likely than peers to bully others in the future.

H3: Perceived future bullying (of others) will increase as knowledge decreases.

H4: Perceived future bullying (of others) will increase as previous experience with bullying increases.

## METHOD

### Procedures and Participants

Participants were recruited through school-based programs about bullying offered by Crisis Center North, a domestic violence counseling and educational resource center near Pittsburgh, PA. Multiple school districts and universities participated. All measures were included in pencil and paper instruments, which were completed prior to the sessions to avoid skewing the data. Post-tests were collected to evaluate the effectiveness of the presenter/presentation but were not used for this analysis. Students could attend the presentation while opting out of the study, but none did so. Students could also choose not to answer individual items. The most commonly skipped items dealt with personal information (332 students did not respond to items asking about personal experience with bullying) and demographics (241 students did not disclose their race. Some students wrote in things like “Human,” “We’re all the same,” and “Why does it matter?” The sample ( $N = 1,742$ ) was 54% male, with an average age of 15.7 (range = 9 (middle school) to 21 (college)). These age ranges were selected because they coincide with reported cases of bullying and intimate partner violence. Consistent with the demographics of the region, 82% of the participants were Caucasian, 9% African American, 2% Hispanic, 2% Asian, and the remaining identified as mixed-race or “other.” Descriptive statistics for the sample are provided in Table 12.1.

### Materials

Risk perception was measured using a standard optimistic bias instrument (Weinstein, 1980): “Compared to other people my age in the United States, my chances of being bullied are...” Responses were on a Likert-type scale ( $-3 =$  Much less likely than others;  $3 =$  Much more likely than others). A negative mean indicates the presence of optimistic bias, the belief that oneself is less likely than others to become a victim. A mean above zero indicates a fearful (greater than average) perspective. This

**Table 12.1 Descriptive Statistics**

|   | <i>Overall Sample</i>                                   | <i>Bullies</i>  |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Gender</b>                                   |   |   |
| M   | 877 (54%)   | 35 (78%)  |
| F   | 754 (46%)   | 10 (22%)  |
| <b>Race</b>                                     |   |   |
| White   | 1,237 (82.4%)   | 21 (52%)  |
| Black   | 134 (8.9%)  | 8 (20%)   |
| Mixed/Other                                     | 84 (5.6%)   | 7 (18%)   |
| Asian   | 24 (1.6%)   | 2 (5%)  |
| Hispanic  | 22 (1.5%)   | 2 (5%)  |
| <b>Age</b>                                      | <i>Mean</i> = 15.7; <i>SD</i> = 2.2;<br>Range = 9 to 21 | <i>Mean</i> = 16.7;<br><i>SD</i> = 2.4;<br>Range = 10 to 20 |
| <b>Experience (self-reported victimization)</b> |   |   |
| Verbal  | 755 (62.4%)*  | 99 (46%)  |
| Physical  | 472 (38.4%)*  | 50 (100%)   |
| Social  | 464 (37.1%)*  | 10 (20%)  |

*Note:* Totals and percentages may not match, because some participants chose not to answer items. Race and experience with bullying were the most commonly skipped items.

instrument was adapted to measure the likelihood of future bullying, labeled “Intent to Bully” in Table 12.2: “Compared to other people my age in the United States, my chances of bullying others are...” (Uses the same scale described above).

Experience with bullying was measured with three items reflecting the HHS (2013) definitions of bullying:

Bullying can be verbal (teasing, name calling, inappropriate comments, taunting, threats to cause harm); physical (hitting, kicking, pinching, spitting, tripping, pushing, taking or breaking someone’s things); or social (in person or online; leaving someone out on purpose, spreading rumors, public embarrassment).

Participants checked boxes for each type of bullying, indicating (0) it had never happened; (1) it had happened to them; or (2) they had done it to others. These were used as categorical variables for much of the analysis, but were also summed to create a measure of bullying experience, labeled “Bully Victim” in Table 12.3.

Knowledge of community resources was measured with five True/False items about resources for bullying victims specific to the community: “Court protections available to adults are not available for minors.” “The

**Table 12.2. Zero-Order Correlations  
Among Variables Related to Intended Bullying**

|                        | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5      | 6      |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| 1. Intent to bully     | .33** | .18** | .17** | -.11** | -.07*  |
| 2. Perceived risk (OB) | —     | -.06* | .18** | -.07*  | .07*   |
| 3. Age                 |       | —     | .14** | -.06*  | -.17** |
| 4. Bully victim        |       |       | —     | -.04   | -.04   |
| 5. Knowledge           |       |       |       | —      | -.01   |
| 6. TV reality          |       |       |       |        | —      |

Note: \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

**Table 12.3. Summary of Linear Regression Analysis  
for Variables Related to Intended Bullying**

| Predictor           | B    | Adj. $R^2 = .11$<br>$N = 178$ |         |
|---------------------|------|-------------------------------|---------|
|                     |      | SE B                          | B       |
| Perceived Risk (ob) | .34  | .03                           | .37***  |
| Age                 | .15  | .01                           | .19***  |
| Bully victim        | .12  | .01                           | .11**   |
| Knowledge           | -.09 | .08                           | -.09*** |
| TV reality          | -.17 | .07                           | -.09**  |

Note: \*\*\* $p < .001$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

hotline and other services are limited to victims of violence.” “Minors need parental permission to call the hotline.” These items were created for this specific program by the advocates offering the programs. Items were scored as correct or incorrect, resulting in a scale ranging from 0 to 5.

Participants were also asked to provide their gender, age, and race. These items were left open-ended, so as not to confine how the adolescents defined themselves.

## RESULTS

Table 12.1 displays the descriptive statistics for the sample. While a number of participants chose not to disclose their personal experience with bullying, there were no significant differences in those who disclosed and those who did not in terms of demographics or intent to bully.

Optimistic bias is demonstrated by a negative mean. A single-sample T-test was used to test the hypothesis. As predicted in H1, most participants believed they were less likely than peers to be bullied ( $M = -.8$ ,  $SD = 1.7$ ),  $t(1104) = -16.7$ ,  $p < .000$ . Over half of the sample (53.8%) believed they were less likely than others to become victims. Around one fifth (19.9%) believed they were at greater risk than peers. H1 was supported. The finding is consistent with the literature.

H2 predicted that most participants would also believe they are less likely to bully others in the future. Again, a single-sample T-test shows support for the hypothesis ( $M = -1.8$ ,  $SD = 1.5$ ),  $t(1080) = -39.4$ ,  $p < .000$ . The difference was even more pronounced, with the majority of adolescents (77.2%) believing they were unlikely to bully others and only 8.6% saying they were likely to bully in the future. Participants who acknowledge physically bullying others in the past were more frequently male (78%), White (52%), and 1 year older than victims. H2 was supported.

H3 predicted perceived future bullying (labeled "Intent to Bully" in Table 12.2) would increase as knowledge of community resources for victims decreased. Participants averaged a 77% on the knowledge measure, indicating some knowledge of community resources (including the center offering the training). Most participants scored near the mean, with less than 1% getting a zero and less than 2% getting all five questions correct. Tables 12.2 and 12.3 show knowledge is a relatively weak, but significant, predictor of intention to bully. H3 is supported.

H4 predicted that future bullying would increase as previous experience with bullying (victimization) increased. Experience with the three types of bullying (Table 12.4) is consistent with previous findings. It is interesting to note that adolescents who bully are less likely to experience verbal or social bullying, but 100% of bullies report being physically bullied in the past. Table 12.2 shows significant differences between victims, bullies, and those with no experience. Victims are less optimistic about avoiding future attacks, less likely to believe media depictions of teen bullying are realistic, and younger than bullies. Regression analysis shows prior victimization to be a relatively strong predictor of intention to bully in the future. The strongest predictor is risk perception. If students believe they are likely to be victimized in the future, they also believe they are likely to offend. H4 is supported.

## DISCUSSION

The CDC (2015) suggests a four-step approach to address bullying: (1) Define and monitor the problem; (2) Identify risk and protective factors.

**Table 12.4. Experience With Bullying by Predictors (Continuous Variables)**

|                               | <i>Optimistic Bias</i> | <i>Age</i>  | <i>Knowledge</i> | <i>TV real</i> |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|------------------|----------------|
| Experienced verbal bullying   |                        |             |                  |                |
| No experience (418)           | -1.2 (1.6)*            | 12.5 (2.0)* | 3.8 (.7)         | 2.0 (.7)       |
| Victim (480)                  | -.4 (1.7)*             | 12.8 (2.1)* | 3.8 (.7)         | 2.1 (.7)*      |
| Bully (46)                    | -1.1 (1.7)*            | 14.3 (2.6)* | 3.6 (.9)         | 1.8 (.7)*      |
| Experienced physical bullying |                        |             |                  |                |
| No experience (661)           | -1.1 (1.6)*            | 13.1 (2.2)* | 3.8 (.7)         | 2.0 (.7)       |
| Victim (299)                  | -.3 (1.8)*             | 12.3 (2.0)* | 3.8 (.6)         | 2.1 (.7)       |
| Bully (48)                    | -1.3 (1.7)*            | 13.7 (2.4)* | 3.6 (.9)         | 2.0 (.7)       |
| Experienced social bullying   |                        |             |                  |                |
| No experience (674)           | -1.1 (1.6)*            | 12.7 (2.2)  | 3.8 (.6)         | 2.0 (.7)*      |
| Victim (359)                  | -.3 (1.7)*             | 12.9 (2.1)* | 3.8 (.7)*        | 2.2 (.7)*      |
| Bully (29)                    | -1.2 (1.4)*            | 14.0 (2.1)* | 3.3 (.6)*        | 2.0 (.6)*      |

Note: \*T-test,  $p > .05$ .

It is not enough to know that bullying is affecting a certain group of people in a certain area. It is important to ask why; (3) Develop and test prevention strategies using information gathered in research; (4) Ensure widespread adoption. The current study addresses the first two steps, and suggests strategies for step three.

The purpose of the study was to shed light on the impact of original violence from grade school through college by exploring the experiences and perceptions of self-disclosed bullies, using optimistic bias as a theoretical framework. To understand why bullies bully is to understand why college students rape and why adults abuse their partners and children. Findings suggest bullies' perceived risk perception (optimistic bias) and past experience are strong predictors of future bullying. People who have been physically bullied in the past or believe they are in danger of being bullied in the future are the most likely to be violent with others in the future. Despite having personal experience with bullying, most students (middle school, high school, and college) exhibit optimistic bias, believing they are less likely than others to be victims. Because skewed risk perception is strongly linked with failure to take precautions, this has serious ramifications for prevention education strategies. First, at-risk students should be identified for intervention, in particular, males with a history of victimization, since past bullying predicts future violence. All students

should participate in prevention education programming designed to help students accurately identify potential risks, raise awareness of community resources, and encourage students to take precautions. This could include taking threats seriously, reporting threats of violence to school officials, and minimizing risks through social media use. Many communities have women's centers and advocacy groups willing to provide these services at no cost to the districts.

The study identified a sub-set of students (around 5%) who acknowledge bullying in the past and say they will probably continue bullying in the future. The findings begin to paint a portrait of the adolescent bully according to gender (male), age (older), race (Black students accounted for 9% of the sample, but 20% of the bullies; all of the minority groups had higher rates of bullying in largely White districts), and experience (100% of the bullies had been physically bullied in the past). The patterns were not the same across the other two forms of bullying (verbal and social). Future research should further explore all three types of bullying and include additional predictors (self-esteem, self-confidence, socioeconomic status, etc.). The field's ability to identify bullying as a part of the continuum of violence extending from the cradle to the grave, may lead to more holistic measures in addressing the impact that domestic violence or original violence has on our society at large.

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## CHAPTER 13

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# CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION PROGRAMS

## The Importance of Including Faculty

Laura Finley

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Campus sexual assault has been a topic of much media and public attention in the 2010s. Sparked by allegations that campuses are inadequately investigating allegations and failing to provide ample assistance and safety for survivors, the Department of Education has issued guidelines for campuses to both respond to and prevent sexual assault. Failure to comply with these mandates from Title IX can result in a removal of federal funds.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 requires colleges and universities to take measures to ensure gender equality. A significant part of that mandate is to address sexual discrimination and sexual assault, both of which disproportionately impact females. In April 2011, the Department of Education issued guidelines for campuses regarding how to adhere to the Title IX requirements. It emphasized the need to provide clear definitions of sexual discrimination and violence, to publish a policy announcing zero tolerance for sexual assault, and mandated the creation of and protocol for disseminating procedures regarding how and where students file complaints. It also requires that campuses appoint a Title IX Coordinator to oversee these activities and to review complaints that are

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reported (AAUW Issues: Title IX, n.d.). The Department of Education expanded its guidance to campuses in 2013, when it reiterated that federal civil rights laws, including Title IX, prohibit colleges and universities from retaliating against students who file complaints about possible civil rights problems on campus, including sexual assault.

One year later, the White House issued its “Not Alone” report, which elaborated on the legal requirements for handling sexual assault cases. It also provided an overview of best practices for initiating or expanding prevention programs. The report noted the importance of investigating sexual assault complaints and developing comprehensive policies that can both hold perpetrators accountable and protect victim’s rights. These are the initial charge of the Title IX Coordinator, but a team of people from across campus should be involved. The White House also called on campuses to provide interim resources to victims while investigations are under way. This includes resources available both on and off campus. Further, the report called on campuses to provide trauma-informed training for school officials and to conduct a campus climate survey by 2016. The purpose of the survey is to assess the scope and extent of sexual discrimination and violence on campus and to identify needs specific to the college or university that should shape its policies, procedures, and programs.

A part of the Violence against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 that President Obama signed called the Campus Sexual Violence Act requires sexual violence prevention education and training for all incoming college students, faculty, and staff. Finally, the White House directed all campuses to develop prevention programs that raise awareness, engage men as allies, and promote positive bystander intervention.

Although the White House generally acknowledged the importance of including all key stakeholders, including faculty members, campuses throughout the country have primarily assigned the creation of policies, procedures and prevention programs to student affairs professionals. After presenting a review of the literature related to the scope and extent of sexual assault and factors that affect victim reporting, this chapter highlights how faculty have been an under-utilized resource. In doing so, we draw on research as well as our own experiences. We conclude the chapter with recommendations for greater involvement of faculty in sexual assault prevention.

## **CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT**

Rape is one of the most frequent violent crimes occurring across the globe. According to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, a sexual assault occurs every 107 seconds in the United States (Statistics, n.d.). A study from 2000 found 35 incidents per year for every 1,000

women attending a college or university (Daigle, Fisher, & Cullen, 2009). A 2007 study by the U.S Department of Justice found that 20% of female college students have been victims of attempted or actual sexual assaults, while 1 in 16 college men report an actual or attempted rape (Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher & Martin, 2007). Fedina, Holmes, and Backes (2016) reviewed 34 studies on the prevalence of rape on college campuses that were published between January 2000 and February 2015. Although some were difficult to compare due to difference definitions and methodologies, they found that rates of unwanted sexual contact (not necessarily rape) were the highest. Further, they noted that most studies focus on White, heterosexual female students attending 4 year colleges, so victimization experienced by males, people of color, and LGBT individuals and those at other types of institutions is likely dramatically underestimated.

Compared with cisgender undergraduates, existing research shows that transgender students are more likely to be victimized, while gay, lesbian and bisexual undergraduates are more at-risk than are heterosexual undergraduates (Cantor et al., 2015; Coulter & Rankin, 2017).

Research has identified other risk factors. Krebs et al. (2007) found that freshman and sophomores were at greater risk than juniors and seniors. The highest risk time is the first three months of the first year of college (Dawisha, 2016). Mohler-Kuo et al. (2004) found that women in sororities were three times more likely to be raped as were non-sorority members, and women living in dormitories or residence halls were 1.4 times likely to be raped than were women living off campus. Research also shows that college women with a history of experiencing sexual assault are at greater risk (Classen, Palesh, & Aggarwal, 2005; Desai, Arias, Thompson, & Basile, 2002).

Studies have also shed light on rape perpetrators. Lisak and Miller (2002) found that just 4% of men perpetrate 90% of campus rapes. Certain groups are over-represented in rape accusations, in particular collegiate athletes and fraternity members. One reason for this over-representation is that these organizations often denigrate women and bond around sexually misogynistic and hypermasculine ideologies (Hayes, Abbott, & Cook, 2016).

Less understood than individual risk factors are the institutional factors that make rape more or less likely on a particular campus, as well as those that affect reporting of incidents.

### **INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS RELATED TO RAPE**

The few studies that have examined institutional factors have found that campuses with higher drinking rates, and in particular binge drinking,

have higher rates of rape (Mohler-Kuo et al., 2004). Location in an urban area (Mohler-Kuo et al., 2004; Sloan, 1992), lower campus selectivity and cost (Sloan, 1992), a lower ratio of full-time security staff to students (Sloan, 1992), higher rates of students living on campus (Stotzer & MacCartney, 2016) greater presence of athletics on campus (Stotzer & MacCartney, 2016) and location in the North Central or Southern regions of the United States (Mohler-Kuo et al., 2004) are all predictive of higher rape rates. Traditional efforts such as fenced boundaries, escort services during evening hours, and increased police or security presence on campus, have not been found to reduce sexual assault rates (Cass, 2007), perhaps because they generally place the ownership on victims not to be victimized rather than change the culture on campus (Finley, 2015).

Sexual assault rates appear to be slightly lower at small, private universities, although these data are less available than from larger state colleges as many private universities do not have to report incidents in the same fashion (Culp-Ressler, 2014). One study conducted by the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium of 54 small colleges found that 7.5% of student respondents reported being sexually assaulted. Just 3.2% reported the assault to police, and one in eight told no one (Kingkade, 2015b). There remains a need, however, for researchers to better understand institutional factors that may influence the frequency of sexual assaults on campus (Dowdall & Wechsler, 2002; Sanday, 1996).

### **CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT REPORTING**

Reporting of sexual assault is low in general, with 68% of rapes never reported to authorities (Reporting rates, n.d.). On campuses, reporting rates are even lower, with some studies showing that less than 5% of campus sexual assaults are reported to authorities (Krebs et al., 2007). An analysis of sexual assault rates between 1995 and 2013 found only 20% of students ages 18 to 24 reported their rape to law enforcement, compared to 32% of the non-student population of the same age (Sinozich & Langton, 2014). Victims have identified many barriers to reporting, including but not limited to fear of retaliation, concern that the report will not be confidential, stigma about victimization, lack of trust that justice will be fairly served, and inadequate university policies (Lombardi, 2009; Sable, Danis, Mauzy, & Gallagher, 2006; Sinozich & Langton, 2014). Two-thirds of victims who do tell someone about the assault share their story with a friend (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). Following friends, the next most frequent group to which victims confide is faculty, putting professors at the front line of campus sexual assault response and prevention efforts.

One of the reasons that victims do not report sexual assault is that they do not feel supported by school officials (Stratford, 2014). Students have suffered retaliation from students or administrators when they reported sexual assault, or are asked questions that seem to attribute blame to them for the incidents. Other survivors report being forced to remain in classes with assailants and/or being discouraged by administrators from pursuing campus actions or police investigations. Faculty members who have supported survivors have sometimes faced retaliation as well, including changes in job assignment or work load, denial of tenure, and even termination. Smith and Freyd (2014) referred to this as institutional betrayal. Elements of institutional betrayal include when the institution has not taken steps to prevent the victimization, when it has created an environment that tolerates violence, if it makes it challenging to report sexual assault or receive services, if it covers up the allegations or discourages victims from pursuing justice, or when it delays the provision of helpful resources (Smith & Freyd, 2014). Several studies have found that those who felt that an institution either did not adequately protect them from assault or responded insensitively after the assault had higher levels of anxiety and trauma symptoms (Carr et al., 2010; Smith & Freyd, 2014). Essentially, this was a form of secondary victimization.

Institutional betrayal in regards to rape should not be surprising, given the prevalence of rape cultures on campus. According to Faculty Against Rape (FAR), a rape culture is a social order in which “rape is common and normalized by societal attitudes and practices.” When institutions deny the frequency of rape, minimize the harm it causes, blame victims, fail to hold assailants accountable, and do not implement effective prevention programs, they are allowing the campus to be a rape culture. Sanday (1996) was perhaps the first to write about rape cultures, as she noted the over-representation of fraternity members and certain male athletes as assailants and described how campuses were doing little to curtail their hyper-masculine, misogynistic bonding that set the stage for sexual discrimination and assault. As of May 2017, the Department of Education was engaged in 333 investigations related to inadequate institutional response to sexual assault complaints, and 62 cases had been closed (Title IX: Tracking Sexual Assault Investigations, 2017).

## **MANDATORY REPORTING**

Some campuses are interpreting the law to require that all faculty members be mandatory reporters of sexual assault (Flaherty, 2015). They assert that this interpretation will make them compliant with Title IX and the White House recommendations, and believe that mandatory reporting will result in better tracking of incidents and improved responses. Fur-

ther, they propose that faculty can help lead students to the care of competent professionals, but only if they are required to report incidents (Deamicis, 2013). What precisely is required of whom varies; some universities mandate that victims disclose to law enforcement, whereas some require reporting only to the institution's Title IX office (Engle, 2015). Some states have enacted laws specifying mandatory reporting of sexual offenses by various campus personnel, while others have proposed such laws (Mancini, Pickett, Call, McDougle, Brubaker, & Brownstein, 2017).

Advocates note multiple problems with mandatory reporting for faculty. Opponents contend that mandatory report laws and policies may actually reduce reporting, as they argue that students are far less comfortable reporting to people who they deem "official," rather than those they see as merely supportive (Campbell, Wasco, Ahrens, Sefl, & Barnes, 2001). Opponents of mandatory reporting also assert that such requirements might have a chilling effect on communications with students (American Association of University Professors (AAUP), 2013). As the leading organization for college professors, AAUP recommends that faculty only be considered mandatory reporters when they are in a legally mandated reporter role, such as a study-abroad advisor.

Critics also contend that mandatory reporting requirements for faculty discourage and disempower survivors. They are paternalistic in the sense that they remove the survivor's right to choose his or her own course of action following a sexual assault (Portnoy & Anderson, 2015). Studies seem to support this notion, as research has found that efforts to control the decisions of rape victims after they revealed an assault were associated with increased symptoms of post-traumatic stress, suggesting that mandatory reports may be revictimizing (Campbell, 2008; Campbell et al., 2001; Kingkaid, 2015a). Further, the Campus Sexual Assault Study indicated that when students know they can talk to someone confidentially, they are more likely to report incidents (Krebs et al., 2007). This is supportive of allowing more, not less, people to be exempted from mandatory reporting laws.

It is clear that, despite the attention to this issue, many campuses remain ill-equipped to adequately address sexual assault and, even more, to craft effective prevention programs. Many campuses still lack clear policies, fail to create appropriate services for victims, and provide minimal curricula or programming. Although there has been a clear mandate to provide training to students, faculty and staff for several years, a 2014 study reported that 31% of colleges did not provide training to students about sexual assault, and one in five did not offer such training to faculty and staff members. Senator Claire McCaskill's office surveyed 440 colleges and universities and found that approximately 10% of schools surveyed did not have a Title IX coordinator as required, 20% offered no

training to faculty or staff, and 30% offered no training to students. The same study found that only 43% of reporting campuses said they had a campus victim advocate, and only 34% said they had a victim assistance office on campus (Stratford, 2014). A 2014 audit of California colleges and universities found that 22% of the more than 200 students surveyed reported they weren't aware of on-campus resources for sexual assault (Taylor, 2014). In another study in 2014, the organization SAFER conducted three listening forums on campuses. They asked students to assign their campuses a letter grade in terms of how they address sexual assault. Most gave their schools Cs or Ds, although the number of Fs far outweighed the number of As and Bs, combined. Students were upset that students had little input about campus policies and programs and expressed that their campuses dissuaded student activism on these issues. They also felt that faculty, staff and students need better training on these issues.

Although all of the literature cited in this chapter so far makes clear that a robust campus sexual assault prevention program must include faculty members for a variety of reasons and in various ways, many do not (Dawisha, 2016). This means that institutions of higher education may unwittingly be contributing to rape culture because they are marginalizing certain voices and minimizing important contributions.

### **WHY AND HOW FACULTY ARE MARGINALIZED IN CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION PROGRAMS**

Following White House guidelines, many campuses have established sexual assault task forces and other committees to create and implement appropriate policies, procedures and prevention programs. While ideally these groups would include students, faculty, staff, community members, service providers and law enforcement, among others, one of the groups that is rarely invited to participate is faculty members. This may not be out of ill-intent; rather, it is likely in large part due to a historic divide on many campuses between academics and student life (Dungy, 2011). On most campuses today, officials in student affairs or legal affairs are tasked with coordinating Title IX efforts, and most Title IX Coordinators are not faculty members. While surely these individuals have good intentions, Moylan (2016) found that campus sexual assault advocates were concerned that many people employed in those positions have little training specific to sexual assault. The advocates that were interviewed cautioned that the emphasis on compliance ignores a trauma-informed approach to working with survivors, and worried that their institutions were most concerned about doing what was required, rather than what might be most

effective. Including knowledgeable faculty members could help assuage this concern and might result in more thoughtful and strategic approaches. My experience, for instance, was that I learned about the sexual assault task force from a friend but, despite having decades of experience in this area, had not been informed by the coordinators nor invited to participate.

Another limitation of the student affairs-directed approach is that universities often place huge burdens on these personnel, with limited funding, making it not only stressful but difficult to achieve all that is required. Faculty also face increased workloads and reduced resources, yet when budgets and personnel are stretched thin, cross-disciplinary and inter-departmental pooling of resources and talents is the most effective approach. Instead of reaching out, however, my experience has been that doors close and tensions build, to the detriment of students in general and survivors specifically.

I have long been concerned that colleges and universities, mine included, pay for speakers or workshop leaders so they can say they used their budget for programming, rather than because it is the most effective means of preventing sexual assault. I have offered multiple times to provide training and workshops, and only one individual ever took me up on that offer. I later learned that she was critiqued for doing so, although why was never made clear to me. Her position has since been eliminated, although I imagine that was related to budgets, not her decision to ask me to provide a workshop.

Problematically, I have also observed that some outside speakers who have presented about sexual assault on our campus have not been particularly well-versed on the subject. For instance, I have heard several deeply inappropriate comments regarding women's so-called responsibility to prevent rape by not drinking too much. Another presenter listed what women can do in order "not to be raped," but when asked by an audience member why she did not mention anything to change the behavior of perpetrators, she had no response. After approaching her supervision, I was informed that her messages were appropriate, which I find terrifically bothersome. Campus sexual assault prevention efforts must never overtly or subtly blame victims, and if they are truly intended to dissuade perpetrators, they must address the behavior of men, rape cultures, and bystanders.

I have also been bothered by the fact that many of my students have never heard anything, or only learned a little, about sexual assault. Some students recall receiving some information at orientation, while others do not recall it or never received it. This only highlights to me the important role that faculty can play, and reassures me that involving faculty mem-

bers in campus sexual assault prevention efforts will make them robust and effective.

Many students have expressed to me that their biggest fear in terms of reporting sexual assault is lack of confidentiality. Most who have reported it on our campus have felt positive about the way the university handled it, but clearly many others do not report due to their concerns. Our campus is very small, and students believe that someone will see them walking into the offices of the Title IX coordinator or counselors, which are located in the heart of the student union building. Further, they fear that word will inevitably leak due to the tight-knit campus climate, and that consequently they will suffer repercussions. If student affairs personnel worked with faculty and students, we might be better able to locate and inform students about our services for survivors and about confidentiality.

There have been numerous discussions and debates on my campus regarding whether faculty members are required to be mandatory reporters. Student Affairs personnel have generally said that Title IX requires it, while others like myself clearly disagree. Our Faculty Senate Ethics Committee has been collaborating with our Title IX Coordinator about this, but while I asked to be included and sent along some information for consideration, I have never been invited to participate in these conversations outside of forums I have helped to organize.

Although students at my campus have generally felt that the sexual assault cases that have been reported have been handled fairly (both survivors and perpetrators), I and many other academics and advocates recommend that we shift the focus from punishment for rapists, as it often prevents healing for survivors and limits the opportunities for real accountability (Levenson & Ackerman, 2016). Universities can play a role in innovative sanctioning. One such approach, albeit not without concerns, is restorative justice. In contrast to the criminal justice or retributive approach, restorative justice includes the voices of survivors and allows the parties to come to some agreeable resolution. While restorative justice makes clear that sexual assault will not be tolerated, the ability to listen to one another and to devise appropriate sanctions can help both hold offenders accountable and allow victims to heal (Levenson & Ackerman, 2016). Again, restorative justice for sexual assault cases is still controversial, so by no means am I advocating that it be immediately adopted everywhere. What I am arguing, however, is that faculty members with backgrounds in sociology, criminology, psychology, gender studies, social work and other disciplines can offer important information about the pros and cons of a restorative approach to campus sexual assault.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FACULTY INVOLVEMENT IN CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE**

The first step in ensuring greater involvement of faculty and staff in campus sexual assault prevention is ensuring that all are adequately trained. As noted earlier in this chapter, such training is also required by federal law and recommended by the White House. Training should address the scope and extent of the problem of sexual assault, as well as risk and protective factors, reporting requirements, and how to support survivors. Further, faculty members must be made aware of university policies and procedures, along with campus resources and those in the community.

Not only do I argue that faculty members need to be included in campus sexual assault task forces, but I believe that efforts should be made to include members from outside of the traditional disciplinary areas that study and teach about these issues. This would help ensure the most diverse voices and viewpoints as well as the broadest dissemination of information to students.

Prevention and intervention strategies must start with a detailed assessment of the specific needs of the particular campus, which is recommended by the White House because campuses vary in regards to their demographics, histories, and culture (Fedina, Holmes, & Backes, 2016). Further, the White House and many other studies recommend that campuses include bystander training programs, in particular those that help to dispel myths about rape (Katz & Moore, 2013).

Faculty members tend to be skilled in creating surveys and using other research methodologies. As such, they are ideally suited to assist with the development, implementation, and evaluation of the climate studies required by the White House. Once the results are understood and disseminated, faculty members can help brainstorm possible programs and policies. As educators, faculty members can also be utilized to create and deliver educational programs for students, staff, and their academic colleagues.

Importantly, knowledgeable faculty members can help ensure that campus programming addresses victim blaming, both subtle and overt. Faculty members' expertise can help make sure that the needs of particularly vulnerable groups are addressed, and that programs emphasize the groups that are over-represented as assailants (Katz & Moore, 2013).

Faculty members should also be a critical part of the dialogue related to interpretations of federal law and mandatory reporting. Since they know, and sometimes even work in private practice or other advocacy with survivors, faculty members can share their knowledge related to the ways in which mandatory reporting can be retraumatizing.

Some campuses are helping to engage faculty by requiring them to provide information about sexual assault in their course syllabi, including language emphasizing the Title IX requirements and identifying the primary campus resources for sexual assault. Providing a list of national organizations and local off-campus resources is recommended as well, given that many campuses may be limited in the services they can provide (Dawisha, 2016). Further, a statement in a syllabus can help hold perpetrators accountable and prevent assaults. Bachman, Paternoster, and Ward (1992) found that the perceived threat of an institutional sanction, such as being arrested or expelled from a university, had a significant deterrent effect. FAR provides a template for inclusion of these items in course syllabi.

In conclusion, federal laws and White House guidelines clearly show that faculty members can and should play a significant role in campus sexual assault prevention. Until they do, I fear that responses to sexual assault reports and prevention initiatives will not be tremendously effective. That outcome is unacceptable.

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# CONCLUSION

Laura Finley

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The challenges for peace educators are many and varied. But, committed educators can and will continue to integrate gender, sexuality, gender identity, and gender-based violence into their peace education curricula and praxis. In this short chapter, I highlight some of the most significant challenges that have been identified in this book and in other literature, as well as recommendations for future research and practice. If this book made nothing else clear, it should be obvious that much more work is required to advance peace education such that it is inclusive of all persons.

Although not directly related to gender, sexual orientation or peace education, the neoliberal emphasis of higher education is a broader issue that underlies many others. Such an approach sees college as a business and students as commodities, and it makes reaching students emotionally, breaking down their biases, and inspiring them civically very challenging. As Giroux (2014) explains,

today's youth have been immersed since birth in relentless, spreading neoliberal pedagogical apparatus with its celebration of an unbridled individualism and its near pathological disdain for community, public values, and the public good. They have been inundated by a market-driven value system that encourages a culture of competitiveness and produces a theater of cruelty, all of which weakens their ability to see and act politically. (p. 72)

This focus on students as consumers and employment as the ultimate goal of the college experience is antithetical to peace education.

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Another challenge is continuing to diversify the field of peace studies and other relevant fields that address such issues. These fields tend to be male-dominated, and as such may be less equipped to address gender and sexual orientation. Educators who identify as LGBTQ still suffer from discrimination, as do female professors, which clearly inhibits the mainstreaming of such topics into peace education or other courses. Further, while several chapters in this volume identify the unique issues related to intersectional identities, far more theorizing and action is necessary.

As has been noted in many chapters in this volume, the most effective peace education programs are interdisciplinary, and an interdisciplinary approach is best-suited to address gender and sexual orientation.

Although I am proud that this volume is eclectic, it still highlights the problem that most of the work on gender, sexuality and peace education comes out of the humanities and social sciences Concannon and Finley (2015).

Peace educators must utilize multiple methods to reach students. The chapters in this book highlight many creative instructional methods, both inside classrooms, on campuses more widely, and in the community. From innovative projects to problem-posing seminars to service-learning and more, peace educators can and should share ideas and gain inspiration from a variety of sources as they develop the best techniques to reach their students.

Additionally, campuses must ensure that they not only allow but encourage free expression and an extensive exchange of ideas. This is true both in the classroom and outside of it. As Tyler (Ellora) LaCarruba's chapter illustrates, there are various ways to ensure that campuses are places that are safe for exploring controversial and sometimes unsettling ideas. As Concannon and Finley (2015) wrote,

Reducing the bureaucratic constraints that unnecessarily stifle creative activism should be an important component of peace and social justice education on campuses. Faculty and students can raise their voices about unnecessary or exceedingly cumbersome procedures, inappropriate curtailing of free speech, and repressive of academic freedoms. (p. 283)

In sum, I hope that the entries in this volume, along with the Appendix of additional resources, provide a useful tool for professors in a variety of disciplines, for administrators seeking to support peace and social justice on their campuses, and for interested students. While there is already some fantastic scholarly work, the time has definitely come for greater acknowledgment of issues related to gender and sexual orientation in peace education.

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# APPENDIX

## Recommended Resources

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### BOOKS

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- Stefatos, K., & Sanford, V. *Gender violence in peace and war: States of complicity*. Rutgers University Press.

## JOURNALS

- *Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law Journal of Conflict Resolution*
- *Community Development Journal*
- *Conflict and Communication Online*
- *Conflict Management and Peace Science*
- *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*
- *Conflict, Security and Development*
- *Contemporary Justice Review*
- *Cooperation and Conflict*
- *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*
- *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*
- *Feminist Studies*
- *Gender & Society*
- *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies*

- *IAMURE: International Journal of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies*
- *In Factis Pax*
- *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*
- *International Journal of Conflict Management*
- *International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies*
- *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*
- *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies*
- *International Journal of Peace Studies*
- *International Journal on World Peace*
- *Journal for Peace and Justice Studies*
- *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*
- *The Journal of Conflict Studies*
- *Journal of Gender Studies*
- *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*
- *Journal of Peace Education*
- *Journal of Peace Research*
- *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*
- *Men and Masculinities*
- *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism*
- *Peace and Change*
- *Peace and Conflict: The Journal of Peace Psychology*
- *Peace and Conflict Studies*
- *Peace Research: The Canadian Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*
- *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice*
- *Peace Studies Journal*
- *Race and Justice: An International Journal*
- *Social Alternatives*
- *Violence Against Women: An International and Interdisciplinary Journal*
- *The Voice: A Journal of the Battered Women's Movement*
- *Women's Studies Quarterly*

### **NEWS SOURCES RELATED TO GENDER**

- *Bitch Media*: <https://bitchmedia.org/>
- *Chicano Por Miza*: [www.chicanopormiza.org](http://www.chicanopormiza.org)
- *Everyday Feminism*: <http://everydayfeminism.com/>

- *The Feminist Wire*: <http://www.thefeministwire.com/>
- *Feministing*: <http://feministing.com/>
- *Huffington Post Gender Issues*: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/gender-issues/>
- *Jezebel*: <http://jezebel.com/>
- *Makers*: [www.makers.com](http://www.makers.com)
- *Ms. Magazine*: [www.msmagazine.com](http://www.msmagazine.com)
- *Women's Enews*: <http://womensenews.org/>

### **ORGANIZATIONS FOCUSING ON GENDER EQUALITY AND RELEVANT ISSUES**

- *American Association of University Women*: [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org)  
Promotes gender equality in the workplace and an end to sexual harassment.
- *American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)*: [www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)  
Advocating for civil rights broadly.
- *Amnesty International USA*: [www.amnestyusa.org](http://www.amnestyusa.org)  
Human rights group includes work on violence against women.
- *Amy Poehler's Smart Girls*: <http://amysmartgirls.com>  
Helps nurture young girls and women in finding their authentic selves.
- *Audre Lord Project*: <http://alp.org>  
Organization for LGBTQ and gender non-conforming people of color.
- *Center for Media Literacy*: [www.medialit.org](http://www.medialit.org)  
Provides education and professional development related to media literacy.
- *Code Pink For Peace*: [www.codepink4peace.org](http://www.codepink4peace.org)  
Female-led initiative to stop war and promote peace.
- *College Brides Walk*: [www.collegebrideswalk.org](http://www.collegebrideswalk.org)  
Coordinates annual walk and educational programs to raise awareness and end abuse.

- *Crunk Feminist Collective*: <http://www.crunkfeministcollective.com/>  
Provides support for hip hop feminists of color.
- *Do Something*: [www.dosomething.org](http://www.dosomething.org)  
Teen-focused website providing information and support to empower young people to be agents of change.
- *End Rape on Campus*: <http://endrapeoncampus.org/>  
Works to end campus rape by engaging in political advocacy, supporting survivors, and encouraging prevention initiatives.
- *Equality Now*: <http://www.equalitynow.org/>  
Promotes full civil and human rights for women and girls.
- *The Feminist Majority and the Feminist Majority Foundation*: [www.feminist.org](http://www.feminist.org)  
Promotes gender equality.
- *Futures Without Violence*: [www.futureswithoutviolence.org](http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org)  
Wealth of information and resources related to abuse.
- *Girls for Gender Equity*: <http://www.ggenyc.org/>  
Intergenerational organization promoting the full development of women and girls.
- *Girls Inc*: <http://www.girlsinc.org/>  
Inspiring girls to be bright, smart and bold.
- *GLAAD*: [www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org)  
LGVTQ organization that monitors media.
- *GLSEN*: [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)  
Champions LGBTQ issues in higher education.
- *HeForShe*: [www.heforshe.org](http://www.heforshe.org)  
UN Women's organization promoting gender equality and inviting men to participate.
- *Hollaback!*: [www.ihollaback.com](http://www.ihollaback.com)  
Raises awareness about and challenges street harassment.

- *Human Rights Campaign*: [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)  
Policy, advocacy, and activist organization focused on LGBT rights.
- *Human Rights Watch*: [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)  
Global human rights watchdog.
- *INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence*: [www.incite-national.org](http://www.incite-national.org)  
Grassroots organization addressing violence against women of color.
- *Indigenous Women's Network*: [www.indigenouswomen.org](http://www.indigenouswomen.org)  
Provides information and support for indigenous women.
- *The Joyful Heart Foundation*: [www.joyfulheart.org](http://www.joyfulheart.org)  
Founded in 2002 by actress Mariska Hargitay with the aim of helping survivors heal.
- *Know Your IX*: <http://knowyourix.org>  
Helps college students understand their rights in regards to sexual assault.
- *LAMBDA GLBT Community Services*: [www.lambda.org](http://www.lambda.org)  
Legal resources for LGBT persons.
- *Lean In*: [www.leanin.org](http://www.leanin.org)  
Offers information, videos and resources largely related to gender equality in the workplace.
- *Love is Not Abuse*: <http://loveisnotabuse.com>  
Provides resources and information related to teen dating violence.
- *Mediawatch*: [www.mediawatch.com](http://www.mediawatch.com)  
Devoted to decreasing racism, sexism and violence in media.
- *Men Can Stop Rape*: [www.mencanstoprape.org](http://www.mencanstoprape.org)  
Advocates for men to address societal sexism and stop sexual harassment and assault.
- *Men Stopping Violence*: [www.menstoppingviolence.org](http://www.menstoppingviolence.org)  
Helps reduce oppression of woman by focusing on social structures, institutions, and belief systems.

- *Mending the Sacred Hoop*: [www.mshoop.org](http://www.mshoop.org)  
“Working to End Violence Against Native American Women”
- *Ms. Foundation for Women*: [www.ms.foundation.org](http://www.ms.foundation.org)  
Grants and support for domestic violence shelters.
- *National Gay and Lesbian Task Force*: [www.nglftf.org](http://www.nglftf.org)  
Advocacy and empowerment for LGBT persons.
- *National Immigration Forum*: [www.immigrationforum.org](http://www.immigrationforum.org)  
Promoting immigrants rights.
- *National Network to End Domestic Violence*: [www.nnedv.org](http://www.nnedv.org)  
Coordinates annual 24 hour census on domestic violence, among other things.
- *National Organization for Men Against Sexism*: [www.nomas.org](http://www.nomas.org)  
Male-led feminist organization devoted to ending sexism and violence against women.
- *National Organization for Women (NOW)*: <http://now.org/>  
Since 1966, NOW has worked on a variety of issues related to gender equality.
- *National Sexual Violence Resource Center*: [www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org)  
Provides information and resources related to sexual violence.
- *National Women’s Political Caucus*: [www.nwpc.org](http://www.nwpc.org)  
Promoting women’s issues and women’s involvement in the political system.
- *Peace and Justice Studies Association (PJSa)*:  
[www.peacejusticestudies.org](http://www.peacejusticestudies.org)  
Promotes peace activism, advocacy, and education.
- *PFLAG*: [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)  
Organization for parents, families, and allies of LGBTQ individuals.
- *Planned Parenthood Federation of America*:  
[www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org)  
“The nation’s leading sexual and reproductive health care provider and advocate.”

- *Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)*: [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)  
Statistics, research and resources related to sexual violence and abuse.
- *Representation Project*: <http://therepresentationproject.org>  
Focuses on the effects of media depictions of women and men.
- *Soroptimist International of the Americas*: [www.soroptimist.org](http://www.soroptimist.org)  
“International organization for business and professional women who work to improve the lives of women and girls.”
- *Third Wave Foundation*: [www.thirdwavefoundation.org](http://www.thirdwavefoundation.org)  
Supports third wave feminists in their efforts to promote gender equality.
- *UN Women*: [www.unwomen.org](http://www.unwomen.org)  
United Nations entity focused specifically on global gender equality.

### FILMS AND DOCUMENTARIES

- *A Sinner in Mecca* (2015)  
Chronicles a gay Muslim man’s pilgrimage to Mecca.
- *Asking for It* (2010)  
Grapples with how young people navigate consent in sexual situations.
- *Beauty Mark* (2008)  
Focuses on gender role norms, media, body image, and girl’s health and wellness.
- *Before You Know It* (2013)  
Documentary about the lives of three gay senior citizens.
- *Boys Don’t Cry* (1999)  
A transgender man in Nebraska is horribly raped, assaulted, and murdered once it is discovered that he is biologically female. This is based on the true story of Tina Brandon.
- *The Bro Code: How Contemporary Culture Creates Sexist Men* (2011)  
Addresses multiple forms of contemporary popular culture that glorify misogyny and promotes men’s control and subordination of women.

- *But I'm a Cheerleader* (1999)  
Hilarious examination of gender role norms and acceptance of homosexuality.
- *Campaign of Hate: Russia and Gay Propaganda* (2014)  
Covers the challenge of gay rights activism in Russia.
- *Carol* (2015)  
Shows a tender lesbian romance in an earlier era.
- *The Color Purple* (1985)  
Depression-era tale of abuse and mistreatment yet also the strength of females.
- *The Danish Girl* (2015)  
The true story of Danish artist Einer Wegener, who underwent one of the first sex-change operations.
- *Dark Girls* (2011)  
Explores the biases against dark-skinned black women, from Caucasians as well as other black people.
- *The Diary of a Teenage Girl* (2015)  
Chronicles a teenage girl's growing sexuality.
- *Do I Sound Gay?* (2014)  
Documentary exploring stereotypes about how gay men speak.
- *Dreamworlds 3* (2007)  
Examines gender role norms and misogyny in video games.
- *The Empathy Gap: Masculinity and the Courage to Change* (2015)  
A follow up to *Generation M*, this documentary examines how misogynistic messages in popular culture reduce men's ability to empathize with women.
- *Flirting With Danger* (2012)  
Analyzes the way girls navigate relationships and hookups.
- *For Colored Girls* (2010)  
Tells the stories of a group of Black women living in Harlem.

- *Game Face* (2015)  
Documentary focusing on two LGBT American athletes.
- *Gayby Baby* (2015)  
Australian documentary about the lives of children raised by gay or lesbian parents.
- *Generation M: Misogyny in Media and Culture* (2008)  
An assessment of misogyny and sexism in mainstream American media.
- *Girl Rising* (2013)  
Shows the global challenges faced by girls trying to obtain primary education.
- *Go Fish* (1994)  
Examines gender role norms and the butch/femme dichotomy as it follows a group of friends in Chicago.
- *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* (2012).  
Shows the many forms of global oppression of women and highlights people and strategies for making change.
- *He Named Me Malala* (2015)  
Shares the powerful story of Malala Yousafzai, who was shot as she attempted to go to school. She won the Nobel Peace Prize for her advocacy for girls' education.
- *The Help* (2011)  
Black and White Southern women in the 1960s challenging gender role norms.
- *Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes* (2006)  
Shows how hip-hop and the culture surrounding it promotes destructive gender stereotypes. Also highlights hip-hop artists who have and are challenging this culture of exploitation.
- *The Hours* (2002)  
Three generations of women are connected by the novel *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf.

- *The Hunting Ground* (2015)  
This film uncovers the epidemic of sexual violence on college campuses and the institutional cover-ups that ensue.
- *I am a Girl* (2013)  
Shows the reality of girls' lives in the 21st century. Available at <http://www.iamagirl.com.au/>
- *If These Walls Could Talk* (1996)  
Three women from different eras struggle through unplanned pregnancies.
- *The Invisible War* (2012)  
This film examines the epidemic of sexual violence within the military and the difficulty for survivors to get help due to the command structure.
- *Killing Us Softly 4* (2010)  
The latest update from Jean Kilbourne exploring how advertisements promote dangerous conceptions about female's bodies.
- *Lady Valor* (2014)  
Follows former Navy Seal Kristin Beck, who is transgender.
- *Mala Mala* (2014)  
Puerto Rican documentary about the lives of transgender people.
- *Matt Shepard is a Friend of Mine* (2014)  
Friends pay tribute to Shepard, who was murdered in a hate crime in 1998.
- *Miss Representation* (2011)  
Highlights the under-representation of women in positions of power in the United States, connecting it to limiting gender-role stereotypes.
- *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003)  
A teacher at a women's college in the 1950s encourages her students to focus on their education, not on finding male partners.
- *The Mean World Syndrome*  
Focuses on how repeated exposure to violent news and entertainment media increases fear. Available from Media Education Foundation.

- *The New Black* (2013)  
Documentary focuses on the African American community and the fight for marriage equality and LGBT rights.
- *Norma Rae* (1979)  
Female textile mill employee rallies for better working conditions.
- *No Woman, No Cry* (2010)  
Examines pregnancy and pre-natal care in the United States and worldwide.
- *North Country* (2005)  
Focuses on the harassment women face in male-dominated professions.
- *Not Just a Game: Power, Politics & American Sports* (2010)  
Explores how American sports have glamorized militarism, racism, sexism, and homophobia. It also profiles the many athletes who have fought for social justice, both on and off the field of play.
- *The Out List* (2013)  
Documentary about famous celebrities who came out.
- *Outrage* (2009)  
Addresses the hypocrisy of gay and bisexual politicians who craft anti-gay policies.
- *A Path Appears* (2015)  
Focuses on the roots of gender inequality and poverty as well as global and local solutions.
- *Private Violence* (2014)  
Focuses on the tragedy of domestic violence. Features the stories of women who defended themselves
- *Real Women Have Curves* (2002)  
The coming-of-age story of a Mexican American girl.
- *Saved!* (2004)  
A Christian girl tries to “save” her gay boyfriend.
- *Sister* (2013)  
Tells the story of health workers in several countries. Available at <http://www.sisterdocumentary.com/>

- *The Stepford Wives* (1975)  
Examines the pressure on women to be too perfect.
- *Suffragette* (2015)  
Intense film focusing on female suffragettes in Britain.
- *Tangerine* (2015)  
Chronicles a friendship between transgender women.
- *To Be Takei* (2014)  
Documentary about the life of *Star Trek* actor and activist George Takei, who is gay.
- *We Were Here* (2011)  
Focuses on the HIV/AIDS crisis in San Francisco.
- *V-Day: Until the Violence Stops* (2003)  
Documents how the play *The Vagina Monologues*, written by Eve Ensler, became a global movement to combat violence against women and girls.
- *Vessel* (2014)  
Tells the story of Dr. Rebecca Gomperts, who started an organization to provide abortions in a ship in offshore waters. Available at <http://vesselthefilm.com/>
- *We Exist* (2015)  
Documentary about people who identify as gender neutral. Available at <http://www.weexist.co/about-the-documentary/>
- *Wrestling With Manhood: Boys, Bullying and Battering* (2002)  
An in-depth analysis of sexism, homophobia, and violence presented in professional wrestling.

## TED TALKS

- *Why we need gender-neutral bathrooms*, Ivan Coyote.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/ivan\\_coyote\\_why\\_we\\_need\\_gender\\_neutral\\_bathrooms](https://www.ted.com/talks/ivan_coyote_why_we_need_gender_neutral_bathrooms)  
Shows how gender-neutral bathrooms can help reduce harassment of transgender individuals.

- *Why gender equality is good for everyone—men included*, Michael Kimmel.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/michael\\_kimmel\\_why\\_gender\\_equality\\_is\\_good\\_for\\_everyone\\_men\\_included](https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_kimmel_why_gender_equality_is_good_for_everyone_men_included)  
 Shows how treating men and women equally at the home and in the workplace is a win-win.
- *An invitation to men who want a better world for women*, Elizabeth Nyamayaro.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/elizabeth\\_nyamayaro\\_an\\_invitation\\_to\\_men\\_who\\_want\\_a\\_better\\_world\\_for\\_women](https://www.ted.com/talks/elizabeth_nyamayaro_an_invitation_to_men_who_want_a_better_world_for_women)  
 Head of UN Women's HeForShe initiative invites men to help create global gender equality.
- *What my religion really says about women*, Alaa Murabit.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/alaa\\_murabit\\_what\\_my\\_religion\\_really\\_says\\_about\\_women](https://www.ted.com/talks/alaa_murabit_what_my_religion_really_says_about_women)  
 Debunks the misconception that Islam disparages women.
- *A powerful poem about what it feels like to be transgender*, Lee Mokobe.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/lee\\_mokobe\\_a\\_powerful\\_poem\\_about\\_what\\_it\\_feels\\_like\\_to\\_be\\_transgender](https://www.ted.com/talks/lee_mokobe_a_powerful_poem_about_what_it_feels_like_to_be_transgender)  
 Emotional poem shares one person's transgender experience.
- *Find your voice against gender violence*, Meera Vijayann.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/meera\\_vijayann\\_find\\_your\\_voice\\_against\\_gender\\_violence](https://www.ted.com/talks/meera_vijayann_find_your_voice_against_gender_violence)  
 Emphasizes the importance of sharing personal stories about sexual and other forms of violence.
- *Why I must come out*, Geena Rocero.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/geena\\_rocero\\_why\\_i\\_must\\_come\\_out](https://www.ted.com/talks/geena_rocero_why_i_must_come_out)  
 Model Geena Rocero discusses her gender identity.
- *The myth of the gay agenda*, LZ Granderson.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/lz\\_granderson\\_the\\_myth\\_of\\_the\\_gay\\_agenda](https://www.ted.com/talks/lz_granderson_the_myth_of_the_gay_agenda)  
 Humorously discusses gay rights as human rights.
- *Social media and the end of gender*, Johanna Blakley.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/johanna\\_blakley\\_social\\_media\\_and\\_the\\_end\\_of\\_gender](https://www.ted.com/talks/johanna_blakley_social_media_and_the_end_of_gender)  
 Discusses how social media is altering gender-based marketing.

- *Why the only future worth building includes everyone*, His Holiness Pope Francis.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/pope\\_francois\\_why\\_the\\_only\\_future\\_worth\\_building\\_includes\\_everyone](https://www.ted.com/talks/pope_francois_why_the_only_future_worth_building_includes_everyone)  
 The Pope calls for equality, solidarity and tenderness during difficult times.
- *How women wage conflict without violence*, Julia Bacha.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/julia\\_bacha\\_how\\_women\\_wage\\_conflict\\_without\\_violence](https://www.ted.com/talks/julia_bacha_how_women_wage_conflict_without_violence)  
 Emphasizes the role of women in nonviolence conflict resolution.
- *Why I believe the mistreatment of women is the number one human rights abuse*, Jimmy Carter.  
<https://www.ted.com/talks?sort=newest&q=peace>  
 Former president describes the global assault on women and how we can change it.
- *Fighting with nonviolence*, Scilla Elworthy.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/scilla\\_elworthy\\_fighting\\_with\\_non\\_violence](https://www.ted.com/talks/scilla_elworthy_fighting_with_non_violence)  
 Documents the power of nonviolent resistance.
- *Pay attention to nonviolence*, Julia Bacha.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/julia\\_bacha](https://www.ted.com/talks/julia_bacha)  
 Shares stories on the effectiveness of nonviolence.
- *Unlock the intelligence, passion, greatness of girls*, Leymah Gbowee.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/leymah\\_gbowee\\_unlock\\_the\\_intelligence\\_passion\\_greatness\\_of\\_girls](https://www.ted.com/talks/leymah_gbowee_unlock_the_intelligence_passion_greatness_of_girls)  
 Nobel Peace Prize winner addresses the important role that women played in securing peace in Liberia.
- *Poems of war, peace, women, power*, Suheir Hammad.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/suheir\\_hammad\\_poems\\_of\\_war\\_peace\\_women\\_power](https://www.ted.com/talks/suheir_hammad_poems_of_war_peace_women_power)  
 Thoughtful poems about war and the resilience of women.
- *A realistic vision of world peace*, Jody Williams.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/jody\\_williams\\_a\\_realistic\\_vision\\_for\\_world\\_peace](https://www.ted.com/talks/jody_williams_a_realistic_vision_for_world_peace)  
 Inspiring talk by Nobel Peace Prize winner.

- *Women, wartime and the dream of peace*, Zainab Salbi.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/zainab\\_salbi](https://www.ted.com/talks/zainab_salbi)  
 Iraqi-born women tells the stories of women who are negotiating for peace.
- *How online abuse of women has spiraled out of control*, Ashley Judd.  
<https://www.ted.com/search?q=media+violence>  
 Shares personal stories and statistics related to revenge pornography.
- *How we talk about sexual assault online*, Ione Wells.  
<https://www.ted.com/search?q=media+violence>  
 Shows how social media can help survivors heal and change rape culture.
- *The dangerous ways ads see women*, Jean Kilbourne.  
<https://tedxinnovations.ted.com/2015/05/27/spotlight-tedx-talk-the-dangerous-ways-ads-see-women/>  
 Showcases Kilbourne's work on misogyny, sexism, and violence in advertisements.
- *The secret to effective nonviolent resistance*, Jamila Raqib.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/jamila\\_raqib\\_the\\_secret\\_to\\_effective\\_nonviolent\\_resistance](https://www.ted.com/talks/jamila_raqib_the_secret_to_effective_nonviolent_resistance)  
 Emphasizes new and creative methods of nonviolent resistance.
- *This is what LGBT life is like around the world*, Jenni Chang and Lisa Dazols.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/jenni\\_chang\\_and\\_lisa\\_dazols\\_this\\_is\\_what\\_lgbt\\_life\\_is\\_like\\_around\\_the\\_world](https://www.ted.com/talks/jenni_chang_and_lisa_dazols_this_is_what_lgbt_life_is_like_around_the_world)  
 Shares the inspiring stories of gay individuals around the world.
- *Confessions of a bad feminist*, Roxanne Gay.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/roxane\\_gay\\_confessions\\_of\\_a\\_bad\\_feminist](https://www.ted.com/talks/roxane_gay_confessions_of_a_bad_feminist)  
 Author's funny and important observations about what feminist really looks like.

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# ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

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## ABOUT THE EDITOR

**Laura Finley** earned her PhD in Sociology from Western Michigan University in 2002. She is currently Associate Professor of Sociology and Criminology at Barry University in Miami, Florida. She is author, co-author or editor of 18 books and numerous book chapters and journal articles. Dr. Finley is also series editor of the Peace Education series for Information Age and the Peace Studies: Edges and Innovations series for Cambridge Scholars Press, as well as a syndicated columnist with PeaceVoice. In addition, Dr. Finley is involved with many peace, justice, and human rights organizations.

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This edited volume, authored by scholars, students, and activists, focuses on how peace educators at the collegiate level can more effectively address gender and sexuality. Chapters focus on the classroom and the campus at large, and emphasize the importance of interdisciplinary practice, thoughtful approaches that offer both challenges and safety, and solidarity and support. The volume includes entries on hot and important topics, including trigger warnings, using popular culture in the classroom, sex trafficking, campus sexual assault, and more. Contributors come from a variety of disciplinary areas, making the volume eclectic in nature. Further, most entries include student voices, providing much-needed agency for college youth. While the book does offer a critical perspective, importantly, chapters also offer hope and possibility.

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