# POLITICAL CONNECTIONS: MEN, GENDER AND VIOLENCE

*by Alan Greig*


## Summary

This chapter discusses the politics of men's roles and responsibilities in efforts to end gender-based violence. Feminist analyses of the arrangements of power and male privilege that both produce and are produced by such violence make clear that ending such violence cannot simply be a matter of individual men changing their violent behaviour. Political action is required to challenge the patriarchal power and privilege underlying this violence. But what can men's roles and responsibilities be in such action, given the 'dividend' that men share from living in patriarchal societies?

It becomes easier to answer this question when the *political* connections between men, gender and violence are made more explicit. This is to say, it is important to locate the connections between men, gender and violence, and strategies to address these connections, in the political space in which multiple oppressive social relations are formed and can be contested.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the gender of violence, and the emergence in recent years of a discourse of masculinity which seeks to explain how gender 'constructs' violent men. Continuing, the chapter considers the de-politicizing effects of this discourse which are produced by its emphasis on questions of personal identity (what it means to be a non-violent man) over questions of political vision (what it takes to create a non-violent world.) It is argued that the discourse of 'masculinity and violence' cannot illuminate these latter questions, or the political actions they entail, because it is trapped within the binary, masculine/feminine logic of gender, which in itself is violent because of its insistence on the definition of self through negation of the Other and the implications this has for devaluing and disallowing certain ways of being in the world – homophobia being an example of this 'violence of gender'.

Exploring this 'violence of gender' makes clear that gender-based violence, as a term, refers not simply to men's violence against women but, more fundamentally to the violence that produces and is produced by a hierarchical gender order that is, itself, enmeshed with other forms of inequality and oppression. The chapter argues that there are connections between gender-based violence and the violence of other hierarchical and oppressive social relations. It proposes 'social justice' as a conceptual framework within which to analyze these connections. A social justice framework of analysis can be used with different kinds of men to explore their differing relationships to multiple hierarchies of power and the range of ways in which they both reproduce and suffer from the oppression that these hierarchies produce. By identifying the connections between gender-based violence and the violence of other forms of oppression, a social justice framework enables (some) men to connect their role in challenging the oppression in their lives with their responsibility to end gender-based violence.

The chapter then discusses some of the tensions that arise when programmes, which work directly with men on their own violence, try to make these connections in practice. It reflects on the experiences of four US-based "Batterers' Intervention Programmes" which locate their work within a discourse of social justice and looks at the ways in which they have negotiated these tensions. The chapter considers the strategies which these

programmes are developing not only to support men in taking personal action to end their own violence but also to mobilize men around the political action necessary to challenge the patriarchal power and privilege underlying this violence. In conclusion, some remaining challenges concerning men's political roles and responsibilities in ending gender-based violence are discussed.

## Introduction

> *"…to produce a masculinity whose desire is no longer dependent on oppression, no longer policed by homophobia, and one that no longer resorts to violence and misogyny to maintain its sense of coherence. That is a major political project…"* (Rutherford and Chapman 1988: 18)

This paper is an enquiry into the politics of men's roles and responsibilities in efforts to end gender-based violence. That such efforts constitute a "political project" has been clear from feminist analyses of gender-based violence over the past three decades. Such analyses, primarily focusing on men's violence against women, have emphasized the structural and public, rather than the individual and private ("domestic"), nature of such violence. In arguing that the "personal is political," feminist activists and theorists from the early 1970s onwards have sought, in part, to connect the physical violence of some men against some women in the domestic sphere with men's political, economic, social and cultural power over women and the patriarchal norms and structures that maintain this oppression.

Given this analysis, it has long been clear that ending such violence can never solely be a matter of individual men changing their violent behaviour. Political action is required to challenge the patriarchal arrangements of power and male privilege that both produce, and are produced by, men's violence against women. In noting the importance of this gender-based analysis of men's violence against women, in contrast to the gender-neutral emphasis of "family violence" perspectives on individual and family-based causes of and solutions to such violence, Garske (1996: 271) argues that:

> *"It is a unifying theory that accounts for the wide range and prevalence of violence against females, both in the home and on the streets (from sexual harassment, workplace violence, incest, rape, assault, and homicide), by recognizing how the patriarchal culture systematically discriminates against women and implicitly supports abusive and violent behaviors by men. This perspective offers strategies for change that move beyond the individual and the specific family to encompass broad social changes."*

But what should the roles and responsibilities of men be in the "broad social changes" necessary to challenge the patriarchal foundations of men's violence against women ? Indeed, what could these roles and responsibilities be, given the 'dividend' that men share from living in patriarchal societies? As Connell (1995: 82) has noted:

> *"To speak of a patriarchal dividend is to raise exactly this question of interest. Men gain a dividend from patriarchy in terms of honour, prestige and the right to command. They also gain a material dividend."*

Given this dividend, it is arguably in men's 'strategic gender interest' to defend, rather than change, patriarchal arrangements of power. As Connell (1995: 82) continues:

> *"A gender order where men dominate women cannot avoid constituting men as an interest group concerned with defense, and women as an interest group concerned with change."*

The question of "why should men change" is fundamental.[1] It becomes easier to answer this question, and to identify men's roles in the "broad social changes" necessary to challenge the patriarchal foundations of men's violence against women, when the *political* connections between men, gender and violence are made more explicit. This is to say, it is important to locate and address the connections between men, gender and violence in the political space in which multiple oppressive social relations are formed and can be contested.

## The Gender of Violence

The connection made most commonly between men, gender and violence is that gender produces violence in men and against women. So much so, that the term "gender-based violence" is often taken to be synonymous with, or a short-hand for, men's violence against women. This is unsurprising given the cross-cultural, and trans-historical pervasiveness of such violence.

A summary of twenty studies from a range of countries *"document that one-quarter to over half of women in many countries of the world report having been physically abused by a present or former partner"* (Heise 1997: 414). At least 10-15 per cent of women in the world report being forced by men to have sex, according to a UNDP report on violence and the global HIV epidemic (Gordon and Crehan 1999). The U.S. Department of Justice[2] has reported that a woman is battered by a man every 15 seconds in the USA. The same report notes that 78 women are raped by men every hour.

The gender asymmetry of violence in terms of perpetrators and victims is striking – it is overwhelmingly men who are violent towards women and not the reverse. This violence is not confined to acts of physical violence. Women suffer from male violence throughout their lives, at the hands of both individual men and male-dominated institutions. Denial of political, economic and social power relative to men, prescribed gender roles which constrict women's rights and opportunities, gender norms which limit women's autonomy in their social and sexual lives – all these are forms of violence against women that are grounded in patriarchy, understood as the institutionalization of male power and privilege.

As noted above, gender analyses of male violence in terms of patriarchal structures of power date back to the beginnings of the women's movement and feminism. But in the last twenty years, in countries of the industrialized North at least, there has been a growing interest in looking more closely at the connections between structures of male power and the violence of actual men in order to develop more effective strategies for ending this violence. This interest has been driven by operational and theoretical concerns.

At the operational level, for example within the domestic violence movement, it has been increasingly acknowledged that working with women as the victims of violence is not

[1] I am continually confronted with this question of "why should men change" in my HIV/AIDS prevention work with men and my work with violence prevention programmes. The parallels between HIV/AIDS prevention and violence prevention are clear. In situations where women's vulnerability to HIV infection or violence is related to structures of male power and privilege, what roles do we envisage men playing in changing the prioritized structures of power? Urgent answers to this question are needed, if the epidemics of HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence (being related, and not distinct, problems) are to be effectively addressed.

[2] These statistics are taken from the Violence Against Women Fact Sheet (1995), which itself is based on the updated National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice.

sufficient to stopping the violence, and that shorter-term strategies for working directly work with violent men are required alongside the longer-term strategies to dismantle the patriarchy through broad social change. At the theoretical level, there is a growing body of work, inside and outside of the academy, which applies feminist insights about the role that discourses of 'femininity' play in the social construction of women's experience of the world, and thus of violence, to the role that discourses of 'masculinity' play in determining men's violence.

These operational and theoretical considerations are apparent in the history of the founding of Men Overcoming Violence (MOVE) in San Francisco in 1981, which came out of the domestic violence movement of the 1970s in the USA and its challenge to men to end their oppression of women. The movement's feminist analysis of gender, which understood the violence that produced inequalities between women and men to be socially and not biologically determined, also created space for thinking about changing men's violent behaviour. As one of the co-founders of MOVE, Michael Radetsky, has noted:

> *"An article of faith from the beginning was that men's violence was learned. Abusive behaviour didn't come with the plumbing. That's what made it possible to even think about doing the work. If it was learned, it could be unlearned."*[3]

Within gender-based analyses of the structural basis of men's violence against women, discourses of masculinity have emerged as an attempt to move beyond simply blaming men for male violence and to understand how patriarchy plays out in the lives of all, and the interpersonal violence of some, men. Such discourses focus, with varying psychological and sociological emphases, on the social construction of men's gender identity, their gender socialization, and how this translates into violence.

This focus on socialization and identity has several significant features which have proved valuable in working with individual men on 'unlearning' their violence, but appear to be less useful when it comes to thinking about men's potential roles in challenging the structures of male power, privilege and violence. The first feature relates to the emphasis placed on the connections between men's emotional development and their subsequent violence. In a well-received book on the developmental basis of men's violence, Pollack (1998: 44) notes that:

> *"The trauma of separation is one of the earliest and most acute developmental experiences boys endure, an experience that plays a large role in the hardening process through which society shames boys into suppressing their empathic and vulnerable sides. [As a result] boys are pressured to express the one strong feeling allowed them – anger."*

Emotional suppression is a common theme of discourses that connect male violence with constructions of masculinity. A second feature of these discourses is the attention given to the role that 'culture' plays in this emotional suppression and socializing men into violence. In examining the connections between gender and war, Goldstein (2001: 283) claims that:

> *"[C]ultures around the world with few exceptions construct 'tough' men who can shut down emotionally in order to endure extreme pain (physical and psychological). The omnipresent potential for war causes cultures to transform males, deliberately and systematically, by*

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[3] Quoted in *MOVEMENT*: Newsletter of Men Overcoming Violence, Autumn 2001 (p. 1)

*damaging their emotional capabilities (which biologically resemble those of females). Thus, manhood, an artificial status that must be won individually, is typically constructed around a culture's need for brave and disciplined soldiers."*

The precariousness of men's claim on the 'status of manhood' and the role that violence plays in performing and proving men's gender identity is a third feature of the way that discourses of masculinity approach the problem of men's violence. This theme of the fragility of men's masculine identity is emphasized by Heise (1997: 425) when she points out that:

*"Men in many cultures wage daily battle to prove to themselves and others that they qualify for inclusion in the esteemed category "male." To be "not male," is to be reduced to the status of woman or, worse, to be "queer".[…] It is partly men's insecurity about their masculinity that promotes abusive behaviour toward women."*

In raising issues of "men's insecurity," discourses of masculinity have served to illuminate what Michael Kaufman, of the International White Ribbon Campaign against men's violence, has termed the "paradox of men's power". An emphasis on the fact that power and powerlessness co-exist in men's lives, and that this dual experience can produce violence in men, could be said to be a fourth feature of discourses of masculinity which seek to explain male violence. This is especially true when the plural 'masculinities' is preferred to the singular 'masculinity', in recognition of the heterogeneity of the group of people referred to by the term "men" and in acknowledgement that the links between gender identity and violence in men's lives are complicated by relations of power between men, along lines of economic class, social status, race/ethnicity, sexuality and age.

These explanations of men's violence against women offered by discourses of masculinity/ies, and their focus on problems of gender socialization and gender identity, have created space for working with men on their violence. They make clear that men are not simply agents of the patriarchy, but are shaped by gender pressures in ways that lead some men to be violent. The implications of such discourses for ending male violence play out in efforts to reach men with messages about non-violent masculinities, to provide non-violent role models for young men, and to change cultural norms of masculinity in order to reduce men's violent behaviour. The vision of such efforts is stated succinctly by Heise (1997: 426), when she writes:

*"The more I work on violence against women, the more I become convinced that the real way forward is to redefine what it means to be male."*

But it is important to question how useful the 'project' of re-defining masculinity is to defining men's roles and responsibilities in the social change necessary to end gender-based violence. While discourses of masculinity/ies have been helpful in speaking to men's lived experience of gender and violence, in part because of their features described above, these same features tend to de-politicize analyses of the connections between men and violence and how to address them. They do so by focusing on questions of emotional development, cultural socialization and gender identity, which frame such connections in personal and behavioural terms, only calling on structural contexts to explain individual men's acts of violence. This 'individualist' emphasis has been noted as a more general aspect of the entry of "men and masculinities", as a field of enquiry and area for action, into Gender and Development (GAD) work. White (2000: 35) is clear that:

> *"'GAD for women' is robustly materialist, concentrating on social relations particularly as they define rights and responsibilities in work, consumption and households….'GAD for men' is by contrast much more individualistic and personal, much more preoccupied with the self."*

Even when issues of power are discussed, as in the 'paradox' of men's power and powerlessness often referred to in discourses of masculinity/ies, such issues are frequently described in personal terms, in relation to men's "experience" of power and how this affects their behaviour.

Framing the connections between gender, power and violence in men's lives in such individualistic and experiential terms, makes it harder to get to a discussion of the structural changes that are required to end gender-based violence, and men's role in them. In part this is because discourses of masculinity/ies focus on gender as an explanation of men's interpersonal violence against women, but tend to neglect the ways in which gender is, as it is currently understood and practiced, itself a form of structural violence in the oppression that it creates and justifies. The next section looks at this 'violence of gender' and the ways in which it opens a space for considering the spectrum of violence, which is expressed structurally, culturally and interpersonally. Understanding the interconnectedness of violence across this spectrum, and the connections between gender and other forms of oppression, helps in better defining and addressing the full scope of the violence that is based in gender, and men's role in this. But this requires a more explicitly political analysis of the nature of, and men's differing relationships to, oppression and violence than is currently offered by discourses of masculinity/ies, with their individualized accounts of men's violent behaviour. Indeed, as the next section will argue, current understandings of masculinity/ies are implicated in sustaining the structural violence of gender itself.

## The Violence of Gender

> *"I grew up understanding something of the violence of gender norms: an uncle incarcerated for his anatomically anomalous body, deprived of family and friends, living out his days in an 'institute' in the Kansas prairies; gay cousins forced to leave their homes because of their sexuality, real or imagined; …it was difficult to bring this violence into view precisely because gender was so taken for granted at the same time that it was policed."* (Butler 1999: xix)

In countries and cultures shaped by Judeo-Christian traditions at least, gender as it is practiced and understood insists on our experiencing the world in binary terms – male/female, masculine/feminine, active/passive, strong/weak, dominant/submissive. The women's movement in the last 30 years has made great progress, in many countries, in disrupting the gender order's normative alignment of female-feminine-passive-weak-submissive as defining how women should be in the world. But it remains true that people who resist or betray the gender order too much (for example, feminine men or dominant women) continue to experience invalidation, intimidation and attack which is intended to bring them 'back into line'. Jasbir Puar, a former Board member with Narika, an organization working with battered women in South Asian communities in Berkeley, USA, emphasizes that:

> *"Any kind of rejection of conventional gender roles, whatever that might mean in a particular context, is going to be punishable vis-à-vis violent behavior."* (Munia 2000: 10)

It is this prescribing of certain, and disallowing of other, ways of being in the world which constitutes the 'violence of gender'. Gay-identified people have experienced this violence for many years. Normative heterosexuality remains such a defining feature of the gender

order of the industrialized North, that people who choose to have sex with others of the same sex are still perceived by many as constituting a fundamental threat to the social order. Despite the gay rights movement in a number of countries, and the protective legislation and policies it has demanded be enacted, the violence of homophobia remains both virulent and pervasive.

In policing people's lives in this way, the gender order relies on binary terms that are defined in negation of the other. The masculine is, by definition, what is not feminine. The current gender order also insists on a hierarchical relation between these terms, such that the masculine is, by definition, superior to the feminine. No wonder that the fear of feminization plays such an influential role in men's gender socialization and that men "wage daily battles" to avoid being reduced to the "status of woman". The violence of misogyny is about men's fear of, and need to negate, the feminine.

Discourses of masculinity/ties have difficulty in addressing this gender violence because they assume, rather than question, a necessary alignment between men and masculinity. Defining masculinity as men's gender identity means that efforts to re-define a non-violent masculinity for men remain within the logic of not being a woman. In these terms, a "non-violent masculinity" can only mean a set of non-violent values and behaviours which are defining of, and thus exclusive to, men, and hence not available to women. Yet the values and behaviours required for non-violent social relations are gender-neutral, available and applicable to both men and women. Working with men to create non-violent social relations must involve challenging the violence of gender itself, and its logic of hierarchical and oppositional social relations.

Looking at some men's experience as victims of the violence of gender provides a way into understanding the issues that underlie such violence. This is not intended to in any way compare men's and women's experience as victims, and by so doing deflect attention from the already discussed, and overwhelming, gender asymmetry of men's violence against women. But it is to argue that men's violence against women is not coterminous with gender-based violence, and that in focusing on the latter it is important to get beyond the gender of perpetrators and victims, to examine the gendered logic of domination and subordination on which it is based.

In a contribution to the INSTRAW virtual seminar series on men's roles and responsibilities in ending gender-based violence (from which this publication has emerged,) Matt Ezzell wrote:

> *"At the rape crisis center where I work, 8-12% of our clients year to year are men. Most have been assaulted by other men, yet some have been assaulted by women. It is important to note, that even if the sex of the offender is female (this is admittedly a small minority of the cases -- the US Department of Justice found that 23.3% of assailants of boys and men were women in 1999) the issues remain as power and control, which are masculine features of a patriarchal society -- thus, the crimes are still examples of gendered violence."*

Whether the "sex of the offender" is irrelevant to a definition of a gender-based violence is questionable, given that such violence is necessarily about maintaining a gender order predicated on male domination and female subordination. But it is clear that the issues of power and control which underlie the inequality of the gender order, and the violence that it produces, extend beyond gender relations to other social relations. As Diane Alméras emphasized in one of her contributions to the same virtual seminar series:

*"Masculine ratio-nality divides the world between dominant classes of subjects (males, whites, property owners, heterosexuals, adults, the mentally and physically sane, urban) and oppressed classes of objects (women, blacks, proletarians, homosexuals, children, the crazy and the sick, rural)[…].We are talking here about patriarchy as the basis of gender-based violence or violence-based-on-the gender ratio-nality of the social order, which in some cases may happen to have a scanty relationship with the sex of the victim and the perpetrator. In other words, a woman who sexually or physically abuses a child of either sex also perpetrates gender-based violence because she then enters the patriarchal/political logic of dominant subject who have rights of ownership and use on an oppressed object."*

Gender-based violence is connected to a "patriarchal/political logic" of oppressive social relations, in which some people exercise power and control over other people. Men occupy differing positions within these oppressive social relations, depending on their class, 'race', age, sexuality, social status and religious faith. Connecting the structural violence of gender with the violence of other forms of oppression creates a space within which many men can identify a need to challenge the patriarchal/political logic which damages their lives, and the lives of their families and communities.

## Men, Violence and Multiple Forms of Oppression

The political connections between gender-based violence and other forms of oppression are evident in Montoya's account of such violence in Nicaragua, when he says that:

*"Violence in couple relationships is a problem of power and control. […]It is maintained by the social structures of oppression in which we live—based, among others, on gender, class, age, and race inequalities. A national history of wars and a culture of settling conflict through force also maintain it. Colonialism and imperialism have had a role in intensifying this violence."*[4]

Social structures of oppression are discussed here not merely as an explanatory context for men's interpersonal violence against women but as integrally connected to this violence, and whose connections express an underlying "problem of power and control." Moffet makes similar connections in her work on experiences and narratives of rape in South Africa, arguing that:

*"…there is a link between the violently enforced hierarchical structures of apartheid and our current levels of gender violence.[…] A pattern (admittedly one among many others) seems to be emerging in which rapists choose victims because they "dare to" practice freedom of movement, "hold their heads up", make eye contact, are "cheeky" and so on. These are exactly the reasons given in cases of unprovoked attacks by whites on blacks over the past five decades."*[5]

Getting to the issues of oppression that connect gender-based and other forms of violence requires a framework of analysis that includes but does not privilege gender. This is the shortcoming of the discourse of 'masculinities', most fully developed in Connell's work (1995), and its account of inequalities in power between men. Such inequalities are characterized in terms of struggles between hegemonic and subordinate masculinities. In doing so, differing forms of oppression (class-based, 'race'-based) and the violence they generate are confined within a gender frame that abstracts men from the social groupings

[4] Personal communication
[5] This quote is taken from one of Helen Moffet's contributions to the Virtual Seminar Series, organized by INSTRAW. See also Helen Moffett's chapter in this volume.

that experience this oppression (working class communities, communities of colour) and the political interests in structural change generated by this oppression.

But rather than privilege gender as the primary lens of analysis through which other forms of oppression can be perceived, it is important to be explicit in applying multiple analyses to understanding men's relationship to oppression and its violence. Socialist-feminist scholar Lynne Segal (1990: 265) offers an example of this kind of explicitness when she writes:

> *"It is the sharp and frustrating conflict between the lives of lower working-class men and the image of masculinity as power, which informs the adoption and, for some, the enactment, of a more aggressive masculinity. There was a time…when feminists would not so readily have lost sight of the significance of class oppression for the sake of identifying a universal male beastliness."*

Keeping sight of the multiple forms of oppression as they are expressed in men's and women's lives, and the violence of them, is critical in order to understand men's potential roles and responsibilities in the broad social changes required to end gender-based violence. The concept of social justice is useful in this regard because it offers a framework within which multiple forms of oppression, and the way in which they interact to create injustice in people's lives, can be kept in view. A social justice framework is characterized by its insistence on the connectedness of different forms of violence and oppression. Within such a framework, gender-based violence is perceived in its relation to an oppressive gender order (patriarchy) whose 'logic' of hierarchy and inequality both shapes and is shaped by other determinants of oppressive social relations (for example, racism, homophobia, histories of colonialism, transnational capitalism).

It is useful to apply this social justice analysis in working with men to end gender-based violence. This framework of analysis can be used with different kinds of men to explore their differing relationships to multiple hierarchies of power and the range of ways in which they both reproduce and suffer from the oppression that these hierarchies produce. In so doing, the connections between gender-based violence and the violence of other forms of oppression can be clarified, thus enabling (some) men to connect their role in challenging the oppression in their lives with their responsibility to end gender-based violence. Applying a social justice analysis can help to move work with men on gender-based violence beyond the personal questions of what it means to be a (non-violent) man, to the political questions of what it will involve to create a more just and less violent world. In addressing these latter questions, such work can help men in identifying the roles they can play in the broad social changes which will be required to end gender-based violence. The next section looks at the experience of four U.S.-based programmes, working directly with men on their violence against women, in their efforts to apply a social justice analysis to this work. It discusses some of the strategies which have emerged from this analysis for working with men toward political as well as personal change, and raises some of the challenges that still confront this work.

## Making Connections in Practice[6]

> *"It is critical that we develop responses to gender violence that do not depend on a sexist, racist, classist, and homophobic criminal justice system. It is also important that we develop strategies that challenge the criminal justice system and that also provide safety for survivors of sexual and domestic violence. To live violence free-lives, we must develop holistic strategies for addressing violence that speak to the intersection of all forms of oppression."*[7]

Programmes working directly with men on their own violence have the opportunity to raise questions with men about their roles in creating a less violent and more just world. Indeed, many such programmes, in the USA at least, define their vision and mission in terms of such broader social change. The Men's Resource Center of Western Massachusetts (MRC) describes the vision of its work as being, in part, as:

> *"…a catalyst to help bring about a more just and peaceful world. We are a network of men and women committed to challenging personal and institutional violence, sexism, homophobia, racism and other forms of oppression and to supporting healing and empowerment for all people."*

In a similar vein, MOVE in San Francisco states the first part of its mission as:

> *"MOVE is dedicated to ending male violence by organizing for social change…"*

Describing how it came to call itself Men Allied Nationally Against Living in Violent Environments, MANALIVE, also based in the Bay Area in Northern California, reports:

> *"We called it MANALIVE to reflect its social activism intent."*

But such intent often exists in tension with the funding requirements, organizational constraints and individually-oriented educational and therapeutic approaches of such programmes. As programmes have become increasingly reliant on referrals and associated funding from the criminal justice system, they have necessarily become more focused on changing the violent behaviour of individual men rather than on mobilizing men to challenge the violence of gender and related structures of oppression. The pressure on such programmes to be providers of social services, and not catalysts of social change, is also a function of the very structures of oppression within which they operate. Paul Kivel, a noted activist and educator on men and violence in the USA, has described the 'buffer zone' function of the NGO (non-profit) sector in a capitalist economic system as being to take care of those at the bottom of the economic pyramid to ensure that they do not organize themselves and try to claim power from the 'ruling class'.[8] Programmes working with men on their violence often fall within this buffer zone. They are further constrained in their potential for social change by their educational approaches to dealing with men's violence as a learned behaviour, that in part reflect the influence of the discourses of masculinity/ies which were described earlier. The challenge facing such programmes is how to push the boundary between individual and social change, and develop "holistic strategies for addressing violence that speak to the intersection of all forms of oppression".

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[6] Most of the quotations in this section are taken from interviews conducted by the author with staff of the four programmes being discussed.

[7] Quoted from Critical Resistance-INCITE statement on Gender Violence and the Prison Industrial Complex.

[8] This analysis is taken from Paul Kivel's workshop on "Uprooting Violence", which he offers to staff working in the NGO sector across the USA.

In reviewing the work of a number of Batterers' Intervention Programmes (BIPs) working directly with men on their own gender-based violence, it is possible to identify the beginnings of a number of such strategies. The first involves making the connections between intersecting forms of oppression as they are expressed outside of these programmes and how such oppression is experienced within organizations themselves. As programmes take on a political analysis of these connections between men, tensions can become apparent within staff teams struggling with oppression in their own lives and in the workplace. Steven Botkin, Executive Director of MRC, talks of "learning to trust" these struggles as signs of a maturing organization coming to grips with its own sexism, racism, homophobia and class biases. He also emphasizes the importance of developing policies, decision-making processes and structures of accountability within the organization that create a strong enough "container" to hold the conflicts that arise. Significantly, he identifies class issues as the "next frontier" for MRC as it takes on still further the implications of its political analysis of gender-based violence.

The ability of programmes to support their own staff in challenging the ways that structures of oppression express themselves in the organization has also been aided by a clear commitment to accountability to the communities and other stakeholders served by the programme. Such accountability has been demonstrated in staffing policies, which insist that staff teams reflect the communities with whom they work – for example, both Men Stopping Violence(MSV) in Atlanta and MOVE have significantly increased the number of people of colour on their staff to better reflect the communities of colour with whom they work. The boundary between staff and community has also been blurred by an emphasis on hiring men who have been clients of a programme to become staff with the programme, most notably in the case of MANALIVE, and to a lesser extent MRC.

A second strategy that programmes are using to respond to men's violence in the context of intersecting forms of oppression is to make more explicit connections between gender-based violence and the violence of other oppressive social relations in their work with men. MSV, working with large numbers of African-American men, emphasizes the connections between racism and sexism in its educational curriculum, and builds their empathy for women's experience of men's violence by connecting it to their own experience of the violence of white racism. In describing the group-work curriculum developed by MANALIVE for violent men, its founder Hamish Sinclair says:

> *"We wanted a programme that briefed men on the politics of men's violence."*

BIP staff are clear, however, that making these connections between the violence of different forms of oppression is in no way intended to excuse men's own violent behaviour. They stress that it is important for men to understand the contexts of their violence, and to be simultaneously challenged and supported to act differently in the world.

A third strategy relates to BIPs' efforts to connect the violence intervention work they do with men inside their programme with the violence prevention work that these men can do outside of the programme in their families, social networks and communities. For example, MSV has tried to broaden the focus of its group-work, by requiring that the male perpetrators in its groups bring at least two male friends from their community to attend some group sessions, to not only act as witnesses and supporters of their own change, but also as potential collaborators for working for change at the community level. MRC is also clear about the importance of making this connection and states its mission as being:

*"…to support men, challenge men's violence, and develop men's leadership in ending oppression in our lives, our families and our communities."*

In recalling the design of the MANALIVE programme, Hamish Sinclair talks of wanting a programme that:

*"…recruited and trained [men] to go out in their neighbourhoods and workplaces to spread the word to other men."*

A key focus of programme development for MANALIVE now is to refine the leadership development component of its work with male perpetrators. The first year of the MANALIVE programme works with such men on stopping their own violence, in preparation for the second year phase of the programme which will work to train and support some of these men to be violence prevention advocates in their own communities. Ways in which men can be supported to take on these leadership roles in violence prevention are also being explored by MOVE, but its leadership development strategy, currently focused on youth, has concentrated on working with young men in existing leadership positions in youth development organizations and strengthening their capacity to address gender-based violence in their work.

This approach is linked to the fourth strategy being developed by programmes to address intersecting forms of oppression and mobilize men to be involved in working for the broader social changes required to end gender-based violence. This strategy is concerned with partnership and coalition-building with groups and organizations already working on issues of social justice. Initially MRC, a largely white organization, tried to take on issues of racism and class-based oppression by reaching out to low income communities of colour in its area, but it had difficulty gaining entry and establishing credibility. Changing tack, it is now partnering with existing organizations which are working on issues of social justice within these communities (for example, in relation to immigrants' rights) and is building their capacity to integrate issues of gender-based violence in their work.

This partnership and coalition-building with social justice organizations is not simply a way of supporting them to make the connections between differing forms of oppression and gender-based violence. Paul Kivel points out that this strategy is also about connecting work with men on gender-based violence to a broader movement for social justice and creating ways to be accountable to this movement.[9] But such a commitment to accountability raises questions about programmes' relationship with centres of power, and the tension between an activist-outsider and a professional-insider approach to their work. This tension has become more pronounced in recent years for many of these programmes working directly with men on their violence, as they have become more deeply embedded within the criminal justice system's response to this violence.

For organizations such as MOVE, this tension has become too great, and it has decided to shift its strategic focus from being a batterers' intervention programme working for behaviour change to becoming a social justice organization committed to ending men's violence through social change. But this transition brings its own tensions in terms of the partnerships and coalitions that become easier and harder for programmes to build when they take explicit political positions on issues such as homophobia, racism and class-based oppression in their bearing on gender-based violence. Efforts to broaden the coalition of organizations working on issues of men's violence may be compromised by a

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[9] Personal communication

deepened and explicit political commitment to working with men on the roles they can play in ending the violence that is based in gender and related structures of oppression.

For MOVE, this deepened political commitment finds expression in its exploration of community organizing strategies to change the social norms and challenge the social inequalities that provide the context for men's violence. Community organizing can be regarded as a fifth, and perhaps the most ambitious, kind of strategy being developed by some BIPs in response to the connections between gender-based violence and intersecting forms of oppression. While still in its early stages, MOVE has already learned lessons about the tensions that can arise in entering communities with a violence prevention concern which is not prioritized by communities themselves, and also the challenges of focusing this work specifically on men when it is often women who take on community leadership and care-taking roles. The initial conclusions drawn from these lessons relate to the importance of working in partnership with other organizations in order to be more able to respond to the diverse needs presented by communities, and thus establish greater credibility with them. They also relate to the necessity of taking time to build relationships with key community ‘gate-keepers’ and stakeholders in order to identify men to work with in community organizing.

These strategies suggest that such programmes are beginning to make the political connections between men, gender and violence which are necessary to mobilize men in efforts to bring about the structural change necessary to end gender-based violence. In so doing, they are applying a social justice framework to understanding the connections between such violence and other oppressive social relations. But it is clear that challenges remain. Firstly, much of the work done with men on ending gender-based violence is grounded in a gender analysis that is curiously unconcerned with issues of sexuality. But gender and sexuality are closely enmeshed. The violence that produces and is produced by the gender order is also the violence of the hetero-sexist order that regulates sexuality. Acknowledging this relationship opens up questions about men’s experience as victims as well as perpetrators of such violence as well as questions about the different kinds of violence that have a basis in an oppressive gender-sexuality system. Child sexual abuse is an example of violence rooted in the system’s logic of power and control over another’s body, and yet is relatively neglected in the current literature on ending gender-based violence, despite the fact that it constitutes many women’s (and men’s) first and sometimes primary experience of such violence.

Secondly, the importance of community, as both site and agent of change, also needs to be more fully recognized. As already noted, the political connections between men, gender and violence require a broadening beyond individual-behavioural to social-structural change in order to end the violence. But mobilizing men around issues of structural violence can be difficult because of the apparent abstraction of such issues, unless they are made concrete for men (and women) at the level of their community, however it is defined. Such a community focus is critical in being able to work beyond questions of gender identity and toward issues of social justice, and to articulate the roles and responsibilities that men have as part of their community in this work.

Finally, it is clear that many programmes currently working with men on their violence need greater capacity to work at the community and not merely the individual level. This would include increased capacities in community organizing and leadership development strategies, that could enable men to take on responsibility for playing their part in ending gender-based violence in their community. Capacity also refers to the skills, support and resources men will need to take on these roles in social change in the face of likely

opposition from other men (and women). Building this capacity is a crucial function for programmes working with men on their political roles and responsibilities in ending gender-based violence.

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