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SECTION II

STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE

Introduction by Deborah Du Nann Winter and Dana C. Leighton

Direct violence is horrific, but its brutality usually gets our attention: we notice it, and often respond to it. Structural violence, however, is almost always invisible, embedded in ubiquitous social structures, normalized by stable institutions and regular experience. Structural violence occurs whenever people are disadvantaged by political, legal, economic, or cultural traditions. Because they are longstanding, structural inequities usually seem ordinary—the way things are and always have been. But structural violence produces suffering and death as often as direct violence does, though the damage is slower, more subtle, more common, and more difficult to repair. The chapters in this section teach us about some important but invisible forms of structural violence, and alert us to the powerful cultural mechanisms that create and maintain them over generations.

Johan Galtung originally framed the term "structural violence" to mean any constraint on human potential caused by economic and political structures (1969). Unequal access to resources, to political power, to education, to health care, or to legal standing, are

forms of structural violence. When inner-city children have inadequate schools while others do not, when gays and lesbians are fired for their sexual orientation, when laborers toil in inhumane conditions, when people of color endure environmental toxins in their neighborhoods, structural violence exists. Unfortunately, even those who are victims of structural violence often do not see the systematic ways in which their plight is choreographed by unequal and unfair distribution of society's resources. Such is the insidiousness of structural violence.

Structural violence is problematic in and of itself, but it is also dangerous because it frequently leads to direct violence. The chronically oppressed are often, for logical reasons, those who resort to direct violence. Organized armed conflict in various parts of the world is easily traced to structured inequalities. Northern Ireland, for example, has been marked by economic disparities between Northern Irish Catholics—who have higher unemployment rates and less formal education—and Protestants (Cairns & Darby, 1998). In Sri Lanka, youth unemployment and underemployment exacerbates ethnic conflict (Rogers, Spencer, & Uyangoda, 1998). In Rwanda, huge disparities in both income and social status between the Hutu and Tutsis eventually led to ethnic massacres.

While structural violence often leads to direct violence, the reverse is also true, as brutality terrorizes bystanders, who then become unwilling or unable to confront social injustice. Increasingly, civilians pay enormous costs of war, not only through death, but through devastation of neighborhoods and ecosystems. Ruling elites rarely suffer from armed conflict as much as civilian populations do, who endure decades of poverty and disease in war-torn societies.

Recognizing the operation of structural violence forces us to ask questions about how and why we tolerate it, questions that often have painful answers. The first chapter in this section, "Social Injustice," by Susan Opotow, argues that our normal perceptual/cognitive processes lead us to care about people inside our scope of justice, but rarely care about those people outside. Injustice that would be instantaneously confronted if it occurred to someone we love or know is barely noticed if it occurs to strangers or those who are invisible or irrelevant to us. We do not seem to be able to open our minds and our hearts to everyone; moral exclusion is a product of our normal cognitive processes. But Opotow argues convincingly that we can reduce its nefarious effects by becoming aware of our distorted perceptions. Inclusionary thinking can be fostered by relationships, communication, and appreciation of diversity.

One outcome of exclusionary thinking is the belief that victims of violence must in some way deserve their plight. But certainly it is easy to see that young children do not deserve to be victims. The next two chapters in this section address the violence experienced by children. In the first, "The War Close to Home: Children and Violence in the United States," Kathleen Kostelny and James Garbarino describe the direct and structural violence which children in Chicago and other urban areas of the United States endure, paralleling that experienced by children who live in countries at war. Children who endure these environments often become battle weary, numb, hopeless, and/or morally impaired. But children not only suffer directly from violence, they also suffer from the impaired parenting and communities which poverty inflicts. The authors describe how community and family support mechanisms can mitigate these effects. For

example, home visitation and early childhood education programs provide crucial family and community support.

While Kostelny and Garbarino focus on community intervention techniques, Milton Schwebel and Daniel Christie, in their article "Children and Structural Violence," extend the analysis of structural violence by examining how economic and psychological deprivation impairs at-risk children. Children living in poverty experience diminished intellectual development because parents are too overwhelmed to be able to provide crucial linguistic experiences. Schwebel and Christie's discussion concludes that economic structures must provide parents with living-wage employment, good prenatal medical care, and high-quality child-care if we are to see the next generation develop into the intelligent and caring citizens needed to create a peaceful world.

If children are the invisible victims of society's structural violence, so are their mothers. In the chapter "Women, Girls, and Structural Violence: A Global Analysis," Diane Mazurana and Susan McKay articulate the many ways in which global sexism systematically denies females access to resources. From health care and food to legal standing and political power, women and girls get less than males in every country on the planet. Mazurana and McKay argue that patriarchy-based structural violence will not be redressed until women are able to play more active roles making decisions about how resources are distributed.

Patriarchal values also drive excessive militarism, as Deborah Winter, Marc Pilisuk, Sara Houck, and Matthew Lee argue in their chapter "Understanding Militarism: Money, Masculinism, and the Search for the Mystical." The authors illuminate three motives

fueling excessive military expenditures: money, which, because of modern market forces, leads half the world's countries to spend more on arms than on health and education combined; masculinism, which leads societies to make soldiering a male rite of passage and proof of manhood; and the search for the mystical, as men attempt to experience profound human processes of selfsacrifice, honor, and transcendence through war. Like William James, these authors argue that we will need to find a moral equivalent to war, in order to build lasting peace.

The global economy that drives weapons production and excessive militarization produces structural violence on a planetary scale, especially in developing countries, which Marc Pilisuk argues in his chapter "Globalism and Structural Violence." As global markets grow, income disparity increases around the world. Relaxed trade regulations and increased communication networks are creating powerful multinational conglomerates that derive huge profits from exploiting underpaid laborers in developing countries. The result is horrific structural violence to workers who toil under brutal conditions. Globalism also produces a monoculture, in which people throughout the world learn that "the good life" is based on consumer values. Pilisuk shows how nongovernmental organizations at the local level can organize globally to reclaim workers' dignity.

Finally, Brinton Lykes's chapter, "Human Rights as Structural Violence," shows how structural violence is invisible when human rights are conceived simply in civic and political realms. She argues for the expansion of human rights to include collective, cultural, and indigenous rights, which guarantee people their traditional culture and

relationship with their land. Using two case studies, Guatemala and Argentina, she shows how collective rights help people heal and reclaim their cultural identities.

Lykes's discussion, as well as each of the chapters in this section, help us see the limitations of psychology as it is traditionally conceived, that is, the study of individuals and their responses to their environments. These papers require that we examine the political and economic institutions that psychologists typically ignore. In this respect, the thinking in both Sections II (Structural Violence) and IV (Peacebuilding) of this book go beyond traditional psychology, illuminating the sociological, economic, political, and spiritual dimensions of violence and peace.

As insidious as structural violence is, each of these papers also point out that it is not inevitable. Learning about structural violence may be discouraging and overwhelming, but all the authors in this section note that the same processes which feed structural violence can also be used to address it. Reducing structural violence by reclaiming neighborhoods, demanding social justice and living wages, providing prenatal care, alleviating sexism, organizing globally while celebrating local cultures, and finding non-militaristic avenues to express our deepest spiritual motives, will be our most surefooted path to building lasting peace.