Connecting the Dots: Linking Oppression & Frustration

CONNECTING THE DOTS:
LINKING OPPRESSION & FRUSTRATION

By

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A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Social Work

McMaster University

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK
(2004)

McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Connecting the Dots: Linking Oppression & Frustration

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NUMBER OF PAGES: vi, 54

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to address two questions: How does it happen that a community can evolve from a safe, vibrant neighbourhood filled with optimistic people to one that is crime-ridden and full of withdrawn individuals? And how are people born with the same hopes and dreams as the majority of American society so shaped by their experience that the majority now calls them stupid, lazy and violent? It asserts that the answers to these questions can be found in the experience of denied self and environmental efficacy felt by many persons marginalised in today's society that is oppression. Also important is the accompanying experience of internalised oppression, which is the psychological state in which a person believes that him/herself and his/her social group are inferior to the dominant social group, as well as the self destructive behaviours that often contribute to a person's continued oppression and to the dominant group's view of that person as inferior (Mullaly, 2002). This thesis will suggest that the mechanism that frames the processes of oppression and of internalised oppression is the feelings of frustration that result each time a person is marginalised and discriminated against in attaining his/her goals in life. It will also suggest that the behaviours that result from this frustration can be understood using Maier's (1949) theory of frustration-instigated behaviour. Understanding oppression, internalised oppression and frustration in this way, recommendations are made for long-term social policies that address the roots of oppression rather than the destructive behaviours and in which marginalised people have control and choice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have encouraged me in many ways throughout my work on this thesis. To begin, I would like to thank the faculty at McMaster University School of Social Work for teaching me to think critically about the many things that we in today's society often dismiss or ignore. I would like to thank Dr. Bill Lee for all of his time, sympathy, patience and knowledge. This experience has been one to remember and I will remember what you have taught me about community for years to come. I would also like to thank Dr. Gary Dumbrill for his work and guidance as my second reader; it is much appreciated.

I would also like to thank Mr. Jonathan Bradford for mentoring me both as a young student and as a first-time social worker. I thank you for all of your knowledge and trust, and for teaching me how to be graceful in defeat. Your faith in God and your commitment to helping marginalised communities is an inspiration to me.

To my family, I thank you for persevering through this thesis with me. Without your prayers, helpful hands and insightful minds, I could not have done this. Juls, thanks for being the worlds best proof-reader. Mom and Dad, thanks for putting up with me when disaster seemed to strike - you are great shoulders to cry on and efficient crisis managers. To my friends, I thank you for doing all that you knew how to support me. Thank you, Steve, for keeping me sane and distracted. Susan, thank you for your emails, cards and notes - you will never know how much they mean to me.

Lastly, I thank God for His grace, mercy, love and providence.

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INTRODUCTION

When and how do men obey?
Under what inner justifications and upon what external means does this domination rest?
- Max Weber

The sun is setting and the boards on your front porch are creaking under the weight of your rocking chair. It is hot out and three streets down, a boy barely thirteen-years-old is selling crack on the corner. You can see him three blocks away because where there used to be trees, there are broken street lights and where there used to be houses, there are half-rotted buildings where johns meet their tricks for the night. Your neighbour two doors down is yelling something at his girlfriend, something about a cat, but you can not understand him because squeals of traffic can be heard too close by.

Earlier tonight, like every other third Wednesday of the month for the past 20 years, you attended your neighbourhood block club meeting. Claire, Bill, Charlie, Margaret and yourself - the same five people holding out for something better in this neighbourhood. A young white girl from the local "do-good" agency was there tonight, full of promises and dreams of something more than pushers, prostitutes and parking lots in this south east end community. Last you checked, there were nine hundred people in this neighbourhood and more than half of them younger than you. You wonder why they are not involved. What causes them to be more interested in drugs and fighting than in their own neighbourhood's future? Why do they all look so tired and callused? It is

irritating how they act like there is nothing they can do. You face the same remarks and the same obstacles - probably more! You are frustrated too, but you still try. Yet, as you creak along your front porch, you know that you could flyer the whole neighbourhood tomorrow and still only have five people at that meeting.

You're name is Violet Williams. You are 64-years-old and you have lived in this community for as long as you can remember. It didn't used to be this way. Your neighbourhood used to be *the* place to be. Parking lots used to be parks and people used to care. It didn't used to be violence, drugs, unkempt yards and apathetic people. There was an energy to your community and people used to think that they could make a difference.

How does it happen that a community can evolve from a safe, vibrant neighbourhood filled with optimistic people to one that is crime-ridden and full of withdrawn individuals? What causes drugs, prostitution and domestic violence to become the norm in a community? How are people born with the same hopes and dreams as the majority of North American society so shaped by their experience that the majority now calls them stupid, lazy and violent? Did people just stop caring or is the explanation more complex than that?

I believe the answers to these questions can be found in the process of what some scholars refer to as internalised oppression (Bartky, 1990; Freire, 1970; Mullaly, 2002; Podgórecki, 1993; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). Internalised oppression is described as the belief that one's self and one's social group are inferior to the dominant social group, as well as the self-destructive behaviours that often contribute to a person's continued

oppression and to the dominant group's view of that person as inferior (Mullaly, 2002). It encompasses the mindset and behaviours that emerge when time and time again, a person's efforts to affect change in his/her life are thwarted by the powers of racism, sexism, classism and a host of other oppressive forces. An integral element of oppression, internalised oppression is becoming an increasingly important concept in social science as a means of understanding why people do not always act clearly against their oppressive situation or indeed why they sometimes appear to act in ways that reinforce it. Internalised oppression is arguably one of the most frightening and destructive aspects of oppression and as such, we must try to understand what it is that is the mechanism moving oppression from an external experience to one that is internal. In addition, we ought to try to understand what happens to both a person's psyche and his/her behaviour once oppression has become internalised.

I would like to suggest that the mechanism that guides the process of internalised oppression is the feelings of frustration that result each time a person is marginalised and discriminated against in attaining his/her goals in life, and that the behaviours that result from this frustration can be understood using Maier's (1949) theory of frustration-instigated behaviour. We know that when a person is continually barred in attempting to meet his/her goals by such forces as racism, sexism, colonialism, ageism and many others, s/he is likely to become tense and frustrated (Ball, 1968; Maier, 1949; Wilkens and Haynes, 1974). We also know that when a person is oppressed sufficiently severely and sufficiently long, s/he will begin to internalise this oppression and develop a negative view of him or herself (Bartky, 1990; Freire, 1970; Mullaly, 2002; Prilleltensky &

Gonick, 1996). I would like to suggest therefore that we can posit a process of internalised oppression and frustration-instigated behaviour in which a person uses rational or motivated action to try to meet his/her needs and that when over and over s/he is denied the fulfilment of his/her needs because of discrimination, colonialism, racism, etc., s/he becomes frustrated and begins to internalise a negative view of him or herself as undeserving. The result of this is that this person eventually begins to act simply to express his/her frustration, rather than acting out of his/her motivation to meet his/her needs.

Early frustration theorists have applied the concept of frustration to individuals in a somewhat abstract and psychological manner (Barker, Dembo & Lewin, 1943; Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Sears, 1939; Maier, 1949). The case can be, however, that frustration is also clearly manifested collectively in community life. Richard A. Ball (1968) is one author who has addressed this dynamic in his article, "A poverty case: The analgesic subculture of the Southern Appalachians." He applies Maier's theory to a community in the southern region of the Appalachians where the combination of physical, social and economic hardship appears to have shaped a confused and confusing collective behaviour. Paulo Freire (1970) explores the effects of oppression and internalised oppression on entire groups of people in his book, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* We can also understand things psychological to be inextricably linked to things behavioural. As Fromm (1941) states, "Just as one cannot properly understand psychological problems without their social and cultural background, neither can one understand social phenomena without the knowledge of the underlying psychological

mechanisms" (p. 156). Thus, I would like to suggest that one can usefully apply these theories to the experiences of entire communities as well as to individual experience, and to behavioural experience as well as psychological experience. In reflecting on my own experience, I have begun to realise that the effects of oppression are not confined to individuals or to the exact moment of discrimination. Instead, it appears that oppression causes a long withstanding injury that can harm the fabric of the individual personality and the collective will.

My desire to explore this topic springs from my own experience with a community of people whom I believe have over time come to accept their oppression as normal and appear to have developed certain behaviours that may reflect a lack of direction and hope. As a young, middle-class, educated white woman I do not pretend to know what it is like to live in a state of internalised oppression. I cannot pretend to understand what severe and extended oppression is like. What I do know is what it is like to work alongside a community that is broken and forgotten. What I do remember is the look upon the faces of people who had been promised much and delivered little. The look that I saw when in place of requested affordable housing, a concrete strip mall was built. The look that I saw when a landlord failed to fix a broken window and winter temperatures meant utility bills soared and a second job had to be taken on. The look that I saw when despite pleas for improved education, the public school board closed yet another school within the neighbourhood. The sobs that I heard when a white, middle-class caseworker told a black woman in the grips of poverty that she was not qualified for many of the jobs she wished to apply for, and so this woman feared that returning to

selling drugs was the only way to provide food for her children. What I do remember is the exploitation, limitation and imposition of those in this community. What I do realise is that oppression is a frightening thing that destroys hope in the lives of many and threatens the balance in many of today's communities.

I believe that social workers must make it their priority to not simply decry oppression but also to understand its dynamics, its long-term impacts on the ability of people to manage their environments and to put forth social policies aimed at ridding our communities of oppression. First, I believe this exploration is important so that those creating social policy do not help to pathologise those that are experiencing oppression by writing social policy that is paternalistic and unrelated to the root of the problem that is oppression. In being aware of the source of certain behaviours, those who create social policy are more able to recognise the injury and scarring that internalised oppression has caused and to put forward effective policy that is aimed not only at ending oppression, but also at dealing with the long-term effects that this trauma has left on many individuals and communities. Second, and most importantly, I believe this exploration is necessary in order for those experiencing internalised oppression to begin to act against their oppression in a motivated way. When communities that are oppressed do not have a voice with which to communicate their oppression and its numerous effects, they are robbed of the self-determination and democratic participation needed to rise up against oppression and their oppressors. As Freire (1970) notes,

> As long as the oppressed remain unaware of the causes of their condition, they fatalistically "accept" their exploitation. Further, they are apt to react in a passive

> and alienated manner when confronted with the necessity to struggle for their freedom and self-affirmation" (p. 51).

It seems that a further disservice beyond oppression is done to oppressed persons when academic literature does not consider all aspects of their reality, including their experiences of internalised oppression and the behaviours resulting from this.

This thesis is concerned with the process of internalised oppression and the resulting frustrated behaviours as they present themselves in a community context. The first chapter presents an overview of the concept of oppression, concentrating specifically on internalised oppression and its connection to external oppression. The second chapter describes typical motivated behaviour, suggesting that when a person is not experiencing internalised oppression, s/he acts in a motivated way, reflecting his/her belief in his/her own environmental efficacy. The third chapter suggests that when a person is internally oppressed, s/he lacks belief in his/her own environmental efficacy and his/her right to a more just reality and will act simply to express the frustration that has resulted from his/her oppression, instead of acting to actually reduce his/her oppression. This chapter explores Maier's four categories of frustration-instigated behaviour, including aggression, fixation, regression and resignation, and how these behaviours manifest themselves in oppressed individuals and communities. To conclude, the fourth chapter will offer suggestions of how this information might influence social policy and the fight to end oppression.

There are a number of cautions in attempting an exploration such as this. First, one must not think that what follows is the only way in which to understand the

behaviour of persons who are oppressed. There are other explanations (Barker, Dembo & Lewin, 1943; Dollard *et al.*, 1939; Seligman & Garber, 1980). What follows is an attempt to understand the present reality in many oppressed individuals and communities and is not a prescription for what will indefinitely occur in oppressed populations.

The second caution is that in undertaking an exploration of internalised oppression, we ought never to assume that we can fully understand oppression outside its actual experience. The effort to understand the actions of oppressed populations must be a joint effort involving many and led by those who have experienced severe and persistent oppression. Those who study oppression must not assume to be able to go this journey alone.

> It happens, however, that as they cease to be exploiters or indifferent spectators or simply the heirs of exploitation and move to the side of the exploited, they almost always bring with them the marks of their origin: their prejudices and their deformations, which include a lack of confidence in the people's ability to think, to want, and to know (Freire, 1970: 46).

That which is offered here is meant to bring attention to issues in the lives of those who are oppressed. I hope that this can be the beginning of a journey towards understanding and part of a critical pedagogy useful in the struggle against oppression.

The final caution is that one does not use this thesis as a means to pathologise those who are oppressed. Clearly, certain patterns of behaviours of those who are oppressed, such as violence and apathy, can be detrimental to both the oppressed themselves and to others. The difference between those who simply act in a destructive manner, however, and the oppressed who act out of frustration, is that for the latter, there

is a constant, demeaning force robbing them of the potential to act otherwise. One must learn to pathologise the oppression, not those suffering under it.

Now, with a cautious mind and a humble heart, let us begin this journey.

Section 2

OPPRESSION & INTERNALISED OPPRESSION

Oppression as the denial of efficacy

Scholars have developed a range definitions of oppression that are each unique, yet commonly describe a process in which a person is denied personal and environmental efficacy. Efficacy is defined by Merriam-Webster's dictionary as the power to produce an effect. Personal efficacy, then, can be thought of as possessing the power to change or control one's own life experience, and environmental efficacy as the power to influence one's environment. Oppression as a denial of efficacy is communicated as well in Podgórecki's (1993) definition. He suggests that oppression is "an external or internal man-made limitation of the available options of human behavior of an individual or a group" (p. 6). The Marxist analyst Eric Fromm (1941) provides this explanation of the profound effect on the depth and breadth of the human experience when we say that a person is denied efficacy.

> It would seem that the amount of destructiveness to be found in individuals is proportionate to the amount to which expansiveness of life is curtailed. By this we do not refer to individual frustrations of this or that instinctive desire but to the thwarting of the whole life, the blockage of spontaneity of the growth and expression of man's sensuous, emotional, and intellectual capacities (p. 206).

He suggests that the denial of efficacy is a deeply injurious act which impacts the centre of a person's being. Oppression as the denial of efficacy is, thus, the institutionalisation of limitation and discrimination for marginalised peoples. Of course

oppression is played out in many forms. It is racism. It is white people unwilling to work in, shop in or even walk through a certain neighbourhood simply because it is predominantly composed of people of colour and the white people have labelled the neighbourhood's residents as dangerous and pathological. Oppression is colonialism. It is Aboriginal Canadians forced to function under a government that works to eliminate an entire culture's centuries-old way of living and governing themselves and the appropriation of their lands. Oppression is ageism. It is locking citizens that used to be our workers, mayors, choir leaders and school principals in sterile buildings reeking of infirmary and death. Oppression is sexism. It is a man who beats his wife because society has said that he is the head of the household and what he says goes. Oppression is all these things, and many more that pervasively and persistently deny a person full participation in and realisation of his/her own life.[1]

> Our social structures are imbued with racism, sexism, patriarchy, and classism in that there is a privileged or dominant group within each of these social divisions that has more political, social, and usually economic power than the subordinate groups. The dominant relations of men over women, white people over persons of colour, affluent people over poor people, heterosexual over homosexual and bisexual persons, physically able persons over physically and mentally challenged person 'have been so internalized into the structures of society that they have also become intrinsic to the roles, rules, policies and practices of [social] institutions' (Haney, 1989, p. 37, as cited in Mullaly, 2002, p. 19).

Oppression is personal, cultural and structural

It is important to be clear that oppression is not simply something that only occurs between two individuals. As Mar'i (1988) notes, oppression is something that is perpetrated by societies, governments, communities and individuals.

> Oppression involves institutionalized collective and individual modes of behaviour through which one group attempts to dominate and control another in order to secure political, economic and/or social-psychological advantage (p. 6, cited in Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996).

Thus, oppression affects entire groups of people and individuals who are part of those groups. Prilleltensky and Gonick (1996) focus their definition on the realisation that oppression occurs both politically and psychologically, and that the detrimental political and psychological effects of oppression can be seen in both individuals and communities.

> Oppression entails a state of asymmetric power relations characterized by domination, subordination and resistance, where the dominating persons or groups exercise their power by restricting access to material resources and by implanting in the subordinated persons or groups fear or self-deprecating views about themselves (p. 130).

Day to day, oppression is exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, ethnocentrism, and violence (Mullaly, 2002; Young, 1990). It is the constant, pervasive and persistent denial of self-determination, distributive justice, and democratic participation (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). Echoing Fromm to a degree, they state:

> What determines oppression is when a person is blocked from opportunities to self-development, is excluded from full participation in society, does not have certain rights that the dominant group takes for granted, or is assigned a second-class citizenship, not because of individual talent, merit or failure, but because of his or her membership in a particular group or category of people (p. 28).

Oppression takes on many forms, manifesting itself as something personal, cultural and structural (Mullaly, 2002; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996; York, 1989). York (1989) describes the institutionalised attack on efficacy and the powerlessness and ethnocentrism faced by Canada's Aboriginal communities, one of many populations that are experiencing oppression.

> The Indian Act also imposes severe restrictions on the political power of Indians. The band council, headed by a chief, is supposed to be the elected authority at each reserve, yet the powers of the band councils are curtailed by Section 82, which gives the Indian affairs minister the authority to disallow any bylaw passed by a council. Even when the minister permits a bylaw to be passed, it is likely to relate to an insignificant issue (p. 59).

This is just one example of many, yet it indicates how oppression is expressed at all levels. First, it indicates how the hegemony of western values causes racial minorities to be oppressed culturally, as those outside of the Aboriginal culture define what is considered the normal order of things in Canadian society, such as how a government is structured and how it rules. Second, it shows how the structures of society, in this case government, add to oppression through the institutionalisation of oppressive practices such as providing one person with the power to veto an entire community. Lastly, Aboriginal populations in Canada face oppression at a personal level each day in that each member of each band has been stereotyped and so it is believed that all Aboriginal people are the same and that it is possible for one minister to know what is best for all Aboriginal populations.

I do not suggest that the oppression experienced by Aboriginal Canadians is the same as that experienced by African Americans or women or children or gays and lesbians. Indeed each case of oppression plays out relative to the specific concrete situation of those involved. What one can say is that each of these communities and many others face daily reminders that they are considered lesser citizens than those in power over them. Young, old, black and brown, they are aware that in the dominant

group's eyes, whether it be white people, men, heterosexuals or others, they are considered less than fully human.

External oppression to internal oppression

As indicated above, oppression is an insidious force, affecting the internal as well as external lives. We must ask how oppression progresses from the dominating treatment of one individual or community by another individual or community, to the domination of that individual or community's thoughts. When constantly faced with acts of violence and discrimination and evidences of failed promises it seems almost natural that one's self-esteem would be in danger. When time and time again a person tries to satisfy what is considered a common human need and s/he is denied the fulfilment of this need on the basis of his/her race or gender or sexual preference, it seems inevitable that one would experience a sort of depression. Indeed, studies suggest that to experience external oppression is to almost certainly experience internalised oppression (Bartky, 1990; Freire, 1970; Mullaly, 2002; Podgórecki, 1993; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). A person or community that is consistently denied resources and opportunity and is subordinated may eventually be a person or community that feels worthless and powerless.

Prilleltensky and Gonick (1996) suggest that external oppression affects a person internally in three ways. First, one loses the ability to define one's own identity and instead accepts an imposed identity. Second, one comes to see oneself as undeserving. Third, one comes to feel powerless to affect change in one's life.

> The dynamics of oppression are internal as well as external. External forces deprive individuals or groups of the benefit of self-determination, distributive justice, and democratic participation (Barret, 1986; Brittan & Maynard, 1984;

> Bulhan, 1985; Weisband, 1989). Frequently, these restrictions are internalized and operate at a psychological level as well, where the person acts as his or her personal censor" (p. 130).

Self-determination is an important concept here. It can be conceptualised psychologically as one's ability to define one's own identity (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). Possessing a negative personal identity, then, can result from internalised oppression. For those oppressed by others, their identity is defined by those oppressing them. In many communities, such as inner city ghettos and Aboriginal reserves, this means that others have labelled them as weak communities and bad neighbourhoods in which to live. The result is that people within these communities eventually begin to understand themselves in this same way. Hogget (2001) notes that the oppressed are often incapable of defining themselves in terms other than their oppression.

> ...where an individual or group is subject to the domination of others the experience of powerlessness that ensues will have an impact upon their capacity to find words to think about their experience and therefore upon their own sense of identity (p. 48).

Similarly, Freire (1970) suggests, the oppressed identify themselves as their oppressors define them and strive to be as the oppressor is, for "during the initial stage of their struggle the oppressed find in the oppressor their model of 'manhood' " (p. 31).

Personal responsibility for one's failure is another externally oppressive message that fosters internalised oppression. The idea of distributive justice experienced in oppression is suggested by Prilleltensky and Gonick (1996) to mean an, "externally produced and internalized view of self as not deserving more resources" (p. 130). In studies concerning reasons behind poverty and unemployment, researchers have found

that "individualistic factors were thought much more important than structural...factors", in essence affirming the idea of personal responsibility for economic failure (Huber & Form, 1973, p. 101; Newman, 1988; as cited in Prilleltensky & Gonick). In addition, in her article, "Welfare mothers' reflections on personal responsibility," Scarbrough (2001) states,

> Welfare women are viewed as irresponsible and dependent. These images situate the problem in the individual and separate the individuals from their physical, economic, and social contexts. The attribution of welfare women's economic success or failure to their psychological traits is reflected in the title of the 1996 Federal 'welfare reform' legislation, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act [PRWORA, P.L. 104-193] (p. 262).

Indeed, I have heard those in an inner city neighbourhood in which I worked describe their own and their neighbour's lack of education, resulting job instability and low incomes as the causes of their community's present situation. They have been encouraged not to recognise the structural issues of poor attention to inner-city education and racism and classism in the job market that are at play.

Another way in which we can think of external forces of distributive injustice breeding internalised oppression is through the establishment of disgust for those who are dependent. Logically, the external oppression of one individual or community by another individual or community, causes the former to be dependent on the oppressive individual or community for meaningful existence (Freire, 1970). In many Aboriginal communities, the government's lack of attention to housing conditions, educational systems and employment opportunities only means more dependence by this community on the government for aid (Robertson, 1970; York, 1989). When one is raised in a culture that

encourages personal responsibility and independence, "the self-made man" and "pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps," one is taught to reject the notions of dependence and charity as a matter of pride. In essence, the value of "you get what you deserve" is preached. In this way, the dominant individual or group's values subordinate those who are forced to be dependent on them.

> The attack on 'dependency culture' reveals a hatred of the very idea of dependency (Hoggett, 2000) and a refusal (and one which finds support within some radical voices within social policy) to accept that some people need continuing support to cope with their lives. There seems to be a real contempt around for people who cannot or will not be 'empowered' at the moment...(Hoggett, 2001, p. 44).

If this hatred of dependency is the foundation of a person's thoughts and the message received from dominant society, then when s/he finds himself/herself oppressed and in need of aid, it likely follows that s/he will hate his/her position and possibly hate himself/herself for needing help.

Internalised oppression can also be expressed through the incapacity to see the opportunity for change or for one's voice to be heard. These feelings of insignificance are the outgrowth of a lack of opportunities for collaboration and democratic participation in society. A marginalised person feels limited in the power to actually make a difference. Freire (1970) describes this as an "adaptation to the structure of domination" in which a person becomes resigned to his/her fate and feels incapable of taking the risks that his/her freedom from oppression requires. S/he believes that his/her position is simply something that s/he must deal with and get used to. For many marginalised communities, numerous failed attempts at long-term change for their community means that those within the community did not see real change as possible. As Hoggett (2001) states,

> Common sense makes the way things are self-evident; nothing else is possible, nothing else is conceivable. Here, then the exercise of power over others (i.e. domination) is equivalent to the power to foreclose thought; the experience of injustice exists as a perturbation, as a disturbance, but one which remains incomprehensible (p. 46).

This inability to see the future as anything different than one's present reality causes one to submit to oppression and discourages one's efforts to retaliate.

Internalised oppression

A less public aspect of oppression, especially when thinking in terms of an entire community, and key to the experience of oppression is its intrapersonal effects, that is to say, the psychological turmoil and self-negating thoughts that are ingrained in a person experiencing oppression. This phenomenon is often referred to as internalised oppression or psychological oppression.

> Psychological oppression, in turn, is the internalized view of self as negative and as not deserving more resources or increased participation in societal affairs, resulting from the use of affective, behavioral, cognitive, linguistic, and cultural mechanisms designed to solidify political domination (Prilleltensky and Gonick, 1996, p. 130).

Bartky (1990) places internalised oppression into an effective perspective. "To be psychologically oppressed is to be weighed down in your mind; it is to have a harsh dominion over your own self-esteem. The psychologically oppressed become their own oppressors..." (p. 22). This idea of the oppressed becoming their own oppressors is consistent with the work of Freire, who states that the oppressor exists within the oppressed, that is, that the oppressed desire to be like the oppressors and hold the same view of themselves as the oppressor. Perhaps the most fundamental element of internalised oppression is that when someone tells one that one is worthless over and over

again, one eventually begins to believe this as truth. In his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970) states

> Self-depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from their internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them. So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything - that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive - that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness (p. 49).

In much the same way that oppression is manifested as what we understand to be racism, sexism, classism, etc., we can understand internalised oppression to be the internalised form of all of these things. For example, it can be said that those who are experiencing internal colonialism believe that they are,

> ...backward or pathological in keys aspects of individual and social life (work ethic or intelligence or ability to govern for example) arising from the imposition of a colonizing society's values and culture. The result is the belief that the oppressed need the governance of the colonizer group. (Lee, Sammon & Dumbrill, 2004, p. 15).

Those experiencing internalised racism, sexism or classism believe that they are inferior to those in the dominant group as a result of their race, gender or class. When we talk of internalised oppression, we are talking about all of these experiences.

The psychological effects of internalised oppression can be characterised in a number of ways. Those experiencing internalised oppression internalise an inferior identity of themselves and often conform to, comply with and obey authority unquestionably. They often hold to the belief in a just world and that they must be undeserving in some way. The internally oppressed often become hopeless and apathetic and believe in their own personal impotence beyond what it is in actuality. Lastly, those experiencing internalised oppression, as a result of repeated instances of failure, often

appear to possess a pessimistic explanatory style which causes them to believe that suffering pervades their entire life and into their future (Prilleltensky and Gonick, 1996).

[1] A person is not simply oppressed or not oppressed. A person may be simultaneously oppressed and not oppressed in different aspects of his/her identity. Gary C. Dumbrill explores these concepts of "mainstream" and "marginalisation" in his chapter, "Child Welfare: AOP's Nemesis?" in Schera, Wes, ed. (2003). *Emerging Perspectives on Anti-Oppressive Practice*. Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press Inc.

Section 3

MOTIVATED BEHAVIOUR

Normative motivated behaviour

As one would in a scientific experiment, it is important for us to explore both control and experimental conditions. In our case, this means that in order to better understand frustrated behaviour, we will first look at how normative behaviour is understood. The current literature generally describes normative behaviour as behaviour that is motivation-instigated, purposive and directed towards a specific end (Kane, 1987; Mele, 2003; Wilkens and Haynes, 1974). It is often the case, and will be for this chapter, that this sort of behaviour is referred to simply as motivated behaviour. In his book, *Frustration: The Study of Behavior Without a Goal*, Maier (1949) conceptualises motivated behaviour as that which is aimed towards the fulfilment of a goal, thus it is goal-oriented behaviour. He states that according to this understanding, motivated behaviour is always a means to an end or "the solution to the problem of reaching a goal" (p. 11). Similarly, Mele (2003) suggests that motivated behaviour is a matter of acting to satisfy a want, or some end that one desires.

> If an entity's behavior is not influenced even by the most carefully designed attempts at positive and negative reinforcement, that is evidence that there is nothing the entity wants and that the entity is devoid of motivation...However, if efforts to reward (positively reinforce) a kind of behavior increases the frequency of behavior of that kind and efforts to punish (negatively reinforce) another kind of behavior decreases its frequency, that is evidence that there is something the entity wants (p. 7).

This suggests that any time that one pursues a course of action in order to fulfil a specific need or reach a certain goal, this action can by classified as motivated.

Motivated or goal-oriented behaviour is said to follow a progression that is relatively predictable (Maier, 1949; Mele, 2003; Wilkens & Haynes, 1974). This progression involves a need or want, the tension that develops prior to need fulfilment and then need-satisfaction. This tension that develops prior to need satisfaction is understood as the source of a person's motivation. In the event that a person's need is unmet, this tension develops into a sort of personal anxiety. Wilkens & Haynes (1974) state,

> The individual first perceives the existence of some unsatisfied need. As the awareness of this need increases, tension is created. This tension develops a motive or reason for the person to seek need-satisfaction. As a result of the tension, the individual searches the environment for an appropriate way to satisfy the perceived need deficiency (p. 770).

A person who is generally part of the mainstream, tends to believe that s/he is deserving of the fulfilment of his/her unsatisfied need. As part of the dominant group, this person has been socialised to believe that it is his/her right as a man, a white person, a wealthy citizen, etc. to be able to use rational means with which to satisfy his/her needs. In addition, s/he will expect to do so with few obstacles or barriers along the way. The actions that this person takes are often referred to as his/her goal responses, that is, the means taken to satisfy his/her need (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Sears, 1939).

Impassability of barriers

As noted previously, a person's ability to reach his/her goal is dependent upon his/her learned behaviours and the relative impassability of barriers s/he may encounter in

trying to carry out a goal-response. If faced with a situation that s/he has been able to navigate successfully on a prior occasion, s/he will readily meet his/her goal by performing his/her original or learned behaviours. When faced with a new situation, however, Wilkens and Haynes (1974) suggest that a person begins a rational decision-making process of first determining the available courses of action and then evaluating the utility of these alternatives in meeting his/her goal. For those not suffering oppression or the blocking of their efficacy, there may be numerous alternative courses of action available to satisfy their needs. One would then calculate the probability of goal attainment resulting from each alternative and select the course of action with the highest probable utility.

When a person or group is trying to accomplish some task, they typically begin by trying the behaviours they have learned in previous apparently similar situations. When they encounter a barrier to meeting their goal using these learned behaviours, the progression of behaviour takes on a slightly different character. Maier (1949) suggests that one of three possible behaviours occurs. First, if a person is unsuccessful in overcoming the barrier using behaviour learned in seemingly similar situations, s/he varies the behaviour in some way and manages to get around the barrier and satisfy his/her goal.

The second and third behaviour forms occur when no goal-response attempted is successful and as Maier (1949) states, "the constant interference of the barrier is unpleasant and gradually the barrier is built up into a negative incentive" (p. 126). At this point, one may have one or two choices. First, if alternate, lesser goals are present, which

in the absence of the original goal become more attractive, one may abandon one's original goal and proceed to satisfy one's need with the substitute goal.

If alternative goals are not available, however, a person may simply abandon his/her original goal, deciding that it is not worth the effort. If a person is truly able to ignore and ultimately forget his/her original need, s/he may relieve the tension that is created when s/he is unable to satisfy it. If a person is not able to forget his/her original need, that is, if s/he is constantly reminded of it, the tension created by the need remaining unmet will remain.

Motivated behaviour and denied means

Motivated behaviour is of course considered to be the normal course of behaviour for those occupying the general mainstream in today's society. Consider, though, the situation of a person who continuously faces impassable barriers, such as racism, classism, sexism, homophobia and others, in the struggle to satisfy his/her needs. What might a person's behaviour look like if s/he could not perform the required goal-response, but yet felt the need to do so because of the tension s/he experiences in the presence of this unsatisfied need?

Mele (2003) notes that there are a number of popular assumptions in current motivation literature, including,

> ...Motivated beings have a capacity to represent goals and means to goals;...A motivation-encompassing attitude may have either a goal or a means as its object; ..Motivation varies in strength; ...Whenever agents act intentionally, there is something they are effectively motivated to do (p. 3).

If one is to accept these statements, then we need to ask what occurs when one does not possess all of the means to meet the goals that one would ultimately desire to fulfil. When an individual or community has never had an amenable environment or the external means to satisfy their needs and so their internal capacity to think about satisfying their needs is damaged, can that individual or community still be acting in a motivated way? What occurs when a person has continuously been frustrated by being denied the opportunity and the encouragement necessary to formulate substantial goals and execute the achievement of such goals? How does the motivation to express one's frustration at being oppressed become stronger then the motivation to seek ways to end one's oppression? An intriguing response to these questions may lie in an examination of frustration-instigated behaviour.

Section 4

FRUSTRATION-INSTIGATED BEHAVIOUR

Frustration

When considering the motivation underlying a person's actions, one often implicitly assumes the presence of particular conditions, mainly that each person possesses the capability and the means necessary to meet his/her needs in an amenable environment. Less often does one consider the motivation of those whose capability has been damaged somewhere along the line by oppressive forces which are beyond their control and those who, through discrimination and exploitation, have consistently been denied the means needed to meet their goals. One tends to see people simply as motivated or unmotivated. Yet this duality leaves many persons' actions unexplained and misunderstood.

It is essential that one consider whether there is an alternative explanation for the sometimes destructive behaviour of persons who, from the outside, appear to be unmotivated or "wrongly motivated". We need to attempt to understand the mechanism that is responsible for frequently scarring the motivation of the array of marginalised populations; the mechanism that is responsible for moving external oppression to something that is internalised within a person; the mechanism that causes some marginalised peoples to act in ways that appear to further their oppression, rather than ameliorate it. I suggest that at least a partial explanation can be found in the notion of the

frustration of the human need to influence his/her environment. This explanation is in part meant to address the need that Kane (1987) notes,

> Rather than continue to take observed differences in attitudes - such as passivity and hopelessness among the persistent poor - as evidence in favor of the cultural view of poverty, we need a social-psychological framework for understanding how the constraining experience of poverty might affect a person's behavior and their future chances for self-sufficiency (p. 416).

As noted earlier, I suggest that one can identify a process of frustration that occurs in a marginalised individual or community. In this process, a person begins his/her effort to satisfy his/her unmet need by acting in a motivated way and is persistently and pervasively denied the fulfilment of his/her needs because of discrimination, colonialism, homophobia, racism, etc. After continuous denied efficacy and the prolonged discomfort of frustration, s/he begins to question why s/he has such little power over his/her life and eventually internalises a negative view of him or herself as undeserving or a victim of fate (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). The result of being forced to see oneself in the same way as those in the dominant group see one, that is as unproductive, inferior and less than fully human, is the experience of internalised oppression (Freire, 1970; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996).

One can understand this as a profoundly alienating and frustrating experience and clearly one carrying with it a tremendous amount of discomfort. A person forced to remain in this position may over time begin to act simply to express the frustration that s/he experiences as a result of being unable to meet his/her needs through his/her own best efforts (Ball, 1968; Maier, 1949). This is something quite different than a person acting out of his/her motivation to meet his/her needs. Fromm (1941) comments

powerfully on the situation that unfolds when a person is unable meet his/her needs because some force (i.e. the state, a more powerful person, government, etc.) is impinging on his/her abilities. He suggests that a person's legitimate energy, when thwarted, can turn to frustration and destruction.

> Life has an inner dynamism of its own; it tends to grow, to be expressed, to be lived. It seems that if this tendency is thwarted the energy directed toward life undergoes a process of decomposition and changes into energies directed toward destruction. In other words: the drive for life and the drive for destruction are not mutually independent factors but are in a reversed interdependence. The more the drive toward life is thwarted, the stronger is the drive toward destruction; the more life is realized, the less is the strength of destructiveness. *Destructiveness is the outcome of unlived life*. Those individual and social conditions that make for suppression of life produce the passion for destruction that forms, so to speak, the reservoir from which the particular hostile tendencies - either against others or against oneself - are nourished (p. 206-7).

Denied efficacy and reactive behaviour

An integral aspect in the experience of internalised oppression is this frustration of the human need for efficacy that Fromm speaks of. Yet internalised oppression is not simply a state of being or a mindset. One can see internalised oppression played out in a person's behaviours, in addition to his/her psyche (Mullaly, 2002). When a person consistently experiences discrimination, exploitation and limitation, certain changes are often seen in his/her outward reactions to this oppression. In other words, history has shown that when opportunities for growth, expression and a fuller experience of life are upset by oppression and internalised oppression certain behaviours emerge amongst populations that are marginalised in this way.

Examples of this sort of reactive behaviour can be seen amongst many different marginalised populations that experience oppression and internalised oppression (Ball,

1968; Fanon, 1968; Freire, 1970; Maier, 1949; Rabow *et al.*, 1983; York, 1989). York (1989) describes how the Canadian government's restrictions on the Aboriginal way of living, in addition to an education system devoid of consideration for Aboriginal children's well-being and Aboriginal peoples' general experience of prolonged and severe powerlessness and abuse, seemed to pave the way for unproductive and self-destructive behaviours, particularly substance abuse, in the community at Alkali Lake.

> Alkali Lake and other Indian communities were also susceptible to alcohol abuse because a high rate of unemployment and a growing dependence on welfare were leading to apathy and despair. Provincial game laws and fishing regulations combined with the increasing amount of logging and farming in the area, made it harder for the Indians to hunt and fish. The Shuswap people were further weakened by the devastating effects of a Roman Catholic residential school near Williams Lake, where their children were sent. A trial in 1989 revealed that a Catholic priest at the residential school had committed dozens of sexual assaults on Indian children at the school in the 1950s and 1960s. Many of the traumatized victims turned to self-destructive behavior - including alcohol abuse (p. 177).

One can also see a tendency towards certain destructive behaviours in those living in poverty, particularly in the inner city where racism and classism, amongst other oppressions, have left a clear mark on the motivation of its inhabitants. Clark (1964) notes how life in the Harlem ghetto has equated countless experiences of powerlessness and oppression, leading to experiences of hostility, aggression and apathy for many of those living in it.

> The Harlem ghetto is the institutionalization of powerlessness. Harlem is made up of the socially engendered ferment, resentment, stagnation, and potentially explosive reactions to powerlessness and continued abuses. The powerless individual and community reflect this fact by increasing dependency and by difficulty in mobilizing even the latent power to counter the most flagrant abuses...Random hostility, aggression, self-hatred, suspiciousness, seething turmoil and non-adaptive reactions to a pervasive sense and fact of powerlessness (Clark, 1964:80, as cited in Rabow *et al.*, 1983: 424-5).

Reactions to oppression and the turmoil of internalised oppression appear to be somewhat predictably patterned among those marginalised in society. Freire (1970) describes yet another example of how a person's feelings of powerlessness and belief in his/her unworthiness leads to reactive aggression, fixation, regression and resignation. He notes how those who come to believe that they are subordinate to others strike out at those closest to them.

> The peasant is a dependent. He can't say what he wants. Before he discovers his dependence, he suffers. He lets off steam at home, where he shouts at his children, beats them, and despairs. He complains about his wife and thinks everything is dreadful. He doesn't let off steam with the boss because he thinks the boss is a superior being. Lots of times, the peasant gives vent to his sorrows by drinking (Freire, 1970, p. 51)

Many others provide similar sorts of descriptions of the past and present reality of populations who have experienced centuries of oppression, exploitation and powerlessness. Each of these descriptions demonstrate the self-defeating behaviours that often are present amongst those experiencing oppression and internalised oppression. Understanding something of the dynamics of oppression, we can postulate that these harmful behaviours that many scholars write of result from the extreme sense of futility and powerlessness that oppressed populations experience.

One would not presume to suggest that any two experiences of oppression are the same. An Aboriginal person living on a reserve in Northern Ontario will experience oppression and its internalisation in markedly different ways than an African American person living in inner city Chicago. Yet although they may experience oppression in different ways, we can discern commonalties in the ways in which marginalised

populations react to their experiences of limitation, exploitation, violence and ethnocentrism. Despite difference in their specific experience, we can usefully look at behaviours in various marginalised populations as relevant to other marginalised populations. I would suggest that we can see all of these behaviours as what some scholars have called frustration-instigated behaviour (Ball, 1968; Maier, 1949; Wilkens & Haynes, 1974; Winefield, 1979).

Frustration-instigated behaviour

Frustration-instigated behaviour refers to those actions which are a response to frustration, conceptualised by Maier (1949) and others as fixation, aggression, regression and resignation. A frustration theorist and perhaps most noted in the development of the concept of frustration-instigated behaviour, Maier began his work on frustration-instigated behaviour with the aim to dispel the prevalent belief of his time that all behaviour was goal-oriented. In his study of what occurs when a person is continuously faced with needs that s/he is unable to meet, that is, when a person is said to be in a highly frustrated state, Maier observed the reactions of rats when they were placed on the Lashley jumping apparatus and forced to pursue food that was hidden behind one of two doors (Ball, 1968; Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Sears, 1939; Maier, 1949; Wilkens & Haynes; 1974). He observed that, normatively, the rats demonstrated goal-oriented or motivation-instigated behaviour as they acted in whatever way resulted in meeting their need for food. Conversely, when faced with what Maier terms "an insoluble problem," that is, a situation in which one is unable to meet one's needs using one's previously learned behaviour, the rats would eventually become frustrated and would either refuse to

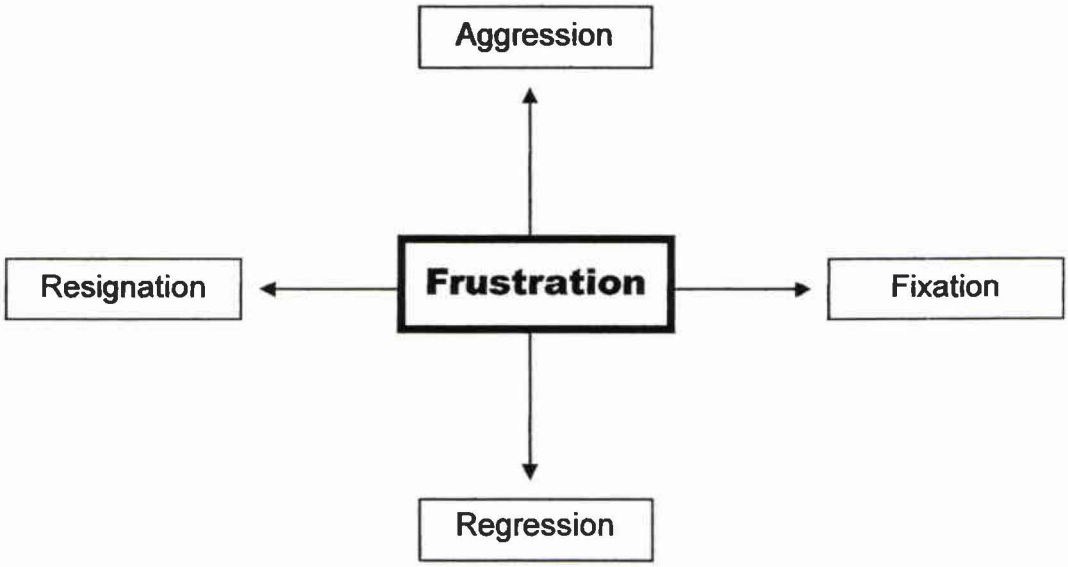
jump or become fixated in performing the same action over and over again, regardless of whether or not it produced reward or punishment.

Maier used these observations as well as inferences from others' work (Barker, Dembo & Lewin, 1941; Dollard *et al.*, 1939; Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, 1938) to develop the theory of frustration-instigated behaviour and its four categories, namely aggression, fixation, regression and resignation. He conceptualised frustration as "the process whereby the selection of behaviour is determined by forces other than goals or mere neural connections" (Maier, 1949, p. 94). He theorised that when faced with a degree of frustration beyond what he called one's frustration threshold, that is, the level of frustration at which one can no longer react with motivated behaviour, one may react with hostile, stubborn, immature and/or apathetic behaviour. When this is the case, a person's actions are not chosen based on his/her motivation to meet his/her needs, but rather as an expression of his/her emotions and feelings of frustration, proving to be frustration-instigated behaviour. Maier and Ellen (1956) comment on the process of frustration-instigated behaviour.

> If the motivation process is operating during problem-solving performance, then frustrated behaviour not only makes problem solving incidental to the needed goal object, but may actually be in conflict with it. Thus it lacks goal-orientation and therefore represents a class of behaviour without a goal. Such behaviour is determined largely by conditions inside the organism, so that the expression of emotions and feelings, rather than what they achieve, characteristically accompany behaviour selected under conditions of frustration...Thus an angry person may strike a man who blocks his path and the man may collapse. However, if the cause of the blow is anger rather than the removal of the obstacle, the success is incidental to the purpose (p. 195).

While typical motivated behaviour is described as a means to an end, frustrated behaviour is considered to be a sequence that ends itself when full expression of emotion is possible or when further aggravation and frustration to reinstate frustrated behaviour are not present (Maier & Ellen, 1956).

Diagram 1.1 - The Four Categories of Frustration-Instigated Behaviour



Aggression, fixation, regression and resignation

The four categories of aggression, fixation, regression and resignation are classified as the responses that occur in frustration-instigated behaviour (Ball, 1968; Maier, 1949; Maier & Ellen, 1956; Wilkens & Haynes, 1974). In their study of frustration and aggression, Dollard *et al.* (1939) found that a tendency to respond aggressively to frustration, combined with the amount of obstruction to one's goal and the number of occurrences of simultaneous frustration determined the likelihood of aggression as one's reaction to frustration. They also found that "...the most direct form

of aggression may be the most strongly inhibited. When this is the case, then indirect forms of aggression will occur" (Lawson, 1965, p. 15). As did the previous example given by Freire (1968), Fanon (1968) also notes this displacement of aggression in frustrated individuals.

> While the settler or the policeman has the right the livelong day to strike the native, to insult him and to make him crawl to them, you will see the native reaching for his knife at the slightest hostile or aggressive glance cast on him by another native; for the last resort of the native is to defend his personality vis-à-vis his brother (p. 52).

Examples of aggressive behaviour, then, are things such as domestic violence, in-group violence and verbal abuse (Freire, 1970; Maier, 1949).

Fixation, being the repetition of a certain behaviour previously shown to accomplish nothing, is also a common response to frustration as it involves the soothing qualities of ritual. Even if detrimental to a person, fixation becomes a learned reaction to frustration and a way to somehow respond to frustration and perhaps control the situation. Examples we can see of fixation would be such things as drug use, gambling, stubborn attitudes, compulsions, persistent criminal behaviour and ritualistic acts (Ball, 1968; Maier, 1949; Wilkens & Haynes, 1974).

Regression is conceptualised as the abandonment of constructive attempts to meet one's goals for the adoption of more primitive and childish behaviour (Wilkens & Haynes, 1974). To a degree, regression is settling for dependency upon others. We can see regression in extreme emotional or financial dependency, irresponsible actions, lack of attention to personal and environmental care, and other immature behaviours (Ball, 1968; Maier, 1949; Wilkens & Haynes, 1974).

Closely related to regression is the final category of resignation. Resignation is passivity, inactivity or disinterest in continuing action - it is giving up (Maier, 1949). This category is quite closely related to the theory of learned helplessness, wherein a person comes to believe his or her action is futile, even in new situations, and s/he gives up trying to achieve change (Seligman & Garber, 1980). Zawadski and Lazarsfeld (1935) describe how unemployment can cause a person to feel inept and eventually resign with no plans or hopes for the future.

> 'For a time, awakening in the morning is unbearable'...He looks for work at a labor exchange; there he gets a sarcastic answer which angers him. After one day of fruitless search for work he says, 'I decided not to go anywhere any more. And for months, lying in the sunshine, I wait quietly...But it lasts very long, and I ask myself how fate will finally decide.' He stays inactive...(p. 237).

In studying the theory of frustration-instigated behaviour, one must consider that Maier conducted his research in experimental conditions involving rats. Yet although one must hesitate to generalise from the behaviour of rodents to the behaviour of human beings, and from the controlled environment of an experiment to the experience of real life, Maier himself, as well as a number of his predecessors and a number of those after him, provide compelling evidence that frustration-instigated behaviour can be observed in human behaviour as well. For example, in their experiments with frustration in children, Barker, Dembo and Lewin (1941) found that children often responded to frustrating situations with behaviours such as stealing, vandalizing, whining, and thumb-sucking. In experiments with college students and real life situations involving unemployed persons, refuges persecuted under the Nazi rule and African American slaves, it was found that adult subjects were shown to respond to frustration with

fixations, violence, and apathy (Allport, Bruner and Jandorf, 1941; Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, 1938; Hovland and Sears, 1940; Marquart, 1948; Patrick, 1934).

Frustration-instigated behaviour in community

In what is perhaps the most in depth application of this concept to human subjects, particularly those in a community context, sociologist Richard Ball (1968) applied the theory of frustration-instigated behaviour to the real life situations of a community of mountaineers in the southern Appalachian Mountains, coining their frustrated behaviours as an "analgesic subculture." He found that those in the Southern Appalachians face oppression from various fronts which may cause them to be frustrated by a lack of control over their own life, resulting in frustration-instigated behaviour. For example, Arnold Toynbee (1946) describes the climate among mountaineers as one where "they have relapsed into witchcraft and illiteracy. They suffer from poverty, squalor, and ill health" (p. 149). In addition, Ball (1968) states that environmental problems such as a harsh climate, unresponsive land ruined by coal production and numerous civil and other wars have left a thoroughly frustrated Southern Appalachian culture whose inhabitants have strong beliefs about their own inefficacy. As a result of all of these forces blocking the efficacy of those in the Southern Appalachians, the mountaineer community's life has become one predicated upon frustration-instigated behaviour.

Ball saw frustration-instigated behaviour as fundamental in maintaining the mountaineers' way of life and their cultural themes of individualism, fatalism, traditionalism, religious fundamentalism, familism and reference-group domination.

> The subculture represents to a significant degree *the institutionalization of frustration-instigated behaviour*. The principle values, beliefs, and implementing norms, formed during a history of protracted misfortune, are supported by the internal nature of the subculture and by the external pressures of contemporary life. These shared understandings are transmitted across generations; the young learn to anticipate defeat and to perform the subcultural rituals which reduce its impact (p. 78).

As a community, years upon years of oppression mean that the mountaineers do not understand themselves as being able to meet their goals – they suffer under internalised oppression and have no perceived self-efficacy. The result is the development of a subculture whose primary behaviours are frustration-instigated in that they are emotional reactions to not being able to release the tension caused by the normative human need to fulfil one's goals.

Aggression, fixation, regression and resignation can all be seen in the mountaineer community. First, aggression, Ball (1968) suggests, can be seen in "the infamous mountain feuds" (p. 81). He points out that, generally, these feuds are not developed as any sort of means to a goal; they are simply the accidental result of one's desire to relieve frustration. Second, fixation can be seen in the cultural patterns of religious fundamentalism and strict tradition. Ball claims that this strict adherence to tradition, admittedly limiting to the culture's adaptability and incomprehensible as rational motivated behaviour, is understandable when one considers the soothing quality of ritual and its ability to perhaps relieve tension and frustration (p. 79). Third, regression can be seen in the mountaineer's simplification of behaviour. Ball offers a number of examples, including, a lack of aesthetic appreciation, anti-intellectualism, self-pity, money-squandering, literal interpretation of the Bible and deep superstition. In addition

to these, Ball also points to the severe emotional dependence on kin (familism), as something that calms the emotional tension within the mountaineer. Last, resignation is portrayed in the apathy and fatalistic attitude apparent in the mountaineer culture – which can not be considered motivated behaviour, as resignation is defined as the act of giving up.

These actions are argued quite convincingly by some to be the result of motivated action where the goal is to attack or end the source of frustration (Dollard *et al.*, 1939; French, 1941). Using our limited understanding of motivated behaviour, this explanation does seem quite plausible. As Fromm notes,

> This, however, is what the study of emotional and mental disturbances has taught us: that human behavior can be motivated by strivings which are caused by anxiety or some other unbearable state of mind, that these strivings tend to overcome this emotional state and yet merely cover up its most visible manifestations, or not even these (p. 175).

Maier argues, though, that these behaviours are in fact the product of frustration in which no motivation exists – the actions are an end in themselves, rather than a means to an end, as goal-oriented behaviour is. Rather than being actions aimed at ending a person's frustration, these behaviours are simply a way in which a frustrated person can react to and express his/her frustration. Maier cites a number of proofs, including instances where fixation is observed even when no goal is achieved and punishment is received instead (Maier, 1949, p. 73), instances where aggression is directed upon objects having nothing to do with the frustrating situation (Ibid, p. 103), the spontaneous action of unlearned regressive responses (Ibid, p. 110) and the definition of resignation as a loss of hope where one does not possess goals (Ibid, p. 112). Whether it is possible for us to see

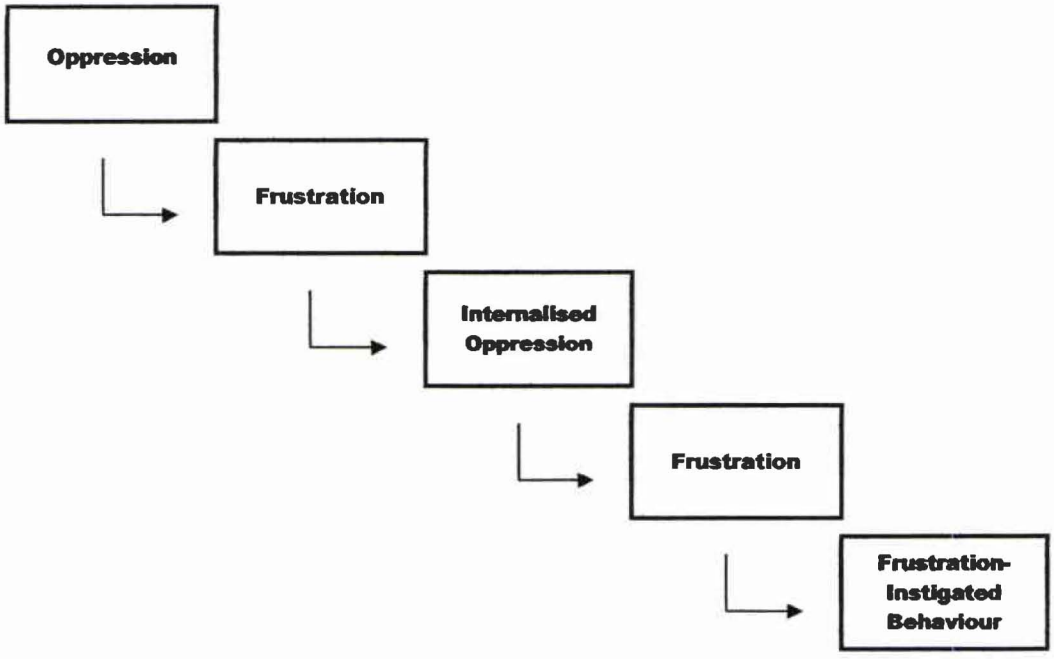
frustration-instigated behaviour as motivated by one's need to decrease one's anxiety and frustration or as an expression of frustration is not so much the matter at hand. We ought to be concerned that, unmotivated or perhaps motivated in some sphere, it seems frustration-instigated behaviour results from prolonged and pervasive oppression.

Oppression, frustration and internalised oppression

In all of these situations, whether it be the experiences of those in the Southern Appalachians, the Aboriginal people at Alkali Lake, the peasant working for a master, those living in the Harlem ghetto, a welfare-dependent single mother or countless other experiences of marginalised people, all of these persons had been oppressed for long periods of time. Each of them was exposed quite consistently and quite pervasively to oppressive forces and frustrating situations wherein they were unable to meet their needs through their own powers and abilities. Such oppressions as unlawful imprisonment by a dominating government, a harsh economy with inadequate support for the poor, an adult's restrictions on a child's ability to choose his/her own form of play, an unresponsive welfare system, etc., all hindered or completely blocked these person's ability to affect change in their lives. Naturally this confused, saddened and frustrated these persons. The reactions of these persons to this sort of denial of efficacy were reactions of emotion; drinking, fighting, apathy and others were all ways in which these persons attempted to express the frustration within them. With our understanding of the process of oppression, we can postulate that these forces were oppressing the individuals and communities involved, which suggests that there is a correlation between oppression and frustration-instigated behaviour patterns.

I would suggest that this connection can be seen in the inextricable and related processes of oppression, frustration and internalised oppression. We can see these processes as one in the same in that they are a continuation of each other. The above examples seem to suggest that the process is such that oppression leads to frustration, frustration leads to internalised oppression and internalised oppression leads to frustration-instigated behaviour.

Diagram 1.2 - The Process of Frustration



Let us consider this progression. A person marginalised in society, for example, a single mother on welfare, perceives the presence of some unsatisfied natural human need such as getting a job to provide food for her children and experiences tension as a result of this need not being satisfied. Like most other human beings, she is motivated to meet this need and attempts to do so using her learned behaviours that have been successful in other similar instances. Yet because of her race, sex, class and her status as a single

mother, she is blocked from meeting her need. Oppressive forces such as racism, classism and sexism frame her as lazy, dependent, immoral, etc. and therefore she is unable to meet her need. She is rendered powerless to affect change in this and many other areas of her life. This, although very crudely, describes a process of oppression. We can also understand that the consistent and continuous experience of oppression such as this might well cause a person to experience overwhelming tension and frustration at not being able to control aspects of his/her own life.

Time after time after time, as this woman is blocked from meeting her needs and goals because of persistent and pervasive oppression, she becomes highly frustrated and tries to understand why she is consistently denied the fulfilment of her needs. Negative attitudes and images portrayed of herself by the media, her family, the welfare system and other systems that are oppressing her, in addition to her own inability to meet her needs, causes her to begin to believe that she is somehow incompetent and unworthy and she experiences an enormous sense of futility and powerlessness. The result of this feeling of inefficacy is the experience of internalised oppression. This mother in fact comes to believe that she must be undeserving and does not know how to change this. Once again, this is a frustrating experience for her.

At this point, this woman is frustrated not only because of her inability to meet her need of finding a job, amongst other needs, but also because of her belief in herself as less than those oppressing her. She is tired and frustrated and wants to give up. Since time has shown her that motivated action has not proven successful, she eventually acts simply out of her frustration, exhibiting frustration-instigated behaviour by drinking

heavily, spending money that she does not have, giving up her search for any sort of work, etc. She is so angry and frustrated that all she wants is to express these emotions in some way, rather than actually being motivated to act against her oppression which indeed the media, education, etc. has encouraged her not to see. Her actions become simply a reaction to her frustrated state. Therefore we can classify her actions as frustration-instigated behaviour.

In sum, this woman was oppressed, became frustrated as a result of her oppression, internalised a negative view of herself and reacted with frustration-instigated behaviour. It seems that, considering the logical progression of this process, we can postulate that the mechanism for oppression becoming internalised oppression seems indeed to be the frustration of a person's personal and environmental efficacy. We can also deduce that the result of internalised oppression appears to be frustration-instigated behaviour. These realisations can and should influence the way that we formulate and write social policy.

Section 5

IMPLICATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

Motivation-based policy

When we consider that which is fundamental to most past and present social policies, it is clear that almost all of them are based upon the concept of motivated behaviour. Workfare policies, child welfare policies, many of our judicial system's policies, etc., are all predicated on the idea that people are motivated to better their situation and their environment. We assume that each person, whether marginalised or mainstream, exists in an amenable environment and possesses the means necessary to affect meaningful change in his/her life. What we often do not consider are those persons who indeed have the means, but for whom oppression causes their environment to be unmanageable. Those on the left of the political spectrum have claimed that oppression is immoral and that it has long-term negative effects on those marginalised in our society. They have criticised motivation-based policies and have known for years that oppression is harmful. However, this has been more of a moral high ground rather than a proven fact. The theory of frustration-instigated behaviour offers us fact. It contains empirical proof that oppression causes destructive behaviour and that it has long-term negative effects on marginalised persons. The theory of frustration-instigated behaviour suggests that past motivation-based policies may not be the answer.

The concept of frustration-instigated behaviour and its apparent connection with oppression provides us with direction for future social policy concerned with the behaviour of marginalised persons. It highlights a ladder of severity in the social problem of oppression that is sometimes ignored in today's social policy. Although it is true that to create a policy that would end oppression would be next to impossible, I would suggest that it is time that we quit settling for policies that merely mask the epidemic that is oppression. We need to begin to see frustrated behaviours as symptoms of a greater problem, rather than as the problems themselves. Admittedly, violence, gambling, apathy and other sorts of frustration-instigated behaviour are destructive. However, despite their negative and sometimes harmful effects, these behaviours are not root social problems. The issue is oppression.

Oppression as the source of frustration

I would suggest that to begin our work towards the amelioration of oppression, we must focus on the source of frustration that is oppression, rather than focusing on the sometimes destructive frustrated behaviours of marginalised people. By this I mean that we cannot continue to aim at fixing the victims of oppression and must instead aim at dealing with oppression itself. The material in this thesis has suggested that the behaviours that we spend so much time and money trying to remedy are simply tangents of the real problem that we seem to have been too afraid or too intimidated to address.

> Social policy must not shirk a confrontation with our negative emotional capabilities, that is, the capacity for self-destructiveness and destructiveness towards others which both individuals and groups are more than capable of... unless we do examine this side of human behaviour consistently, neither the

> public nor policy-makers will take radical leftist voices seriously (Hoggett, 2001, p. 53-4).

Hoggett (2001) suggests that we must face our destructive emotional capabilities continuously in order to face true change - the concept of frustration-instigated behaviour does this and then goes one step further to point to a solution aimed at ending oppression.

I would suggest that there are some clear elements of a solution suggested by our look at the theory of frustration. First, the frustrated behaviours themselves can show us something about what is important to marginalised peoples. Freire (1970) notes that what at first glance appears dysfunctional behaviour, may in fact have elements of functionality within it.

> Admittedly, these reactions are not 'adequate adaptations to the situation.' They do not represent 'effective coping with the environment.' Nevertheless, the responses are in a limited sense functional, for they provide relief from the pains of frustration (p. 82).

Consider that, unless one sees them as compulsions, the behaviours that a person chooses to react to frustration with are just that - a choice which s/he has made for himself/herself. Even in the case of behaviour that is frustration-instigated, a person has the power and self-determination to decide what sort of behaviour s/he will react with and express his/her emotions with.

Efficacy and control

If oppression is the blocking of a person's efficacy, then it makes logical sense that one of the cornerstones of efforts against oppression ought to be the promotion of environmental and self-efficacy. This means that social policies would promote a person having control over his/her present situation and the direction in which his/her future is

moving. Freire (1970) calls this our ontological vocation; that human beings ought to be subjects who act upon and transform their world. Rabow *et al.* (1983) suggest that one way in which to promote this self-sufficiency and self-efficacy is in allowing persons to create their own solutions to problems, rather than prescribing solutions.

> The task in diminishing frustration-instigated behaviour is to minimize the source of frustration. This would entail requiring people to approach problems in a problem-solving manner instead of with emotions of fear, anger, indifference, or threat. It is critical to allow people to discover solutions for themselves (Rabow *et al.*, 1983, p. 426).

I would suggest, though, that before a person can do this, s/he must be able to believe in his/her own problem-solving abilities and his/her power to actually change things. This is difficult because, as this thesis has shown, for many marginalised persons their experience of oppression is both external and internal. When a person has internalised the idea that s/he is powerless and has believed this for much of his/her life, his/her sense of futility will be more pervasive and persistent than a person who still believes in his/her own power to change things despite external oppression (Kane, 1987). This internal struggle may in fact be as difficult as the struggle against external oppression. Hoggett (2001) notes that this internal struggle is comparable to a struggle against systems and institutions. "Here radical change also has to confront internal opposition, in this case the rules, constraints and expectations 'within our head' which constitute a kind of internal establishment" (p. 51).

We cannot expect that simply because a door is opened, a person who has suffered years of exploitation and limitation will walk through. Many persons marginalised in today's society have been socialised to believe and have internalised the

idea that fate is against them and that their efforts are futile. As a result, oftentimes they will not pursue or even recognise opportunities for them to take control in their lives. Scholars have shown that repeated experiences with uncontrollable outcomes interfere with peoples' ability to seek out opportunities for exercising control (Kane, 1987; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996; Rabow *et al.*, 1983). In addition, Kane (1987) notes that one's motivation to act upon something consists of two parts, one being the desirability of the outcome and the second being the expectancy that one's own actions can help attain it. It is logical, then, that when a person believes in his/her own futility, his/her motivation to act will be quite low or even non-existent. It is important that the possibility to exercise personal control be made explicit in social policies, so as to encourage marginalised peoples to pursue new opportunities and to expect change.

Exposure to one's power for change

Although it may take time for a marginalised person to be ready to wage his/her war against oppression, we must understand that one cannot free another person from internalised oppression - freedom is a goal that must be obtained by oppressed persons themselves. As Freire (1970) so perfectly states,

> Attempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building; it is to lead them into the populist pitfall and transform them into masses which can be manipulated. At all stages of their liberation, the oppressed must see themselves as men engaged in the ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human (p. 52).

It is imperative that we trust the power of marginalised peoples to wage their own battle against oppression - when we offer support and discipleship, we surrender control of that

which is not ours to control. We may work to change the externally oppressive structures that cause the oppressed to internalise a sense of inferiority. Yet it is only when we believe in and surrender to the personal and collective power of those experiencing internalised oppression that we can provide support for their struggle to be fully human.

In his/her struggle against oppression, a marginalised person may need to be strongly encouraged to see that s/he can have control and make a difference in his/her own life. This forced exposure to one's power to change one's situation and environment promotes self-efficacy and an internal locus of control. "...persons who are internally oriented believe that responses and subsequent rewards are dependent, and that environmental control can be achieved from within" (Rabow *et al.*, 1983, p. 422). When a person begins to recognise and pursue opportunities to take control in his/her life, s/he comes to expect his/her control in more areas of his/her life. When a person has greater control of his/her life, s/he will experience less frustration and so exhibit less frustration-instigated behaviour. Rabow *et al.* (1983) also note that the more a person expects to have control, the more he/she will fight for that freedom and control when it is threatened. S/he finally feels that s/he has a choice between,

> being wholly themselves or being divided; between ejecting the oppressor within or not ejecting him; between human solidarity or alienation; between following prescriptions or having choices; between being spectators or actors; between acting or having the illusion of acting through the action of the oppressors; between speaking out or being silent..." (Freire, 1970, p. 33).

A voice for the oppressed and the oppressed community

When a person is willing to stand up for his/her freedom and control, s/he offers a voice for others who are similarly oppressed. The tranquillity of the oppressor rests in

the oppressed not questioning things. When those marginalised in society are given the power and encouragement to ask questions concerning the present and past order of things, they are also taking the power necessary to direct choices in their own lives. The current culture of silence submerges people in a place where critical awareness and response are nearly impossible. Oppression and the silence implicit in it is domesticating (Freire, 1970).

We must not, however, hear the voices of only a few. The struggle against oppression is not something that an individual can accomplish on his/her own. In community, one finds the strength needed to endure such a battle. As Freire (1970) suggests, those marginalised in our society must provide the support and reinforcement necessary for each person to fight his/her oppression.

> When they discover in themselves the yearning to be free, they perceive that this yearning can be transformed into reality only when the same yearning is aroused in their comrades. But while dominated by the fear of freedom they refuse to appeal to others, or to listen to the appeals of others, or even to the appeals of their own conscience (p. 32).

Social policies must not address the oppression of only one group of marginalised people. Although the experience of oppression may be very different for marginalised persons, the fundamental solution of the promotion of efficacy is quite similar. For one marginalised person to desire to remove his/her internalised oppression and replace it with personal and environmental efficacy, s/he must not continually face others such as himself/herself who are convinced that they are less than those oppressing them in some way.

Choice and time

Implicit in discouraging frustration-instigated behaviour and explicit in restoring marginalised peoples' sense of efficacy is the need for choice. Choice is synonymous with control. When real choice is given, real control is experienced and less frustration caused by one's lack of control is experienced. Kane (1987) points out this connection between choice and control.

> For instance, if our goal is to promote self-sufficiency, should "workfare" be a mandatory "shock treatment" used to discourage dependency and encourage stable wok habits, or should employment programs be made voluntary, giving people the control implicit in choice?...giving people occasions to make choices - such as signing up for basic skills classes or job search programs - will lead to longer-term payoffs by allowing them to gain a sense of control (p. 410).

When marginalised persons become the decision makers in their own lives, they also become responsible for their own fates and aware of their needs and rights.

I would also suggest that we cannot expect a policy to cause frustration-instigated behaviour and oppression disappear overnight. Oppression is not limited to the exact moment of discrimination and its effects are not limited to that moment either. Scholars have indicated that oppression and internalised oppression leave a scar on their victims that often remains with them for much of their lives (Antone, Miller, & Myers, 1986; York, 1989). Marginalised persons will be reacting to their oppression and frustration in different ways for years beyond their experience of oppression. As a result, the creators of social policy must not abandon a process or idea simply because its effects are not immediate. We must ensure that evaluative processes take this injury into account and that they provide sufficient time to pass for a policy to be effective before evaluating a policy's success.

In conclusion, real change must be more than asking marginalised persons to adapt to what the mainstream thinks may be helpful for them. In this thesis, one has seen how oppression or denied efficacy frequently results in internalised oppression and frustration-instigated behaviour. A social policy that forces marginalised persons to adapt to its solutions, rather than allowing marginalised persons to create and control their own solutions, is nothing more than a disguised oppression. We do not want persons who simply adapt to a slightly different version of their previous oppression. We must insist that social policy causes a new way of being for both those on the margins and those in the mainstream. Anything less than this is oppression and control and a prescription for failure. When we "do to" or "do for" a person, we are limiting their efficacy and causing both their oppression and their frustrated behaviours.

> "We are different than we used to be. The government has us in a little box, with a lid on it. Every now and then they open the lid and do something to us and close it again. We are a dying race. Not this generation but the next, will die." Willie Denechoan, medicine man, Hay Lake (Robertson, 1970, p. vii).

Let us not be the cause.

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