WHEN PUSH COMES TO LOVE: PARTNERSHIP AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Margaret Frimoth, PhD

Abstract

Despite major accomplishments of the modern era, the protection of women, children, and the environment remain vulnerable. In response, there has been increasing growth of social justice protests that use social media to express the need for social change. This article provides a discussion of the rise of several social movements and their attempts to address issues of injustice, particularly focusing on sexual violence and environmental destruction. The increased use of social media prompted a global response, within the context of popular culture, which was then followed by mainstream news coverage of the protests. This technological shift in news sharing promoted increased awareness about issues of sexual violence and environmental destruction. The lasting impact, however, is unknown. Yet there may be links between current social justice movements and Riane Eisler's Cultural Transformation Theory that could foster social change. This article formulates a more direct connection between social movements and Eisler's Cultural Transformation Theory in a manner that intentionally urges progressive social justice groups to understand and move toward partnership in general, and specifically toward a cultural transformation that protects the environment and eliminates violence against women and children.

Keywords: sexual violence; abuse; injustice; social justice; Eisler; Four Cornerstones; partnership; cultural transformation

We are living in a time of magnificent achievements in medicine, science, technology, and industry. We are witnessing progress in several social movements. And yet, despite these tremendous accomplishments, women and children continue to need protection from rampant domestic and sexual violence. Despite legal and social interventions, the abuse continues at alarming rates.

This article presents a discussion about the rise of several social movements and their attempts to address specific issues of injustice. The guiding principles found within many social movements seem to dovetail with Riane Eisler's Cultural Transformation Theory. This article formulates a more direct connection between social movements and Cultural Transformation Theory in a manner that intentionally urges progressive social movements toward partnership in general, and specifically toward the elimination of violence against women and children.

Statistics about the abuse of women and children are staggering, and the impact on children, specifically, is inescapable. According to a recent worldwide report compiled by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2017), three out of four children between the ages of two and four will regularly experience violent "discipline" by those who presumably care for them. The idea of discipline here is better defined as punishment. While many caregivers justify corporal punishment as a necessary form of parenting, research confirms that many forms of corporal punishment escalate into physical abuse (Gershoff, 2002). Child abuse occurs not only when a child directly experiences abuse, but also when a child witnesses the battering of a parent. Typically, though not exclusively, the parent who is battered is the child's mother (Moe, 2009). Unbelievably, one in four children under the age of five have mothers who are victims of domestic violence (UNICEF, 2017).

Education can be transformative for women and girls (UNESCO, 2013), yet girls are four times more likely than boys to remain out of school (UNICEF, 2016). One in three middle schoolers is bullied, and approximately fifteen million girls between the ages of fifteen and nineteen endure forced sexual assault (UNICEF, 2016), often while at or on their way to school.

Violence against women and children is prevalent and legitimized across the globe. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC), sex trafficking rings have recently expanded exponentially, apparently connected to migratory patterns (UNODC, 2016). Families fleeing unstable political or economic conditions find their children most vulnerable to abduction and sexual violence. Seventy-nine percent of these victims are women and children. In just two years, between 2014 and 2016, more than five hundred "flows" or sex trafficking routes have been identified that include citizens from 137 different countries (UNDOC, 2016). While sexual exploitation and forced labor remain the most common forms of trafficking, other types include forced begging, sham marriages, pornography, and the shameless act of organ removal (UNICEF, 2016).

Far too often, the crisis of childhood violence is repeatedly dismissed by social standards, and defined as random acts perpetrated by individuals who abuse only certain women or specific children. This belief justifies a societal norm that ultimately places greater responsibility on the victims to defend and protect themselves than on the perpetrators to stop abusing. The normalization of violence manifests a covert undertone of blame and responsibility that is strategically assigned to those who are most victimized. Victims are, therefore, held responsible for the victimization they endure.

While violent acts are committed against anyone or any group of people, domestic and sexual violence is consistently targeted at women and children, or anyone emulating

feminine traits (i.e., the perception of feminine features or vulnerabilities that are viewed as weaknesses, regardless of gender identity). Violence against women and children is systemically driven to maintain a culturally-based status quo that benefits a few by oppressing the masses, whether or not the beneficiaries are aware of the fact. Those who benefit furnish the fuel that maintains a system of domination (Adkison-Stevens, et al., 2015). Despite an unprecedented surge in emerging research that links childhood victimization to lingering neurological, physical, and emotional damage, the epidemic of domestic and sexual violence against children remains ingrained in a vast array of social, legal, institutional, and cultural norms that define violence as situational and an innate characteristic of the human condition. This results in a population numbed to the enormous prevalence of completely preventable violence.

Today's culture reinforces desensitization to abuse by maintaining language that justifies violent interactions. Let's take a look at a few examples — we have *killer* thoughts, or we take a *shot* at new ideas; we are *brutall*y honest when we pick our *battles*; we *kill* time waiting for the *punch* line, and get away with *murder* when the joke *bombs*; we bite the *bullet* to prevent something *blowing up* in our faces; we have a *blast* talking about the guy who went *ballistic* when he learned he'd *knocked* up his girlfriend who was *drop dead* gorgeous; we pride ourselves on *shooting* from the hip or rolling with the *punches*, and we take the *well-beaten* path to soften the *blow*, even though it may *break* our hearts; when *push* comes to *shove*, we *shoot* ourselves in the foot because of a hair *trigger* temper that *explodes* when we are at the *end of our rope*; we rally the *troops* before bringing out the *big guns* to *target* those who are *gunning* for trouble and *shooting* holes in an argument; as long as we are *armed* with the facts, we can *set our sights* on the prize, resolved to *combat* violence.

Imagine the transformation that could occur with the simple act of eliminating the use of violence-derived terms interspersed throughout our everyday conversations.

Violence breaks our sense of wholeness (Listenbee & Torre, 2012) because survivors spend enormous amounts of time simultaneously recovering from abuse and protecting themselves from future violence. This is particularly true for child survivors. If the frame used to explain victimization is based on socially accepted abuse (corporal punishment, shame, blame, denial of harm, etc.), then patterns of oppression overshadow other possible responses, and violence becomes normalized, assumed, and invisible (Pharr, 1988).

Personal stories, however, have the power to shake up and awaken persistent denial and expose the existence of an enormous, socially-constructed network of injustice. Violence, or the threat of violence, holds in check a system of inequalities that are justified by cultural values, beliefs, and morals that relegate the human story to a framework of exploitation, power, and oppression (McIntosh, 1989). This socially-constructed dimension of humanity emits a historical perception that violence is innate to all beings. Fortunately, there is growing evidence of a different social construction that tells an acutely alternative story. Social justice movements — like domestic violence shelter movements, the civil rights movement before that, and the evolution of the women's movement — were bolstered by the underpinnings of personal stories detailing oppression and providing clear rationale for social change. These and other seemingly small steps forward provide bits of insight about the power of narrative as an affirming tactic to challenge social injustice. Speaking up and speaking out about injustice is an act of transformation.

RELATIONSHIPS: THE FOUNDATION OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Dr. Riane Eisler is a social scientist, historian, and human rights activist who spent much of her life researching, examining, and documenting what she references a *full-spectrum* of human history (Eisler, 2007)). She began by observing the absence of women in the field of researcher, and then noted their invisibility in the research,

itself. By shifting the lens enough to fill in the gaps left by leaving out 50% of the population (i.e. women), she amplified the research, holistically, and garnered data cross-culturally and trans-historically (Eisler, 2003) that was inclusive of women and men. Her extraordinary efforts resulted in consistent discoveries that had been overlooked or devalued previously because the data did not fit the prevailing archaeological, anthropological, socio-psychological, or cultural theories. Much of what impressed Eisler were artful images of men and women working together in the home, in the fields, and in ceremony. By tracing and confirming human evolution from artwork, crafts, and burial artifacts, she unearthed a rich legacy of human interactions based on shared labor and equitable relationships. In prehistory times, women had been as important as men in daily routines, child rearing, governing structures, and intimate relationships. Large populations thrived for thousands of years in communities that lived in systematic coherence with others and with respect for the natural environment around them (Eisler, 2003).

From this collection of evidence, Eisler defined two underlying social configurations to explain patterns that are present in all human interrelationships. She questioned why some cultures are more violent than others and discovered two opposing social configurations that operate continuously along a continuum — *systems of domination* on one end of the continuum, and *systems of partnership* on the other end.

Systems of domination are based, principally, on authoritarian, top-down rule which will ultimately influence all social structures and family systems. Eisler identifies a key area of influence beginning at a child's birth, when the typical first words announced identify the sex of the child. Systems that operate from a set of values that adhere to domination are bound to designate characteristics of strength, force, brutality, and toughness as signatures of valor and superiority. These culturally-imbued characteristics are defined as masculine traits, which carry a higher value than the

assigned feminine attributes of sensitivity, caring, and kindness (Eisler, 1987, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2016, 2017).

Despite recent differentiations between biological sex and gender identity, and re-definitions of gender to include a spectrum of identities, gender variables (gender that does not adhere to the sex assigned at birth) are rarely expressed safely in systems of domination. Those who identify as, or are viewed as, men but are more comfortable with attributes of caring and kindness are at risk of public ridicule, bullying, and violent attacks. Those who identify as, or are viewed as, women but demonstrate courage, power, or strength, may be threatened with emotional or physical violence. Regardless of gender identity, expressions of gender variability can be costly, and even deadly (Yacka, 2017) in systems that operate from rigid, authoritarian rules.

Again, when feminine traits are devalued (often beginning at birth), the subjugation of women justifies and maintains control over the full range of other social, cultural, and personal differences. When women are oppressed, all oppressive acts can be justified (Pharr, 1988). Individual women who rise to positions of power cannot challenge the system of domination that is interwoven around them. Social and cultural systems of domination promote the subordination of female traits which causes the devaluation of non-violence and caring; this devaluation, in turn, creates institutionalized fear, coercion, and violence. Domination slips into our most intimate relationships, and it fashions our governing structures. Race, class, religion, ethnicity, citizen status, and physical and emotional abilities are defined as either superior traits or vulnerable attributes. Those with authority and "power over" social status determine the fates of all who are viewed as vulnerable.

Fortunately, Eisler recognized that if systems of domination were operational on one end of a continuum, then *systems of partnership* were an alternative on the other end. Unlike systems of domination, partnership systems embrace equitable gender

relationships, caring principles, and democratically organized governance. Leaders are well versed in cultural competencies, inclusive relationships, and personal responsibility within a context of caring communities and fair distribution of resources. With partnership as the social norm, violence is principally ineffective. Cultural beliefs and stories reflect nurturance for others, mutual respect, and accountability. Partnership systems are not a social or utopian fantasy. There is now proof that partnership systems once existed as the social norm in Neolithic cultures. Today, elements of partnership systems can be found in modern cultures, particularly the Nordic nations and in various indigenous communities (Eisler, 2010, 2017).

Eisler provides clear evidence that, based on human history and basic neurology, we are capable of orienting more toward partnership and away from domination (Eisler, 2003). This provides a glimmer of hope for today's world. We are not doomed to be violent. In actuality, we are hard-wired to care for one another (Frimoth, 2015). Violence is not a second-nature predestination. In fact, it takes tremendous neurological effort to learn to be violent. Then, it takes a colossal, yet essential, shift in thinking to re-learn and integrate partnership relationships into all aspects of how we live, work, and interact with the natural environment. Equitable relationships are the foundation of partnership systems.

IS SOCIAL ACTION CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION?

This is an interesting time to write an article about sexual violence. Today's media is filled with nearly continuous revelations of accusations from women who were sexually abused by powerful men. While disclosures of gender-specific sexual misconduct are not new to those who work with survivors, the notable differences are the recent response times to the allegations and the swift, punitive follow-up actions against those accused. Typically and historically, a sexual assault report takes an enormous amount of time to investigate and prosecute, if it even gets that far. A mere thirteen out of 1,000 sexual assault reports are sent to a prosecutor (Rape, Abuse and Incest National

Network [RAINN], 2017). If prosecution occurs, only about seven percent of cases result in a felony charge after months or years of investigations and court hearings. This is the standard response timeframe (RAINN, 2017). However, nothing about the recent public accusations of sexual assault has followed standard conventions.

Why the sudden change in responses to sexual abuse allegations? By looking at recent protests and social justice organizing efforts, a series of politically and socially relevant events seem to have contributed substantially to the recent public disclosures of sexual violence by women.

Initially, the re-emergence of sexual abuse allegations against entertainer Bill Cosby, and the subsequent mistrial in June, 2017 (Bowley, Perez-Pena, & Hurdlejune, 2017), may have cultivated a climate for further disclosures by other women survivors, not necessarily because the women who alleged abuse by Cosby felt supported, but because popular media hyped coverage of the public revocation of many awards and honors that had previously been bestowed on Cosby. This punitive response heightened the visibility of women survivors of abuse, while also highlighting the consequences that could be imposed on perpetrators.

In August, 2017, popular singer-songwriter Taylor Swift sued and won a sexual assault court case against an ex-disc jockey for groping her during a photo shoot. The trial was followed closely by mainstream media, and ultimately, after she won the case, Swift was commended for testifying boldly and directly about the incident despite various attempts during court proceedings to discredit her allegations (BBC News, 2017). In an interview following the court's decision, Swift stated that she wanted to speak out for all women who suffered from the deliberate attacks of sexual violence (BBC News, 2017).

Also disturbing was the nomination of a U.S. presidential candidate who, in a heavily re-publicized 2005 interview, boasted about his actions of sexual assault against women, and then dismissed the conversation as "locker room talk" (Fahrenthold, 2016). The cultural disconnect between valuing women and using male entitlement to justify sexual violence was clearly present, whether or not one aligned with the candidate or his party affiliation.

At the same time, there was a substantial rise in social justice movements, such as Black Lives Matter, Say Her Name, and athlete Colin Kaepernick's campaign to *take a knee* during the national anthem to protest systemic racism. These social actions gained public attention and brought the ongoing issues of racial injustice to the forefront of social concerns. The protests challenged the concept of a post-racial era with powerful stories about commonplace racist injustices. Personal stories of grief and loss framed a social movement that demanded an end to racially motivated killings.

In 2011, the Occupy Movement began as a debate about the inequitable power of the wealthy few over the other 98 percent of the population. As the movement grew, their leadership began to weave other social inequities into the outrage about unjust distribution of wealth (Love, 2016). While many of these particular social justice movements were not directly related to domestic or sexual violence, grassroots organizing efforts prompted increased attention to the intersectionality of all oppression. Street activism confronted economic inequities. Research that had been published in the 1990s by feminist scholars Kimberle Williams Crenshaw and Patricia Hill Collins resurfaced to provide important connections between race, gender, and domestic violence (Crenshaw, 1994; Collins, 1990). The research gave language to protesters and helped influence the evolving activism within the movement by emphasizing the links among all oppression.

In 2016, a group of Native American water protectors at the Standing Rock campsites in South Dakota began to gain public notice. Despite a slow start in mainstream media's news coverage, social media was able to stream daily news events to personal electronic devices around the world. Personal experiences, stories, and images of tribal members standing up against industry giants inspired Indigenous and non-indigenous supporters alike to make pilgrimages to the campsites. There, supporters were expected to abide by the rules of the camps, which followed Native American principles and values (Stone, 2016). The daily expectations included full participation in chores, food preparations, clean-up duties, and sanitation responsibilities. The camps modeled respect for women in governing roles and as spokespersons for the camps. Echoes of *mni wičoni* ("Water is life.") and *Mitakuye Oyasin* ("all my relations") reverberated in song and prayers across the plains. LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, the founder of Sacred Stone Camp, Standing Rock, Sioux Nation, linked the issues of water protection, human dignity, and environmental protection in a statement to the public: "We are the river, and the river is us. We have no choice but to stand up" (Allard, 2016). The camps integrated the power of oral history, shared stories, and community-based actions to challenge unjust and unsustainable laws and land-use decisions.

The 2017 Women's March swelled into a culminating event in Washington, DC with affiliate marches occurring simultaneously around the world. The Women's March organizers represented a diverse group of third wave feminists who demanded an integrated, intersectional platform based on human rights, equity, and environmental protection. The international marches propelled the issue of violence against women and gender discrimination into the spotlight. An estimated five million people, representing cultures from all seven continents, marched in solidarity across the globe. Social and mainstream media covered the events, and when my rural hometown, with a population of 10,000, found itself among the international photo montage published in *The New York Times* (Miller, 2016), community activists were filled with an overwhelming sense of connectedness and shared power. Collectively, we wondered

whether we could actually shift the dominant culture off its base and transform the world.

Then, unexpectedly, on October 5, 2017, *The New York Times* published a news story about movie executive and film producer, Harvey Weinstein, that alleged decades of sexual harassment and sexual abuse by Weinstein against several women (Kantor & Towhey, 2017). This announcement unleashed a torrent of additional accusations against Weinstein, which were followed by nearly immediate consequences. Harvey Weinstein was fired from his own production company and expelled from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Social media seized the moment. Here was an opportunity for other voices to add personal stories to the growing disclosures by survivors of sexual abuse. By mid-October, the *#metoo* social media campaign flooded Twitter and Facebook feeds. Cable Network News (CNN) reported that within 24 hours, nearly five million people worldwide used *#metoo* as a disclosure post of sexual victimization, and this resulted in more than twelve million reactions, reposts, and comments (Santiago & Criss, 2017).

We are witnessing a surge of protests directed at the inequities of bigotry and oppression. Sexual assaults. Racial injustices. Unjust distribution of wealth and resources. Environmental destruction. The cascade of recent events speaks loudly about the desire for a shift in culture. But it is obviously not enough for millions to march in solidarity, calling for an end to violence against women. Nor is it enough for millions more to disclose sexual assault on social media. Social action can shift some social behaviors, but it often falls short of actual cultural transformation. What, then, is the holdback?

FOUR CORNERSTONES OF CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

Riane Eisler's Cultural Transformation Theory (Eisler, 1987, 1995, 2002, 2003, 2007,

2016, 2017) validates our desire for transformation, and provides an analysis of factors that either prevent or support cultural transformation. In a recent article, Eisler (2017) scrutinizes political agendas that volley for power and control while maintaining a traditional framework of social and economic inequalities. For example, the use of violence as a necessary evil while also endorsing stories that glorify strength, valor, and domination to justify violence, ultimately promotes greater subordination of women and children because culture cannot simultaneously glorify violence and end discrimination.

Despite protests and challenges to the status quo, very little changes when political confrontation is focused primarily on top leadership. The ups and downs of party politics are a perfect example of a chaos-producing distraction. Party politics persist, essentially unchanged, and remain stable within a continuous feedback loop of dominant power. When one leader fails, another takes his place; when one party fails, another takes its place. The political system remains firmly ingrained within the social constructs of inequality, the justified use of violence, and the invocation of *traditional family values*. Interestingly, Eisler eloquently refers to the term, *traditional family values,* as political code for top-down authority (Eisler, 2017). What remains hidden in plain sight is the unmitigated violence against women, the abuse of children, threats to gender identities, escalating racism, violent religious intolerance, and environmental destruction. When progressive politics overlooks the connection between family authority and top-down political authority, there is little disruption to the status quo, and the shift toward partnership fades to near impossibility.

As an alternative foundation for political and social redesign, Eisler's Cultural Transformation Theory details Four Cornerstones that define migrations along a partnership/domination continuum, beginning with an integrated, and caring, partnership agenda that highlights the protection of childhood vulnerability. This first cornerstone represents a shift away from lauding those with the most power. Instead,

there is keen emphasis on the protection of those most vulnerable. This seemingly simple shift in perception fosters a holistic, operational system that functions best when social, cultural, and environmental needs are prioritized.

Cornerstone 1: Child and Family Relationships

The intentional support of children is, in all actuality, the methodological starting point for understanding the complexity and necessity of human caring. Raising children within partnership systems restructures the demands of power and control. Instead of using power over others, power represents collective actions that contribute to the greater good. No longer is power used to exert control over others, but rather, power becomes an act of shared potential. Within partnership systems, power and responsibility are inseparable. Violence is denounced as disempowering, immature, and irresponsible, because violence negates shared potential. The power to raise and nurture children is revered as a gift to humanity. When children are treated as precious extensions of ourselves, then corporal punishment makes no sense. Teaching, correcting, redirecting, and praising appropriate behaviors become methods to empower children and cultivate empathy. When children are cherished, they learn to honor others. Caring for those who are vulnerable becomes the standard of care, from cradle to grave. The natural progression from birth to old age is revered, and caring for elders strengthens a holistic understanding of life. In partnership systems there is a clear awareness that the future is directly determined by the treatment of children. Therefore, harm towards children negatively effects everyone's future. Certainly, today's child abuse statistics confirm the harm that extends to us all, whether we are consciously aware of this or not.

The task of parenting remains arduous and exhausting, even within systems of partnership. Yet the empowerment skills used as parenting techniques become attributes employed, recursively, by the community, which is then able to enrich the art of parenthood and support all variations of families. Parents and children are surrounded by commitment, love, and nurturance. Loving relationships model

meaningful, equitable human connections. Eisler's theory understands that the full capacity of equitable, loving relationships is most essential to cultural transformation. Love is understood as the heart of human evolution. Love embodies the power of universal unification. Caregiving and loving relationships are keys to successful cultural transformation. For social justice movements to move forward, the integration of the first cornerstone — honoring children and family relationships — is vital.

Cornerstone 2: Gender Equity

The second cornerstone necessitates gender equity. A full spectrum of gender identification represents our internal understanding of ourselves. Domination systems use binary differences (male or female) to establish rules about power, relationships, safety, and protection. Newborn sex classifications still hold tremendous social importance, especially for babies identified as boys. A recent internet search of the word, *maleness*, prompted descriptions of vigor, strength, potency, ruggedness, and forceful while words associated with *femaleness* were insipidly described as feminineness, womanliness, and girlishness (thesauras.com, 2017). While the internet search lacked robust research, it provided a clear reflection of contemporary culture's viewpoint. If these words are culturally aligned with the respective gender identities, then what does the culture say to an evolving toddler? Despite the many advances in gender equity, the social clues remain clear – boys are strong and capable; girls are girls. Socially imposed, rigid gender ideals constrict personal identities and disrupt the psychological manifestation of self-awareness, while dampening a holistic understanding of our place within our most primary relationships.

Personal gender identification extends beyond family affiliations into all other relationships. When the basis of self-knowledge and self-worth is imposed by rigid definitions of gender, then reliance on an internal locus of control is co-opted and replaced by an external definition of self (Rotter, 1966, pp.19-24). Within systems of domination, boys are expected to excel, remain stoic, and protect others. Girls are

taught to rely on boys to meet their needs. Individual relationships may shift and dance along the domination end of the continuum, but when push comes to shove, tradition demands that boys provide and girls receive. While gender inequity in systems of domination is focused on women, it is a disservice to everyone because it vastly limits our evolutional abilities to be truly and fully human. Fortunately, the inverse is also true. When equity is focused on women, everyone benefits. The status of women is a clear predictor of quality of life (Ghosh, 2014), health, and well-being.

Gender equity, within the realm of partnership systems, negates the need to divide and control other human beings based purely on perceptions or justifications of differences. Children are able to grow into their full potential and able to express their identity in innumerable ways without threatening the status quo. Kindness, compassion, and commitment to the well-being of others are key factors in developing a healthy internal locus of control devoid of the limitations of labels and divisions.

Eisler's first two cornerstones — child and family relationships, and gender equity — are crucial to all social justice movements because they radically transform definitions of power, equity, inclusion, and non-violence. Without the strength of these cornerstones firmly in place, justice stalls.

Cornerstone 3: A Caring Economy

The third cornerstone defines a new, inclusive vision of economics. Within the context of partnership systems, full-spectrum economics is a socially-constructed process that attends to the needs of humanity, while also promoting environmental stewardship as necessarily entwined with human existence. A stewardship economy exists, in large part, to enable lifelong care of all of humanity and the ecosystem. This devotion to humanity is not viewed as an extraneous expense, but rather as an investment in the future. Volunteer and household labor is as visible as paid labor. Volunteers and household caregivers are fundamental contributors to an economic system that values

caring and caregiving. The system promotes caregiving by recognizing volunteer labor with safety nets like Social Security credit or comprehensive health care.

Human needs can be undeniably complex, which results in the need for robust educational systems that teach and explore complex theories that address social and environmental problems. Health care and social services offer support and assurance of help and comfort for those in need. The labor market requires highly creative problem-solvers, as well as technical experts who are prepared to address and resolve unknown future challenges. Partnership systems promote education and provide sufficient funds to maintain excellent instruction and skill development. Various levels of authority make up the job market, all working toward a common, sustainable goal rather than battling for top positions. The market itself focuses on quality-of-life indicators, which are as important as technically trained workers. The workforce contributes holistically to the promotion of high-quality human capital. Responsible production, in alignment with innovative, environmental protection, is highly praised and continuously improved. A nation's ability to care for its people, especially the most vulnerable, determines the true grit of social health and public well-being. This is the foundation of what Eisler refers to as a nation's *real wealth* (Eisler, 2017). When social justice movements understand real wealth, they gain solid, economic strength.

Cornerstone 4: Language and Narrative
Eisler's fourth and final cornerstone acknowledges the power of language and narrative. Since words construe knowledge, the use of caring and inclusive communication helps design the reference points for stories, entertainment, and expression. Language can be expressed through many creative formats, such as music, the arts, and literature. In partnership systems, stories elaborate the complexities of our relationships with nature and with other cultures, and explores diverse belief systems without fear. Differences are more stimulating and less threatening because the sense of self is built on stories and values that detail shared goals and communal wisdom.

The most compelling narrative found within Eisler's Cultural Transformation Theory is the inclusion of the whole story of human history. As described previously, this transformative narrative begins with archeological evidence that shows the existence of an often overlooked, pre-historical civilization that developed complex and successful societies. In the early Neolithic civilizations spanning several thousand years, humans developed highly integrated, equitable, artistic, and resourceful partnership-based communities. Men and women worked together first to survive, but also to design and enjoy communities filled with music, dance, art, and sciences.

Acknowledging the full span of human history sets Eisler's fourth cornerstone into action. To forge a healthy future, we desperately need to know our full human story, including the past narrative of partnership civilizations. To survive the vast changes in today's world, partnership communities are most likely our destiny and greatest hope for sustainability. The full story of our humanity includes a comprehensive and integrated narrative that links past partnership societies with the goals of current social justice movements. The quest for social justice is strengthened by a complete historical narrative.

PARTNERSHIP AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Eisler's Four Cornerstones are deliberately focused on social justice. Her work envisions a world that is transformed by embracing and instituting the ideals of partnership — mutual respect, care, trust, equity, and inclusion. Of course, some will view this as naive, or a fantasied, utopian dream. Eisler specifically counters the idea of *utopia* with the word *pragmatopia,* to define a possible or practical place for humans to live and interact (Eisler, 2013). However, her knowledge is not limited to pragmatic thinking. The profound juxtaposition between *caring* and the elimination of child abuse or environmental destruction, is no less than a radical idea. A common rallying call for

social justice advocates is often, *Does anybody really care?* Eisler reminds us that when we really care, we shift our own thinking. If we all cared, the shift would reverberate throughout all movements seeking social justice and into the world.

Although we are far from the goal, Eisler views the continuing need for social and progressive movements as a reflection of unfinished work, rather than failed attempts (Eisler, 2013). A central element that can sustain the efforts of progressive movements is the ongoing integration of Eisler's Four Cornerstones into social movement strategies. Partnership language forms partnership-based policies, partnership systems, and partnership-based institutions that support a caring shift from domination toward partnership. Enacting partnership is synonymous with establishing justice.

The word *justice* is linked, etymologically, with the concept of equity. *Justice* originates from the Latin word *iustitia* (Justice, n.d.) which translates as equity. Eisler clearly establishes equity as the essential baseline that empowers systems toward partnership and away from domination. Social configurations that value gender equity construct relationships that are more democratically organized, whether within families, cultures, or governing structures (Eisler, 2003, 2007, 2010, 2016, 2017). Equity is justice. Equity is woven throughout the Four Cornerstones. Therefore, all of Eisler's efforts underscore the goals of today's progressive social justice movements.

Within partnership systems, language describes ethical standards and moral behaviors based on the seemingly simplistic acts of caring and protection. What appears to be a current social norm — to care and protect — is actually a portal to a new reality. When caring and protection are the basis for decisions, then social narratives (literature, popular culture, secular and religious institutions, human services, etc.) value non-violence and conflict resolution as core attributes for healthy, humane, and just social structures. Partnership ideals may seem preposterous and unorthodox because they are based on seemingly simple values, yet they are actually revolutionary in scope, because

partnerships systems dare to rotate our sphere of understanding toward the basic truth of compassion for each other and commitment to the earth on which we live.

Today's social justice movements have the ability to integrate Eisler's Four Cornerstones into their platforms to increase their potential to collaborate intersectionally with organizers of other, like-minded progressive movements. Social justice movements depend on relationships and connections with others, and while not perfect, many utilize a multi-focused platform to strive for a comprehensive and inclusive shift in culture. By intentionally integrating an undercurrent of partnership systems, progressive movements will be able to promote greater gender equity, non-violent relationships, family health, child safety, and environmental protection.

Current social justice groups that specifically focus on economic power and financial growth as a valued means to an end, rather than an end itself, align with Eisler's theories. When economic growth advances the fair distribution of funds, combined with a commitment to addressing human needs and sustainable practices, then the progressive system expresses partnership values.

Social justice narratives are primed to express the importance of protecting children while striving to eliminate harassment and all sexual violence. Now is an important time to embody a unifying, transformational movement that fosters stories about human caring as fundamental to our continued existence. Healthy human relationships are reflections of the world around us. We need narratives that promote the vision expressed by progressive movements and futurists who recognize our capacities to care for each other as an integral path to cultural transformation. We are capable of shifting away from the language of domination to embrace, instead, the language that nurtures high human capital and reinforces social wealth, health, and well-being.

At this time in history, social justice fills the news streams. The entertainment industry's recent Golden Globe Awards presented an overt and almost universal response against sexual harassment and sexual exploitation in Hollywood. A legal defense team recently announced funding that will connect attorneys with victims employed as farmworkers; at factories, restaurants, and hotels; and employed as nurses and janitors. The initiative also focuses on legislation that holds companies accountable for persistent harassment, and discourages the use of nondisclosure agreements that have been used by wealthy perpetrators to keep victims silent. Another campaign, called 50/50 by 2020, strives to reach gender parity in the entertainment industry within two years. The #TimesUp campaign and the #HealMeToo social media tag have initiated caring connections between traditionally isolated individuals. These connections help sustain the shift toward mutuality, empathy, and models of partnership.

A partnership response is crucial to the unfolding news stories. The response needs to foster acts of accountability and responsibility, rather than punishment. Sexual abuse, environmental destruction, and racial injustice will not decrease if the only recourse involves punitive measures. Punishment re-establishes oppositional politics, which is, in fact, the domain of domination. Polarization generates a counter-story of revenge, dehumanization, and justified violence. Punitive reactions without thoughtful analysis inadvertently revert to patterns that maintain tactics of domination already at play in the system. Without a clear vision that incorporates the Four Cornerstones as points of transformation, social movements will be less likely to transform the culture. Despite the recent, undisputed *wins* for women, this will not transform a culture of violence because a *win* maintains a key domination ritual of declaring some people winners and others losers. Cultural transformation must hold people accountable for actions of harm, and maintain authority, without abusing power.

Regardless of wins or successes, surely there will be a backlash against women, because systems of domination are threatened by the mere suggestion of equality. The subjugation of women justifies revenge and violence, even if the violence is in response to socially unacceptable abuse. Educator and philosopher Paulo Freire understood that dominators claim the right to define violence, and never see themselves in that role. They will, however, brand anyone who rises up against them as violent (Freire, 1974, 2013). Violence is embedded in dominant power. Social transformation is seeded to occur only if the shift does not slip backwards into the powerful clutches of systems of domination. Therefore, social justice narratives need to develop specific language that anticipates cultural backlash. Developing a new narrative becomes, in and of itself, a practice of partnership.

Social justice narratives address the deep longing by the majority of humanity for connection, commitment to the earth, and caring for humanity. Stories that celebrate justice without violence; or generate reverence for the environment; or model parental nurturance, child-centered education, and loving relationships are stories that add power to cultural transformation.

The quest for partnership is stirring as we yearn for a more humane and caring world. A partnership agenda can realize this aspiration if we integrate the Four Cornerstones — children and families, gender equity, a caring economy, and a transformative narrative — into the framework of every segment of progressive social agendas.

While reflecting on today's social movements, there is a growing awareness that the path toward protecting children is found precisely within the fierce dedication of Black Lives Matter advocates, and throughout the rise and resistance of Women Marchers, and deeply engrained in the insistence of Water Protectors. Within cultures of domination, we are all child survivors of violence. Each of us is a survivor. Once we see the expansive trauma and realize the damage that abuse contributes to our own despair and loss of connections, then perhaps we will be better prepared to contribute, en

masse, toward a seismic shift in the culture toward partnership ideals. Ultimately, when communities are dedicated to protecting the most vulnerable by nurturing equitable relationships, cultivating caring social structures, and promoting sustainable ecosystems, the transformation toward a partnership system renders child sexual abuse obsolete. Protecting children is love in action. In systems of partnership, children are safe. When children are safe, the culture is transformed.

Resources

Allard, L.B. (2016). Why the founder of Standing Rock Sioux Camp can't forget the Whitestone massacre. *Yes! Magazine.9/3/16*. Retrieved from http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/why-the-founder-of-standing-rock-sioux-camp-cant-forget-the-whitestone-massacre-20160903

Adkison-Stevens, C., Gates, J., Greenman, N., Holton, D., Kovacs, M., Light, W., Mauer, W., Naliboff, S, Neimann , T., Nickels, R., Santos, G., & Smith, R. (2015). Intersections of oppression and sexual violence. *Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force, Prevention and Education Committee*. Retrieved from http://50.116.64.16/~oregonv6/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Intersections-of-Oppression-and-SV-Paper-FINAL-1.pdf

British Broadcasting Center (BBC) News (2017). *Taylor Swift wins assault case against DJ*. August 15, 2017. Retrieved from http://www.bbc.com/news/40931988

Bowley, G., Perez-Pena, R., Hurdlejune, J., (2017). Bill Cosby's sexual assault case ends in a mistrial. *The New York Times*. June 17, 2017. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/17/arts/television/bill-cosby-trial-day-11.html

Collins, P.H. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness and the politics of empowerment*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.

Collins, P.H. *Intersecting Oppressions*. Retrieved from https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/13299_Chapter_16_Web_Byte_Patricia_Hill_Collins.pdf

Crenshaw, K.W. (1994). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. In: M. A. Fineman & R. Mykitiuk (Eds.), *The public nature of private violence* (pp. 93-118). New York, NY: Routledge. Retrieved from http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mapping-margins.pdf

Eisler, R. (1987, 1995). *The chalice and the blade: Our history, our future*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Eisler, R. (2002). The dynamics of cultural and technological evolution: Domination versus partnership. *World Futures. 58: pp. 159-174.*

Eisler, R. (2003). *The battle over human possibilities*. Paper presented at the First World Congress on Matriarchal Studies, Luxembourg, Luxembourg, 2003

Eisler, R. (2007). *The real wealth of nations: Creating a caring economics*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Eisler, R. (2010). *Building cultures of partnership and peace: Four Cornerstones*. Carmel, CA: The Center for Partnership Studies

Eisler, R. (2013). The power of the creative word: From domination to partnership. *The Tapestry of the Creative Word in Literatures in English (ALL 14)*. Udine, Italy: Forum Editrice.

Eisler, R. (2016). Whole systems change: A framework and first steps for social/economic transformation. *The Next System Project*. Retrieved from https://thenextsystem.org/whole-systems-change

Eisler, R. (2017). Building a caring democracy: Four Cornerstones for an integrated progressive agenda. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies*. Volume 4, Issue 1, article 2. Retrieved from https://pubs.lib.umn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1085&context=ijps

Fahrenthold, D.A. (2016). Trump recorded having extremely lewd conversation about women in 2005. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-recorded-having-extremely-lewd-conversation-about-women-in-2005/2016/10/07/3b9ce776-8cb4-11e6-bf8a-3d26847eeed4_story.html?utm_term=.71a23b4c7ffd

Freire, P. (1974, 2013). *Education for critical consciousness*. London, New York: Bloomsbury. 1974, Sheed and Ward Ltd. 2013, Bloomsbury Academic.

Frimoth, M. (2015). *Ales and Ideas Community Lecture Series*. Hard-wired to care: Debunking the myth that humans are innately violent. Clatsop Community College and Fort George Brewery, Astoria, Oregon. March 19, 2015.

Gershoff, E. (2002). Is corporal punishment an effective means of discipline? *American Psychological Association. June 26, 2002*. Retrieved from http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2002/06/spanking.aspx

Ghosh, I. (2014). *Social wealth economic indicators: A new system for evaluating economic prosperity*. Center for Partnership Studies. Retrieved from http://caringeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/SWEI-Executive-Summary-and-Core-Indicators-2.pdf

Justice. (n.d.) In Online etymology dictionary. Retrieved from https://www.etymonline.com/word/justice

Kantor, J., & Twohey, M. (2017). Harvey Weinstein paid off sexual harassment accusers for decades. *The New York Times. 10/5/17*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/05/us/harvey-weinstein-harassment-allegations.html

Listenbee, R. L., Jr. & Torre, J., (2012). Defending childhood: Protect, heal, thrive. *Report of the Attorney General's national task force on children exposed to violence.* Retrieved from https://www.justice.gov/defendingchildhood/cev-rpt-full.pdf

Love, L. (2016). *Nights in Tents*. New York, NY: Yucca Publishing.

McIntosh, P. (1989). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Peace and Freedom Magazine.* July/August, 1989, pp. 10-12.

Miller, D. (2016). Pictures from Women's Marches on every continent. *The New York Times.* 1/23/17. *The Daily Astorian*, via the Associated Press. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/01/21/world/womens-march-pictures.html

Moe, A.M. (2009). Battered Women, Children and the End of Abusive Relationships. *Sociology Faculty Publications*. Paper 1. Western Michigan University. Retrieved from http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=sociology_pubs

Pharr, S. (1988). *Homophobia: A weapon of sexism*. Inverness, CA: Chardon Press.

Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN). (2017). *What to expect from the criminal justice system. R*etrieved from https://www.rainn.org/articles/what-expect-criminal-justice-system

Rotter, J. (1966). Generalized expectations for internal versus external controlled reinforcement. *Psychological Monographs: General and Applied.* Vol. 80, No. 1. Whole No. 609. Retrieved from http://socserver.soc.iastate.edu/sapp/soc512Rotter.pdf

Santiago, C., & Criss, D. (2017). An activist, a little girl and the heartbreak origin of 'me too.' *Cable Network News* (CNN). October 17, 2017. Retrieved from http://www.cnn.com/2017/10/17/us/me-too-tarana-burke-origin-trnd/index.html

Stone, K. (2016). Framing a movement: The media at Standing Rock. *Montana Journalism Review, special report. University of Montana, School of Journalism. Retrieved from* https://features.mjr.jour.umt.edu/2016/11/27/framing-a-movement

Thesauras.com (2017). Retrieved from http://www.thesaurus.com/browse/femaleness?s=t

Thesauras.com (2017). Retrieved from http://www.thesaurus.com/browse/maleness

Thomsen, S. (2016). *Water Is Life - Mni Wičoni. Retrieved from* www.echoesofpeace.org/water-is-life

The Women's March (2017). Retrieved from: www.womensmarch.com/march

Townsend, C., & Rheingold, A.A., (2013). Estimating a child sexual abuse prevalence rate for practitioners: studies. *Darkness to Light*. Retrieved from https://www.d2l.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/all_statistics_20150619.pdf

UNESCO, United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. (2013). *Education of all global monitoring report*. October, 2013. Retrieved from https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/sites/gem-report/files/girls-factsheet-en.pdf

UNICEF, United Nations Children's Fund (2016). The state of the world's children. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/sowc2016

UNICEF, United Nations Children's Fund (2017). A familiar face: Violence in the lives of children and adolescents. Retrieved from https://data.unicef.org/resources/a-familiar-face

UNODC, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2016). Global report on trafficking in persons (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.16.IV.6). *United Nations.* New York, New York.

Yacka, S. (2017). National report on hate violence against lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, queer, and HIV-affected communities released today (June 12, 2017). *National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs.* New York City Anti-Violence Project. Retrieved from http://avp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/NCAVP_2016_HVReport_Media-Release.pdf

Dr. Margaret R. Frimoth is the Vice President of Academic Affairs at Clatsop Community College, Astoria, Oregon. She received a B.A. in Human Services from World College West, an M.A. in Values from San Francisco Theological Seminary, and a PhD from California Institute of Integral Studies. She is a long-time advocate for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, serving on local, regional, and national committees. In 1987, she founded the annual Victory Over Child Abuse (VOCA) Camps and has received several awards for her work, including a mention in the U.S. Congressional Record and the Oregon Governor's Volunteerism award. The annual camps continue, based in part, on the principles of Riane Eisler's partnership systems.

Correspondence about this article should be addressed to Margaret Frimoth at mfrimoth@gmail.com