

THE LINK BETWEEN MORAL ANGER AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM: AN
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ABSTRACT

“In one autobiography after another we find the same story—the initial action for peace and justice is motivated by anger against injustice. Like the spark that ignites the fuel in an engine, anger is the stimulus that initiates action” (Adams, 2007, p. 10). This study explores one of the pathways to creating change, via examining the mechanism that allows some individuals who have experienced anger as a result of growing up under a system(s) of injustice to transform their anger into moral anger and subsequently into activism. Individuals who experience moral anger often perceive their anger as righteous and justified, linked to something greater than individual self-interest (Potter-Efron, 2005). A semi-structured interview that contained open-ended questions about the individual’s demographics and childhood, exposure to structural violence/social injustice, past and current involvement in social activism, description of moral anger, opportunities to express anger or discuss it with others, and hypotheses about the link between anger and activism was administered to fourteen individuals who self identified as activists. Grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) was used to analyze the data. Many interviewees acknowledged times when they felt different from those around them during their childhood/adolescence and described being bothered by how people were treated during their childhood. While some were “intrinsically” drawn to activism, others came to activism through an external experience. The results indicate the importance of normalizing emotions, working together in a collective fashion, developing a critical consciousness through discrete educational experiences, a family legacy of activism, observing activism during childhood or adolescence, observing injustice, exposure to people from different cultures or with different opinions, surviving a family trauma, and

accurately identifying emotions. Significant intersection was found between the factors, likely indicative of multiple pathways that work together in a cyclical manner to help individuals channel their anger into moral anger and subsequently into activism. Challenges to expect when channeling anger into activism, limitations of the study, and implications for future research are included. In addition, implications for future curriculum development, for adolescents who are currently experiencing anger as a result of social injustice, are also discussed.

Dedicated to the Memory of my Granny, Daisy (Dina) Master (1916 -2008)

A Quiet Hero

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CHAPTER I

Literature Review

“History has taught him [Dubois] it is not enough for people to be angry. The supreme task is to organize and unite people so that their anger becomes a transforming force” (King, Jr., 1968, p. 109).

Statement of the Problem

While research has been conducted on the motivation of social activists, the role of using anger about systems of injustice, as a motivator for activism, has been largely unstudied. There are many examples throughout history of individuals who have channeled their anger towards making a change in a system of injustice; however, little is known about the mechanism that leads some to channel this anger towards activism, as opposed to more destructive behavior.

In order to begin an exploratory study of the mechanism that leads some who have grown up surrounded by injustice to channel their anger into positive change, it is necessary to first explore the other common responses to anger, such as violence. Two caveats are necessary. While people have a variety of reactions to anger, including internalizing the anger, depression, violence, activism, ignoring the anger, screaming, and calmly expressing their anger, this literature review will focus exclusively on activism and violence, with the intention of teasing apart the differences between the two

reactions. Moreover, while there are a large number of factors that motivate activists, this study will focus only on the role (or lack thereof) of anger in propelling social change.

Anger

Definition of anger. Simply, anger is defined as “a strong feeling of displeasure and usually of antagonism” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008). It is considered a

Conflictive emotion that, on the biological level, is related to aggressive systems and, even more important, to the capacities for cooperative social living, symbolization, and reflective self-awareness; that, on the psychological level, is aimed at the correction of some appraised wrong; and that, on the sociocultural level, functions to uphold accepted standards of conduct. (Averill, 1982, p. 321)

Anger is the internal experience of a private, subjective event (emotion) and has cognitive and physiological components. This is differentiated from aggression, which can be defined as behavioral acts that inflict bodily or mental harm on others. Anger is generally viewed as a negative emotion, in relation to both social evaluation and a subjective experience (Averill, 1983).

Anger can be conceptualized in wide variety of manners. The social constructivist view of anger suggests that it is a “socially constituted syndrome that is maintained because of (not in spite of) its consequences...Anger is a highly interpersonal emotion. It cannot be fully understood apart from the social context in which it occurs...that context typically involves a close affectional relationship between the angry person and the target” (Averill, 1983, pp. 1146-1149). Averill’s, a social constructivist, starting point is that “anger is antisocial, unpleasant, negative, and very common” (Kemp

& Strongman, 1995, p. 407). People are more likely to become angry with loved ones and friends than at strangers or other individuals that they dislike (Averill, 1983).

Alternately, psychodynamic theory focuses more on internal processes.

According to Freud's dual-instinct theory, aggression is one of the two sources of the "basic instinctual energy that drives mental processes...what is repressed are not just harmless sexual wishes...but a powerful, savage destructiveness deriving from a death instinct" (Mitchell & Black, 1995, pp. 18-19). Repression then shifted from being conceptualized as imposed from a restrictive society to a

Form of social control that saves people from themselves and makes it possible for them to live together, without perpetually killing and exploiting one another. Ideal mental health does not entail an absence of repression, but the maintenance of a modulated repression that allows gratification while at the same time preventing primitive sexual and aggressive impulses from taking over. (Mitchell & Black, 1995, p. 19)

Additionally, there are two other psychodynamic models of emotions, which include anger. One "views symptoms as manifestations of internal conflict and another...regards symptoms as by-products of deficits in personality functioning" (Livesely, 2003 as cited in Knafo & Moscovitz, 2006, p. 102). For instance, Kohut (1971, 1972, 1977) viewed the emotion of anger and rage as "reflecting the 'disintegration' of a core self in response to empathic failures of the environment" (Knafo & Moscovitz, 2006, p. 102). However, as opposed to other theories, Kohut uses the word environment to refer to "other people in the individual's social world as they exist for that individual" (Knafo & Moscovitz, 2006, p. 102). A psychodynamic model of anger can therefore be conceptualized as a combination of repeating past conflicts and a defensive manner in which one is able to avoid vulnerability (Feindler & Byers, 2006).

The cognitive behavioral model suggests that anger is an intense emotional response to frustration or provocation characterized by heightened autonomic arousal, changes in nervous system activity, and cognitive labeling of the physiological arousal as anger. Lazarus (1991) understands anger in terms of his cognitive-motivational-relational model of the processes of emotion and coping. He views anger as the result of loss, harm, or threat, with the blame being attributed to someone else.

For the angry person, the implication is that whoever caused the harm, loss, or threat could have exercised control and not done it, if he or she had so wished...Lazarus argues that a matter of general importance to people is the preservation of their ego identity. Any assault on this will prompt anger, a reaction which is to an extent dependent on personality and on one's recent history of being demeaned. (Kemp & Strongman, 1995, p. 406)

Lazarus also notes that when it appears that expressing anger will produce a strong retaliation, anger is often inhibited. While expressing anger can be simultaneously dangerous and useful, uncontrolled anger will likely be simultaneously counterproductive and physically unhealthy, depending on the culture, time, and place (Kemp & Strongman, 1995).

The biological argument suggests that during evolution, anger had an adaptive function. "Anger is a residue of our biological past, which under more civilized circumstances we can control only imperfectly" (Averill, 1983, p. 1146). Adams (2007), who self identifies as a follower of Darwin, assumes there is a biological substrate of anger against social injustice, which developed throughout the course of human evolution and served other purposes when it evolved. However, Adler and Denmark (1995) clarify by suggesting that although anger may be related to evolution and have social

significance, it does not detract from the idea that anger or aggression might be misused, misdirected, or other actions could be substituted to produce more prosocial “scripts.” Over time, in certain stereotypically “developed” societies, there has been a tendency to re-channel anger into more socially acceptable behaviors, in a sense, creating a cultural script. Anger can also be viewed as a secondary emotion, because it is often more socially acceptable and/or easier to express than other emotions, such as sadness. This study, however, will focus exclusively on the primary, not secondary, function of anger.

When a person is angry, he/she often wants to destroy the one that has caused the anger, to retaliate in an aggressive manner, or to withhold something positive from the individual. Anger is often a motivator that serves as a catalyst for the individual to take action that is self protective or retaliatory to “even the scales of justice” (Weiner, 2005, p. 37).

“Nowadays, psychologists claim that they spend more time helping clients manage their anger than in dealing with any other emotion” (Kristijansson, 2005, p. 679). Tavis (1989) argues that expressing anger is cathartic when it meets five conditions. First, the anger must be directed at the target of one’s anger, rather than displacing the anger to another individual or object. Second, the expression of the anger must lead to an equivalent amount of harm to the other, rather than underreacting or overreacting. This leads to a sense of control over the situation, as though justice has been restored. Third, expressing the anger has to lead to new insights about the situation or change the behavior. Fourth, the individual who is angry and the individual who provoked the anger must use the same language and tone. Finally, the individual who provoked the anger can’t retaliate in an angry manner. Since it is difficult to control how people will

respond, this might help explain the cathartic effect of writing anonymous hate mail or letters to the editor, as they often don't receive a response. Moreover, writing letters or diaries to individuals who are unavailable and not mailing them can be similarly cathartic.

Averill (1983) estimates that most anger is in response to social injustice. He found that over 85% of the events that the angry person described involved either something she/he considered unjustified and voluntary (59%) or an accident that could potentially have been avoidable (e.g. due to negligence or lack of foresight, 28%). According to Averill, anger can be provoked due to frustration, particularly if it is severe and/or arbitrary, and possible or actual physical pain or injury. The childhood expression, "that's not fair!" also captures the spirit of anger (Adams, 2007).

Ancient philosophers and divergent manners of characterizing anger. Ancient philosophers had differing views about the purpose and usefulness of anger. Philosophers such as Galen and Seneca were hostile to anger, "regarding rage with loathing, and refer to it as a kind of madness (e.g. Galen, 180/1963, p. 42; Seneca, 45/1928, p. 107 as cited in Kemp & Strongman, 1995, p. 398). In Seneca's "famous diatribe against anger, the late-Stoic philosopher argued that anger is neither rational nor morally fitting in any possible circumstances, and he suggested various ways in which children should be brought up so as to nip in the bud the creation of an angry disposition" (Seneca, 1995 as cited in Kristijansson, 2005, pp. 682-683). He further noted, "if the misfortune is unbearable, then suicide should be preferred to rage" (Kemp & Strongman, 1995, p. 398).

Seneca argued that “anger may be avoided in the first place ‘if we repeatedly set before ourselves its many faults’” (Seneca, 45/1928, p. 265 as cited in Kemp & Strongman, 1995, p. 403). He noted that avoiding being too busy, avoiding being around people who provoke anger and avoiding being hungry or thirsty could help prevent anger. Moreover, he thought that soothing music was helpful.

To guard against growing anger, Seneca advises one to check speech and impulses and be aware of particular sources of personal irritation. In dealing with other people, one should not be too inquisitive: It is not always soothing to hear and see everything. When someone appears to slight you, you should be at first reluctant to believe this, and should wait to hear the full story. You should also put yourself in the place of the other person, trying to understand his motives and any extenuating factors, such as age or illness...when dealing with the anger of others, it is wise to do nothing quickly. Being angry in return is likely to make matters worse, and often some kind of deception is necessary when talking to angry people. (Kemp & Strongman, 1995, pp. 403-404)

On the other hand, Aristotle defined anger as “desire, accompanied by pain, for conspicuous revenge because of a conspicuous slight that was directed, without justification, against oneself or those near to one” (Aristotle, 1378/1991 as cited in Leighton, 2002, p. 26). He held “that anger, which arises from perceived injustice, is useful for preventing injustice, and that the opposite of anger is a kind of insensibility” (Aristotle, 350 B.C./1931 as cited in Kemp & Strongman, 1995, p. 398). Moreover, “what we should be aiming at in anger regulation is, according to Aristotle, neither the eradication of anger nor its control through calculated self-discipline but rather learning to experience that emotion...as part of our true selves in an uninhibited, rational and morally fitting way” (Kristjansson, 2005, p. 681).

Gender and anger. Anger can also be examined within the context of gender.

According to Crawford, Kippax, Onyx, Gault, and Benton (1992), Averill's understanding of anger is a "particularly male view. Defining it from a woman's perspective, they place the stress differently, arguing that anger involves moral judgments about rightness and justice, and is sometimes socially acceptable and sometimes not" (Kemp & Strongman, 1995, p. 409). Crawford et. al. argue that anger is connected with being hurt and related to fear. When women are unable to restrain their anger and exhibit anger, they are seen as hysterical or emotional. Women's anger is usually associated with crying, which is often misinterpreted as hurt or depression.

In fact, from the woman's perspective, crying indicates the strength of the anger, and is not a replacement for it. The tears are demonstrating feelings of being a victim, that is, of being annoyed or aggrieved, yet are often seen (by men) as being anger out of a woman's control...contrary to the case for men, women are condemned both for expressing anger too strongly or for suppressing it too much. This, from a woman's perspective, is quite different from the situation for men, who are permitted (encouraged?) to express their anger...anger from powerlessness (the woman's lot) is seen as more out of control, more passionate, and more ineffectual. It is accompanied by feelings of unjust victimization and is directed against those in power (men), and often provokes the powerful and empowering type of anger in return. (Kemp & Strongman, 1995, pp. 409- 410)

In Victorian times, teaching boys to channel their anger was complicated, because angry outbursts were looked down upon. However, even parents who practiced extreme discipline taught boys to channel their anger appropriately, not to completely eliminate the anger. Girls, on the other hand, were assumed never to be angry. Women were often taught that expressing their anger would be in opposition to "proper" family life and their sex. Recently, Western culture has focused on helping people learn to manage their

anger (Kemp & Strongman, 1995). Current anger management programs focus on a middle ground of anger

A final casting off of the shackles of Victorian gender differences. Men are encouraged to engage in more public display of tears, and women are counseled that it is not only good to be assertive, but even to become angry. Thus, there may even be a reversal of roles representing a change in the balance of power. (Kemp & Strongman, 1995, p. 412)

Moral anger. Moral anger, one type of anger, is the focus of this dissertation.

Moral emotions are defined “as emotional responses motivating support for actions that benefit the interest and welfare of other individuals or of society as a whole” (Haidt, 2003 as cited in Pagano & Hua, 2007, p. 228). Anger can span from the non-moral primordial form, often found in animals, to a more complex emotion, linked to transgressions and rights violations against those close to the self (Rozin, Lowery, Imada, & Haidt, 1999).

Although previous work on emotions and prosocial tendencies has been dominated by the emotion of empathy for victims’ suffering and the subsequent desire to offer them immediate relief, we suggest that harm inflicted upon others in violation of normative principles (i.e. moral transgression) can induce distinct emotions, such as guilt and moral outrage, that would lead to support for other forms of actions that also benefit the victims. In other words, we suggest that support for various forms of action tendencies is emotion specific. (Pagano & Huo, 2007, p. 229)

Individuals who experience moral anger often perceive their anger as righteous and justified, linked to something greater than individual self-interest (Potter-Efron, 2005). “It may be that, in order to prompt support for political change, we need people to feel morally outraged enough to do so” (Marcus, 2000 as cited in Pagano & Huo, 2007, p. 248).

“*Multi-generational anger.*” Gooding (2000) argues for the existence of “multi-generational anger,” a potential form of moral anger. Rather than anger about day to day events,

Multi-generational anger brings into play ‘historical memories’ fueled by anger that has been accumulated, vicariously, as a result of situations and suffering experienced by past generations of African Americans from the slave period to the present. This ‘multi-generational anger’ is not event specific and is pervasive, often results in excessive explosiveness, usually not understood by the person or others affected, not responsive to traditional anger management curriculums, often projected inwardly through dysfunctional behaviors (i.e., substance abuse, crime, under achievement), physically and psychologically damaging, [and is] misinterpreted by others as a genetic pre-disposition toward violence. (Gooding, 2000, pp. 1-2)

This anger has a negative impact on self esteem, one’s expectations about life, problem solving skills, and the “personal freedom of African American males. It taxes America’s criminal justice system and diminishes a very important national resource; the energy and creativity of African American men” (Gooding, 2000, p. 2).

Anger and Violence

Violence. “Violence involves a willful action (or inaction) that results in the intentional infliction of harm or injury” (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2005, p. 13). Traditionally, violence involves physical acts of aggression directed from one person to another. However, Hardy and Laszloffy (2005) argue that violence also includes intentional harmful acts that an individual directs against her/himself, including suicide. Furthermore, Alderman (1997) coined the term ‘self inflicted violence’ to connote situations where an individual attempts to cause harm and injury to her/himself without an obvious suicide attempt. Another layer of violence is societal. War, genocide,

slavery, and all manifestations of socio-cultural oppression, including homophobia, sexism, racism, and poverty are all forms of violence. In each case, domination is paired with inequalities, based on differential access to influence, power, and resources. This will be discussed further below, under the category of structural violence. When such conditions exist in human relationships, violence is often inevitable. Furthermore, acts of omission, when one is aware of violence yet fails to take specific action to intervene and prevent future violence, can be viewed as a passive form of violence (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2005).

Many American children grow up in violence (Kostelny & Garbarino, 2001). The United States is considered the most violent country in the industrialized world, especially for children and adolescents. In 1992, the Surgeon General declared violence a public health emergency (Koop & Lundberg, 1992; Kostelny & Garbarino, 2001). In terms of violence against one another, a vicious cycle often occurs. Children and adolescents join gangs to help protect themselves against violence, but in exchange for their safety, are often forced to commit crimes, leading to further violence. Furthermore, the adolescent suicide rate has increased 300% in the last 30 years (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2005). Risk factors for developmental harm from exposure to violence include family violence, depressed mothers, media violence, and easy access to firearms (Kostelny & Garbarino, 2001).

Many children cope with violence by adopting behavior that is adaptive in a violent setting but is dysfunctional in 'normal' settings in which they participate (Garbarino, Dubrow, Kostelny, & Pardo, 1992). For example, adapting to chronic violence by becoming hypervigilant and hyperaggressive may be a useful strategy on the streets, but is detrimental to being successful in school. (Garbarino,

Dubrow, Kostelny, & Pardo, 1992 as cited in Kostelny & Garbarino, 2001, pp. 114-115)

Much of the violence also occurs in schools. In 1999, students aged 12 to 18 were victims of about 2.5 million crimes in school, and 186,000 of the crimes were classified as serious violent crimes, including rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). Moreover, in 1999, students were twice as likely to be victims of serious crimes away from school as in school (Kaplan, 2004). In 2001, 6% of all students aged 12 to 18 were afraid of going to school or spending time at school (Kaplan, 2004). Preventing this violence, that occurs across cultures, by teaching students to channel their rightfully felt anger, towards activism, would not only help the individual, but also has the potential to increase school attendance and academic performance, and create widespread positive societal change. This dissertation attempts to isolate the variables that would enable individuals to transform their anger into activism, rather than violence.

The link between anger and violence. Understanding the trajectory from anger to violence provides a crucial context in understanding the link between anger and activism. There are a variety of perspectives on the psychological etiology and effects of anger and subsequent violence. Miller (1983) saw violence as an attempt by individuals who were subject to authoritarian and repressive child-rearing practices to cure themselves through their projection of the humiliating parts of themselves onto others and subsequently attacking others. Miller therefore argued that in the short term, violence had an ameliorative potential, but in the long term, could never be a force of healing (Straker, 1992). According to Fanon (1963), violence originates when individuals live in a political system that exploits and demeans them, “and which projects onto them all the

disowned negative aspects of the oppressor” (Straker, 1992, p. 109). This generates significant fury in the individual being oppressed, which out of necessity, must be repressed and outwardly replaced by conforming to what the oppressor is dictating. The fury, denied an outlet, might lead the individual to turn inwards, towards self-destruction, or might be directed toward a scapegoat (Straker, 1992).

However, Freud viewed participation in violence in a manner quite different from Miller and Fanon. According to Freud, rather than conceptualizing violence as a reaction to abuse and oppression, he “saw it as part of the repertoire of all human beings, exercised in response to ‘normal’ rather than especially abusive conditions” (Straker, 1992, p. 110). He believed that individuals have a life instinct, an active component in favor of self-preservation. When one participates in war or collective violence, there is permission to express both instincts.

Freud postulated that in small-scale traditional societies, the engagement of these two impulses within the individuals was simple and direct. External controls within the society dictated what was good or bad. Its simple organization allowed for continual monitoring of individual behavior, and for immediate reward or punishment. There was no real need for individuals to monitor their own behavior by way of the superego, or conscience; external sanctions were sufficient. (Straker, 1992, p. 110)

When anger leads to violence: The frustration-aggression hypothesis. According to the frustration-aggression theory (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939), anger functions as a drive. An aggressive response will likely only occur when evoked by an external cue (e.g. an individual who is angry sees an object or person that is associated with the source of frustration). This suggests that an individual who is angry is not likely to respond haphazardly, but rather only strike out at the target she/he thinks

is responsible. Attacking someone or something is an inherently satisfying response to anger, reducing the individual's anger, regardless of whether the frustration itself is reduced. However, aggression is likely to occur if frustration continues. Moreover, if the attack reduces frustration, the act of attacking is reinforced, and when the individual gets angry again, she/he is likely to respond in an aggressive manner (Gurr, 1970). A reformulation of this model suggests

Frustrations are aversive events and generate aggressive inclinations only to the extent that they produce negative affect. An unanticipated failure to obtain an attractive goal is more unpleasant than an expected failure, and it is the greater displeasure in the former case that gives rise to the stronger instigation to aggression. Similarly, the thwarted persons' appraisals and attributions presumably determine how bad they feel at not getting what they had wanted so that they are most aggressively inclined when they experience strong negative affect. (Berkowitz, 1989, p. 71)

According to Maier, there are four responses induced by frustration: regression, fixation, resignation, and aggression. As opposed to goal-directed behavior, frustration-instigated behavior tends to be compulsive and fixed, not always deterred by punishment (which might actually increase the frustration), not influenced by anticipated consequences, and is satisfying in and of itself. The original goal that led to the frustration might be unrelated to the behavior (Gurr, 1970).

Some would argue that the frustration-aggression mechanisms might be the primary source of the human capacity for violence. This does not suggest that frustration always leads to violence, nor that violence is never motivated by expectations of gain. However, the anger induced by frustration does seem to be the motivating force in the disposition of aggression. The theory states that if frustration is significant, it is almost certainly going to lead to violence proportional to the frustration. However, in each case,

there is a range of additional variables, including beliefs, social environment, and inhibitions (Gurr, 1970).

A threat-aggression sequence has also been identified. Often, the violent response is greater when there is a greater perceived threat to life. For instance, the bombing on English, German, and Japanese civilian populations during World War II (including Hiroshima and Nagasaki) led to acute fear, which led to greater hostility toward the government that failed to prevent the bombing and the enemy (Janis, 1951). Animals have revealed a similar response—when something threatens their existence, the avoidance-survival mechanism is triggered, which can include extremely violent behavior. Berkowitz interprets this sequence as a special case in the relationship between frustration and aggression. The anticipated frustration is a threat to life. Fear and anger simultaneously rise as the degree of threat increases, and fear might be mediated by the individual's perception of her/his power to hurt or control the individual who is frustrating her/him relative to that individual's power to hurt or control her/him (Berkowitz, 1993). It seems likely that people have a fundamental disposition to respond to extreme fear in an aggressive manner. The response can then both reinforce frustration-induced anger and be reinforced by frustration-induced anger (Gurr, 1970).

When anger leads to violence: The relative deprivation theory. The relative deprivation theory (RDT) (Gurr, 1970; Runciman, 1996) has also been proposed as an explanation for how anger can lead to violence.

Relative deprivation is defined as a perceived discrepancy between men's/women's value expectations and their value capabilities. Value expectations are the goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled. Value capabilities are the goods and conditions they think they are capable of attaining or

maintaining, given the social means available to them.
(Gurr, 1970, p. 13)

The word “relative” is used because it focuses on one’s feelings of being deprived, not actual deprivation, which is usually a result of a difference between one’s expectations of attainment and actual achievement. The expectations for achievement will probably emerge from social comparisons with the self in the past, other individuals, or other social groups. The feelings of deprivation result from a negative outcome, usually a result of comparisons with other groups, which he calls fraternalistic deprivation and individuals, which he refers to as egoistic deprivation. Fraternalistic deprivation can lead to outgroup hostility, because it is linked to social behavior (Brown, 1995; Niens & Cairns, 2001). Discontent is usually intensified when conditions in society, such as value gains of other groups and promises of new opportunities, increase the intensity or average level of expectations without increasing capabilities. Similarly, discontent is intensified when conditions in society decrease one’s position of value without decreasing one’s expectations, leading to increased deprivation (Gurr, 1970).

When discontent is induced by deprivation, there is often motivation to take action. The mediating factors of whether one will take action are often the individual’s belief about the source of the deprivation “and about the normative and utilitarian justifiability of violent action directed at the agents responsible for it” (Gurr, 1970, p. 13).

There are often societal variables that lead individuals to focus their discontent on political objects. These variables often include

The extent of cultural and subcultural sanctions for overt aggression, the extent and degree of success of past political violence, the articulation and dissemination of symbolic appeals justifying the violence, the legitimacy of the political system, and the kinds of responses it makes

and has made to relative deprivation. The belief that violence has utility in obtaining scarce values can be an independent source of political violence, but within political communities it is most likely to provide a secondary, rationalizing, rather than primary, motivation. Widespread discontent provides a general impetus to collective violence. However, the great majority of acts of collective violence in recent decades have had at least some political objects, and the more intense those violence acts are, the more likely they are to be focused primarily or exclusively on the political system. Intense discontent is quite likely to be politicized; the primary effect of normative and utilitarian attitudes toward violence is to focus that potential. (Gurr, 1970, pp. 13-14)

However, a caveat must be made. Such discontent has also led to pogroms, lynchings, Nazis, and other evils in human history. “Activists” of all types exist, ranging from those who advocate for social justice to those who advocate for social injustice.

When anger leads to violence: Four aggravated factors. Hardy and Laszloffy (2005) developed a different approach to explain the connection between anger and violence. Their model assumes that all individuals have the potential for violence; however, the interaction of four aggravated factors, devaluation, erosion of community, dehumanized loss, and rage, differentiates those who do and do not actualize their violent potential. It should be noted that the term aggravating is used instead of etiological factors because these factors do not cause violence, but rather a mix of the factors plays an important role in understanding adolescent violence. The four factors are closely linked to one another. For example, disruption of a community often leads to devaluation and vice versa.

When an individual or group’s worth and dignity are assaulted or denigrated, devaluation occurs. It can develop in response to situational circumstances, such as school failure, unemployment, and abandonment or as a result of pervasive conditions,

such as being a member of a group that is socially stigmatized, marginalized, or ostracized, which often includes racial minorities, females, gays, and lesbians.

Adolescents who become violent have often not only had multiple experiences with devaluation, but the experiences have been largely untreated and unhealed, leading to a significant emotional effect (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2005).

Erosion of the community, also referred to as disruption of the community, can occur as a result of familial issues, such as abuse, separation, divorce, and abandonment, and broader social issues such as gender, racial, and economic oppression. According to Hardy and Laszloffy (2005), the three levels of community integrated into an adolescent's life include primary, defined as one's family; extended, such as neighborhoods, schools, churches, synagogues, temples, civic groups, and community centers; and cultural, which includes communities that one is a member of based on race, ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, mental/physical ability, and religion. A community is broadly defined in emotional, psychological, and physical terms.

It is a place, physically but mostly metaphysical, of rootedness and belonging, where one feels a sense of connection and purpose. The establishment and maintenance of a strong sense of community are necessary preconditions for feeling safe, secure, and connected with others. Adolescents, like their adult counterparts, depend on 'community' to derive a sense of identity, rootedness, and positive relations with others. (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2005, p. 27)

Therefore, one could experience a wide range of difficulties when one's sense of community has been disrupted or eroded.

Some form of loss is involved in both devaluation and erosion of community.

Hardy and Laszloffy (2005) found that teens who are violent have often experienced

significant loss and the dehumanization of loss, characterized by a multitude of experiences of unacknowledged and unmourned loss. “It’s one thing to lose something that was important to you, but is far worse when no one in your universe recognizes that you have lost it. The failure to acknowledge another’s loss is to deny that person’s humanity” (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2005, p. 28).

The last factor, before violence occurs, rage, is the product of devaluation, disruption of community, and the dehumanization of loss. Rage is a natural and inevitable response to injustice and pain, and when channeled constructively, can be a positive, transforming force, however, the potential for violence increases significantly when there are few or no opportunities to express and channel rage constructively (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2005). Furthermore, if one responds to rage by trying to suppress and/or deny it, the probability that rage will lead to an explosion of violence greatly increases. On the surface, the suppressed or denied rage might give the appearance of calmness and security, but actually represents the exact opposite. While the motivation for denying and/or suppressing rage might be to avoid violence, it often intensifies rage and subsequently, violence (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2005). Rage can be viewed as the “mediating variable between the first three factors and violence. The presence of the first three factors gives birth to rage, and depending upon how rage is handled, it may eventually explode into violence” (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2005, p. 29). However, the likelihood of violence decreases if one receives validation for the roots of the rage and is provided with constructive opportunities to channel and express one’s rage. “For example, youth who find constructive outlets for their rage (athletics, drama, writing, music, sociopolitical activism) are far less likely to become violent because their rage has

a channel, and it's a channel that brings them social affirmation, validation, and pride” (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2005, p. 101).

Anger is a common emotional response when a perceived offense occurs. Anger often develops quickly, is spontaneous, and if there are appropriate opportunities to express and validate the anger, it often passes. On the other hand, when anger is suppressed and denied either expression or affirmation, it often becomes “buried within, eventually taking root and beginning to grow. Suppressed anger is the seed of rage. Over time, suppressed anger grows and intensifies until eventually it is transformed into rage, a far more intense, sustained, and consuming emotion” (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2005, p. 96). According to the authors, depression could often be considered rage turned inward.

The rage felt by many children and adolescents is healthy and natural. However, when systems do not recognize the normalcy of anger and are unsure how to deal with the rage in a constructive manner, they often deprive the individuals of methods to work through and release anger. This tends to intensify the rage. Furthermore, the strategies that many institutions, such as juvenile detention centers, use to suppress rage are often invasive and serve to exacerbate devaluation, which can lead to an increase in rage (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2005). While it might seem somewhat illogical, rage does not have to equal violence and at times, if handled with nurturance and appropriate guidance, may be healing (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2005). “The worry that rage will erupt into violence prevents most of us from appreciating its life-saving power” (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2005, p. 103).

What Hardy and Laszloffy refer to as rage is quite similar to the previous discussion of anger. Following their systemic context, I will attempt to identify the aggravating factors that lead to activism, explicitly drawing a connection between anger/rage and motivation to change one's environment.

Violence: solving problems or creating new problems? Violence creates few psychological problems, in the medium term, when it can be justified within the individual's own existing system of morality. However, while violence might not create problems for the individual, it also often does not solve many problems. For instance, in a study looking at youth who grew up in Leandra, a township in South Africa, during apartheid, there was a lack of evidence that participating in violence had a transformative or healing effect on the individual. There might have been a short-lived euphoria immediately following public violence, but it was rarely sustained. However, violence did appear to bind individuals together, which might have contributed to developing structural changes that would ultimately benefit the individual. While violence might have facilitated a sense of empowerment and well being in the short term, it did not appear to transform individuals or cure their psychological pain. It did appear, though, that some individuals used violence as a means of reducing tension and/or avoiding anxiety and depression in the short term. This often led to an addictive, rather than curative effect, though. The violence itself had an emotional intensity that was frequently sought out, regardless of the societal situation (Straker, 1992).

Structural violence. While people shooting one another is devastating, there are other forms of equally devastating, yet subtle, social violence alluded to above in the discussion of violence. Twenty percent of the children in the United States live in

households that are at or under the poverty level. The violence of poverty is evident in the children who go to school hungry, malnourished, and with untreated medical conditions (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2005).

The term structural violence was coined by Johan Galtung (1969) “to mean any constraint on human potential caused by economic and political structures” (Winter & Leighton, 2001, p. 99). Whenever people are disadvantaged by political, legal, economic, or cultural traditions, structural violence occurs. Structural inequalities often seem ordinary due to their longstanding nature, yet lead to suffering and death as often as direct violence. However, the damage is slower, more subtle, more widespread, and significantly more difficult to repair (Winter & Leighton, 2001). Structural violence is usually invisible, entrenched in omnipresent social structures, and normalized by regular experience and stable institutions. While “direct violence is immediate, concrete, physical violence committed by and on particular, identifiable people” (Opatow, 2001, p. 102), structural violence

Is gradual, imperceptible, and normalized as the way things are done; it determines whose voice is systematically heard or ignored, who gets particular resources, and who goes without...agency is blurred and responsibility is unclear...normalizes unequal access to such social and economic resources as education, wealth, quality housing, civic services, and political power. (Opatow, 2001, p. 102)

Structural violence impedes intellectual development. Therefore, if one grows up in a structurally violent society and becomes angry, one might respond via violence due to a lack of intellectual development or other factors described above. This is further motivation to help eradicate society of structural violence, which in turn, might eradicate individual violence, because the anger will be directed towards activism rather than

violence. Poverty is also related to insecure attachments, as it is often difficult for parents to provide warmth, guidance, and responsiveness (Schwabel & Christie, 2001).

Unfortunately,

Most psychologists are not trained in macro-level interventions, but failing to engage with structural problems and focusing only on the individual unit of analysis and change places peace psychologists in the role of helping people maintain the status quo. To the extent that we help people adjust to the stresses of poverty, unemployment, and inadequate health care and education, we unwittingly contribute to the inertia of structural violence. (Schwabel & Christie, 2001, p. 126)

Furthermore, structural violence often leads to direct violence.

Activism

Social activists. Social activists are “individuals who attempt to change societal conditions that they believe perpetuate the targeted social problem” (Sytniak, 1996, p. 2). Sytniak argues that there are two types of activists, “self interested” individuals, who will directly benefit from the social change, and “benevolent” individuals, who will not benefit in a tangible manner from the success of the social change. Of course, there are personal rewards and motivations for both groups of individuals. Social activists often have precursors to their participation in activism and then continued involvement due to sustaining factors, “rewards obtained through activism that help benevolent activists maintain their social involvement” (Sytniak, 1996, p. 5). Personal responsibility and ultimate values are frequently motivating factors for social activists while small wins, social networks, psychological well being, and psychological empowerment are among the sustaining factors. According to Sytniak’s (1996) dissertation, the process of taking action usually involves the following cycle:

A person is confronted with a social problem that is inconsistent with his/her values. The person feels personal responsibility for the social conditions surrounding this problem. These factors encourage him/her to seek out social change opportunities that address these social conditions. Initially, values and a sense of personal responsibility serve to keep him/her involved. Gradually, the person is rewarded with small positive changes in the social problem, new friends with similar values, or other sustaining factors. These rewards are important to the activist and serve to reinforce his/her involvement in social activism. Involvement in social activism may also influence the person's values and sense of personal responsibility that led to his/her involvement in the first place. (p. 94)

Another way to characterize social activists was described in a study examining the two leaders in Leandrea, a township in South Africa that suffered greatly under apartheid. The leaders were both

Able to represent outer reality authentically and clearly, and to be pro-active within it, without being impulsive. Both of them thought carefully about their actions and assessed what would be appropriate in the face of the particular reality that confronted them. They were both interpersonally skillful and popular. They appraised themselves positively and had a sense of personal responsibility for their own actions and the well-being of others. (Straker, 1992, pp. 35-36)

In the child development literature, these characteristics are highly correlated with invulnerability and stress resistance. The leaders were also able to make sense of and relate meaningfully to their worlds, and to work in a manner that focused on what they could change, instead of what could not be changed. In somewhat of a similar vein, the follower group, involved in activism in a different way, "seemed to enter the struggle as a way of giving meaning and direction to their lives" (Straker, 1992, p. 39). Furthermore, the support and political socialization received from significant adults were the most

important distinguishing factors between the leaders and the followers. For instance, the leaders had a history of resistance in their families (Straker, 1992).

In another study exploring the characteristics of social activists, Caplan and Paige (1968) examined the difference between “rioters” and “non-rioters.” They found that the key difference is the “rioters” refusal to accept that discrimination is inevitable and therefore refusal to passively adapt to discrimination. The rioters “have negotiated a crucial psychological shift in perception from blaming the self for failure to perceiving causes in the social structure, while at the same time, maintaining a sense of personal effectiveness” (Straker, 1992, p. 22).

According to Schwebel (1993), the motivation of unconventional peace activists includes a dissatisfaction with the status quo (Kinder & Sears, 1985), a sense of duty and responsibility to future generations or people who are suffering, a belief that values are in danger, an involvement in peace activities so central to their lives, that it is impossible to ignore, and the benefits outweigh the costs. Moreover, the motivation also includes political efficacy, which is the belief that the actions have meaning and will have a significant effect on policy; the activism adds meaning to their lives; and they value excitement seeking, where seeking peace could be considered akin to the excitement in a war (Watanabe & Milburn, 1988).

Some individuals share the identity of passive peace sympathizers. Their motivation might include economics, particularly the result of a shorter work week that forces some people to work overtime or two jobs to compensate for the changing wages, leading to less time for activism. Alternately, “while these conditions may provoke a few to take political action, for most people the result probably is to undermine morale. If

those conditions lead to any action, it is likely to be a type that is injurious to the individuals themselves or to others, rather than constructive social activism” (Schwebel, 1993, p. 65). However, education, especially higher education “results in greater feelings of political efficacy...greater political interest, and greater general political activity” (Watanabe & Milburn, 1988, p. 468). The media is also argued to play a significant role in current and internalized values, and ability to challenge authority or views of the authority (Schwebel, 1993). Alternately, Adams (2007) argues, “our biological legacy of aggression is the basis of our capacity for righteous indignation against injustice which is essential for peace activism and peace education” (p. 1).

There is evidence that the individuals who are the angriest and take action to resolve what they view as societal contradictions are the members of society who have strongly developed the moral values of society. Moreover, one can assume that the more society attempts to suppress the activity of an angry activist, the more confirmed the activist becomes in her/his rage against society. In some cases, repression may fuel anger and subsequent activism (Adams, 1986).

The transformative effect of action: Anger and activism. “Rage, I believe, is essential to the first phase of a social movement. It unifies disparate members of the group against a common enemy; the group becomes defined by its anger” (Tavris, 1989, p. 272). Anger can be utilized as a powerful force for social change at a higher level of consciousness development. The collective emotion of anger, rather than the individual emotion, can become

The battle cry of the movement. Martin Luther King saw this as a critical truth and a secret of the success of W.E.B. DuBois as a leader of the civil rights and peace movements: ‘history has taught him it is not enough for people to be

angry- the supreme task is to organize and unite people so that their anger becomes a transforming force.’ (Adams, 2007, p. 12)

“Social conflicts can foster injustice, but they also motivate social change that advances social justice. Constructive conflict processes can maximize social outcomes, but they are not intuitive and need to be learned” (Coleman & Deutsch, 2001; Deutsch, 1973; Opatow & Deutsch, 1999; Opatow, 2001, p. 109). People are often transformed by the process and the consequences of initiating action, which often leads them to operate at a higher level of consciousness. Purpose and values are often reinforced, anger is focused on activity rather than being turned inward, preventing pessimism, which is dismissed by results. This process occurs regardless of whether the actions of the individual are successful. However, when the actions are successful, individuals gain new faith in their ability to influence history (Adams, 2007).

Higher levels of consciousness development are often unlocked by anger. By taking actions, individuals often become affiliated with an organization that collectively plans and carries out action. “An armchair theorist can read and think all he wants, but without the test of practice and the collective wisdom of organizational action and assessment of that action, the armchair theorist will simply spin abstract ideas that diverge further and further from the real course of history” (Adams, 2007, p. 15). When affiliation occurs, it often leads to a psychological transformation. Anger becomes collective, purpose is shared, and action becomes more effective and complex due to the availability of the division of labor (Adams, 2007).

History is full of examples of individuals whose anger propelled them to activism. “In one autobiography after another we find the same story- the initial action for peace

and justice is motivated by anger against injustice. Like the spark that ignites the fuel in an engine, anger is the stimulus that initiates action” (Adams, 2007, p. 10). Jane Adams stated that her initial involvement in the social justice movement was due “to a vision of the poor in London that filled her with ‘despair and resentment’” (as cited in Adams, 2007, p. 12). W.E.B. DuBois started the Niagara Movement, which became the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), when his “indignation overflowed” (Adams, 2007, p. 14), thus becoming a leading civil rights activist. Similarly, Nelson Mandela states, “I had no epiphany, no singular revelation, no moment of truth, but a steady accumulation of a thousand slights, a thousand indignities and a thousand unremembered moments produced in me an anger, a rebelliousness, a desire to fight the system that imprisoned my people” (as cited in Adams, 2007, p. 2).

Moreover, Dorothy Day (1952), the founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, which played an integral role in the American pacifist movement, commented that her involvement began when she was working as a journalist during a demonstration for women’s suffrage and was arrested.

I was to find that one of the ugliness of jail life was its undertone of suppressed excitement and suspense...I reflected on the desolation of poverty, of destitution, of sickness and sin. That I would be free after thirty days meant nothing to me. I would never be free again, never free when I knew that behind bars all over the world were women and men, young girls and boys, suffering constraint, punishment, isolation, and hardship for crimes of which all of us were guilty. (as cited in Adams, 1986, p. 158)

As she explains, anger at social injustice played a large role in her future activism.

Again, Martin Luther King’s wife (1969) talks about “his anger in terms of his favorite phrase, ‘the slow fire of discontent’ which he felt was central to the ‘spirit and

need' which lies at the 'beginning of every great human advance'" (Adams, 1986, p. 158). Helen Caldicott's first action was preceded by anger. In her book, *Nuclear Madness* (1978), she explains,

My personal commitment to human survival was sparked when I read Bertrand Russell's autobiography...When in 1971, I discovered that France had been conducting atmospheric tests over its small colony of Muroroa since 1966, contravening the treaty inspired by Russell's work, I became indignant...I decided that it was my duty, as a physician, to protest...and I began by writing a letter to a local newspaper. (as cited in Adams, 1986, p. 159)

When Gandhi (1954) was forced out of a first class compartment because of his race, he notes that

I knew it was sheer injustice and an insult, but I thought it better to pocket it...if I had raised a protest, the coach would have gone off without me and this would have meant the loss of another day.' As a rule, Gandhi did more than simply restrain his anger, instead he 'reserved' it, as he says later, 'to fight bigger battles.' (as cited in Adams, 1986, p. 159)

What made Gandhi respond with activism? Why did his anger lead him to fighting injustice rather than expressing it via violence? How did he maintain this calmness? Even when Gandhi was angry, he was able to think clearly. How was he able to maintain this level-headedness in the face of his anger?

It should be noted that not all anger serves a positive purpose or is useful for consciousness development. Often, the anger that is used as a motivator towards action is directed against institutions, rather than against a specific individual. "If anger is not guided by the optimism of vision and clear humanistic values, it can be diverted into desperate and anti-human activities. The enemies of peace and justice often try to exploit

anger in order to divert movements into such desperation...anger is not the same as violence” (Adams, 2007, p. 11).

Anger can therefore be viewed as one of the first steps in the consciousness development of peace activists. The anger, a response to perceived social injustice and an expression of moral outrage, often depends on the prior attainment of the individual’s previous knowledge and social values. “Anger leads to action, which is the following step in consciousness development. Later, as consciousness development proceeds to steps of affiliation and analysis, the anger does not disappear. Instead, the individual episodes of anger and action are replaced by collective anger and action against the perceived source of injustice” (Adams, 1986, p. 160).

What is it about these individuals that enabled them to use their anger as motivation to act on/change the object of their anger? What is the mediating factor that leads some individuals to turn their anger inwards and become bitter or depressed, others to direct their anger towards violence or harm, and others, such as those previously described, to use their anger to change their world?

While Adams first thought that aggression was the cause of the injustices in the world, he realized that the “proper use of aggression in the form of righteous indignation is essential for peace activism and education” (Adams, 2007, P. 1). Today, aggressive behavior is misunderstood.

On the one hand, social evils such as war and crime have been blamed on aggression or even called aggression, as if the participants in these destructive social phenomena were acting out of misdirected individual aggressive behavior. On the other hand, the positive role of anger in the activists who have tried to change society in order to eliminate these evils has been ignored and even suppressed...It may be argued that anger is the personal fuel in the social motor

that resolves the institutional contradictions that arise in the course of history. (Adams, 2007, p. 3)

However, it is important to note that anger can be used in many ways, and often, is not used in a moral way. According to Tavis (1989), “the moral use of anger...requires an awareness of choice and an embrace of reason. It is knowing when to become angry—‘this is wrong, this I will protest’—and when to make peace; when to take action, and when to keep silent; knowing the likely cause of one’s anger and not berating the blameless” (p. 285).

Teaching “justified” anger. Through teaching literacy to Brazilian peasants, Freire developed the philosophy of conscientizacao, or critical consciousness, which “refers to learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take actions against the oppressive elements of reality” (Freire, 2006, p. 35). He highlights the importance of both action and reflection, emphasizing the need to avoid doing one to the exclusion of the other.

Human activity consists of action and reflection: it is praxis; it is transformation of the world. And as praxis, it requires theory to illuminate it. Human activity is theory and practice; it is reflection and action. It cannot...be reduced to either verbalism or activism...the revolutionary effort to transform these structures radically cannot designate its leaders as its thinkers and the oppressed as mere doer. (Freire, 2006, pp. 125-126)

He further 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” (Freire, 2006, p. 65).

“Proper anger is, even in Aristotle’s golden-mean view, a reaction whose excess is worse than its deficiency...agreeing that anger can be, in principle, psychologically regulatable and morally justifiable does not imply that it can, in practice, be teachable” (Kristjansson, 2005, p. 672). However, there are three general categories of strategies for regulating emotions, behavioral, conative, and cognitive strategies.

As implied by the name, behavioral strategies involve regulating emotions through a change in behavior and often involve a number of categories. For instance, in “situation selection and modification, persons systematically avoid or approach certain situations either to prevent the arousal of a certain emotion or to generate alternative emotions—or they try to modify such situations beforehand” (Kristjansson, 2005, p. 677). This is often most useful for individuals who have little control over modifying their actual environment. “In attentional deployment, either mental or physical ‘behavior’ is used to divert attention away from the relevant emotion through distraction or concentration on an alternative source of emotion” (Kristjansson, 2005, p. 677). Once again, though, the root of the problem often remains. Finally, the third category of behavioral strategies is bootstrapping, where individuals force themselves to engage in actions relating to the emotion, hoping that they will then begin to feel the appropriate level of the emotion (Kristjansson, 2005). Conative strategies go one step further and “involve a modification of desires and attitudes” (Kristjansson, 2005, p. 678). Cognitive strategy

Involves reframing or changing the beliefs that underlie our emotions. Those strategies can assume the form of cognitive manipulations whereby becoming angry is replaced by deliberately deceiving oneself about the relevant truth of the matter...more constructively, however, cognitive strategies can also assume the form of cognitive

reinterpretations which are neither arbitrary nor illusory, but involve conscientious probing of the ground of emotion-conferring beliefs in order to change them if they turn out to be unfounded. (Kristijansson, 2005, p. 678)

Kristijansson notes that “I see no good reason for teachers of moral education to shy away from teaching justified anger, via various means and methods, in the classroom” (2005, p. 688). For instance,

If we turn to more specific didactic issues, interestingly enough, most of Aristotle’s advice about sentimental education falls within the rubric of what would nowadays be called behavioral strategies of emotion regulation. Aristotle recommends situation selection and modification in letting children play the right kinds of games and listen to the right kinds of stories, while avoiding the company of unfit persons (slaves) and refraining from hearing anything shameful and unseemly (Aristotle, 1941, pp. 1304-1305 [1136a-b]). He suggests music as a means of attentional deployment to promote cheerfulness (p. 1310 [1339a-b]), and his famous portrayal of habituation as being on a par with learning a craft or an art—one learns to be just by learning to do just acts, just as one learns to be a good harpist by learning to play the harp—constitutes a classical description of what psychologists call bootstrapping: states of character (*hexeis*), including emotional dispositions, arise from the repetition of the corresponding activities. Once the appropriate actions have been chosen for the young and they have performed them, the associated emotions will follow. (Aristotle, 1985, pp. 34-40 [1103b-1105a] as cited in Kristijansson, 2005, p. 686)

A different means of teaching about justified anger is described by Gooding (2000), who offers many ideas for addressing the “free floating” “multi-generational” anger in people of color. These ideas include the importance of examining the impact of systematic racial oppression, including internalized racial oppression, and isolating beating the system and blaming the system as ineffective tools, as they cause individuals to act out against the system or prevent one from taking responsibility for one’s behavior.

“It must illuminate the folly of total avoidance and rejection of Euro-Americans and the Euro-American system since co-existence with this system is a reality. Rather, this system must be truly understood and modified to assure self-actualization, survival, enhanced self-esteem, and the empowerment of future generations” (pp. 2-3).

According to Gooding, individuals

Should learn to embrace 'self and their African heritage.'
It is important that the devaluation of other African Americans and African culture be discouraged; just as the overvaluing of Euro-American culture should be challenged. Additionally, the political significance of race and racism must be discussed. Participants must learn that attempts to bury or earn acceptance through conspicuous consumption, using status and degrees to prove self-worth and race sabotage are self-defeating strategies. (Gooding, 2000, p. 3)

Moreover, the “split-self syndrome” (Gooding, 2000, p. 3) must be taught, focusing on the damaging nature of good or bad thinking that leads individuals of color to

Compare themselves against Euro-American standards...The program, if it is going to be effective must assist them in activating both internal and external resources and support systems. They need to be able to acknowledge their own personal strengths and pro-social coping skills and to develop strategies where they can bring these to bear, at a moment's notice, to make choices that will promote their long-term safety, freedom, and self-actualization. External resources such as: family, pro-social friends, organizations (not gangs), and institutions (i.e. churches) should be presented as some of the most indigenous support systems. (Gooding, 2000, p. 3)

Gooding's program for multi-generational anger focuses on an African American model of mental health. This includes

A conscious awareness that many in this society are hostile to their very existence, but not all are so disposed...an awareness of the stresses associated with racial oppression; a lack of a desire to oppress or to be oppressed; a need to be

involved in shaping and controlling one's own destiny; steady involvement in self-confrontation; thinking, feeling, and acting in a single motion rather than fragmenting oneself into intelligence and emotion; having a sense of self, which is collective or extended; having a clear sense of one's spiritual connection to the universe; and being steeped in our own culture, history and values. (Gooding, 2000, pp. 3-4)

Since many individuals may have been socialized to believe distorted beliefs about themselves, they “will develop a belief system and life-style to justify and support those beliefs” (Gooding, 2000, p. 4). Ways to reject these distorted images must therefore be discovered and taught. “Being alert to seize pro-social opportunities to grow must be cultivated, and maximization of personal strengths must be a motto of the program” (Gooding, 2000, p. 4). Similarly, since many individuals have already been damaged by this phenomenon, a healing process should be included in the program, that assists

Participants in letting go of any distorted and false, anti-self, anti-African messages that have been internalized. Thus, the participants must be guided through checking all their thoughts and perceptions of themselves against as many as possible alternative perceptions and perspectives. They must become aware of their feelings and deal with them honestly and constructively. Anger must be released constructively and appropriately so they manage it instead of it managing them. Participants must come to know that anger can disrupt information processing and problem solving efforts; that it can instigate aggressive behavior and that it can build up and fester until it causes problem behavior or illness. They must also know that it can serve as a cue that something is wrong, that it can energize coping activity, and that it can be managed. In reality, anger can be effectively managed by gaining insights into what provokes it and preparing to handle situations when they occur or by avoiding them and not falling into the ‘multi-generational anger trap.’ (Gooding, 2000, p. 4)

Another program, the Young Warriors (Watts, Abdul-Adil, & Pratt, 2002), focuses on fostering and enhancing “critical thinking so that young men are more conscious of social forces that influence them and their communities—especially as they relate to race, culture, class, and gender” (p. 41). The program is designed for African American males, between the ages of 11 and 21, in schools that have significant problems with violence, gangs, low academic performance, and maintaining effective learning environments, utilizing the concepts of critical consciousness and media literacy. The program focuses on the image of a warrior, expanding the definition, highlighting that “‘true’ warrior values include a struggle for a higher purpose, an ability to formulate goals, the exercise of discipline, and a cooperative spirit” (Watts, Abdul-Adil, & Pratt, 2002, p. 44).

For young African American men and psychologists, it could be said that critical thinking shifts to critical consciousness when person-centered concepts such as delinquency and violence are seen in historical, political, and cultural contexts. There is an awareness that violence can be structural and institutional as well as interpersonal (Bulhan, 1988a, 1988b as cited in Watts, Abdul-Adil, & Pratt, 2002). Policies rather than pistols are the deadly weapons, but they take no fewer lives (Johnson & Leighton, 1995 as cited in Watts, Abdul-Adil, & Pratt, 2002). This view does not deny the power of personal agency in the decision to engage in prosocial, antisocial, or collective social action, but it does expand the analysis to the social forces that influence personal behavior. We argue that educators and human service professionals have an obligation to contribute at least in some modest way to the liberation of the oppressed people they serve. (Watts, Abdul-Adil, & Pratt, 2002, p. 42)

Limitations of Current Literature

Continuing the example set by activists and building upon the theories suggested by Adams, I will continue the exploration of the link between anger as a result of

structural violence and involvement in activism. While some of the previously described research explains the link between anger and violence, the literature fails to describe the mediating factor(s) that enables some individuals to use their anger to change the perceived injustices in their world. Furthermore, the literature lacks a discussion about the potential connection between suffering from structural violence and taking action to alleviate some of the injustices. This dissertation will attempt to isolate the mediating factors that lead those who become angry as a result of structural violence to use their anger as a motivator towards social justice. Tavis (1989) argues that

In this country, the civil-rights, women's rights, and the human-rights movements have been organized and sustained primarily by those who already had more education, opportunities, and success in the system than the less-fortunate members of their race, sex, or class. Paradoxically, some of the angriest revolutionaries came from worlds of privilege, not misery. (p. 262)

In an effort to change this dynamic, this information will be used in the future to create a curriculum that will empower students in the midst of suffering from structural violence to use their anger to make changes in their community.

CHAPTER II

Methodology

Participants

Fourteen adults, ranging in age from 26 to 93, who self identify as activists were interviewed for the study. An activist was broadly defined as anyone who is trying to make changes in society. Participants were recruited through a networking sample and throughout the interviews, interviewees often recommended other subjects whom they deemed appropriate for the study.

Random sampling is more appropriate to quantitative studies than to qualitative ones....qualitative researchers are not trying to control variables, but to discover them. They want to identify, define, and explain how and why concepts vary dimensionally along their properties. So, while random sampling is possible, it could be detrimental because it prevents the analyst from following analytic leads and discovering the answers he or she is seeking. (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 318)

Since many of the subjects were high profile activists, specific information was removed throughout the study to protect their confidentiality. The demographics of those interviewed included ten females (71%) and four males (29%). Ten of the individuals (71%) were born in the United States and four (29%) of the individuals were born outside the United States, in countries including South Africa, Columbia, Uganda, and Israel. Interviewees were raised by single parents, both parents, extended family, and a

combination of parents and extended family. They included individuals who grew up in a diversity of areas, including a White man who grew up under strict racial segregation, a Black woman who grew up on a sharecropper farm, a White woman who grew up in a coal mining town, and a White woman who grew up in a neighborhood she described as “White, suburban, middle class, Republican, quiet, and desolate.” Interviewees’ social economic status growing up spanned from poor to working class to middle class to upper middle class to upper class.

The interviewees attended private school, public school, and a combination of private and public school. The highest level of education of the majority of the interviewees (N=8, 57%) was a doctorate, while others received a Masters (N=3, 21%), Associates Degree (N=1, 7%), some college (N=1, 7%), and a GED (N=1, 7%). As a result of using a networking sample, many of the individuals (N=9, 64%) were mental health professionals, which must be taken into account when considering the generalizability of the study. The majority of individuals interviewed (N=11, 79%) described informal education from a variety of sources, including family, media, activists, family friends, youth programs, friends, religious schools, extended family, mentors, and youth programs.

The interviewees included individuals who identified their race as White (N=6, 43%), African American (N=5, 36%), Indian and South African (N=1, 7%), Latina (N=1, 7%), and Southeast Asian (N=1, 7%). When asked about ethnicity, interviewees identified as German, Swiss, African American, “White something,” Indian, Jewish, Middle Eastern, Native American, and unable to identify their ethnicity. In terms of religion, interviewees identified as Christian (Baptist, Methodist, born-again Christian,

and Catholic), spiritual, Jewish, Muslim, secular humanist, and identified with Eastern religion. Religion played a significant role in the childhood of the majority of those interviewed (N=12, 86%), but less than half of the individuals noted that religion is currently a significant part of their life.

Some individuals were devoted to specific causes, such as violence prevention, penal system reform, domestic violence, anti-racism/anti-bias work, lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender rights movement, peace work, teaching, and political activism, while others were devoted to the general idea of activism. Thirteen of the interviewees (93%) had been the victim of discrimination(s) as a result of their race, gender, religion, sexual orientation or combination thereof. The one subject who did not experience direct discrimination observed significant discrimination throughout his childhood.

Twelve of the subjects (86%) were able to identify someone in their family who was an activist. One of the two individuals who did not have a family history of activism noted that “survival was such an important piece of living Black in the south, so both my parents were really concerned about getting an education, believing that if you follow the course you’ll be taken care of.”

Procedures

Contacts of the researcher were asked to suggest individuals who qualified for the study. The individuals were subsequently called or emailed, given a brief description of the study, and if they met the inclusion criteria of being an activist (broadly defined) and experiencing some form of anger as a result of social injustice, were invited to join the study. Every effort was made to arrange a face-to-face interview. However, phone

interviews were conducted with two individuals due to geographic distance. The in-person interviews were conducted in locations selected by the interviewees that maintained the confidentiality of the study.

Each participant signed a consent form (see Appendix A) that included his/her willingness to be recorded. The interviewees were told that they could request that the digital recorder be turned off at any point, without penalty. One individual requested that the recorder be temporarily turned off, when discussing highly personal and political information, and then requested that the researcher turn it on again for the rest of the interview. Moreover, individuals were given the option of allowing the researcher to contact him/her after the completion of the study if she would like to use his/her name in written material after the completion of this dissertation. The researcher explained that at this point, their answers would no longer be confidential, but that they were free to change their mind and return to confidentiality at any point, without penalty. The interviews ranged from 45 minutes to two and a half hours. All interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. The transcripts were coded by the researcher with the use of a coding manual (see Appendix B) developed by the researcher. The final interview question generated answers that were too broad to be coded. This was noted in the coding manual, without subsequent codes, and the data was described in full detail in the results section.

Throughout the interview and coding process, all material remained confidential. Participants were assigned a case number, which was the only identification used on response materials. No identifying information was attached to the transcriptions or audiotapes unless the participant gave explicit permission to use his/her name. At the end

of each interview, the researcher asked if the interviewees had anything else to add or any feedback about the study. Any tape recordings, transcripts of interviews, or other data collected from the participants were maintained in confidence by the investigator in a locked file cabinet. After three years, the principal investigator will destroy all research material.

Description of the Instrument

The semi-structured interview (see Appendix C) contained open-ended questions about the individual's demographics and childhood, exposure to structural violence/social injustice, past and current involvement in social activism, description of their moral anger, opportunities to express anger or discuss it with others, and their hypothesis about the link between anger and activism. The questions were developed by the researcher, based on current research regarding anger, moral anger, and activism. The researcher conducted a pilot interview with an individual who met the selection criteria for the study, but was not included in the study results, in order to determine whether the questions in the interview were appropriate for generating the desired information. After the completion of the pilot interview, the interviewee provided feedback about the interview and the wording of a few of the questions was changed to more appropriately tap the desired information. Due to the time constraints of a few of the interviewees (many had high level positions and were generous in the time they provided the researcher), it was unfortunately not possible to ask every interviewee every question. In these few cases, as much data was collected as possible, but this must be taken into account when considering the generalizability of the study.

“The research question should dictate the methodological approach that is used to conduct the research” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 12). The methodology of utilizing a qualitative interview was therefore selected due to the absence of systematic information on this topic. It was important to allow the participants the opportunity to provide whatever information they chose about the topic, in an effort to focus on their subjective perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. The information was used to generate hypotheses about the mediating factors between anger and activism, with the hope of eventually using the information to create a curriculum for adolescents who are experiencing anger as a result of societal injustices (out of the scope of this dissertation). The data was analyzed qualitatively, using grounded theory.

Data Analysis

There are many reasons for choosing to do qualitative research, but perhaps the most important is the desire to step beyond the known and enter into the world of the participants, to see the world from their perspective and in doing so make discoveries that will contribute to the development of the empirical knowledge. A qualitative researcher should be curious, creative, and not afraid to trust his or her instincts. (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 16)

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), qualitative analysis is not “the quantifying of qualitative data but rather...a nonmathematical process of interpretation, carried out for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationship in raw data and then organizing these into a theoretical explanatory scheme” (p. 11). Data can include observations, interviews, documents, films, videos, and census data. Grounded theory, developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, focuses on developing theories from data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Grounded theory is designed to:

1. Build rather than only test theory.
2. Provide researchers with analytic tools for handling masses of raw data.
3. Help analysts to consider alternative meanings of phenomena.
4. Be systematic and creative simultaneously.
5. Identify, develop, and relate the concepts that are the building blocks of theory. (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 13)

It is important to note, though, that these procedures should be used flexibly and creatively, rather than followed dogmatically. Rather than beginning with a preconceived notion, grounded theory is used when the researcher begins with a specific focus and develops the theory from the data that is collected (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Strauss and Corbin (1998) note, “our theories, however incomplete, provide a common language (set of concepts) through which research participants, professionals, and others can come together to discuss ideas and find solutions to problems” (p. 56).

The first step in theory building, coding, involves “taking raw data and raising it to a conceptual level...interacting with the data, making comparisons between data, and so on, and in doing so, deriving concepts to stand for those data, then developing those concepts in terms of the properties and dimensions” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 66).

While grounded theory includes three types of coding; open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, the line between these types is often viewed as artificial.

Open coding involves a close examination of the data, resulting in naming and categorizing the data. Categorizing includes grouping ideas that likely relate to the same phenomena and involves “breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks of raw data” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 198). A name, that is graphic enough to quickly remind the researcher about its meaning, is given to each category. Important

ideas that emerge from the data are called phenomena. However, “because categories represent phenomena, they might be named differently, depending on the perspective of the analyst, focus of the research, and (most important) the research contexts” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 114). Strauss and Corbin advise that one be careful about using categories derived from the literature, such as body image or stigma, because they come with associations that can bias one’s work or read specific meaning into one’s work. Often, they can cause an inquiry to close, rather than be opened. Open coding also involves examining the property and dimensions of a category. “Properties are the general or specific characteristics or attributes of a category, dimensions represent the location of a property along a continuum or range” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 117).

Open coding can be done in a variety of ways. For instance, one can use a line by line analysis, which is comprised of a close examination of an interview, often focusing on specific phrases or words. Another method is to examine the text by focusing on full sentences or paragraphs. One can then focus on “what is the major idea brought out in this sentence or paragraph? Then, after giving it a name, the analyst can do a more detailed analysis of that concept” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 120). The final way is to examine an entire text and “ask what seems to be going on here? And what makes this document the same as, or different from, the previous ones that I coded?” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 120).

Axial coding, the next step, “is the act of relating categories to subcategories along the lines of their properties and dimensions...Rather than standing for the phenomenon itself, subcategories answer questions about the phenomenon such as when, where, why, who, how, and with what consequences, thus giving the concept greater

explanatory power” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, pp. 124-125). The linking of categories then occurs at a conceptual, not descriptive, level. Axial coding involves:

1. Laying out the properties of a category and their dimensions, a task that begins during open coding.
2. Identifying the variety of conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences associated with a phenomenon.
3. Relating a category to its subcategories through statements denoting how they are related to each other.
4. Looking for cues in the data that denote how major categories might relate to each other. (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 126)

One way to organize the connections within data is to use an organizational scheme, referred to as a paradigm. A paradigm is comprised of “conditions, a conceptual way of grouping answers to the questions why, where, how come, and when” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 128). Conditions can be defined as

Sets of events or happenings that create the situations, issues, and problems pertaining to a phenomenon and, to a certain extent, explain why and how persons or groups respond in certain ways. Conditions might arise out of time, place, culture, rules, regulations, beliefs, economics, power, or gender factors as well as the social worlds, organizations, and institutions in which we find ourselves along with our personal motivations and biographies. (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 130)

Strauss and Corbin (1998) identify three types of conditions, causal, intervening, and contextual, but note that identifying the type of condition is less important than focusing on the “complex interweaving of events (conditions) leading up to a problem, as issue, or a happening to which persons are responding through some form of action/interaction, which some sort of consequences. In addition, the analyst might identify changes in the original situation (if any) as a result of that action/interaction” (p. 132).

The final step, selective coding, involves developing a theory through “the process of integrating and refining categories” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143).

Deciding on a central category, or core category, is usually the first step. The criteria for choosing a central theory include:

1. It must be central; that is all other major categories can be related to it.
2. It must appear frequently in the data. This means that within all or almost all cases, there are indicators pointing to that concept.
3. The explanation that evolves by relating the categories is logical and consistent. There is no forcing of data.
4. The name or phrase used to describe the central category should be sufficiently abstract that it can be used to do research in other substantive areas, leading to the development of a more general theory.
5. As the concept is refined analytically through integration with other concepts, the theory grows in depth and explanatory power.
6. The concept is able to explain variation as well as the main point made by the data; that is, when conditions vary, the explanation still holds, although the way in which a phenomenon is expressed might look somewhat different. One also should be able to explain contradictory or alternative cases in terms of that central idea. (Strauss, 1987, p. 36 as cited in Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 147)

Identifying a central category is often facilitated by developing a story line, relating different categories to a core category, and validating the categories with the data. Refining the theory then involves “reviewing the scheme for internal consistency and for gaps in logic, filling in poorly developed categories and trimming excess ones, and validating the scheme” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 156). According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), the process “is like putting together a series of interlinking blocks to build a pyramid. The pyramid represents the entire structure, but blocks, and how they are arranged are the components that make it what it is” (p. 199).

CHAPTER III

Results

Overview

Grounded theory, developed by Strauss and Corbin, was used to find themes related to the link between moral anger and social activism. Since the following results are based on a small sample, it is important to interpret them with caution and avoid generalization.

Childhood and feeling different

All of the interviewees endorsed having significant experiences (both positive and negative) in their childhood that helped shape them in the present. These included involvement with the penal system, frequent fear, death of a family member, fights, exposure to other cultures, racism, models of activism, serving in the army, and youth movements.

Nine of the interviewees (64%) noted that they remembered being bothered by how people were treated during their childhood, due to the -isms and a generalized sense that things were unfair. Some individuals had direct experiences that bothered them while others described observing events that had a similar effect. A South African Indian woman explained “I knew that things were unfair and that used to bother me. I knew that my dad worked hard and didn’t always get what he wanted.” Many described an intrinsic

sense that something was wrong, despite being surrounded by individuals who did not share their opinions. For instance, one White woman noted:

“When I was four years old and we lived in Berkeley, we had an African American babysitter and she would come help my mother clean the house a couple of days a week. So my mother said that I asked this woman how many kids she had and she had four kids. So I said she shouldn’t work for us, she should go home and take care of her own kids, it wasn’t right that she wasn’t taking care of her own kids. So I don’t know, I don’t remember that, but my mother says it was there.”

An African American woman noted “I didn’t know how to articulate it then.”

The majority of the interviewees (N=11, 79%) acknowledged times when they felt different from those around them, particularly from their family of origin, due to the death of a family member, from those who were racist, as a result of discrimination due to an –ism, as a result of having different political and religious beliefs, and a generalized constant feeling of being different. A White woman noted, “I always feel like I’m a little bit outside or a little bit off kilter.” An African American woman noted

I think when you grow up and you’re usually the only kid of color in a class, you tend to feel a sense of insecurity, this label on your forehead that everyone can see. I can remember sitting in class when I was in Virginia and reading about slavery and wanting to die inside because I knew I was a descendant of that.

Another interviewee, a White woman noted, “all the time. I always just felt like why do I see things in a different way? Even when I go back home with my family now, more than ever, it’s so apparent to me just how different I am.”

Moral Anger

When describing their childhood and adolescence, all of the interviewees remembered being angry about the systems of inequality around them. These systems included racism, sexism, religious discrimination, political injustice, educational injustice/disparity, religious practices, apartheid, and general anger.

Different forms of anger. All of the interviewees endorsed the existence of different kinds of anger. When asked how they would distinguish moral anger from other forms of anger, individuals offered a variety of ideas.

Fifty percent of the interviewees noted the differences between injustices that are ongoing versus anger linked to a specific, immediate cause. For instance, an ongoing injustice was described as an

Injustice against something so widespread in the country and the world, so it was not just a personal kind of anger. It was not one that you can release by letting someone know that you didn't like the way you were treated or anger that you feel if you've been cheated out of some change; you can direct it immediately and correct it or deal with it in some way, and this you can't.

Another individual noted

That kind of anger was an anger against a system, against society, against an order of things, against ideas. It was not an anger just toward a specific person. The injustice could be embodied in certain kinds of people, but it was broad. It wasn't the anger I had with my father because he was trying to limit me.

An interviewee noted that “what distinguishes it is that the anger I had about women being treated the way they were treated was such an ache, like an ache in my heart that I just kept thinking it has got to change...this one was constantly burning on a low simmer.”

Furthermore, an interviewee noted that there are different levels of anger, including

Manageable anger...that you can get mad about something, but realize that it's not that deep to be assaulting somebody. You can bring yourself down or walk away. But then there is that other anger, when you're at that level, that there is no thought. It's just all reaction to the feeling you get, it's what makes people act out, aggressively; it's an aggressive behavior.

Others noted the difference between collective and individual anger. For instance, an interviewee noted that "moral outrage, in my experience, almost always moves toward some type of collective action." Similarly, a respondent noted the difference between injustices that are discussed by others versus those that remain unspoken. "If it's one of those ongoing injustices that's never been dealt with, never been talked about, or anything, that's one of those injustices that can cause an aggressive behavior spontaneously." Moreover "it's also different because it sustains itself longer, in certain ways, but others can't empathize with it sometimes. Like this neighborhood group we got together, that was fairly successful, but other people kept saying, why are you persistent about it? Why does it bug you so much?"

An interviewee described a "front" that many individuals, particularly kids, "put up" to prevent the world from seeing their hurt. Since anger is a more socially acceptable emotion than most, it is often easier for kids to access. Another interviewee noted "because it was there and there wasn't anything I could do about it, it felt more like helpless anger." Finally, an individual described moral anger as "intellectual or a mix of intellectual with reality. It's anger that everything is against you and the only way out of it is to use violence or something drastic."

When asked about anger, a South Asian female interviewee noted an important cultural distinction. She explained

I think anger is a very Western construct in many ways, because my family was not angry. I'm sure my parents were really disappointed that I got [a serious health condition], I'm sure they were completely crushed that they had a female child, they knew they were going to have other kids, but then when I got [a serious health condition], I'm sure they were crushed. But they were never angry with physicians. We traveled all over for good medical care and they were never angry about anything. The same thing with my grandmother. She would talk about how upset she was with what all these women did, but I never saw them really rageful or angry that way. It could just be cultural, that they dealt with their anger or sense of moral conscience by just doing for others. So I think coming here, being more in a western context, I've had a lot more sanction to talk about anger in an open way, but I don't think it's an emotion that is actually validated that way in many Asian cultures.

Understanding the triggers. Four individuals (28%) noted that when they were younger, they were sometimes conscious of the cause of their anger. Three individuals (21%) noted that they were conscious of being angry when they were younger, but were not able to tease apart the reasons for their anger. A White woman explained that the anger “leaked out in horrible ways. I didn't know. I was just sideways Sally, I had no idea why I was angry, I couldn't figure it out, I thought I was a freak. I couldn't understand why I couldn't control my anger. I couldn't understand why I felt so hopeless.” An African American male who grew up in a neighborhood where violence and fighting were regular occurrences noted

Personally speaking, whenever I got mad, I knew exactly why I was mad. But the difference is that even though we knew exactly why we got mad, we'd tell ourselves something different...where you might not like a person for whatever reason, and they might say something to you and

because you have this dislike for them, you're angry at them, and you want to lash out. Because you never got to know the person, it's just something they said or did that made you not like that person, so when they do or say something, it really strikes a nerve.

An African American woman noted that after her teenage son was murdered, she “moved on from that anger stage. I remember having spats, I would call my twin sister and let her have it, I would jump out of her car and later on we would talk about it...and it could have been that I was missing my son when I was getting so angry.” Another African American woman noted that she personalized her feelings, “I felt that I was sensitive...so it was like just keep going but you're very angry and maybe that's why I was attracted to Islam because it said stop some of this stuff.”

On the other hand, five interviewees (36%) noted that they were conscious of the cause of their anger when they were younger. A South African Indian woman explained “I used to always put my anger towards good use, I used to write, I used to talk about it, I used to debate, I always put it into a positive context.”

Normalization of moral anger. Five interviewees (36%) were told by someone in their life that their moral anger was a normal reaction to societal injustice, two interviewees (14%) had the experience of their anger being both normalized and pathologized (by different individuals in their lives), and four interviewees (28%) were never told that their anger was normal. A White bisexual woman noted, “I think that's what we [a lesbian/gay/bisexual youth group] gave each other, the clarity that we were okay and they were wrong.” However, a White male, who is deeply involved in anti-racism work noted,

For most of my time, after I became an activist, it just wasn't talked about. My family knew that I was involved

in these things and they didn't always disapprove but they didn't know how to really deal with it on both points. So there was a period when I was very self-righteous and tried to tell them all the things they ought to know and stuff. They were probably a lot more tolerant than I was being, as I was talking about tolerance.

A White woman noted, "as a kid, I didn't [understand my moral anger]. I think that was a big problem. I just kept de-selfing, I kept thinking there was something wrong with me, I'm a bad person."

Expression of moral anger. The majority of individuals (N=9, 64%) had memories of someone talking about inequality or anger related to inequality when they were growing up. However, the term inequality took on many meanings. As one White male noted, people around him were "always justifying it. If there was such a stark difference in the way that 'colored' people lived, it was because of certain individual or biological factors. Never oh, it's an unjust system so we always blamed the people." Another White woman noted that while she doesn't have memories of people talking about inequality or anger related to inequality, she does remember her mother yelling at the television, particularly at politicians.

When asked what individuals remembered about talking to others about being angry, an African American male noted, "the only resolution was let's get it on, let's fight; that's how people would resolve things." A White woman reported feeling accepted: "I was able to talk to my mom's best friend, she would listen, she might not have anything to say but at least she accepted me and she heard me out and actually thought it was great that I was who I was, so that was good." An African American woman reported venting to others about her anger but not talking directly to the source of her anger. Another African American woman noted feeling the sense of a collective

while talking about being angry. A South Asian woman, whose family was informally involved in serving as a shelter for women suffering from domestic violence noted,

My aunts would all be talking about it and I would be part of a circle where they would all be complaining about it and talking with each other. My grandmother would have friends over and they would all be talking about how horrible this was, so it wasn't a silent thing. Everyone was talking about the different men and what they were doing and why they were doing it and why it was unacceptable and that kind of thing.

Collective moral anger. A majority of the interviewees (N=10, 71%) described a sense of collective moral anger. Respondents described the collective moral anger in a variety of ways. A White male who grew up under strict racial segregation noted

I just knew there was something about doing it together that resonated with me and that's all I wanted to do. I never took pride in my individualism. A lot of those who I witnessed taking pride in their individualism seemed kind of stupid to me, like nobody's worried about you or what you think. But I wouldn't say that out loud. It wasn't often translated politically, more how you are living your own life.

A White woman who grew up heavily influenced by her family's activism and the ethos of the time explained, "the feminist movement was also coming of age at that time so there was a collective sense of anger and the anti-war movement. So everybody, at least everyone I knew, was collectively angry and we were justified and it was the bad government and stuff like that." A White man noted the influence of an informal political group

After college I joined a group, they all happened to be guys, about five of them, all older than I, we would meet in the home of a very successful lawyer and we would read and discuss political issues. It wasn't an activist group, but it was an informative group that propelled one's actions. It

gave deeper understanding of the issues of the time. I was part of that group for three years, until I left town.

An African American woman noted the importance of a spiritual, universal voice.

When you're marching with folks out there in the streets, there is something that pulls you together. A lot of people are opposed to the war. I went to the very first war protest, very cold, heard Ozzie Davis, heard so many people and it just felt so rewarding. I was by myself but I was part of a global voice that day that just said that we don't accept this, even if we don't change the outcome. I felt like I was part of a spiritual, universal voice.

An African American male clearly explained the cycle between collective anger, collaboration, and a subsequent decrease of anger.

There was always an incident of some kind that went down that didn't sit right with you, witnessing it and in your mind having a sense that that's wrong...invoked a rage. A lot of times it was dealt with a lot of talk and collective collaborating about what we're going to do and then it would kind of fizzle out.

Respondents described a variety of ways that important adults modeled dealing with moral anger, including fighting, suppressing the anger, channeling it into activism, and not modeling any response. A White male, who noted that his family suppressed much of their anger, commented "I think a lot of them stuffed their anger around gender dynamics and marriage dynamics." Alternately, an African American woman noted, "when they were angry, it was more or less they would get organized and go to the council meeting. I really wasn't privy to a lot of that, but eventually that would lead to a lot of activism." Another interviewee, a South African Indian woman, stated

My dad was out there, he used to yell and scream; he was a very angry man. Lots of drinking, the men and the women, I don't know how they dealt with it, they were very docile. Maybe they took it out on the kids, I don't know, but they were very quiet and withdrawn.

Seven individuals (50%) claimed that they did not feel pressure from their peers or family to express their moral anger in a certain way. However, two individuals (14%) noted that they felt pressure not to express their anger, to silence themselves, “don’t make waves.” Moreover, seven individuals (50%) noted that their moral anger was acknowledged and/or validated by those they respected, but for many individuals, this didn’t happen until later in life. There was also a significant range in who acknowledged/validated the anger, including community wide support, a friend’s parents, and religious leaders.

Informal Education

Many of the interviewees noted the importance of informal education, particularly discrete programs, often “underground seminars” led by influential individuals, in shaping their ideologies. For instance, a lifelong White male activist highlighted the impact of a summer program in a different part of the country.

For me, a real collective process that politically might not be given enough credits was when I was in my mid-teens, as part of a church program in Brooklyn in the Fort Greene area. This church was wealthy enough at the time to bring two kids from each...and I had never been north of Memphis, to be part of their rather extensive summer program. I wouldn’t call it camp, but that’s in fact what it was. And I met young people from all over the country and it had a transforming effect on me. It really was one of those things that you can benchmark and say, and in some curious way....and it was our first acknowledgment of hey, we can do this.

An Israeli peace activist was involved in a right wing youth group when he was younger. He has since changed his political orientation, but was significantly influenced by the ideology of the group during his late childhood and adolescence.

I started studying and I told you about the bad boys. We had a TV in the basement and watched the news because we had one channel, the main Israeli Channel. At the time, when somebody passed by us, we had to turn it off. At that time, I started to look and really wanted to learn and there was one guy who came to the neighborhood, to my friend's house. He started to teach us every Monday and Thursday, Kahana [Rabbi in Israel with strong right wing nationalist and religious views] philosophy. So we would just sit and he would teach us Kahana philosophy. I remember everything about him...when I grew up, I didn't like Palestinians...people from the Lubavitch community are considered very radical right. So I grew up in this kind of environment and then Kahana makes you take action so his philosophy is not just yes, we are for the State of Israel but let's take action for it. And he made it very intellectual, but within the framework of religion. They gave you proof from Nahmanides that this is the way we should act so I started to really like this group. He was nice and we had coffee and cookies and so we really came and then he offered us to join this group, this Kahana youth group. At this time, when looking back, I was in transition because I was Lubavitch, and I was starting to look to other things and my friends. Also my appearance started to change because the Lubavitch usually wear black pants and a white shirt and I started to wear gray and after a few months I started wearing jeans and my yarmulke was still black but I changed it to the settler [West Bank or Gaza] one, so at the same time, when I started to be interested in this group, the Oslo process was happening. So I started to be very active. I was getting people to block main roads in Israel and throwing stones at tires.

An African American woman who grew up surrounded by family activists, in a poor community, noted the influence of a group that provided her with extra educational opportunities. She explained,

I was part of a program sponsored by...an African-American women's movement. They allowed twelve of us from junior high, we were A and B students and they sponsored us to take Saturday classes at the...Museum. And that's where I learned dissection. And we studied a lot in science at the...Museum.

A White woman who identified as bisexual explained the influence of a lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender youth group on her development, especially in the face of her unstable formal education, as she changed schools, was kicked out of school, and ultimately attended night school. She noted,

I think a lot was being part of the lesbian gay community in LA, because once I finished school I moved to LA, because then it was also multiracial and multicultural. It was mixture of a community, because it was gay and lesbian. It was a community of outsiders, so there was a need to bond together against the world. But because it was multiracial and multicultural, there was always that tension of me being the White girl, and yet there wasn't a strong enough community that they, at least the group I was attached to, were willing or wanted to push me out. I had to earn my place, so I would often be challenged on stuff, so that was a big part of how I learned about racism, without having the language for it. In terms of how culture works, not so much in terms of individual biases, but I would say something or do something or express an idea and then it would be challenged as an example of racism. I'm like, what do you mean, that's crazy, I'm not racist, and they'd slap me to next Tuesday and I'd learn a bit.

An African American female mental health professional described the impact of girl scouts,

We were in Girl Scouts, we went to camp. The camp we went to was the camp that my mom went to. My grandparents were involved with it. The camp was also about social activism but I don't think I knew it at the time. The rituals that we had...all the units had their own particular song so we all took turns singing...they were social protest songs like This Little Light of Mine and at the time I had no idea -- it was just a song that we all sang - - until I began to get the history and see that we were all involved in a political movement. I don't think the phrase social justice had been created at that time but it was always about song in praise and dance so was also very creative as well.

A Columbian woman noted the crucial influence of a group led by a local teacher.

This guy was amazing. He was a sociologist and philosopher and used to teach humanities at the school, which I loved, history, philosophy, literature, which I loved...He was wonderful in instilling critical ideas in our education. And I definitely picked it up, so much so that another student and I hired him to teach us private classes in philosophy, because we had such a quest for knowledge. He was teaching us Marx and Hegel and all these great philosophers when we were kids, so I can't tell you how big his impact was. He taught me to be a critical thinker. We started taking classes with him when I was fourteen.

Transformation of Anger into Moral Anger

Twelve of the interviewees (86%) first observed some form of activism during their childhood or teenage years. A South Asian woman noted “I think the first time I observed it was when I saw how my grandmother handled things in our home, but I didn't know what to call it then. We thought then she was just being neighborly.” Many individuals were surrounded by different forms of activism, but only learned the language later in life.

When asked to pinpoint the moments they first decided to take action, what continues to motivate their activism, and how they were able to transform their anger into moral anger, individuals described the themes below. It is important to note that many individuals endorsed more than one discrete category.

1. *Cognitive “aha.”* Individuals in this group, eight interviewees (57%), described specific educational experiences, usually involving consciousness raising, that helped them channel their anger into activism. While they might have had a sense that things were “off,” the cognitive “aha” validated their concerns and gave them confidence to begin making changes. Many noted the importance of giving a

phenomenon language, gaining access to literature, feeling “a tremendous synergy and release of the rage when I write,” having conversations with other people, and being in a different environment. One African American woman explained “I was never able to talk about race stuff because I saw racism as individual acts of meanness. It wasn’t until I got the language to describe institutional racism that gave me some place to talk about it.”

Another woman, from Columbia, described a more gradual process, where she connected book knowledge with information from her daily life:

What happened was that I also became very interested in learning the history of my country, beside the classist history that we had...my father was an avid reader and there were always lots of books in my house, and he did have some history books about that time in Columbia, called *The Violence*. I picked one of those and started to read about that, which is how I started to inquire about my grandfather...Now connect that with the fact that I have family members from different socioeconomic backgrounds and connect that with the fact that you see poverty in the street; it’s right in your face.”

Another White woman attributed the change to her exposure to an influential workshop on race and

I think what I did, my doctoral dissertation on the simplest level, was an evaluation of services at the shelter, but nothing is ever simple with a dissertation and it also became a way for me to analyze the intersection of multiple forms of oppression in the women we are serving. So I’m looking at racism, poverty, gender issues and gender violence...at many different issues and trying to determine how on one level you create services that will be responsive to all of these needs...what does violence mean to a Black girl who grew up in the ghetto in the south Bronx? Tell her that she doesn’t need to be violent in her life! Are you crazy? She’ll get killed. So these things all happened in succession. There is the People’s Institute; then I went on this reading rampage. So I went through this whole

experience where I felt like I didn't really learn anything new but was reminded of all these things I learned when I was younger but no one really talks about, ever, and so I got really curious. Why doesn't anyone talk about this? What's going on? So I just became this voracious reader and read anything and everything that has been written, from Michael Moore's *Stupid White Men* to more serious, academic things and racial identity theories and getting a history of the movement and what was going on in the 50s and 60s and anything I could get my hands on. So I filled my head with everything I could find, so that turned into more serious work on my dissertation, with violence literature and all the gender stuff. So I think it was just the culmination of all that reading and thinking and talking with other people and putting all those ideas together and developing more of a schematic in my head about how the world works.

As she became more educated and exposed to different situations, she noted

Questions of why are all the poor people Black and Brown [developed]. What's going on here? And also looking at residential segregation because I also have a house upstate, and there, all the poor people are White, so how did that happen? What's going on? So it raises a lot of questions that I need to have answers. I can't just look at a phenomenon and not know what I'm dealing with.

She had previously struggled with formal education and went to college because it was suggested by her girlfriend at the time. She noted that college was

Really a turning point for me....you also learn critical thinking skills and theories, and once you learn how to theorize, how to take this bit of information and that bit of information and seek out that information and make a picture out of it, it is possible to start metabolizing some things that are too big. I think that in a lot of ways, that was a life saver; just the ability to do that, so I could not be self destructive with the anger, so I could understand it as something bigger that isn't against me, so it's not about me. As an individual, I can find my way, and can work against it or ignore it or do whatever, but it just is and it's not right, so I can be angry, with volume control. So I can be outraged, but when there are times that I need to turn it down, I can turn it down.

An African American male who had been involved in the penal system noted

Truthfully speaking, the first three to four years there [in jail] I did absolutely nothing, because I was mad at all the wrong people, I blamed the prosecutors, the lawyers, the judges, I blamed all the other people, when in reality, I put myself there. It wasn't until this old guy said, 'you're going to be here for a long time young boy if you don't start doing something for yourself and stop waiting for someone else to do it for you.'

Finally, a recently turned activist, a female White social worker, noted, "it's that Freirian thing, you can't just sit and be intellectual and do nothing and you can't just be action. You've got to meld the two to have that praxis and that's what I learned and that's how I was able to transform it."

2. *Intrinsic knowing/need.* Eight individuals (57%) described a more intrinsic sense that propelled them to transform their anger into activism. When asked how the anger was transformed into moral anger, an African American woman simply noted, "that's the way to do it." Similarly, another individual, an Israeli male, explained "I have no idea why, but from a very young age, I questioned everything...I was always looking and thinking outside the box." Another, a South African Indian woman commented, "I don't know whether there was a clear moment but I knew that, it just became part of who I was. I knew that if I saw an injustice I needed to fight it because of how I grew up. I knew that in my life." While many of these individuals were surrounded by people, including their family, who didn't support their activism and who channeled their anger differently or more often, who didn't experience anger due to injustice, these interviewees inherently knew they had to do something. Another interviewee, a White woman noted, "I don't think it's an option not to. It's just what you do. If

something makes you frustrated or you don't like it, you take action. Otherwise, sitting with those feelings is so wretched, you just do something."

3. *Observation of injustice in the world and continued injustice in world.* Eight interviewees (57%) noted that they were unable to stop their pursuit of justice as a result of the multitude of injustices that continue in the world. When asked about motivation, they simply rattled off many systems of injustice that continue. For instance, an African American woman replied,

Let's see, gas prices, women's issues, healthcare, children's issues, the ongoing injustice of racism, sexism, classism, it's all those things intertwined. I don't know if there is a moment. It will come back to me. I think the name of the movie was Billy Jack, Saturday Night Live did a spoof on it with Paul Simon who played Billy Jack. They actually shot that movie in a town where I went to college. The kids were being hassled for being Native American and he comes in and beats the crap out of everybody. I think learning about Native American people in this country, I remember going and seeing that movie and for whatever reason, it just really moved me. And I think there were references to the students who were killed in Kent State and political activism and I can remember coming back from the movie and being like, I don't want to be like that. I think just the way the police opened fire on the students and the folks who were living on the reservations and it wasn't as if it was a film, but this really happened. And I think it was part of realizing that this really happens. What keeps me? This is an unjust society.

Another White male described "a sense of moral, if not rage, indignation. A very poor principle, where on the one hand you are being told this is the part of freedom in a free nation and on the other hand, it is constantly violated."

4. *Student activism/Part of a collective.* Seven interviewees (50%) described the influence of a student group, either before or during college. They were likely

influenced by the collective nature of the work, but also mentioned influential professors, study groups, and peers.

One White woman highlighted that since developmentally, teenagers are also often focused on their peers and socializing, she largely fell into activism because

It was fun! Now we're talking about when I was a teenager. It was like an organized social activity that you have this group of people, an interesting diverse group of people, also age diversity... and the social, playful aspects of it and the activism would sort of bleed together, so it was hard to tell which was which.

Another Jewish man noted,

I went to college early, I was 16, and I could tell you that I was still Orthodox...in my freshman year, but by the time I was a junior or senior I was an atheist and a socialist...I had a great transformation during my college years, from someone who was still quite innocent with political things to someone who developed a worldview as, by the way, a philosophy major.

When asked how he developed that worldview, he noted the impact of his professors, courses, and the overall climate in the world, "so all this during the 30s, when old established ways of thinking were being challenged. And I was challenging my own and transforming myself, and that's what occurred."

Focusing on the importance of a collective, at any age, one White male interviewee noted

It wasn't a solitary journey on my part. It was part of a collective, which is harder today because we've been distanced from that and we don't have the same entry points. I did and thus was nurtured and accepted and allowed then to grow and develop the analysis and self understanding. Had it not been there or had I not been in a place where, I don't know how I would have done it. I

might have become a very good teacher or pastor in my individual level tried to operate humanely and justly but it would have been more difficult than being nurtured in the sense of collective.

Other interviewees noted the importance of being part of well-established organizations, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

5. *Desire to leave a different legacy.* Five individuals (36%) expressed a desire to leave the world in a better place for future generations. For instance, a White woman who grew up in a town filled with racism and sexism noted

I think it goes back to growing up in X and feeling like something's not right. I can't figure out what it is, but something's not right, and then when I figured it out, feeling like I have to do something, I can't just sit back and let this happen to other people. And I'm not going to say it was always like that. Some of it was personal, I thought I can't let this happen to me, but I think more and more I realized that it doesn't even matter about me; it's about others, and keeping that connection and working on that.

An African American woman, whose son was murdered in a random act of violence, also noted her desire to change the paths of those headed towards violence. She explained, "and his friends were so distraught. They didn't leave the hospital that night when they told us. They were laying on the floor crying and just watching them I knew I had to pull them back, before they go somewhere else with their anger."

A South Asian immigrant from Uganda also noted that she didn't think that her activism was motivated by anger, but rather that

I want to leave a different place, a different world for my kids, and a different generation and I think it's possible. So that's really what motivates me...I think it's both familiar

and all the friends I'm involved with that have those same values. I can say that my life is fairly okay and not get involved in the political stuff, but when you see half the country going to hell, when I do think this is a great country, because I managed to survive in this country after I lost my country. So I have a lot of mixed feelings about it and I feel like it's just not okay to sit by passively and not do something.

6. *Discrete experience.* Four individuals (28%) described discrete experiences, often traumatic, that reshaped their lives. For instance, after an African American woman's teenage son was killed in a random act of violence, she noted that

I said you know what? We got to keep his memory alive; it's just the love...On that day, I kept thinking and through the funeral process, my mind came back maybe a month later. We have to do something for [him]...After awhile it kept coming back and forth what can I do, what can I do, we have to do something for [him].

An African American man who was involved in the penal system for an extended period of time noted,

When a situation impacts you more on a personal level, it drives you in one of two ways; you can be an activist who is going to bring about change or be an activist who is going to make the situation worse than it is, and highlight the negative instead of the positive. Well you get to a point where you are sick of the same humdrum life, that is repetitive, there is no change, because we don't make changes in our lives because we can't accept change, because we're comfortable.

He later mentioned the influence of a well-known public figure, who was in the cell next to him, and from whom he learned many of these lessons.

7. *Family influence/legacy.* Three interviewees (21%) described a family legacy of activism, implying that they were taught, at a young age, to channel their anger into activism. One or both of their parents were involved in activism and their

children's activities were therefore encouraged and fully supported. It was simply what they did. An African American woman described her mother's activism and then noted, "I met someone from my step-grandmother's home town in North Carolina who said, 'Oh your aunt and grandmother are active,' and I said, 'well if they are active in the South, then I should just keep being active.'" She joked, "I think I got it in my blood."

8. *Personal experience of injustice.* A South African Indian woman who suffered under apartheid noted that the activism is "because of the hurt that I felt from what happened to me."
9. *Sense of satisfaction/fulfillment.* The interviewee from South Africa also noted, "I think just, it makes me feel good. I feel great about what I do."
10. *Other.* A White woman noted,

I'm not sure it was conscious, I think, I'm not sure, I think it might have been, I think that though my mother was active at times, at times she was depressed. I think the idea of taking action to deal with things seemed like a good antidote to feeling stagnant, with the stagnancy that I observed, the activism was a good antidote for me when I was feeling frustrated with that or things.

Another woman noted the importance of religion in guiding her to use her anger in a positive manner. Finally, a White woman described the process of transforming the anger as an antidote to powerlessness. She traced her process as

Let's say I go to one of these religious anti-gay sites run by religious people. It's the sense of anger, feeling victimized or personally attacked, which leads to a sense of being hurt or being vulnerable. Then that stirs up feelings of powerlessness, and the activism is the antidote to that.

When asked about the meaning that the activism continues to have, individuals used words such as “spiritual call,” “an inability to imagine life without involvement in activism,” and “it makes me feel spiritually, emotionally, and morally fulfilled.”

Dealing with Anger Differently Throughout Life

Eight individuals (57%) reported dealing with their anger in different ways throughout their lives. When asked to reflect on how they made sense of their different responses, individuals noted a number of themes.

1. *Age and experience.* An African American man who was heavily involved in the penal system as a result of his anger and currently volunteers with an anger management program in his community noted “I’ve gotten older and mellow. My views and principles have changed. There are some things in life that mean more to me now than they did in the past.” A White woman who grew up in a small town discussed her difficulties modulating her anger, explaining

I think I went from not being able to control it and ruining a lot of relationships. I went to high school and I pulled back but I went too far because I didn’t engage in anything. It wasn’t until I hit college, I really blossomed in college. I remember taking a political science class and thinking wow, this is awesome, I love talking about political science theory. And in college you are with the kids who want to talk about it, so it was a really great time for me...so I think I learned there how to make a balance, but I think in my 20s it was really trial and error and I burned alive.

Alternately, a White male who has been an activist for most of his life noted

I think I now have more opportunities as a long-term activist that has a degree of being known in these circles. There are a lot of avenues where I can play out my activism and no longer having to prove myself in some ways. One of the ways you do that is to make sure you are hit on the head and hauled off to jail and it’s what we all do, but now I don’t want to go to jail and there are other ways in which

I can be active...I'm as passionate now around these issues as I was 30 years ago; I still have the sense of urgency.

Another activist, a White female who struggled to understand and express her anger during her childhood and upon reflection, noted that it frequently leaked out onto arguments with her mother, again validating the importance of age, said

On one level, it's just developmental. You know, mom got to be the target for many reasons, but I was young and that's what kids do. I just developed verbal and intellectual skills as I got older, I was able to use that more and more in different ways, both as a defense to protect me from some of the urgency of it, but also as a tool, through writing or teaching or conversations with people. I'm probably much better now at sitting with and hearing people who are coming from a very different point of view and able to find ways to join with them and move them along rather than feeling like I need to slap them down because they are wrong. I think that just comes from experience. There was a time when I couldn't deal with anyone. I could deal with the person, but not the conversation, who would hit a point that would just make me crazy because I would just get so angry with them for being like that. I knew at the time that I had to not feel like this all the time; that there has got to be a way if I really want to be an effective agent of change. I can't just be angry with people and shout them down, but I didn't know exactly how to evolve beyond that and I'm not really sure how I did. I'm not sure if I grew up a little bit or if I just had more experience, so the individual doesn't make me as angry anymore. Oh, you're just at that place in your life and I know what that place looks like and I know what this place looks like and so you'll get there or you won't, but it's on you.

Similarly, an older White man noted the importance of age, explaining that “the anger was rawer in earlier years...I've come to accept it without allowing it to disturb my sleep. Let's put it this way, without offing the intensity about my reaction to it or dealing with it. In other words, I got deeper understandings about it.”

2. *Influence of society.* A White woman who grew up heavily involved in activism noted that her anger

Was always channeled. I might have tried to block it out and just not deal with it, but I think early on, just because of the times I was raised in, there were people who were, whether it was feminist leaders or civil rights leaders or anti-war protestors who were modeling. When you feel frustrated, even gay-rights, when you feel frustrated, you take to the streets and demonstrate and call for change and work towards change...I think not having avenues for activism would make me depressed or feeling a little less enthusiastic about things, but not seriously.

3. *Put it in context.* An African American woman who works in the social service field noted that

I think I had to put it in a context and also look at how I wanted to manage it, how to express it, who to express it to, who not to express it to. I have a current supervisor who is very unconscious even though she would tell you that she's very conscious and she's very much into diversity but she's not really into the hard work that's about looking at privilege. So it's a very superficial conversation. But then there are others that you can have a conversation with who aren't afraid of the anger. I think that's another thing. There's a conditioning that the folks become afraid of anger, the feeling, because of how it's sometime expressed. But to be able to have a conversation or discourse, even though you can disagree, it doesn't mean that something bad is going to happen. I think that usually when you talk about oppression and injustice, there is a sense that oh my god, the angry Black woman thing or people of color are angry. I heard that this morning about Michelle Obama, she is being described by the conservative right as being angry because she's challenging the whole entire myth and ideal about feminism and femininity. It's got to be nice and compact and that's not who she is and good for her, because I think it's about the voice and I think underneath all of this is about developing the voice, and how you're going to implement your voice.

Different Paths Within the Family

Many of the individuals who were interviewed approached activism in a manner not only different from their parents and other adults in their life, but also in a significantly different manner from their siblings, illustrating that no two siblings grow up in the same family. When asked to describe this phenomenon, individuals gave vastly different explanations.

When a White man who grew up under strict racial segregation and whose uncle was murdered in a racially charged incident, was asked how he made sense of going on a different path from his siblings, he noted:

I think that we, I don't know what, maybe it was age. My older sister was five years older plus kind of moved in a more traditional way. My sister closest to me should be closest to me politically, we would find out later. She might have been a little too young to understand and have the impact of Uncle X's murder in the same way. Because I think that all of us, although my younger sister is very what we would call right-wing, we all very much love each other so we were influenced...I think it's timing and stuff. We're very decade oriented in this society. You grow up in one decade and it's different.

When a South African Indian woman who grew up under apartheid was asked if her siblings went in a similar direction of activism to hers, she explained, "no, one of them is a substance abuser, and one of them doesn't do good things in his life, and another one is okay but he's always trying to cheat someone or whatever. So I think they didn't make out as well. They put their anger into a negative context." She added,

I think that education had a lot to do with it. They were not attracted to education and I was. I saw it as my savior and they did not. They were in the same school system as me, but not in the beginning because I went to parochial school I'm the only one who did that. I was in parochial school for about five years, which was quite substantial...I liked

reading a lot. I like to learn, I liked learning about other places. I was just hungry to learn as a kid...I was also around children who were wealthier than me. So probably their parents were doctors and lawyers and all of that so maybe there was a part of me that saw that education could get them where they were.

Link Between Anger and Activism

Interviewees described a number of links between anger, moral anger, and activism. An African American male noted

There is a direct link. The activism part of the link is that it is a more positive avenue in which to deal with it. To expose it, bring it out, talk about it, do it in a non-violent way, on the other side of it; you can not take that approach and just deal with it aggressively on the spot.

He identified the importance of a “mechanism” that prevents spontaneous aggressive behavior, noting

Everyone has it; they just don’t know how to use it, how to access it...it’s there, but it’s easier to not access it than it is just to act. But if you have a sense of how to access it before you just act, then it’s easier to do. After you’ve done it a number of times, then you have a better feeling about yourself, that you’ve conquered an emotion that normally would have sent you spiraling into the penal system.

Another woman, a White lifelong activist and clinical psychologist, suggested that anger is the fuel that motivates activism. She explained,

I think you have to have the energy to be active, because activism takes a lot of energy and takes some sacrifice, it pulls you away from your other activities, so you need to sustain it, so you need energy, and anger is the energy, the fuel. I like to tell clients and other people that anger can’t possess you, you have to transform it into rocket fuel and then use it to fuel where you want to go. Because if you’re not angry, who is going to have the energy day in and day out to do these things. So you use the anger to provide the energy.

Similarly, another African American lifetime activist noted, “if I wasn’t angry, I probably wouldn’t say anything.” A “newer” White activist noted,

I doubt if I didn’t feel angry about injustice, I don’t know if I would do it [activism]. Why would you? Because there are lots of bad things that happen in the world and thank god there is always someone getting angry about something that they are going to save whatever, but you can’t do everything. And I know those people who are also angry at everything, and that’s not good also. So why is it that I’m focused on racism and women’s issues and I’m not campaigning to save Darfur? I think what’s happening there is terrible. But, it doesn’t get me in the same emotionally invested way, and yet I do have energy for this. Why here and not there, I don’t know? It’s the anger that gives me the energy to do something. It makes it a moral imperative. It’s this deeply rooted central feeling that I absolutely have to act on; it’s not a choice. Whereas addressing other issues of injustice that are happening in the world are a choice, and I will act if it’s convenient for me, I’ll do the right thing, but if it’s not convenient for me, like a lot of people, I’m just not going to go out of my way to save the dolphins or whatever, but this, this I’ll walk ten miles barefoot in the snow so I can show up and do something, because I feel that I have to.

A recent African American activist noted that she “absolutely” saw a link between anger, moral anger, and activism, but “for 30 years I avoided the discussion of race and didn’t even allow myself to feel the pain or the anger,” suggesting that not only must the link be visible, but one’s immediate society or important systems must, at a minimum, give one permission to acknowledge the anger. In a strikingly visible example, after she was able to give language to and acknowledge her anger, she lost 35 pounds. She further explained

I don’t think I’m a good example because the anger was hidden for so long. My folks are very peaceful by nature and I am sure that much of the peacefulness grew out of a desire to survive. But there is very little, if any, open

hostility in my immediate family. Very little fighting, never a time that people aren't talking to each other, never a time that people are disrespectful to each other and I know it came from the need to survive and how our parents did not tolerate bad behavior. So in order for me to be able to express anger, it had to be in a way that was focused on the institution and not the individual. It hurt very much. And therapists have always told me that the hurt was really about the anger that I did not acknowledge. I'd get hurt and cry. I still get hurt and cry, but much less than I used to. It's a piece of me and I'm sure that those tears are really about anger.

Less directly, a Latina interviewee explained that while she saw a link, she didn't see a continuous link between anger, moral anger, and activism, also adding the role of the emotion of hurt to the model. As she explains:

I do see anger when I see something horrible. You know this whole scandal just in the news about the football player using those dogs for the fights, I felt just angry. I had a sense of indignation, but I was angry. I wanted this guy in jail and all the punishments. It just broke my heart to think about those dogs; that was very visceral. So it's not that the feeling of anger isn't there, I think it comes and goes. After I feel like this, I acknowledge and am aware that I feel this intensity and this is the feeling I have. What is helpful is that it hurts me, when I acknowledge that it hurts me a lot, then that helps me mobilize and think, ok I have to do something, do something positive to change this. So it's the movement from anger to hurt, that helps me to think what I have to do to change the situation. So it's not about hating you, but what can I do to solve this problem or resist it or whatever.

Similarly, when asked how she understood her own journey as an activist, she noted that

What helped me was not in those groups [student educational groups], because those groups were very heady. This just came from another part of my life. I think part being a woman, and to some extent, socialized to be more vulnerable and feeling helped get in touch with that part, but I think that walking the path of healing myself in therapy and spiritually and being a psychologist is what

helped me make that link. Activists can lack a lot of touch of how they feel.

Barriers to Activism

All interviewees (100%) noted a variety of obstacles to taking action about something that angered them. While their responses do not fall into discrete categories, they provide insight into the challenges of channeling anger into activism.

An African American male who spent a significant amount of his youth in the penal system noted that when he was released, “I would see something, but would lean back because I would think if you get into this, you might end up back in.” However, “when I became aware of what my rights were,” taking action was easy. Another African American woman echoed this sentiment by noting the importance of knowing when to take action. “Everything doesn’t warrant angry actions. You know someone stepped on my toe is not a reason to march around the White House.”

A White woman noted that activism is difficult because it sets her apart from her family. She explained

Any time I participate in activism I always feel great and connected, even when it’s hard, but I think sometimes after it’s over, there’s always that pang about being different from my family. And I think it happens when I go home for holidays or I’m around them and I see their typical normal White lives, I always feel like that kid on the outside of a glass looking into the candy store, like just give me a gum drop or something but I think there’s always that pang that I have to watch.

She later noted that her feelings about being so different from her family often leaked out unpredictably, in a manner she wishes she could avoid.

Two interviewees (14%) noted the importance of a collective, including that “without that same group...I might have done things that called for reflection and more

just jump out there and do something for your own gratification when others don't get caught up in that and it passed them by." Another White woman noted, "you can't do things by yourself; you need to motivate others to get the resources."

However, a White woman who works for a large social service organization explained the challenges of activism in groups, after the initial consciousness raising. She explained

It's hardly ever difficult to take the first step, to say here's an issue that's a problem, but then you get the backlash, and what happens with the backlash can be easy or difficult or extremely difficult, so there certainly have been times where that second step or third step is getting so much backlash that it can be negative. I'm getting used to it, so I can identify it now as here is the backlash, but I think for a lot of years, it would just feel very personal, like why are all these people who I thought liked and trusted me, very angry with me? I didn't understand the degree to which they'd feel threatened or the degree to which everybody's anxiety goes up so I have so many experiences where I'll sit in conversation with somebody, usually with a group of people, because if it's one on one we can usually work it out, but with a group of people where I truly believe I am saying racism is bad and we should eradicate it, and somebody will come up to me later and say why are you in favor of racism, that's terrible! It's like, wait a minute, what did you hear me say? And their anxiety was so high that they just completely twist around something that I said. I think that's part of what's hard, everybody gets anxious, and you don't know who in the room is going to hear you, how are they going to hear you, who is going to support you, who is going to be the one that you're going to tussle with a little bit. Sometimes the people of color in the room have the most to lose, and their anxiety might be the highest, and they are the ones who are most likely to mishear me because they are so convinced of what awful thing they are going to hear that they often end up hearing it regardless of what comes out of my mouth. That's always hard, and with experience it's gotten easier, but it's still hard.

Another White individual noted the difficulty of taking a stand against something when “it threatened my livelihood.” He explained

When I became certified as a teacher...I was subbing in my old high school and I was very good at it, and the word passed around and I was subbing in 5-6 school districts and working every day. Well, about after a year or year and a half, word was passed on to my father from the Board of Education, if your son wants a regular job here, he’s going to have to stop his political activity. I remember that very distinctly. Horrors, that I was involved in raising money for Spain and organizing the NAACP.

This is closely linked to the three individuals (21%) who noted the importance of the political climate in society. For instance, during the McCarthy period, the political ramifications of being a specific kind of activist were often quite significant. A White male noted, “if you wanted to protect your job, you didn’t want to be blacklisted...on the other hand, in the 60s, as time moved on later in the 60s, opportunities for expression were very great.” Another South African Indian woman noted that it was difficult to take action

When I was in South Africa and I just couldn’t do anything about the situation [apartheid]. I remember when I was teaching once and I was told not to use the material that I was using because it was banned literature, that made me very angry and frustrated at the same time. I knew I couldn’t do anything about it.

A Latina woman expressed her frustration at not being able to do enough. For instance, she explained:

I wish I could change the world, just for example in Columbia. When I did those workshops, at some point, I worked with people who were activists or who were community activists and went through a period of re-integration from the guerilla group to civilian life and I wish I could have done more for them, because they lived in pretty hard circumstances. And here, for example, an

example I feel really impotent about is all the immigration stuff going on. I hear all these comments from people I interact with and also TV and politics about such hatred for undocumented immigrants, it's mostly Mexicans, and I just feel very impotent about the whole situation right now. I wish I could have them understand that these people are here because this government has a relationship with the Mexican government that is completely toxic and vicious and they have no other option. They wouldn't be here otherwise, they'd rather be in their country with their families. So that's one that I feel just very impotent about.

A South Asian woman also noted that it is

Really difficult...when professionals who are seen as great liberals and contributors to the cause, cause harm to people of color or exploit people of color and are not held accountable. It's the hardest conversation because how do you challenge them when everyone has this view of them. You can talk privately to people and they'll endorse it, but there's no accountability in that sort of bubble.

Moreover, a man who grew up in a religious community in Israel and went from being strongly anti-Palestinian to pro-peace, explained the challenges of being overwhelmed by personal anger

A gunman came into the main Yeshiva [Jewish school] of the whole movement and killed a student, and two days before that there was a fight in Gaza where 135 people were killed, including women and children and I felt different anger, that this was so stupid. By your action, you are fulfilling the same ideology about what we are, and now, when the gunman came here, I felt leaps of anger. I could split myself literally...I think about my anger now as stupid, but then felt the anger of my friends, now they become more angry, now that the attack was on specifically the main Yeshiva of the entire movement. People here didn't recognize that. I got so angry, and it was leaps of anger, but then I felt that the Palestinians in Gaza felt the same thing, and thought how stupid it was. You continue both of you, killing, fulfilling the same prophecies and then what happens, nothing will change. I actually couldn't finish the paper I was writing about the conflict, it was so difficult, it kind of paralyzed me. For me, it became clear.

I felt why the Palestinians came in and killed them and why they hate them and want to destroy the house of this family even though it's Jerusalem and I actually saw some of my rabbis on YouTube and New York Times going to the village of the gunman and everybody throwing stones at Palestinian cars. I kind of felt both sides, and I felt the anger of both sides. And this is difficult to understand the anger, how each can continue to meet the basic needs of each without continuing to kill each other. The entire situation really was difficult.

Activism Without Barriers

Alternately, all of the interviewees (100%) were also able to identify times when conditions were right for taking action against things that angered them. Many of these responses are similar to the previous section on how anger was transformed into moral anger and activism, once against highlighting the importance of a pivotal educational (informal or formal) experience and social support. Responses mostly fell into the following categories:

1. *Cognitive "aha."* A White female career-changing mental health professional noted the influence of a supervisor. When she "heard her speak it was like all the struggle that I had grappled with in my social work school that I couldn't give language to, it was so easy. I was like, 'oh yeah this makes total sense, how come I didn't come up with that?'"
2. *Plan.* An African American woman who started a town-wide violence prevention program noted the importance of having a plan.

You need to have a plan. You need to know what you're going to do about it. If I'm angry over racism, when did I get angry? When do I get angry? What is the cost and effect of this anger?...Last week my girlfriend's sister-in-law down South was standing by a bar and two guys rolled by and threw a gas bomb on her. She had gasoline in a cup, she was standing on a corner talking and she turned around

and it went into her face and burned her up. And we could have marched around the block; we could have marched on City Hall. They're only getting five years malicious wounding. We can march 20 more times and that's what they're calling it. So what are we going to do? We have to beat down the laws of justice. How are we going to beat down the walls of justice? They went to court, to the arraignment, and everything.

3. *Support.* Support from others was also identified as a crucial component when activism was “easy.” As a White female social worker explained,

That first step is always easy, especially being a social worker. Identifying the problem, speaking out against it. Step one, it's expected that that's what social workers are supposed to do. There is very little at stake, because you can only go so far in step one. Some people might disagree with you, but whatever, that's easy. It's easier to take the second, third, and fourth steps when I know that I've got support with whatever I'm doing or whatever group I'm working with. But support isn't just people who work with me. Real support is people who support me as an individual and support me in my role, whatever that role is. They understand and agree enough, but are also unique enough that we can have a real dialogue, because you don't want to be surrounded by yes people. And I need to know that I've got at least a couple of people that will really challenge me and will really catch me when I'm about to go down the wrong path of something, and that's hard to do. You have to work on developing relationships to do that, so when I've had that, it's easier to continue. When I don't have that, I feel like every step I'm taking, I've become more isolated.

Additionally, a White female lesbian psychologist also noted that while her work was never easy, having the support and structure of an organization, such as the American Psychological Association, behind her, was helpful.

4. *Lack of politics.* Alternatively, an African American woman noted that activism became easier when she no longer affiliated with a specific board, “because I'm retired and I'm not connected to something.” This provided her with the freedom

to follow her beliefs and anger without fearing the reaction of the organizations with which she was associated or was thought to be representing.

What I Have Learned That Would Have Been Useful to Know When I was Younger and Full of Anger...

When interviewees were asked to reflect about things that they learned, related to anger and activism, that would have been useful to know when they were younger and full of anger, they provided a variety of responses, highlighted by the following categories:

1. *Ability and education to access mechanism.* An African American male interviewee continued to highlight the importance of having “that mechanism, the ability and education to access that mechanism, that will prevent you from reacting to a situation prematurely. Without that, you’re just a loose cannon.”
2. *Normalizing anger.* Normalizing, rather than pathologizing anger was also cited as an important lesson. A White female stated, “if I had just had someone say it’s okay for a girl to be angry, let me show you how to do something with this rather than being alone and feeling like a freak.”
3. *Learning history.* An African American woman who grew up on a sharecropper’s farm noted that learning history was pivotal in her development, but came later in her life, after she had already suffered considerably. Moreover, it was a specific kind of history, rather than political, somewhat censored descriptions of the past, that was crucial. She noted that

I needed language to describe what I saw so clearly but lacked words for. I needed to hear and understand the historical events. I think at some point, when I was college age or whatever and understood about the segregation and

the fact that my father had gone along with whatever it was, I was angry at him, I was angry with them. I would have needed historical information, insights, and I never got that historical information clearly until the [powerful workshop on race].

4. *Reduce impulsivity and increase thoughtful/strategic behavior.* A White older man, who has been involved in activism for most of his life, noted that “I’ve learned painfully, not to be impulsive, and to be thoughtful and reasonable and really to be contemplative about situations and how to deal with them. To be more reasonable about it and avoid being impulsive.” Another South Asian woman, who has been hurt by some of her allies, noted

I think I probably would have been a little more patient and a little more strategic. I wouldn’t have given them all my cards and I wouldn’t have trusted them so quickly. I’ve really learned that and I’m very cautious now. Not in a bad way, but I just know that you have to take people where they’re at. I was just too trusting and let people in too quickly before and learned my lesson. I won’t do that again.

5. *Supportive adults.* The importance of supportive adults was also highlighted, particularly in a school setting. A South African Indian interviewee noted, “it would’ve been nice to have counselors and all that in our schools but we didn’t. But we used our friends as our counselors. And it would have been nice to have more supportive adults who put things in a psychological context.”
6. *Learning about own privilege.* Learning more about one’s position within the hierarchy in society was also cited as a humbling experience. As a woman who grew up in Columbia explained,

It would have been useful or good for me if I had had at least a little bit of the knowledge I have about my own privilege and questioning my own privilege. When I was

growing up, I was looking at all these injustices outside of me, but I never questioned how I played a role in that; that came a lot later. And of course, later I made sense of the emotional connections I had with the people who were not like me and stuff like that, but I think it would have just helped me to mature intellectually, cognitively, and emotionally, if I had had exposure to someone who could have helped me challenge my own privilege in a gentle way. I don't mean break me up or anything like that. I think that would have been helpful, because I had this, I'm not sure this is the right word, but there was cognitive dissonance. I went to school where rich girls went, but my family was not like their family-- in some ways, but not really-- so I had to navigate all these differences. But it was easier for me to say at that point...they are like that, but I'm not a part of it. And I was being groomed to be a part of that, so when I got so angry at that system and I didn't like those people and I didn't talk to them and all that, I had this tremendous anger, but I was not connecting that to the fact that I sometimes behaved like them. I am guilty of having been nasty and saying nasty things, things they did, I'm not different. Hopefully, I'm different now. So I think that would have helped me to learn about being more humble about myself.

Strategies to Teach Adolescents how to Channel Anger into Activism

At the end of the interview, interviewees were asked what advice, about how to channel their anger into activism, they would give adolescents who were experiencing anger due to social injustice. While only a few of the interviewees had been involved in facilitating anger management or violence prevention programs and most respondents were quick to note that they were not experts on the subject, they provided fascinating responses. The categories below illustrate their ideas. It is important to note that many respondents gave several ideas that fit into multiple categories.

1. *Creating a plan and teaching alternative responses.* One White female, a psychologist, highlighted the importance of using a plan to turn the anger into something proactive. She explained,

Coming up with a plan, having a strategic plan...having a plan and strategy and goals, not just being angry, but having achievable goals... and then the same critical consciousness can develop a plan. They have to have a plan and goal, and then you have to have a practical goal that is realizable. You have to break it down into steps, whether it's canvassing or petitions; that's been the civil group. In this environmental group, we had to come up with one almost on a daily basis. What steps would we take to prevent this development and stop these corrupt politicians? We wrote petitions, went to meetings, you know, there is a repertoire of investigating this, but to deal with the frustration, you have to have something to do that seems productive and it's better if it's linked to a plan.

Similarly, an African American man who helps facilitate an anger management program for adolescent males explained that in

Terms of their anger, they need to be made aware that there are other alternatives to their ways of thinking, so they have to be exposed to more. They have to be taught that mechanism to be able to access a different emotion than acting out when those feelings come up. And until they can do that, they are going to stay on the same path that they are on. This is how life is, when you get a feeling like this, this is how you're supposed to deal with it. This is how all my peers deal with it.

2. *Showing vulnerabilities.* Expressing vulnerabilities, especially for men, was also identified as a crucial part of a program. An African American man who currently helps facilitate an anger management program for men shared a strategy he uses to generate strong emotions from the males in his program.

Sometimes we do mock things, like we had a mock funeral here once. We had a kid lie on the table, as though he was in a coffin, and we asked all the kids to get up and walk around the table and act as though that person on the table was your friend, and what last words you'd want to say to him. None of them could say anything, because they couldn't put themselves in that situation of being the one in the coffin. So we have to show by example what it is we were saying, the vulnerable side of being a man, because a

lot wouldn't talk because they didn't want their peers to think oh, you're soft, saying all that mushy stuff, so we have to lead by example and let them know this is what I would say. We walked around the coffin and said things like I really miss you, I love you. I didn't get a chance to say this, I wish I had the opportunity to say this, or if I was there, I would have tried to persuade you not do what you did or be involved in that that ultimately led to your death. You know, all those kinds of things, to get them to show the vulnerable side of what a man is like.

3. *Preventing powerlessness.* A White female psychologist highlighted the crucial intersection between power and anger and the importance of preventing feelings of powerless anger. She explained,

I think it's a powerless anger; it's not just anger, it's a powerless anger, and I think it's easy to feel a powerless anger as an individual, when you're alone, but even when working with a couple of other people, it's harder to feel that way...People don't often identify the feelings of powerlessness because that's often very defended against, cause people don't want to feel like they are powerlessness. So admitting that some of the anger is out of a sense of powerlessness and frustration is helpful...I had a conversation with a colleague who focused on substance abuse and he named the words powerless anger. He thought many substance abusers struggle with powerless anger, so just having that concept was helpful to me. Like critical consciousness, having words to name the feelings. I think like with men, there is such a difficulty in admitting they are powerless. It makes them feel like they are powerless or blocked or stymied, coming up with the right words. I don't know the name of the person that coined that term, I've seen the term elsewhere, in discussions about race and racism, maybe with some liberation psychology stuff, but this was just a casual conversation.

4. *Collective.* Six respondents (43%) highlighted the importance of both sharing the problem with others and developing a collective voice. For instance, an African American man who helps facilitate an anger management program for adolescent males noted that he teaches the boys the following skills:

First you have to acknowledge that there is a problem and talk about it. Don't try to carry it around by yourself and deal with it on your own. You need to first tell somebody. At least in their mind, they aren't viewing it as being talked down, but tell somebody to get another opinion about what you're feeling. Maybe they faced the same thing and dealt with it in a different manner that didn't lead them to a consequence that they were going to regret. So we teach them that you need to talk about it; you need to be open with your feelings. Don't try to carry them, these burdens, on your own.

Moreover, another White female interviewee echoed the importance of working in a collective. "What I think is imperative is staying connected to a lot of people who are going to support you in building a critical consciousness. So I would say to them that you don't want do anything in isolation."

A female African American retired teacher and lifelong community activist highlighted the importance of communicating with others, especially via a youth group format.

I think you can always tell somebody something, but in this day, unless there are, I would like to see more youth groups where they come together on a daily basis, to talk things through...I just wish that the kids would have a way to channel all of their anger. They're angry because they don't have the clothes. They're angry because many of the parents have stuck them up, really have not treated them well, treated them like they were the problem. And that many of them had children as a teenager and they were robbed of many activities, so now they're mad at the kids. They're mad because they got to buy them clothes; its almost like a cycle that has to be broken down or real bad things will happen...Also, small group discussions daily with a professional to supervise students might be immensely helpful. I have found that students do not feel comfortable expressing themselves even when things are extremely stressful to them. In one case I did not read the signs well and one student was pummeled and seriously injured on his way home after school one day in retaliation for something that his older brother had done. He had

sought my help that afternoon but I failed to read the signs and did not know the urgency. I hope that there are social workers and other professionals who are more dutiful with working with students immediately, who are trained to see signs and symptoms and then knowledgeable about the actions to be taken. Every person on staff who is assigned may not commit the time or effort to see that they are effective with troubled students.

A White woman who directs a large social service program agreed with the importance of a collective, adding an age appropriate twist. She insightfully suggested that adolescence be told,

Hey, there's this thing happening and you should go to it and validate their personal experience that the only thing that changes the world is a collective of people who are agreeing on their personal experience and moving forward in some kind of unified way. We could discover fire if we thought of that! So it takes a collective to work together and not work against each other, so however you can get kids to do that. And kids are social creatures usually, and so that should be pretty inviting.

A White male lifelong activist also validated this, explaining,

To turn the energy of anger into the energy of action? I would point out that one cannot effectively change things on one's own. One needs to be linked to other people, one needs to be linked to an organization that directs its attention against discrimination and then become actively involved in it, and thereby use the energy of your anger towards the energy of active change.

Another White female lifelong activist added, "it helps to be engaged with others, because the isolation I think fuels a negative type of anger."

5. *Engaging in an activity that has a positive impact.* A White woman who runs a social service program noted age appropriate variables, insightfully thinking about the complexity of adolescence.

What I'm thinking about is that there is something about that age, it's a beautiful age, where you really believe that you are invincible and can change the world. And since you believe you are the center of your universe, you believe you are the center of the universe, what I'm remembering is that feeling. And therefore feeling that whatever I said or did really mattered. And I think that if you can find a way to get kids involved in something where they really do matter and so that feeling is really validated, and they can express their ideas, that's got to have a positive impact.

An African American female lifelong community activist echoed the importance of connecting individuals with positive, productive activities. She explained,

And I think all those people with anger maybe they can be included in things at the hospital. The hospital has a unit for those youth. Well, they should also have little things they can do that are not so related to therapy. I don't know the levels of their anger but something like candy stripe going on, a supervisor, or something more positive. You always have to ask people, would you supervise these kids and you give them four or five kids. I know there are more numbers than that, but that gives me empowerment like I'm helping these kids. That gives these kids an important role and there's a great big difference even in the adults I notice. We give them a little something to do, give them a little power. This is my little corner or give them a role or something. Do something productive because I think that makes all the difference; it shows them that they can.

6. *Dismantling White privilege.* A White woman who is actively engaged in exploring and dismantling her White privilege noted

For the White kids I would say your focus really has to be on dismantling your White privilege, not that you have to do it separately, but that's another layer of the work you have to do in your activism whereas for the kids of color I wouldn't put that as the focus.

Similarly, a South Asian female mental health professional who works at the same organization explained, through a case example, the importance of

examining what is under the anger, which in her opinion, for children of color, is often related to White supremacy.

I don't think you can start by telling a kid to channel their rage differently. You have to start at several standpoints below that, which is to really look at White supremacy and what it means. Because then what you're doing is allying with her experience without redirecting her anger. So I think what shifted [for an adolescent client] was watching the White privilege tape, having the women in the room talk about what White Supremacy was about so that she could actually let loose with her anger and cry. We were saying before, doing the critical consciousness, the school was saying let's see if you can do something different. You're smart, you're a leader. And she was closed off to all of that until we were able to get behind the power of her experience and then propel her into action.

7. *Normalizing anger.* As discussed above, normalizing anger was a crucial component of enabling individuals to express their anger in a direct and proactive way. A White woman noted that adolescents should be taught

That it's okay to be angry. It's not okay to be disrespectful and destroy property but to think that if you're angry about something maybe it's a good clue that you're on the right path to figuring something out. Not to get caught up in the anger, but to learn to ask more questions about it.

8. *Teaching history.* A White male individual who leads workshops about racism explained the importance of teaching history. He also added the necessity of a collective, as discussed above.

Well I could do that in terms of understanding history. It would be best if I was working with a partner, I would try not to do this work alone because of all the dynamics that that creates. But certainly one of the things that another colleague at the institute, she would say, sort of in passing, that she would say the Black community was at its healthiest when we were organizing for justice. Once that sense of justice is taken away, it becomes your fault that you're going through all this, then it becomes internalized

oppression. And so she says that regardless of your stature if you're Black and you're organizing, your health and your psyche is improved. I would attempt over time, to work within a partnership context I would attempt to direct the students in that way. But I don't think I could get their attention just on my own.

9. *Reflection about the consequences/Imposing consequences.* An African American woman who is involved in a program that fights violence in her community highlighted the importance of reflection, boundaries, and consequences.

If you get mad, then read your book. Don't get on the phone, don't fist fight, use your mind. You got to think before you do things. As kids they don't think before they do things. See, I see too many things happened, people go to jail, like a young boy got stabbed because his mother told him, someone took something from him and she said go get it. I'm tired of you coming home crying; go get it. She didn't tell him to take a knife with him, so when she said go get him, he ended up stabbing the kid and killing him. You can hurt somebody by mistake. I can pick up a pipe and hit you because you abused me and it can kill you. So it goes beyond assault and self-defense and it's now murder. So now we have to prove that he hit me first and that's why we hit him with the pipe, but he's dead. There are consequences. See, you have to set boundaries, and when you overstep those boundaries, there are consequences. And that's all about parenting. And a lot of time we remove the consequences. I remember my father said stop hollering; he heard you the first time you said come into the house and now you're on the eighth time. Is he playing? Kids are playing; they're playing so much, but in reality they heard you. But this is little kids; this is what they do.

Another African American woman agreed, highlighting the importance of slowing down the process from anger to action.

They really have to consider thinking; it's the thinking about the consequences. If I crossed the line into anger, I would do something stupid that could hurt somebody or

myself. If I cross the line into activism, I could reach more people and get my point across. And do everyone right. I could convey my thoughts and we all might agree and start working it out. So I could reach more people. Like they say with the bees and the honey and the vinegar. You can reach more with the honey and less with the vinegar. So it's all about your thought process; how do you process your anger. Like they always say, stop, breathe, and think about it. Do you really want to go there? Do you really want to go over there and smack him in the head because he asked a question wrong or he came late? I learned to tell people in years to come, I learned to tell people how I feel and if you can be real with yourself and real with your thoughts you won't even have to cross that level. You need to say. See the problem is that we hold everything inside and then we explode and that's deadly. So if you're mistreating me or you say something to me that I didn't like, the time is now. Let's talk about it now; let's get it off my chest and convey to you what my problems are; let's listen to these issues and let's resolve it. Because the more it stays in here, the more it festers. And once it festers it can go to a whole another level, like they say, to the 10th power. And then you got a problem. I just had that happen with a girlfriend of mine and I'm 45 years old.

10. Cognitive framework to understand the world. A White female psychologist

suggested the importance of developing a critical consciousness, suggesting that

I think they need some kind of cognitive framework to understand the world around them, like liberation psychology has this concept of critical consciousness, so one way they have to do this is have a way to conceptualize the world around them that makes sense, why they are angry. It legitimizes their sense of being victims or oppressed...The critical consciousness, understanding it and having a cognitive frame to channel the emotions, like on the Rorschach, not a pure C, but an FC or even a CF, so you need a cognitive form, and then that critical consciousness can help for the plan.

Another South Asian female mental health professional agreed with the importance of developing a cognitive framework for understanding the world, which she also termed a critical consciousness. She explained

I think it's just about having a critical consciousness around some thing. Snoop Dogg was recently on Larry King and he was asking him about all the horrible gangster stuff that he did and all the trashing of women, and he was saying that he doesn't do that anymore because he respects women, he respects his wife and is trying to teach his kids something different and really what he was saying is that he had a lot of rage and all he wanted to do was be successful and didn't care where it landed. He didn't have the critical consciousness; it was unhinged anger and it has to be hinged. The critical consciousness is a place that threads people into, okay you do have rage, let's see how you're going to channel it, rather than its just being completely wild, which is why I don't think that just validating kids' anger and saying that we understand why you're angry without giving them a meta on themselves and their sense of anger is enough. It's such a cognitive thing. I mean, these kids aren't cognitively impaired. We can't teach them to manage their anger in their heads. It doesn't work with men either; the anger management protocol just doesn't work."

An African American female mental health professional who had been trained in the Culture Context Model (Almeida, Dolan-Del Vecchio, & Parker, 2008), a therapy model based on a social justice, collectivist, post-colonial ideology, focusing on the strength and power of healthy communities, that included "socioeducation," a form of consciousness raising, explained:

I don't think there's a right way and a wrong way; young people who are interested in activism even though they're not sure what it is, who want to make a difference, not only in their lives but in the lives of other young people, who want to partner with adults to create collaboration around activism or change, understanding what power is about. It's a workshop, 12 weeks maybe, I don't know. Where I think it's the socioeducation type of exposure, it's the same way when we have batterers who come in, whoever coming in...helping young people look at adultery, the effects of racism and sexism rather than waiting until they become an adult; helping them to look at becoming mentors or peer mentors to their other peers. Men are in the best position to impact violence with other men, I think the same thing with

youth, the same type of being an outsider, trying to have an impact on a value system or a social situation that is so far removed from most of our experiences right now, generation wise...Having them build in collectives and conversations so it doesn't have to continue to be that way.

11. *Writing.* An African American female retired teacher and lifelong community activist highlighted the importance of writing.

They have to learn to write and express themselves. That's more acceptable now, much more acceptable now. Somebody will listen now. My daughter was so angry with me because a young man whose family I knew, whose grandmother I went to school with, wrote a note regarding violence and he actually had to have written it and left it for me and I didn't do something with it right away. And I was looking at it and I didn't know what to do with it and he was saying that his brother must've done something horrible, some horrible crime and that he was living around with his brother. I don't know who exactly the parents were, but his grandmother by that time was dead. She got killed in a fire one day when we were at school. I don't think if they had parents who were around, they had any way of getting anybody to listen to something. So I think they have to write it and they have to find people that they trust to find help for them.

Moreover, an Indian mental health professional who grew up under apartheid in South Africa also highlighted the importance of writing, particularly as a communication vehicle to serve as a catalyst for receiving other services.

I would encourage them to write about it, to talk about it, to recognize why they are angry, I think most of the people who get involved in the problematic behavior are unaware of the link between the anger and the injustice. And if you can make that link then you can do something about it...participation in groups, going to therapy, getting counseling, talking to someone, that'll help you make that link.

12. *Sense of belonging and safety instilled by people with values.* A Latina psychologist who experienced the traumatic loss of a sibling in her childhood

acknowledged the importance of belonging and safety, particularly when instilled by individuals with values.

Look, I always had a home to go to, not that my parents were the best parents or anything like that, no, but there were several times that were very difficult, like the school was making my life very difficult, and my parents were there one hundred percent. My father, despite all the conflicts we had, he always, he never let the people cross the line with me, and he made it very clear, so no one bothered me at school. So that sense of belonging and knowing that, growing up, you have that safety. I always had my grandmother there and my uncle and when I needed them. It's not that I went to talk to them about my problems. I'm not talking about that, but just that they were there. I had their love, like really unconditional love, that gave me hope, made me feel secure, made me feel valued. And these were people who had certain values, not just the family affection but people who had certain morals, so that's what they instilled in me. So it has to be both, I think; it has to be a place where you belong, those emotional connections that you really need, but with the people who have a sense of values, I think that's really important.

13. Mentors/Experts. A White female psychologist highlighted the importance of mentors or experts, particularly with adolescents, but useful at any point in life.

With adolescents, you probably need some teachers or role models or activists to get them. If you don't like the way your school is run, what do you do? Well it takes a little bit of knowledge that you go to the school board meeting or you collect a petition and then go to the school board meeting and make a presentation. What does a presentation look like? Sort of like expert knowledge. Sometimes people get frustrated because they don't have the expert knowledge. Like with the civic organization, we hired an attorney. And not only did he give us legal advice; we brainstormed political activities too, like what commission can we protest with and what commission can we make a statement in front of and what can we do here and what can we do there. That's where knowledge helps.

A Latina psychologist also acknowledged the importance of a mentor, particularly responsible, ethical mentoring.

I also feel that, and I think what's helpful for me, like I was telling you about this teacher in high school, looking back, because this guy had a huge influence on us. He could have impacted us in many negative ways, because he had power over us, but he never misused his power. So having an adult who was a critical thinker but also has integrity, the presence of that person in my life, that was critical for me. I guess what I'm trying to say is that it has to be a combination of the love people give you, that adults give you, with integrity, with critical consciousness. Because this guy was a lefty and he could have asked us to do things that we could have done.

14. Inducing humanity into the "other"—building empathy. A male who grew up in an ultra-religious settler community in Israel and went on a journey from anti-Palestinian to being actively engaged in peace work highlighted the importance of building empathy, in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He explained,

When they cry about someone they lost, I am crying, so why do we have to use this anger to put as justification to fight. We can take it and say whoa, we have the same thing. Let's find another strategy; let's stop taking this anger to justify things that are causing more anger."

He further elaborated

I wrote a paper for school and called one of the young settlers from the same settlement that I was talking about, and we had a discussion and I asked her a question. I told her about the occupation, what do you think about the occupation? And she said, what occupation, like the Arabs occupying our territory? And I said, no, when there is a war and occupation for the holy land, and I said you know, I can't really explain that. Let me ask you, do you feel, what do you feel about the people in your family who got killed? And when I did the interview, one of the teenage neighbors got kidnapped and killed in Ramallah, someone from the settlement. She said, see it just happened again, I have flashbacks from other attacks. It's so difficult and

even though I think differently now, I have so much pain that I can't even think about solutions. I tried to introduce some humanity into the Palestinians, but she had so much difficulty. But then I told her, I have a question, the pain you felt when your family was killed, if you were a Palestinian or Arab, can you think, when your family got killed, and I'm not talking about terrorists, just your family, that someone was walking on the street and someone shot them. And she said, our soldiers would never do that, so I said, no, by mistake. She said that she would feel terrible. How would you feel if all your family was killed? She said very terrible, and then I said, what if one of the people who killed our friend, this is what happened to them. So she got quiet for a long time and said I have my pain to deal with; I can't deal with them both. But this is just an example of how, in conversation, to find something that you can relate to and then go back. I think it's pointing out the empathy and realizing that I have the needs and the other person has the same needs. What triggered those things? On the other hand, I'm trying to explain that the way that you grew up and became religious, that becomes your reality. It's really hard to break, and this is the main thing that I'm trying to explain. When policy makers talk about peace, they don't talk about people who have the reality on the ground. You can't tell that to settlers who 20% of their friends got killed in the last 5 years. Do they want peace? No! So we need a very individualized approach to what caused you to hate the other person. How can you forgive? How can you channel your anger into something more positive? How you can look at other people as human beings?

Final Thoughts

An African American woman who easily could have crossed into anger and violence after her son was brutally murdered, but rather decided to cross into activism noted "I would say it's a line. Anger is here and activism is here and it's do you want to cross the line into anger or do you want to cross the line into activism."

Furthermore, a Latina psychologist ended with the following poignant thought, predicting the consequences of only focusing on the anger and other negative emotions.

I think that it's critical that you connect around indignation in relation to love and healing and hope and not the opposite. Not connecting around the anger and victimization and hatred...I think that that generates interpersonal violence and other forms of violence. I think that what has been helpful for me and really what I do, is more connecting the sense of personal anger with collective anger, with hope and with love and with being there for the person who has suffered whatever they have suffered. I think that's what matters. When you go the other way, you flip into hatred and that only generates more hatred. So, that's for me, like a very important distinction, and I really try to connect with people who are on that side, not just how by how they talk, but by how they connect and their actions, and the other piece from my personal experience that has been helpful is my spiritual life. I am still grounded in Christian thinking and that's what nurtures me spiritually and that love and that connection I have from that has just been the guiding values that help me make this transformation. I know that's just not for everybody, that's a choice you make, for me, that's the guide.

CHAPTER IV

Discussion

The Experience of Conducting the Interviews

A notable aspect of the interviews was the overall generosity of time, interest in the researcher's topic, and desire to provide other contacts to assist the researcher in her dissertation. Many of the interviewees went out of their way to connect the researcher to their colleagues and frequently, sent the researcher pertinent articles long after the interview was completed. Moreover, many of the activists appeared to share an attitude about life that included frequent laughter, excitement, hope, and curiosity about the world. While the sample is quite limited, an intangible "activist personality" began to emerge, potentially explaining the lack of burn-out among the small sample, who are involved in deeply challenging work on a daily basis. While many of the interviewees were critical thinkers; unique with their contexts, and thoughtful, rather than accepting of what they had been told, others came from a family legacy of activists, where they might have a similar "activist personality," but were not necessarily unique in their cohort or family of origin.

An important caveat is the theme of survival. As was suggested by interviewees, the ability to engage in activism is often in conflict with meeting one's basic needs. Moreover, challenging the status quo often involves risking one's safety and/or the safety

of one's loved ones. This is a personal decision and one that was handled differently by different interviewees.

Definition of Moral Anger

All of the interviewees were able to differentiate moral anger from other forms of anger. Interviewees described their moral anger as anger against an ongoing injustice, not against a specific person, and as an ache that was constantly burning. All of the interviewees (100%) remembered being angry about the systems of inequality around them during their childhood and adolescence. However, one South Asian female interviewee poignantly reminded the researcher about the culturally based nature of the notion of anger, suggesting that while anger tends to be an acceptable emotion in the United States, it is often unacceptable in other cultures. There are likely different cycles of anger for different individuals, based on the history of acceptable emotions and reactions modeled to them, which are often culture and context specific. Regardless of how it is labeled, though, the focus of this study is how to use the anger to one's advantage rather than internalizing it or its "forcing" one to engage in destructive behaviors.

It is important to acknowledge that this dissertation takes the premise that anger is a normal reaction to societal injustice. As Aristotle explains, "anger, which arises from perceived injustice, is useful for preventing injustice, and that the opposite of anger is a kind of insensibility" (Aristotle, 350 B.C./1931 as cited in Kemp & Strongman, 1995, p. 398). Others, such as Seneca, disagree with this premise, thereby making the contents of the results more controversial. This study does not suggest that anger is the only motivator for social activism, but rather follows the assumption that anger is a normal

reaction to a variety of triggers and that learning how to use the anger to one's advantage is a useful skill both for personal survival and success as well as towards eradicating the injustice that frequently triggers the anger. In a similar vein, this study is not meant to perpetuate the stereotype of an "angry Black man or woman." Rather, the intent is to focus on the normalization of anger for all individuals.

Therefore, this dissertation follows the theory that "social conflicts can foster injustice, but they also motivate social change that advances social justice. Constructive conflict processes can maximize social outcomes, but they are not intuitive and need to be learned" (Coleman & Deutsch, 2001; Deutsch, 1973; Opatow & Deutsch, 1999 as cited in Opatow, 2001, p. 109). It should be noted that not all anger serves a positive purpose or is useful for consciousness development. Often, the anger that is used as a motivator towards action is directed against institutions, rather than against a specific individual. "If anger is not guided by the optimism of vision and clear humanistic values, it can be diverted into desperate and anti-human activities. The enemies of peace and justice often try to exploit anger in order to divert movements into such desperation...anger is not the same as violence" (Adams, 2007, p. 11).

Shared Characteristics of the Interviewees

Seventy-nine percent of the interviewees acknowledged times when they felt different from those around them and sixty-four percent of the interviewees remembered being bothered by how people were treated during their childhood. This sense of being different, or somewhat of an outsider from mainstream culture, was an interesting similarity amongst some of the interviewees, suggesting possibly a draw towards non-mainstream culture, depending on the political climate at the time. For instance, during

the 1960s in the United States, activism was the norm, while at other times, or within specific movements, it was closer to the counter-culture. Due to the range of educational backgrounds of the interviewees, it appears that level of formal education was not directly related to transforming anger into activism. Religion played a significant role in the childhood of 86% of those interviewed, but less than half of the individuals noted that religion is currently a significant part of their lives.

Ways of Knowing

Despite the striking diversity of backgrounds of the interviewees, they had many similarities in their experiences, potentially beginning to explain how they were able to transform their anger into moral anger and activism rather than more destructive behaviors. However, throughout the study, it became clear that there is not a single pathway towards using anger to motivate activism. Rather, there are likely a variety of factors that contributes to the multiple pathways. One interesting component appears to be either the presence of intrinsic knowing or an external experience or influence that helped motivate an internal desire to participate in making a change (often unconsciously, as throughout the interviews, many interviewees noted that they had not previously connected various events in their lives to their participation in activism). In a sense, this recreates the debate between nature and nurture. Is it possible that individuals are born with a propensity towards using their anger towards activism or do environmental factors help make this link explicit?

Intrinsic knowing. Throughout the interviews, individuals noted, time and again, that they simply “knew” something was wrong (e.g. racism), despite the opposite messages being preached by everyone around them. Moreover, many times, individuals

noted that their perception of events was scorned by those close to them. For instance, a White female interviewee vividly described sitting in class, in elementary school, during a time of significant racism, and knowing the hypocrisy in the Declaration of Independence. No one in her immediate family or school appeared to support these views. Moreover, she tearfully described her emotional reaction, as a child, to hearing family friends talk in racist ways about an African American man:

And another time his friend, who worked at a paper mill, was going on and on about Black people. And by then I was a teenager and I was so naive and he was like Blacks this, Blacks that, I don't want to work with them, blah blah blah, and I said to him, well maybe if you got to know them better, you could invite them to your house for dinner and maybe it would be different for you. And he looked at me and his eyes changed and his whole demeanor changed and he said just because I work with them doesn't mean I have to eat with them. And I got really physically sick in my stomach and I was just afraid of him. I hated him. It was awful...it almost makes me emotional just talking about it. It was really overwhelming. I just hated it, I hated living in the town and I thought if I had to stay there, it was going to be bad.

She hypothesized that her “knowing” might have come from Sesame Street, “it was the only thing that I got where they talked about differences and I saw Black people on TV....the only place where I got to see Whites and Blacks go together and I remember thinking it's so cool.”

While many of these individuals grew up during a time of “extreme” circumstances, such as the pre-civil rights South or under apartheid in South Africa, they were able to view their reality in a manner that differed from many of their friends, family, and educators, who were experiencing the same reality. The manner in which they were able to recognize the structural violence in their community, both when they

were suffering from the injustice and when others were suffering from the injustice, is a topic for future research and discussed further below. However, the factors that enabled them to channel their anger towards activism, despite the lack of external support, are pertinent to this study. It is possible that individuals who were subject to one form of discrimination were more attuned to other forms of discrimination, even if it was not directly affecting their lives. For instance, a White woman who was deeply affected by sexism was more angered by racism than was typical of her community and a bisexual woman was more attuned to racism than was typical of her community.

Many interviewees also grew up in a family that was somewhat atypical for their environment or community. For instance, one woman noted that in her blue-collar town, her father was the only “father” around to wear a tie to work. Another woman noted that her mother was the only divorced woman in their neighborhood and would

Sometimes date Black people and have Black and Brown people come visit so there were little kids who could not come play with me because my parents were divorced and then kids who couldn't play with me because my mom was hanging out with all these Black and Brown people and so it was that kind of neighborhood.

Often, individuals moved from one strong opinion to another. For instance, an Israeli man who grew up in a right wing, ultra-religious community who now identifies as a peace activist shifted from one side of the spectrum to the other. Similarly, an African American man who grew up involved in violence and spent a lot of time in the penal system is now a sponsor for an anger management program. It is possible that there is a “personality” type that pulls one towards an extreme. However, while the extreme to which one is pulled might be somewhat random, it is likely tied to many external factors, described below in the section on aggravated factors.

Moreover, while this perspective often appeared to just be “known,” many of the individuals who described a feeling of intrinsic knowing could identify an individual who modeled the connection between anger and activism. However, the reason that they were drawn to the perspective that was modeled, rather than the norm of the community, remains unclear and is an area for future research. Perhaps these individuals were bored or understimulated by their environment and were searching for something different, that intuitively felt “right.” While they were unable to articulate these ideas, they subtly conveyed a sense of being proud of their ability to see through “mainstream” convention and be instinctively aware of ideas that they would later understand with more nuance.

External experience. The theme of a significant educational experience was evident. The length of the time seemed inconsequential—individuals described the impact of one day seminars and ongoing supervision, groups, and seminars. This will be further described below, in the section on discrete educational experiences.

Aggravated Factors that Lead to Activism

The literature review highlights different models that hypothesize about the trajectory from anger to violence. Taking Adams’ (2007) model of affiliation one step further, it is interesting to examine why certain people were drawn to activism and were able to affiliate, while others were either drawn in a different direction or initially drawn towards activism, but possibly did not have other factors in place to promote their development as an activist.

Hardy and Laszloffy (2005) described four aggravated factors that lead to violence. Their model assumes that all individuals have the potential for violence; however, the interaction of four aggravated factors, devaluation, erosion of community,

dehumanized loss, and rage, differentiates those who do and do not actualize their violent potential. It should be noted that the term aggravating is used instead of etiological factors because these factors do not cause violence, but rather a mix of the factors play an important role in understanding adolescent violence. In a similar vein, my research suggests the following eight aggravated factors that might lead individuals who have grown up under systems of injustice to use their anger towards activism. Moreover, similar to Hardy and Laszloffy, many of these factors are related to one another and work together. Once again, due to the small sample, this list is tentative and open to further research.

1. *Talking to others, normalizing emotions, and then working together in a collective.* Time and again, interviewees noted the importance of being able to express anger, have a respected individual normalize the anger, and then move towards the feeling of collective anger. Some of these individuals had the experience of having their anger normalized, while others looked back on their childhood and wistfully discussed their sadness over the lack of normalization that occurred and the life changing experience of realizing that some of their anger was a normal reaction to social injustice. Moreover, the fact that most of the interviewees were willing to share so much of their time with the interviewer might also be indicative of the importance of sharing their anger with another person. For many, especially those who had not previously experienced the normalization of their anger, the interview itself might have served this function, indicative of a parallel process that likely led many of the interviewees to suggest other individuals for the study.

Many interviewees noted the importance of being able to talk to someone, ranging from a teacher to family member to peer about their anger. Moreover, 64% of the interviewees had memories of someone talking about inequality or anger related to inequality when they were growing up. Through this process, the individual's anger was often normalized, simply by virtue of its not being dismissed, and the discussion often led to some form of collective action. Individuals noted that when their anger was stifled or kept inside, it frequently leaked out in unpredictable ways, often negatively impacting their lives. This is similar to Hardy and Laszloffy's (2005) finding that adolescents who become violent have not only often had multiple experiences with devaluation, but the experiences have been largely untreated and unhealed, leading to a significant emotional effect (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2005). Treating and healing the effects of the devaluation, in a collective manner, is likely intricately linked to healing the anger through activism, in a similar way to the manner in which violence often appears to bind people together (Straker, 1992).

It is unclear if the power lies in the actual act of sharing the anger or the normalization of the anger that likely occurs as a result of talking about the feelings of anger. Either way, talking about the feeling appears to be a crucial step in using one's anger towards activism, rather than more destructive behavior. Moreover, many interviewees noted the importance of working together, in a collective fashion, towards a goal. Seventy one percent of the interviewees, all of whom were able to channel their anger towards activism, described a sense of collective moral anger. For some, this happened in school, when they joined a

student group with an education or activist focus. Individuals frequently suggested that they were both able to initiate and sustain their involvement in activism as a result of the strength and power that they garnered from others. The anger was therefore heard, processed, and then transformed into positive action with others. The opposite of this, disruption of community, was named by Hardy and Laszloffy (2005) as an aggravated factor towards violence.

This was also noted by Adams (1986), who reported “later, as consciousness development proceeds to steps of affiliation and analysis, the anger does not disappear. Instead, the individual episodes of anger and action are replaced by collective anger and action against the perceived source of injustice” (p. 160). Moreover, this is echoed by Adams’ (2007) argument that the collective emotion of anger, rather than the individual emotion, can become

The battle cry of the movement. Martin Luther King saw this as a critical truth and a secret of the success of W.E.B. DuBois as a leader of the civil rights and peace movements: ‘history has taught him it is not enough for people to be angry- the supreme task is to organize and unite people so that their anger becomes a transforming force.’ (Adams, 2007, p. 12)

Moreover, Adams (2007) suggests that higher levels of consciousness development are often unlocked by anger. By taking actions, individuals often become affiliated with an organization that collectively plans and carries out action. “An armchair theorist can read and think all he wants, but without the test of practice and the collective wisdom of organizational action and assessment of that action, the armchair theorist will simply spin abstract ideas that diverge further and further from the real course of history” (Adams, 2007, p. 15). When

affiliation occurs, it often leads to a psychological transformation. Anger becomes collective, purpose is shared, and action becomes more effective and complex due to the availability of the division of labor (Adams, 2007).

2. *Cognitive framework for understanding the world: Discrete educational experience related to structural violence or activism.* Similar to Gooding's (2000) suggestion for programs that address multi-generational anger, particularly the importance of teaching about systematic racial oppression, the majority of interviewees also reported the impact of educational (both formal and informal) experiences that helped them transform their anger into activism. Although somewhat counter-intuitively, some individuals described one day workshops as being as influential as ongoing educational experiences. Moreover, some of the experiences were not formal workshops, but rather advice or suggestions from influential figures. Some individuals focused on the importance of giving phenomena, such as racism, language, while others noted the importance of putting feelings or events into a historical context and gaining access to literature. Often, the more education one received, the more questions were raised, pushing one towards future educational experiences. Likely, the shared, collective nature of many of these experiences was also transformational.

A particularly interesting theme was the "underground seminars," taught by an influential teacher. Likely, the seminars helped to slow down the process between anger and violence. These included an underground seminar on right-wing Zionism, a student driven philosophy seminar taught by a local teacher, a group that met in South Africa to discuss banned literature, and a

gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender youth group. The content of the seminars were often unrelated to anger or activism, but the act of participating in such a “class” likely made individuals more thoughtful about their actions.

However, it is likely that the act of participating in the seminars is only one factor in the transformative process, because only select individuals gravitate toward such seminars, particularly when they are not culturally normative. There is likely an intangible “pull,” completely unrelated to activism, that motivates individuals to engage in these non-mainstream activities. For instance, a woman organized and attended underground philosophy seminars likely as a means of coping with her brother’s sudden and premature death. She noted that she simply felt more mature than everyone around her and was looking for something that felt more developmentally appropriate. Another man began attending right wing political seminars with a rabbi in Israel while growing up in a religious environment that felt too insular and suffocating to him. However, both of these individuals subtly noted that they questioned the norm throughout their lives and tended to be more curious and provocative than those around them, suggesting the intersection of a variety of factors. These underground seminars are also an example of the power of discrete educational experiences within a collective fashion.

3. *Family legacy of activism.* Twelve of the subjects (86%) identified someone in their immediate or extended family who was an activist. While unfortunately something that can not be taught or chosen, but rather the result of chance, individuals who were born into a family with a legacy of activism, or, on a

smaller scale, with even one family member involved in activism, were more likely to use their anger towards activism. On a simple level, they were following a learned response—when something makes one angry, attempting to repair the system that has led to the anger is the natural response. This phenomenon is also supported numerous times in the literature. For instance, in Straker's (1992) study about the resistance in a township to apartheid, the support and political socialization received from significant adults were the most important distinguishing factors between the leaders and the followers. Once again, a family legacy of activism also often indicates a willingness to talk about anger and the importance of working in a collective, continuing to illustrate the intersection of these factors.

4. *Observing activism during childhood or adolescence.* Eighty six percent of the interviewees first observed some form of activism during their teenage years. In addition to the family legacy described above, many individuals noted that they observed the activism from someone other than a family member, such as a role model on TV (e.g. Jesse Jackson), teachers, or a representative from an agency collecting money for a particular cause. It is important to acknowledge, once again, the intersection of factors, as individuals who were exposed to civil rights leaders on TV during their childhood were likely part of a family or community with a leaning towards activism or at least a family that permitted exposure to a variety of opinions. Activism could be viewed as a learned response to an injustice, as opposed to the learned response of fighting or aggression.

5. *Observation of injustice in the world and continued injustices in the world.* Fifty seven percent of the interviewees reported observing injustices in the world as a motivator to continue their activism. Perhaps constantly being exposed to injustice prevents one from consciously or unconsciously ignoring many of the realities of the world and continues to fuel the fight towards a change. While the injustices varied according to individual interests and life experiences, the description of the emotion upon seeing the continued injustices was strikingly similar.
6. *Exposure to people from different cultures or with different opinions.* Eighty six percent of the interviewees noted that they were exposed to different people or opinions during their childhood. For instance, while an Israeli man was in the army, he lived in a more secular city in Israel that allowed him to interact with individuals he would not have otherwise met. Other interviewees met different peers during programs outside of their schools or through moves in their childhood. Moreover, other individuals cited the importance of childhood trips to different countries and having individuals from different countries live with their family (to help pay the rent). At some point during the interview, almost all of the interviewees mentioned exposure to an “other,” either directly or through some form of media.
7. *Family trauma.* Fanon (1963) argues that violence originates when individuals live in a political system that exploits and demeans them, “and which projects onto them all the disowned negative aspects of the oppressor” (Straker, 1992, p. 109). However, many of the interviewees experienced some type of family

trauma, sometimes involving a political system that exploited and demeaned them, and were able to channel their anger, at some point, towards activism. For instance, a South African woman of Indian descent experienced her entire family being moved to a township when apartheid laws were instituted. A Columbian woman heard about the family legacy of being persecuted during La Violencia and her brother was killed in an accident when she was 13 years old. Two interviewees, a White male and African American male, were present during the tragic accidental drowning of family members. A South Asian family coped with the birth of a daughter (an interviewee) with a serious physical disability. The uncle of a White interviewee was brutally murdered and the son of an African American interviewee was brutally murdered. A South African Indian woman's husband passed away at 23 years old. "I was a very young widow with a very young kid. My son was a year old then, so I guess that's the other thing that was pretty dramatic in my life." Finally, an Israeli male experienced the divorce of his parents in a religious community, where divorce was extremely rare. It remains unknown why certain individuals who grew up in these systems were able to transform their anger into activism and others into violence, but it likely is related to an intersection of factors, which will be further described below.

Interestingly, while it would be expected that many individuals would turn their anger into activism after a powerful single traumatic event, this phenomenon was less common than expected and for many, the link was not explicit throughout the interviews.

However, a mediating factor might be the previous environment and stimuli to which these individuals were exposed. For instance, the woman who was able to channel her grief over the random murder of her teenage son into the creation of an anti-violence program discussed growing up in an environment in which caring for others was always crucial and a natural part of her life.

Throughout her son's life, his friends frequently spent time at her house and she often, quietly, met the needs of his friends that were not being met at home.

Another interviewee, who also experienced the early and random loss of her brother, described being drawn to the development of an underground study group. However, she later described growing up in a home where books were always available and multiple opinions were the norm, rather than an anomaly.

An individual who spent many years in jail and is currently involved in sponsoring anger management program for adolescent males noted that he was frustrated with himself for disappointing his family, noting that his family was loving and "gave me all the supports I needed growing up." He identified being "exiled" from his family, before and during his incarceration, as the most difficult part of his self identified "poor choices" in life.

8. *Accurately identifying emotions.* "What we should be aiming at in anger regulation is, according to Aristotle, neither the eradication of anger nor its control through calculated self-discipline but rather learning to experience that emotion—like any other emotion which admits of a mean—as part of our true selves in an uninhibited, rational and morally fitting way" (Kristjansson, 2005, p. 681).
Therefore, being able to accurately identify emotions, particularly confusing ones,

such as anger and hurt, or emotions that are always accepted by a particular culture, is a crucial prerequisite to using anger to one's advantage. This theme came up in many ways throughout the interviews. For instance, one interviewee noted that people told her that her anger was masked by her hurt. Others suggested the importance of finding a way to move from anger to hurt. In either case, being able to accurately identify the anger is a necessary step in channeling the anger into activism.

Intersection of Factors

While creating a model is useful, as illustrated above, it is exceedingly difficult to isolate factors. Perhaps a more accurate model would include a combination of categories that work together in a cyclical manner. For instance, people who were influenced by anti-racism workshops fell into the category of a discrete educational experience, but also likely shared a personality type that chose to attend the workshops and once they engaged in the material, sought out more information and continued reading. Alternately, many others who attended the workshop likely did not continue in a quest for knowledge after the workshop. Something about the topic grabbed the interviewees, potentially indicative of a hypothesized, broadly defined, "activist personality."

Moreover, while an interviewee began her formal work as an anti-violence activist after the brutal murder of her son, she noted that before the trauma, her house had been known as the "kool-aid house." She explained, "I started seeing all this injustice and child abuse and neglect and I said okay come to my house and they came to my house, for milk or coffee. I remember all my life I did stuff like that." So while it might

appear that the trauma was the motivation for her activism, she likely had been engaging in informal acts of activism throughout her life. Similar intersection, described above, was present throughout the experiences of many of the interviewees.

Challenges to Expect when Channeling Anger into Activism

Interviewees provided many examples of times when it was difficult to channel their anger into activism, despite generally living their lives according to this philosophy. They talked about feeling “separate” from their families and loved ones, trying to engage in activism alone, talking about such volatile and sensitive topics that they are sometimes misunderstood and accused of being the very thing they are condemning (e.g. racist), having their job or something else that is important threatened as a result of their activism, working against the political climate of the time (e.g. during McCarthyism), experiencing frustration about not being able to “change the world,” being let down by a trusted colleague, and being paralyzed by anger. While some of these variables can be controlled and taught, barriers will frequently occur while doing this work. It appears that having the context to normalize the barriers, often through working with others, may provide an antidote to many of these difficulties.

Limitations of the Study

Due to the limited sample size, results of this study should be interpreted with caution and generalizations to other activists should be avoided. The sample was limited due to the quantity of data provided by each interviewee; however, a larger sample size would improve the generalizability of the study. Moreover, coincidentally, since 57% of the sample had a doctorate and 64% of the sample were mental health professionals, these results might not generalize to a broader group of activists.

The sample was largely recruited through networking. The interviewees were either contacts of the researcher, contacts of contacts of the researcher, or suggested by the interviewees throughout the process. Since many of the subjects were contacts of the researcher's professor, they might have felt obligated to be interviewed or obligated to respond to the researcher in a particular manner.

Researcher bias also contributes to the limitations of the study. The researcher developed the interview protocol, selected the subjects, conducted the interviews, transcribed the interviews, and analyzed the results. Moreover, the researcher is passionate about social justice and was inspired by all of the interviewees. This lack of objectivity had the potential to cause some of her research to be somewhat biased. Moreover, the researcher was younger and of a different race, gender, and sexual orientation than some of the subjects. The subjects had the potential to respond differently to a researcher of the same race, gender, age, and sexual orientation.

Due to the time constraints of a few of the interviewees, it was unfortunately not possible to ask every interviewee every question. In these few cases, as much data was collected as possible, but this must be taken into account when considering the generalizability of the study. Finally, due to a variety of constraints, the study lacks the assessment of inter-rater reliability.

Areas for Future Research

Common sense suggests that one is only able to address systemic injustice after one's basic needs have been met. This was suggested by numerous interviewees and follows conventional wisdom. For instance, an interviewee could only recognize and use her moral anger after she was secure in a high level job, while her parents focused on

meeting their basic needs, such as food and shelter, and were forced to forgo the luxury of trying to change their environment. However, this presents a paradox, as survival in times of systemic injustice is often based on activism, yet when every day is a fight for survival, is it feasible to have the physical and emotional energy and motivation for activism? An exploration of different degrees of activism and the impact of allies, who are not directly experiencing the injustice, therefore appear crucial. For instance, if the allies are not directly experiencing the effects of the injustice, can their anger be transformed in a similar way? Is anger after experiencing a specific injustice necessary or is the general experience of anger related to any injustice, in the past or via the experience of others, sufficient to harness these feelings and lead to action?

Moreover, religion played a significant role in the childhood of 86% of those interviewed, but less than half of the individuals noted that religion is currently a significant part of their lives. It is therefore interesting to consider the potential impact that religious teachings had on the interviewees during their childhood. Despite many of their eventual rejection of religion, perhaps being raised under the influence of religious teachings instilled values in the interviewees that contributed to their eventual participation in activism. For many, this link was not direct or explicit, as the activism often occurred after they had intentionally distanced themselves from formal religion, but nonetheless, it is often difficult to unlearn values from one's childhood. This is an area for future research.

Another interesting component is the difference between the ability to transform anger into activism as an adolescent rather than as an adult. All of the interviewees were able to look at their lives retrospectively, but none were currently adolescents. It is

unclear how many of the interviewees would have listened to these ideas when they were younger or how many of their lessons were teachable. As described above, an indirect approach, that appeals to many of the unique characteristics of adolescents is crucial, and it is not clear if these ideas can be fully extrapolated in a retrospective study. A follow-up study that focused on current adolescents who are able to channel their anger into moral anger and subsequently into activism would therefore be intriguing. While this loses the wisdom the interviewees accrued with age, it might provide more realistic ideas for adolescents.

The prophetic, mystical vision suggested by many interviewees also has the potential to lead to fascinating future research. How did a White woman, surrounded by racist White adults, know that racism was wrong? How were people able to simply “know” that something was wrong, despite an education and social environment that supported the status quo? While many had some of the experiences described above, there appears to remain an unknown, intangible component.

This reopens the nature/nurture debate and also inspires the question of a biological influence. Do individual temperaments matter? While Adams (2007) argues that “our biological legacy of aggression is the basis of our capacity for righteous indignation against injustice which is essential for peace activism and peace education” (p. 1), is there also a biological legacy of activism? Moreover, how can the biological component be teased apart from family influence? Many interviewees responded to injustice in a different way than their siblings, but since families frequently change and children therefore often grow up in different environments, how can these characteristics be distinguished from one another? Is it important that they become distinguished from

one another? This is somewhat irrelevant to the current study, because accepting the notion of a biological legacy of activism creates a system that is virtually impossible to teach to students. However, it might explain why certain students are more drawn to activism and others to violence and is an interesting area for future research.

It is also important to explore the effect of age and experience on learning how to use anger in a proactive manner. Many interviewees described times in their early lives when anger was used in a destructive manner and identified age as one of the variables that allowed them to use their anger as motivation for activism, rather than allowing their anger to control them. This leads to the question of whether one has to go through a period of using anger destructively to learn how to use it towards making changes. Can adolescents, who don't have the benefit of age, be taught these ideas without the negative experiential component of a negative consequence to violence? While children are getting involved in violence at younger and younger ages, is experiencing the negative results of anger a prerequisite for experiencing the positive effects of activism? Can a curriculum, with experiential components, be a substitute for age?

Moreover,

Most psychologists are not trained in macro-level interventions, but failing to engage with structural problems and focusing only on the individual unit of analysis and change places peace psychologists in the role of helping people maintain the status quo. To the extent that we help people adjust to the stresses of poverty, unemployment, and inadequate health care and education, we unwittingly contribute to the inertia of structural violence. (Schwebel & Christie, 2001, p. 126)

Further research on motivating psychologists to become engaged in macro-level interventions might be intrinsically linked to psychologists motivating individuals and systems to transform their anger into moral anger and subsequently into activism.

Implications for Future Curriculum Development

One of the goals of the study was to begin to conceptualize the ways in which adolescents might be helped to transform their anger into moral anger, and subsequently into activism, rather than violence. Utilizing the above examples, then, what can be taught? How can individuals who are rightfully angry, due to any number of injustices in society, channel their anger into making changes in their environment, thereby relieving the source of their anger, rather than channeling the anger into violence or more destructive behavior? While individuals can not (and should not!) be put into families who model activism, some of the other categories are easier to integrate into a curriculum.

On the surface, many of the interviewees talked about transformative events with an element of randomness. They happened to be born into a particular family, political or social climate, or attended a particular educational experience. Others were the unfortunate victims of a major trauma or injustice. However, many individuals in the world were born into similar circumstances or experienced similar life-shattering traumas. How can the other factors that naturally influenced these individuals be taught to current adolescents, to shift some of their trajectories from violence to more life affirming behavior?

During the interviews, interviewees were asked for suggestions for an anger management curriculum that focuses on helping adolescents channel their anger into

activism. These suggestions were thoroughly described in the results section. As the interview progressed, however, interviewees frequently thought out-loud about a variety of links between different parts of their lives. In this section, some of these ideas will be pulled together. While the following ideas were extracted from the experiences of the interviewees, they were likely often initially unconscious processes.

One theme that frequently emerged was that children and adolescents often learn experientially, as many interviewees observed injustices or activism. Since 86% of the interviewees first observed some form of activism during their childhood or teenage years, perhaps it would be helpful to expose kids to activism from an early age. While one can not dictate what parents do at home, there are opportunities to model this activism, in an indirect way, at school. For instance, teachers or school administrators can make their involvement more transparent (if they are involved in activism) or invite speakers or presentations from community leaders, about community programs. This could also succeed by tapping into the part of adolescents that thrives on being rebellious. Their natural rebelliousness could be harnessed, empowering them to engage in activities that are proactive rather than destructive. Since these activities are often not mainstream, they might retain a degree of appeal to adolescents.

The data suggests that it would be helpful to create a forum to discuss anger and put it into context. As one interviewee suggested, this could be achieved through teaching history, particularly as it relates to the suffering that the individual is currently experiencing. For instance, lessons could focus on exploring the historical context of racism, sexism, or homophobia. These lessons could explore the inequities in the world, explore the different “isms,” and therefore build critical consciousness.

Similarly, both leaders of resistance in Leandra, a township in South Africa that suffered greatly under apartheid were

Able to represent outer reality authentically and clearly, and to be pro-active within it, without being impulsive. Both of them thought carefully about their actions and assessed what would be appropriate in the face of the particular reality that confronted them. They were both interpersonally skillful and popular. They appraised themselves positively and had a sense of personal responsibility for their own actions and the well-being of others. (Straker, 1992, pp. 35-36)

This and information provided by the interviewees suggests the importance of slowing down impulsivity. This can be done in a variety of behavioral ways and is usually the focus of traditional anger management programs. However, a similar idea can be taught through the development of a critical consciousness, which allows individuals to externalize and contextualize “individual acts of meanness” (McIntosh, 1990, p. 31). This initial development of a critical consciousness is a crucial step in transforming the anger into activism, as it will allow individuals to transform their individual anger into collective outrage. Moreover, following Freire’s (2006) philosophy, it appears crucial to combine thought and action, praxis and reflection.

For instance, one could use the hypothetical situation of a Latino male being followed around a local convenience store in the morning. He then gets to school and another student, who he barely knows, accidentally gets in his way in the hallway. He subsequently pushes the student out of the way and a physical fight ensues. If the student had been able to step back, identify the morning vigilance as racism, and then bring it to his student group as evidence that action must be taken, his anger would remain, but the violence would likely be prevented.

As basic psychological theory suggests, being aware of one's emotions is often the first step in learning to cope with the emotions. In this case, being aware of the emotion and the historical context could open up the opportunity to directly deal with the societal inequity, rather than allowing it to leak out unpredictably. This both prevents the Latino student from experiencing more anger and taking action he might regret, for something that he should not have suffered from in the first place, and helps the effort to eradicate the problem. This notion is similar to the idea of an optimal level of anxiety, which is often compared to the shape of a bell curve. Anxiety is useful for motivating action, but too much anxiety, after it crosses the peak of the bell curve, can be debilitating. Similarly, anger is often needed to fuel action, but repeated, hateful anger can become counterproductive and debilitating

Tavris (1989) argues that expressing anger is cathartic when it meets five conditions. First, the anger must be directed at the target of one's anger, rather than displaced to another individual or object. Second, the expression of the anger must lead to an equivalent amount of harm to the other, rather than underreacting or overreacting. This leads to a sense of control over the situation, as though justice has been restored. Third, expressing the anger has to lead to new insights about the situation or change the behavior. Fourth, the individual who is angry and the individual who provoked the anger must use the same language and tone. Finally, the individual who provoked the anger can not retaliate in an angry manner. Since it is difficult to control how people will respond, this might help explain the cathartic effect of writing anonymous hate mail or letters to the editor, as they often do not receive a response. Moreover, writing letters or

diaries to individuals who are unavailable and not mailing them can be similarly cathartic. Integrating all of these components into a curriculum appears crucial.

At a basic level, the primary goal is to help students learn that they do have power and can make a difference in the systems around them. Therefore, one could start small, and encourage students to identify something in the school that frustrates them and work together towards a solution. Ideally, this would be something that grabs the student emotionally, as interviewees noted that an emotional connection often enabled them to have a stronger investment in their work. Once students learn that their voice does matter, they will hopefully be inspired to work towards changing systems that are oppressing them, both in and out of school. Of course, while students at this age can serve as effective agents of change, they will likely need the support, both educational and financial, of those older than them or with more power. This again could serve to include both praxis and reflection.

The role of formal and informal mentors and teachers are therefore crucial. Many of the interviewees had at least one individual in their life with whom they were able to openly talk about their feelings of moral outrage. This relationship could facilitate the dissemination of concrete information about a problem, emotional support, a role model, or simply a positive feeling of an adult taking a genuine interest in one's life. As interviewees suggested, one's basic needs must usually be met prior to engaging in activism. In a sense, a trusted adult could help an individual connect to necessary services, in an effort towards reaching this goal. Moreover, the emotional support provided could open up space for the teenager to focus outward, on more systemic issues,

because his/her basic emotional needs are being fulfilled, both through the support of the adult and the other social systems in his/her life.

A primary role of developing a strong support network is the theme of working in a collective, which was echoed by the majority of the interviewees. As was discussed above, working with others, throughout all steps of the process, is often a crucial component in channeling one's anger towards broadly defined activism. The collective appears to inspire, counter isolation, and generally, be a more effective method of achieving a goal. This is also one way to understand the large number of interviewees who became involved in activism via student groups in college. While college opens the opportunities for identity development and independence, the group itself likely also played a formative role. While one could suggest that teenagers work together, it would likely be more effective to illustrate this idea to them experientially, by comparing their results on an activity where they worked alone and then with a group. This will also appeal to the inherent social needs of many teenagers. However, getting schools to acknowledge and agree to such a curriculum might be challenging, as in a sense, it goes against the individualized nature of the curriculum in many schools. An after-school group or weekly therapy/support group is one option, but powerful change will likely only occur if this ideology is integrated into a school's curriculum.

Furthermore, as previously discussed, many of the interviewees who were able to transform their moral anger into activism were involved in some form of an "underground group." However, they were often invited to join the group after achieving success in another realm, such as academics. For instance, one woman noted, "I was a debater and captain of the speech team at school and I had done a speech that was very

political and at the end of it...then they wanted to know who I was and if anyone helped me with it and so that's how I got invited into the student group." The group then became a hugely influential part of her development while living under apartheid in South Africa. It therefore seems important to help students find an area in which they can both excel and enjoy, and as a result, many other doors might open. This serves the dual purpose of improving the adolescent's overall self esteem and self regard and being noticed by others, which could lead to a variety of unexpected opportunities.

Working with others, in a school based, community based, or "underground" setting also often provides the crucial function of normalizing anger. As previously described, many individuals suffered greatly by assuming that they were flawed for simply experiencing or feeling anger, rather than assuming that their anger was a normal reaction to a societal injustice. They assumed they were "sensitive," or the anger would leak out counterproductively and frequently, cause them further damage. Learning that anger about injustice is normal validates one's experiences and respects the historical/societal origins of the anger. In a sense, normalizing relinquishes the control from the individual and places it on society. However, as Gooding (2000) and interviewees suggested, time must also be allocated to healing the pain and hurt from the anger, rather than immediately channeling the anger into activism. Transforming the anger into activism might be one step in the healing process, but others, unrelated to taking action, are also necessary.

Research also suggests that it is important to consider reinforcement for activism, as there are often immediate, short lived, positive feelings after violence. The motivating factors for activism are typically one's ultimate values and sense of personal

responsibility. The sustaining factors often include social networks, small wins, psychological well being, and psychological empowerment (Sytaniak, 1996). According to Schwebel (1993), motivation of unconventional peace activists includes a dissatisfaction with the status quo (Kinder & Sears, 1985), a sense of duty and responsibility to future generations or people who are suffering, a belief that values are in danger, an involvement in peace activities so central to their lives, that it is impossible to ignore and the benefits outweigh the costs. The activism also adds meaning to their lives, due to the excitement seeking, where seeking peace could be considered akin to the excitement in a war. Political efficacy, which is the belief that the actions have meaning and will have a significant effect on policy, also motivates activists (Watanabe & Milburn, 1988).

For adolescents, reinforcement for activism might be somewhat different, and tailoring the reinforcement to the particular group is crucial. For some, values and psychological well being might be sustaining factors, but at first, it might be important to focus on the concrete gains, the idea of empowerment, external recognition, and draw upon the interests and needs of the specific adolescents with whom one is working. Discussing the positive feelings after violence is crucial, and finding a way to involve the adrenaline and other reinforcements for violence, including the public recognition of “winning a fight,” into activism, will likely be crucial components of a successful program.

Throughout this process, an important distinction must be made between general anger and anger as a result of a societal injustice. Typically, moral anger is ongoing and related to a system, rather than an isolated event. As discussed above, moral anger differs

from other forms of anger, and while moral anger can frequently indirectly lead to other forms of anger, not all anger is related to moral anger. For instance, anger at a sibling due to the attention they are receiving from a parent is a different form of anger from anger at being denied a job promotion because of one's race, being paid less due to one's gender, or not being allowed equal rights due to one's sexual orientation. Often hurt is related to moral anger, while minor irritation might be more linked to general anger.

As repeatedly noted by the interviewees, specific educational experiences provided cognitive "aha" moments. These moments were the result of a variety of formats, led by a variety of individuals and organizations, with a wide variety of intentions. Creating a blanket curriculum for all teenagers therefore seems unrealistic and counterproductive. However, following the basic guidelines, outlined above, tailored to the specific needs and contexts of the group, has the potential to provide a more transformative experience than the traditional anger management curriculum. At the core, anger is a normal emotion, one that can be repressed and disguised, but not eradicated altogether until society has reached utopia. However, teaching individuals to use their anger as "fuel" increases the possibility of striving towards the utopia, rather than continuing the status quo. It is crucial, throughout this process, to acknowledge the multiple barriers, described above, to activism, and at the least, include discussions about these barriers in any curriculum.

It is also important to explore the expectations around expression of anger based on gender roles. For instance, while aggression is sometimes acceptable for men, crying is frequently looked down upon for women. Current anger management programs focus on a middle ground of anger,

A final casting off of the shackles of Victorian gender differences. Men are encouraged to engage in more public display of tears, and women are counseled that it is not only good to be assertive, but even to become angry. Thus, there may even be a reversal of roles representing a change in the balance of power. (Kemp & Strongman, 1995, p. 412)

Summary of Findings

This study explores one of the pathways to creating change, via examining the mechanism that allows some individuals who have experienced anger as a result of growing up under a system(s) of injustice to transform their anger into moral anger and subsequently into activism. Individuals who experience moral anger often perceive their anger as righteous and justified, linked to something greater than individual self-interest (Potter-Efron, 2005).

Many interviewees acknowledged times when they felt different from those around them during their childhood/adolescence and described being bothered by how people were treated during their childhood. While some were “intrinsically” drawn to activism, others came to activism through an external experience. The results indicate the importance of normalizing emotions, working together in a collective, developing a critical consciousness through discrete educational experiences, a family legacy of activism, observing activism during childhood or adolescence, observing injustice, exposure to people from different cultures or with different opinions, surviving a family trauma, and accurately identifying emotions. Significant intersection was found between the factors, likely indicative of multiple pathways that work together in a cyclical manner to help individuals channel their anger into moral anger and subsequently into activism. While the many limitations of the study prevent the results from being generalized, the

results can begin to shape the development of a non-traditional anger management curriculum for adolescents who are experiencing normal anger due to daily interactions with societal injustice.

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APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Agreement

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Talia Master, PsyM, a doctoral student at the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology, Rutgers University. Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask the investigator.

Purpose of the Study

This study explores the connection between anger and activism. The study will focus on the mediating factors that have led some individuals who have grown up impacted by social inequality to channel their anger at the injustice towards making concrete changes in society. In the future, this information will be used to create an anger management curriculum that will teach some of the skills that you identify to children and adolescents. A doctoral student at the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology at Rutgers University is conducting this study as a fulfillment of dissertation and doctoral requirements. Approximately twenty individuals will participate in this study.

Study Procedures:

You will be interviewed about your experiences growing up in a system of injustice, your anger, and your activism. The interview will take about two hours. If you agree to participate in a phone interview, a copy of this consent form will be mailed to you and the interview will only be conducted after a signed consent form has been received. Interviews will be audio taped to contribute to the authenticity of the study. Interviews will be transcribed and tapes will be destroyed after the transcription. Any tape recordings, transcripts of interviews, or other data collected from you will be maintained in confidence by the investigator in a locked file cabinet and destroyed at the end of the study.

Risks: The interview focuses on your past feelings of anger and your current and past activism. Recalling some unpleasant memories, such as the source of your anger, may cause discomfort to you. If you experience major distress related to the study, please contact the researcher, so that she can provide you with the necessary referrals, either personally or through your state psychological association referral network, to help you cope with these painful emotions.

Benefits: Your experience and knowledge have tremendous value to understanding the factors that lead individuals to take action to change negative situations in their lives. Furthermore, this information will be used in the future to benefit future “angry” students, helping to provide them with tools to redirect their anger from violence and gangs to activism. In addition, the opportunity to share your experience and process certain patterns may be valuable to you.

Confidentiality: All records will be stored in locked files and will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. The data about your interview will be stored on an electronic data file in the researcher's personal computer and kept confidential. The data will be available only to the research team and no identifying information will be disclosed. Audiotapes and other paper work will be assigned a case number. The signed consent form will not be kept with your data and your name will not be on any data, including the interview protocol, audiotape, and transcript. Your case number, known only to the researcher, will be linked to your data.

Your responses will be grouped with other participants' responses and analyzed collectively. All common identifying information will be disguised to protect your confidentiality. This will include changing your name and other demographic information.

Research Standards and Rights of Participants: Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide not to participate, or if you decide later to stop participating, all data collected will be destroyed and there will be no penalty in any way. Also, if you refer other individuals for participation in this study, your name may be used as the referral source only with your permission.

I understand that I may contact the investigator or the investigator's dissertation chairperson at any time at the addresses, telephone numbers or emails listed below if I have any questions, concerns or comments regarding my participation in this study.

Talia Master (Investigator)
Rutgers University
GSAPP
152 Frelinghuysen Rd
Piscataway, NJ 08854-8085
Telephone: (201) 658-9227
Email: tmaster@eden.rutgers.edu

Lew Gantwerk, Psy.D. (Chairperson)
Rutgers University
Center for Applied Psychology
41A Gordon Road
Piscataway, NJ 08854
Telephone: (732) 445-7795
Email: gantwerk@rci.rutgers.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Sponsored Programs Administrator at Rutgers University at:

Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559
Tel: 732-932-0150 ext. 2104
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

I have read and understood the contents of this consent form and have received a copy of it for my files. I consent to participate in this research project.

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Investigator Signature _____ Date _____

I give permission for the interview to be audiotaped.

Signature _____ Date _____

THIS SECTION IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY AND AT YOUR DISCRETION

I give permission for the researcher contact me after the completion of the study if she'd like to use my name in written material after the completion of her dissertation. The researcher will check with me about the specific information that will be put forward and will delineate the exact location where my name will be used prior to removing my pseudonym. At that point, I understand that my answers will not be confidential. However, I understand that at any point during the study, I can change my mind and return to confidentiality without any penalty.

Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX B

Coding Manual

A) Demographics and childhood

1. Age:
 - 1) 20-30
 - 2) 31-40
 - 3) 41-50
 - 4) 51-60
 - 5) 61-70
 - 6) 91-100
2. Gender:
 - 1) Female
 - 2) Male
3. Where did you grow up?
 - 1) Born in the USA
 - 2) Not born in the USA
4. Who raised you?
 - 1) Both parents
 - 2) Parents and extended family
 - 3) Single parent
5. Tell me about your neighborhood.
 - 1) Suburban
 - 2) Urban area/city
 - 3) Rural
 - 4) Township
 - 5) Blue collar town
6. Tell me about your family.
 - 1) Trauma in immediate family
 - 2) Siblings
 - 3) Large
7. Was there someone in your family who was an activist or helped instill activist ideals in you?
 - 1) Yes
 - 2) No

8. Can you describe your SES growing up?
 - 1) Poor
 - 2) Working class
 - 3) Middle class
 - 4) Upper middle class
 - 5) Upper class

9. Highest level of education completed:
 - 1) GED
 - 2) Some college
 - 3) Associates
 - 4) Masters
 - 5) Doctorate

10. Tell me about your education (including type of educational system- e.g. Montessori education).
 - 1) Public school
 - 2) Private school
 - 3) Combination of public/private school
 - 4) Kicked out of school

11. Can you describe your informal education?
 - 1) Family/Extended family
 - 2) Family friends
 - 3) Friends
 - 4) Media
 - 5) Activists
 - 6) Youth program
 - 7) Religious school
 - 8) Mentors
 - 9) None

12. How would you describe yourself racially?
 - 1) African American
 - 2) White
 - 3) South African
 - 4) Latina
 - 5) Southeast Asian

13. What is your religion?
 - 1) Baptist
 - 2) Christian
 - 3) Catholic
 - 4) Methodist
 - 5) Muslim
 - 6) Jewish

- 7) "Eastern religion"
 - 8) Spiritual
 - 9) Secular humanist
14. Did religion play a significant role in your childhood? Currently?
- 1) Yes
 - 2) No
15. How would you describe your ethnicity?
- 1) German
 - 2) Swiss
 - 3) African American
 - 4) "White something"
 - 5) Indian
 - 6) Israeli
16. Did you have any significant (either positive or negative) experiences when you were younger?
- 1) Yes
 - a. Involvement with the penal system
 - b. Frequent fear
 - c. Death of family member
 - d. Fight
 - e. Exposure to other cultures
 - f. Racism
 - g. Activism modeled
 - h. Army
 - i. Youth movements
17. Who were your role models when you were younger?
- 1) Family member
 - 2) Family friends
 - 3) Teachers
 - 4) "Drug dealers, pimps, hustlers"
 - 5) Older peers
 - 6) Religious leaders
 - 7) Political leaders
- ◆ Were any of the role models involved in activism?
- Yes
 - No
18. Who are your current role models?
- 1) Activist
 - 2) Non-activist

19. Did you have any role models for your activism?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No

20. Please describe your peer group as a child and adolescent (including any changes in your peer group).

- 1) Stable
- 2) Transitory
- 3) Lack of peer group/socially isolated

B) Assessing exposure to structural violence

21. Have you ever felt discriminated against as a result of your race, gender, religion, social economic status, or sexual orientation? If so, please give examples.

- 1) Yes
 - a. Race
 - b. Gender
 - c. Religion
 - d. Sexual orientation
 - e. Cultural
 - f. Multiple –isms
- 2) No

22. Describe times you felt different from those around you.

- 1) People who were racist
- 2) Family of origin
- 3) After death of family member
- 4) Discrimination due to –ism
- 5) Constant feeling
- 6) Physical disability
- 7) Political and religious beliefs

23. Did you ever feel at a disadvantage due to economic or political structures?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No

C) Past and current involvement in social justice

24. Social activists are “individuals who attempt to change societal conditions that they believe perpetuate the targeted social problem” (Sytzniak, 1996, p. 2). Can you describe your first experience of observing activism?

- 1) Childhood
- 2) Teenager
- 3) Young adult
- 4) Adult

25. What do you remember about being a child and being bothered about how people were being treated?
- 1) -isms
 - 2) Nothing
 - 3) Generalized sense that things were unfair
 - 4) Castes
26. Can you pinpoint the moments you first decided to take action?
- 1) After discrete event in life
 - 2) Always gravitated/intrinsic knowing
 - 3) Cognitive “aha”
 - 4) Climate in world
 - 5) Family influence/legacy
 - 6) Student activism- “fun”
27. Tell me about your first participation in activism. COMBINED WITH #28
28. What factors do you think motivated you to become involved in activism? People often have mixed reasons. Can you think of anything else?
- 1) Discrete event
 - 2) Desire to leave a different legacy
 - 3) Intrinsic need: “have to do something”
 - 4) Moral indignation/rage
 - 5) Modeled by others/family legacy
 - 6) Curiosity
 - 7) Education (development of a critical consciousness): cognitive “aha”
 - 8) Student activism
 - 9) Observation of injustice in the world
 - 10) Personal experience of injustice
 - 11) Continued injustice in world
29. What motivates you to stay involved in activism?
- 1) Create a different legacy
 - 2) Moral indignation
 - 3) Injustices continue
 - 4) “Just have to”
 - 5) Sense of satisfaction/fulfillment
30. What meaning does your activism have for you now?
- 1) Job
 - 2) It is “my life”/ Whole identity
 - 3) Spiritually fulfilled
 - 4) Emotionally fulfilled
 - 5) Morally fulfilled
 - 6) Hoping that contributing positively to society

31. What kind of activism are you involved in?

- 1) Violence prevention
- 2) Penal system reform
- 3) Domestic violence
- 4) Anti-racism/anti-bias
- 5) LGBT rights movement
- 6) Peace work
- 7) Teaching
- 9) General activism
- 10) Political

D) Description of the moral anger

32. When you think of your childhood and adolescence, do you remember being angry about the systems of inequality around you? For instance, at being the victim of racism, sexism, or economic inequality or being affected by the plight of others who were experiencing an ism?

- 1) Yes
 - a. Race
 - b. Gender
 - c. General anger
 - d. Religion
 - e. Political
 - f. Educational injustice/disparity
 - g. Religious discrimination
 - h. Apartheid

33. How would you distinguish this type of anger from other forms of anger?

- 1) Out of control anger vs. manageable anger
- 2) Ongoing anger at injustice or system vs. discrete cause/immediate target
- 3) Moral outrage leading to collective action
- 4) Hurt masked by anger
- 5) Anger that has been discussed versus ignored
- 6) Self righteous indignation (with abstract moral quality), sustains itself longer, other can't empathize
- 7) Futile anger vs. action oriented anger
- 8) Intellectual anger with justification

34. Do you have memories of anyone talking about inequality or anger related to inequality?

- 1) Yes
 - a. Community members
 - b. Friends of parents
 - c. Family
 - d. Youth program
 - e. Friends
- 2) No

- a. Parents
 - b. No one
35. Looking back, do you think you were conscious of the cause of your anger or perhaps conscious of being angry, but not able to tease apart the reasons for your anger (e.g. thought you were angry because someone pushed you in the hallway, but looking back, realized it was because someone made a subtly racist comment to you or someone you care about that morning)?
- 1) Yes (conscious of cause of anger)
 - 2) No (unable to tease apart cause of anger)
 - 3) Yes/no (situation dependent)
36. Individuals who experience moral anger often perceive their anger as righteous and justified, linked to something greater than individual self-interest (Potter-Efron, 2005). Do you think that your anger was transformed into moral anger? If so, can you please tell me about the process?
- 1) Yes
 - a. Influence of other
 - b. Parental influence
 - c. Part of a collective
 - d. Student group
 - e. Cognitive “aha”
 - f. Educational experience
 - g. Access to literature
 - h. Instinctual
 - i. Religion
 - j. Antidote to powerlessness

E) Opportunities to express anger or discuss it with others

37. Thinking back to times when you felt a sense of moral anger, did you sometimes get into fights in your school or neighborhood?
- 1) Yes
 - 2) No
38. Were you ever involved in a gang or group of peers?
- 1) Yes
 - 2) No
39. Did you feel pressure from your peers or family to express your moral anger in a certain way? If so, what message did you receive?
- 1) Yes
 - a. Silencing (don't express anger)
 - 2) No
 - a. Cry
 - b. No pressure

40. Was your moral anger ever acknowledged and/or validated by those you respected (e.g. the destructive action punished, but the reason for the action validated)?
- 1) Yes
 - a. Later in life
 - b. Friend's parent
 - c. Community wide support
 - d. Family
 - e. Teachers/mentor
 - f. Peer group
 - g. Religious leader
 - 2) No
41. Did you experience any depressive symptoms as a child or adolescent? Currently? If so, please describe.
- 1) Yes
 - 2) No
42. Have you ever participated in a conflict resolution/anger management/peer mediation/violence prevention program? If so, please describe.
- 1) Yes
 - 2) No
43. What do you remember about talking to others about being angry?
- 1) Pressure to fight
 - 2) Felt accepted
 - 3) Vented to others, but not source of anger
 - 4) Sense of collective
 - 5) Not talking when younger
44. Was there ever a sense of collective moral anger? If so, please describe.
- 1) Yes
 - a. Later in life
 - b. Just resonated with me
 - c. Natural support of others
 - d. Tied to political movement/group
 - e. Family
 - f. Spiritual/universal voice
 - g. Gives power
 - 2) No
45. How were you influenced by the moral anger of those around you?
- 1) Towards violence
 - 2) Towards activism

46. Were you ever told that your moral anger was normal? Did you conceptualize your anger as a normal reaction to societal injustice?
- 1) Yes
 - 2) No
 - 3) Sometimes
47. How do you understand your moral anger?
- 1) Always two sides/routes to a conflict
 - 2) Personalized it/Became self critical
 - 3) A useful tool
 - 4) Resigned to status quo
48. How did your peers deal with their moral anger?
- 1) Engaging in constructive behavior
 - 2) Engaging in destructive behavior
49. How did the important adults in your life model dealing with moral anger?
- 1) Fighting
 - 2) Suppressing it
 - 3) Didn't model dealing with moral anger
 - 4) Channeled it into activism
50. How do you make sense of dealing with anger in different ways throughout your life? Can you give a few examples of different things that have made you angry and the different ways in which you've responded?
- 1) Age and experience
 - 2) Influence of society
 - 3) Put it in context
 - 4) No change

F) Hypothesis about link between anger and activism

51. What link, if any, do you see between your anger, moral anger, and participation in activism?
- 1) Yes
 - a. More positive approach
 - b. Anger as fuel/energy
 - c. Motivator
 - d. Anger to hurt to activism
52. Did anyone model the link between anger, moral anger, and activism for you?
- 1) Yes
 - 2) No

53. What reaction do you have to the suggestion that your moral anger motivated you to take action against injustice (not the only motivator, but one of them)?
- 1) Agree
 - 2) Disagree
54. What made it difficult to take action about something that angered you?
- 1) Fear of punishment
 - 2) Feeling different from family
 - 3) Without collective or clear issue
 - 4) Knowing when to take action and when action isn't warranted
 - 5) Without resources
 - 6) Lack of change
 - 7) Backlash after initial consciousness raising
 - 8) Political ramifications
 - 9) Climate in society (external forces)
 - 10) Not doing enough
 - 11) When hurt by collaborators
 - 12) Overwhelming personal anger
55. What made it easy to take action about something that angered you?
- 1) Cognitive "aha"
 - 2) Plan
 - 3) Support
 - 4) Lack of politics
56. Can you describe the differences between the times you used your anger in a proactive way and the times you used your anger in a more destructive way? Tell me about your life at the different times.
- 1) Yes
 - 2) No
57. If you were currently working with adolescents that were experiencing anger due to social injustice, what advice would you give them about channeling their anger towards activism?
- 1) Creating a plan and teaching alternative responses
 - 2) Showing vulnerabilities
 - 3) Preventing powerlessness
 - 4) Collective
 - 5) Engaging in an activity that has a positive impact
 - 6) Dismantling White privilege
 - 7) Normalizing anger
 - 8) Teaching history
 - 9) Reflection about the consequences/Imposing consequences
 - 10) Cognitive framework to understand the world
 - 11) Writing
 - 12) Sense of belonging and safety from people with values

13) Mentors/experts

14) Inducing humanity into the “other”- building empathy

58. Is there anything you’ve learned, related to anger and activism, that would have been useful to know when you were younger and full of anger?

- 1) Ability and education to access mechanism
- 2) Normalizing anger
- 3) Learning history
- 4) Reduce impulsivity and increase thoughtful/strategic behavior
- 5) Supportive adults
- 6) Learning about own privilege

APPENDIX C

Interview Protocol

Many adolescents, especially those that grow up suffering from racism, sexism, poverty, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination, are angry. They often use their anger in a destructive manner, including getting into fights, joining gangs, and internalizing the anger, which could lead to depression. Often, they alienate those closest to them and their decisions have significant negative repercussions for their future (in extreme situations, sometimes leading to jail or death). Since I believe anger is a normal reaction to societal injustices, the challenge is teaching adolescents to funnel their anger towards positive action. In an effort to create such a curriculum, I am interested in learning from your experiences about your reaction to your anger, at different points in your life. My dissertation study is focused on how individuals are able to transform their anger into moral anger, and subsequently, into activism.

A) Demographics and childhood

1. Age:
2. Gender:
3. Where did you grow up?
4. Who raised you?
5. Tell me about your neighborhood.
6. Tell me about your family.

7. Was there someone in your family who was an activist or helped instill activist ideals in you?
8. Can you describe your SES growing up?
9. Highest level of education completed:
10. Tell me about your education (including type of educational system- e.g. Montessori education).
11. Can you describe your informal education?
12. How would you describe yourself racially?
13. What is your religion?
14. Did religion play a significant role in your childhood? Currently?
15. How would you describe your ethnicity?
16. Did you have any significant (either positive or negative) experiences when you were younger?
17. Who were your role models when you were younger?
18. Who are your current role models?
19. Did you have any role models for your activism?
20. Please describe your peer group as a child and adolescent (including any changes in your peer group).

B) Assessing exposure to structural violence

21. Have you ever felt discriminated against as a result of your race, gender, religion, social economic status, or sexual orientation? If so, please give examples.
22. Describe times you felt different from those around you.

23. Did you ever feel at a disadvantage due to economic or political structures?

C) Past and current involvement in social justice

24. Social activists are “individuals who attempt to change societal conditions that they believe perpetuate the targeted social problem” (Sytniak, 1996, p. 2).

Can you describe your first experience of observing activism?

25. What do you remember about being a child and being bothered about how people were being treated?

26. Can you pinpoint the moments you first decided to take action?

27. Tell me about your first participation in activism.

28. What factors do you think motivated you to become involved in activism?

People often have mixed reasons. Can you think of anything else?

29. What motivates you to stay involved in activism?

30. What meaning does your activism have for you now?

31. What kind of activism are you involved in?

D) Description of the moral anger

32. When you think of your childhood and adolescence, do you remember being angry about the systems of inequality around you? For instance, at being the victim of racism, sexism, or economic inequality or being affected by the plight of others who were experiencing an ism?

33. How would you distinguish this type of anger from other forms of anger?

34. Do you have memories of anyone talking about inequality or anger related to inequality?

35. Looking back, do you think you were conscious of the cause of your anger or perhaps conscious of being angry, but not able to tease apart the reasons for your anger (e.g. thought you were angry because someone pushed you in the hallway, but looking back, realized it was because someone made a subtly racist comment to you or someone you care about that morning)?
36. Individuals who experience moral anger often perceive their anger as righteous and justified, linked to something greater than individual self-interest (Potter-Efron, 2005). Do you think that your anger was transformed into moral anger? If so, can you please tell me about the process?

E) Opportunities to express anger or discuss it with others

37. Thinking back to times when you felt a sense of moral anger, did you sometimes get into fights in your school or neighborhood?
38. Were you ever involved in a gang or group of peers?
39. Did you feel pressure from your peers or family to express your moral anger in a certain way? If so, what message did you receive?
40. Was your moral anger ever acknowledged and/or validated by those you respected (e.g. the destructive action punished, but the reason for the action validated)?
41. Did you experience any depressive symptoms as a child or adolescent? Currently? If so, please describe.
42. Have you ever participated in a conflict resolution/anger management/peer mediation/violence prevention program? If so, please describe.
43. What do you remember about talking to others about being angry?

44. Was there ever a sense of collective moral anger? If so, please describe.
45. How were you influenced by the moral anger of those around you?
46. Were you ever told that your moral anger was normal? Did you conceptualize your anger as a normal reaction to societal injustice?
47. How do you understand your moral anger?
48. How did your peers deal with their moral anger?
49. How did the important adults in your life model dealing with moral anger?
50. How do you make sense of dealing with anger in different ways throughout your life? Can you give a few examples of different things that have made you angry and the different ways in which you've responded?

F) Hypothesis about link between anger and activism

51. What link, if any, do you see between your anger, moral anger, and participation in activism?
52. Did anyone model the link between anger, moral anger, and activism for you?
53. What reaction do you have to the suggestion that your moral anger motivated you to take action against injustice (not the only motivator, but one of them)?
54. What made it difficult to take action about something that angered you?
55. What made it easy to take action about something that angered you?
56. Can you describe the differences between the times you used your anger in a proactive way and the times you used your anger in a more destructive way?
Tell me about your life at the different times.

57. If you were currently working with adolescents that were experiencing anger due to social injustice, what advice would you give them about channeling their anger towards activism?
58. Is there anything you've learned, related to anger and activism, that would have been useful to know when you were younger and full of anger?
59. Do you think there is anything I haven't asked about that is important in understanding the link between anger and activism?