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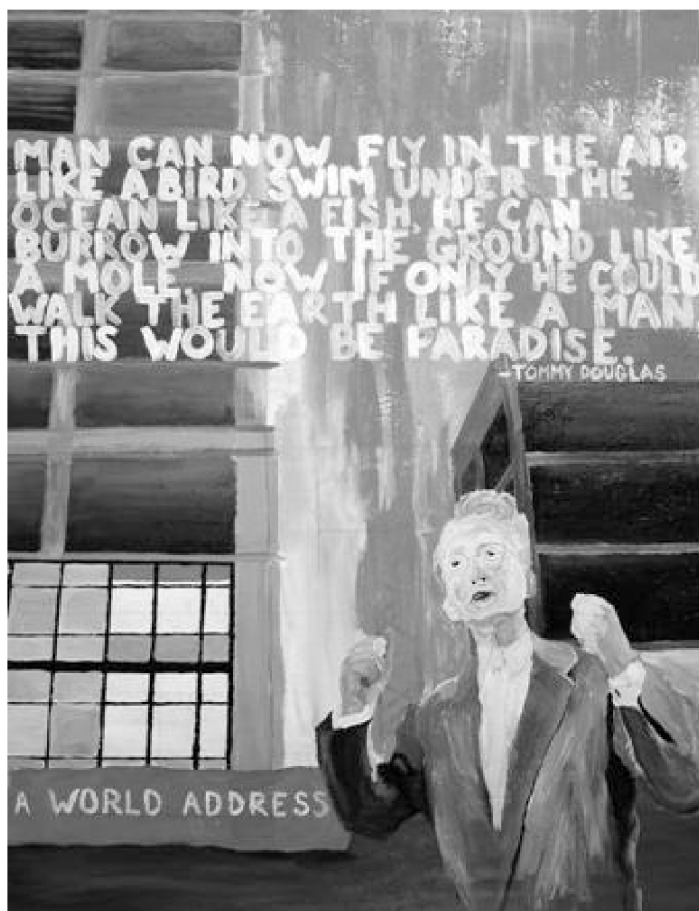
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Michael T. Schmitt is an assistant professor of psychology. He lives in a communal house with 6 people, a dog, and a cat.

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Chad Danyluck

THINKING ABOUT SOCIAL CHANGE

Free

A Collaborative Effort

Spring 2009

The article frames DTEs residents as being undeserving of help because they have created their own problems. It implies that it is their responsibility to change who they are as a group in order to improve the way they are treated by the police (and everyone else). This method of framing can decrease the amount of helping behaviour people are willing to engage in. If the situation was framed thematically, as a society we would be more likely to help because we would not see the increase in ticketing as the residents' fault, but rather that of the government and the police system.

If we change the previous sentence into a thematic sentence, it looks something like this: "The makeshift market on East Hastings popped up a few years ago after funding that supported programs for low income individuals was cut". This altered sentence presents the government and its structure as responsible for the creation of the 'makeshift market'. Thus, we do not see the problem as a 'makeshift market' as a DTEs problem, rather, we see the problem as structural, therefore, the responsibility falls to the larger society to make Vancouver a city that takes care of all of its citizens.

The article discusses above presents an 'us vs. them' conflict. This allows the readers (Vancouverites) to view themselves and the residents of the DTEs as two separate groups with two separate identities. This description permits one to rationalize the poor treatment of the DTEs residents because they are 'different from us' and, therefore, deserving of being ticketed by the police. The article presents the DTEs residents as being individually responsible for creating disorder for the rest of Vancouver, while giving the police legitimacy because they did a 'good job' of dismantling the Main and Hastings drug market. Thus, this new procedure of ticketing the residents of the DTEs may have the same outcome. This example demonstrates how behaviours and actions can be justified depending on which group is affected.

Who we are, right now, this universe

James Climenhage is a social psychology PhD student. He shares his time bi-weekly at Vancouver and Quesnel, BC in an attempt to strike a balance between research and family.

Chad Danyluck is an honours student in psychology. He lives in an Ashram with a collective of yogis and teaches meditation to the public free of charge.

Lisa Giamo is a PhD student of psychology. Lisa is also an avid baker and enjoys whipping up goodies in her spare time. She lives with her partner and their two cats.

David Gill lives at and attends SFU. He is interested in the relationships between psychology, the law, and justice. His life otherwise includes (in varying proportions), cooking, gardening, fencing, and traveling the world with his amazing partner Carin.

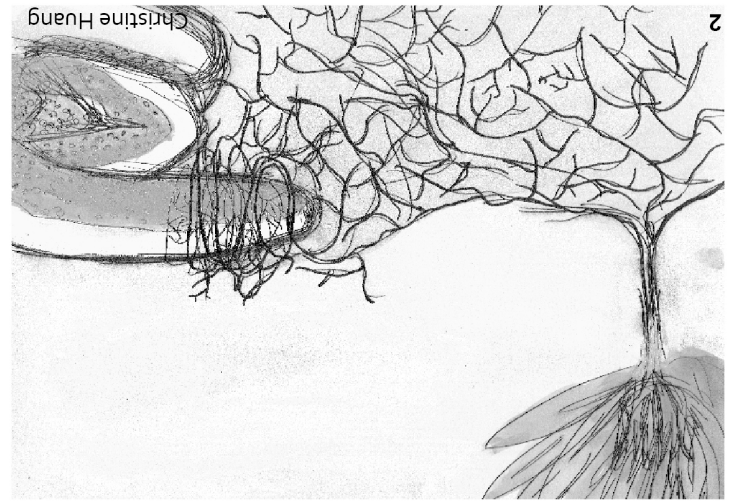
Greenly Ho is a PhD student in Clinical Psychology. Her work focuses on children and ethnic minority families. In her spare time she enjoys cooking and watching documentaries.

Christine Huang's flushingly cute feline companion Mark is slowly mastering the use of a toilet.

Sophia Johl is a psychology major and is studying to become a counselor. She loves to travel and be outdoors.

Diana Jung is completing her undergraduate degree in psychology. She's not sure what the future holds. If all else fails she plans on taking over the world.

Adana Lagerstrom is in her final semester of her undergraduate psychology degree.



Threats to our natural environment are quickly becoming one of the most important social issues of our time. However, people vary in their understanding of environmentally sustainable actions and solutions. Environmental sustainability is most commonly defined as meeting "the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (United Nations General Assembly, 1987). More specifically, the Earth Charter, an international declaration of standards for constructing a just and sustainable society, states that "we must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations".

James Climenhage, Lisa Giamo, Christine Huang, Sophia Johl, Rob Outten

Environmental Sustainability

Exploring social change in an experimental classroom

Michael T. Schmitt

This zine is a collaborative project created by participants in a seminar on the Psychology of Social Change at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC.* As the person tasked with teaching this seminar, I was concerned that the norms of a standard university class were inconsistent with social change and the reduction of inequality and hierarchy. How could I ask students to consider the ways in which our world could be different, more egalitarian, more just, if I wasn't willing to try something different in the classroom? After consulting with friends, educators, and reading some books on radical education, I suggested to students that we attempt to share power to the extent that such a thing is possible within a university context. Students were understandably nervous about the uncertainty of such a classroom experience, but indicated an enthusiasm to try to do learning differently. Students determined course requirements, methods of evaluation, and the specific topics of investigation. In an attempt to undo the divide between "higher education" and the rest of the world, we decided to create a final product that would be worth sharing beyond the boundaries of the classroom. That product is this zine. Our hope is that Thinking about Social Change is tangible evidence that through creativity, trust, and collaboration, people can create new social realities. As outlined in this zine, humans face a number of difficult problems. We hope to inspire readers to consider the ways in which they can collaborate with others to create social change and a more just, equitable, and sustainable future. I would like to thank the students in the course for their willingness to explore. I have never worked with a group of students who were as engaged and hard-working, and I have never had this much fun teaching!

*Michael would like to acknowledge and honour the traditional territories of the Coast Salish Peoples.



Here are some additional resources you can check out:

www.endhomelessnessnow.ca
www.endpoverty.org
www.stophomelessness.ca

- Volunteer
- Work at a shelter
- Invite people experiencing homelessness to a community event
- Advocate
- Involve the media
- Contribute – clothing, services, books, food, etc.
- SMILE

What can YOU do to help end homelessness?

For support, information, & referrals, call the SHELTER & STREET HELPLINE 24 hours a day, 7 days a week @ 604-875-6381

So the next time you see a homeless person on the street, or read an article about this population in the newspaper, try to think of why you react the way you do. Where did you get your information from? Have you actually spoken to any of these people for any length of time?

Determining Responsibility for Vancouver Downtown Eastside

Katie Smith

When reading newspaper articles, one may not notice the socio psychological techniques that are embedded in these articles. These techniques can sway the reader's perception of responsibility. Attribution framing can subtly convince a reader's sense of who should be held responsible for an event. Attribution framing is the tendency to either accentuate or ignore certain characteristics in an article that have the power to shape a reader's opinion.

There are two methods used to frame responsibility: thematic and episodic. Thematic framing gives structural explanations for events (e.g. lack of government funding increases DTES poverty). Episodic framing on the other hand, describes an individual's story. This method presents the individual as responsible for their current situation. Both methods have the power to influence the possible amount and type of helping behaviour the readers of these articles would likely engage in.

An example of attributional framing is found in the article 'Police crack down on Downtown Eastside street disorder' (*The Tyee*, December 8, 2008). In the sentence, "The makeshift market on East Hastings popped up a few years ago after the police broke up the Main and Hastings open drug market", the author episodically frames the situation by describing the residents of the DTES as being responsible for the development of the 'makeshift market' and the police as being responsible for the breakdown of the Main and Hastings drug market. The remainder of this article discusses the rationale behind the police department's decision to increase ticketing the DTES area for violations such as jay walking and spitting.

The descriptions of both groups found in the article mentioned above influences the reader's perception of who was responsible for this situation. The

Within every community is a set of norms and standards that suggest how members of that group should and should not behave. As community members we are bound (consciously or unconsciously) to the values and social norms of our respective communities. For communities in which pro-environmental behaviour is not seen as normative, changing these perceptions may result in increased ecological behaviour. For example, influencing social norms to suggest that most hotel guests reuse their towels increases towel reuse rates by 49.3% (Goldstein et al., 2008). In addition, framing these norms in a more localized way (people in your room versus people in the hotel) resulted in the highest reuse rates. Applied on a larger scale, tailoring norms to a specific relevant group or context could

Shaping Pro-Environmentally Behaviour

Risk perception research tells us that people might feel as though they can engage more in pro-environmental behaviours if these actions are framed in personal and local terms. This will increase the degree to which people feel accountable for environmental damage by making salient the threats that environmental risks pose to themselves and others around them. Also, the negative consequences associated with environmental risks that don't seem immediate or local (e.g., global warming) can be made more personal and local by pointing out changes that are going on closer to home (e.g., rising water temperatures during summer months which negatively impact local salmon populations in the Lower Mainland). A national or global framing enables people to use denial tactics to justify their lack of engagement with environmentally sustainable behaviours. For example, when we as Canadians are criticized about our own inactivity we can deflect any personal responsibility by quickly pointing out that Americans have a poor environmental track record (Norgaard, 2006). In reality we as Canadians are often not much better than our American counterparts. For example, Canada's annual CO₂ emissions/person is marginally lower (23.45 tonnes) than America's (24.09 tonnes; Carbon Planet, 2008).

are occurring here, now and to us. For example the risks associated with a declining healthcare system seem immediate, local and likely to affect us or people that we know.

From various ad campaigns (e.g., "Live Green", "Save Our Environment"), to Hollywood movies like Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*, we are reminded that the environment is in a state of crisis and that we must act now before it's too late. Although these messages are meant to encourage action, they provide little direction in terms of an effective course of action. As a result, environmental sustainability is an overwhelming issue for many people.

We feel that sustainability begins with human social behaviour. The purpose of this article is to outline some of the main reasons why people do not take environmental issues seriously, and to use findings from social psychology theory and research to help shape pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours in an effort to promote environmental sustainability now and in the future. We would also like to offer suggestions on how everyone, from the average citizen to activist organizations, can promote sustainable practices in their everyday lives.

Why People Tend to Ignore the Seriousness of Environmental Risks

Understanding how people perceive environmental risks is essential for achieving environmental sustainability. As it stands, many people do not take environmental risks as seriously as other social issues. For example, when people in Western countries are asked to list which social issues are personally most important right now, environmental issues tend to take a back seat to healthcare, unemployment, education, immigration, involvement in international conflicts and the economy (Leiserowitz, 2005; Spiegel Online International, 2008).

So why are environmental risks treated less seriously? The answer is because of how we perceive time and space. The negative effects associated with environmental risks often seem as though they will occur in the distant future (e.g., the loss of natural resources like oil). Therefore, environmental issues take a back seat to seemingly more pressing problems such as the economy and health-care (Gattig & Hendrickx, 2007). Second, environmental issues are typically seen as occurring in distant places (e.g., the melting of the arctic glaciers). This can result in people taking environmental risks less seriously than risks with negative outcomes that

"Everything has its beauty but not everyone sees it." – Confucius

Now try to imagine being on the other end, where people attach this negative stigma to you and your lifestyle. On top of all of the other challenges, you are faced with people treating you as if you should be ashamed of yourself.

What is even more important than the causes of homelessness is what homelessness means to the people experiencing it. It is accompanied by a negative stigma. After looking at over 50 recent newspaper articles, I noticed that homeless people and their situation are commonly described by words such as ashamed, disgusting, vulnerable, disturbing, infested, sleazy, unhealthy, unsightly, grim, humiliating, tragic, and distressing. None of these are positive. When positive words such as resilience were used in these newspaper articles, they were not used in reference to the poverty-stricken population but rather used to describe working-class individuals.

- Many people are unable to find or maintain employment
 - Not enough low-income housing is available
 - Mental health & addictions are not being treated properly or successfully
- More than 3,000 people are currently homeless in Vancouver. This undeniably alarming statistic reflects a few things:

- Confucius

"Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in getting up every time we do."

Jenn McArthur

Homelessness in the DTES: What it Means & What We Can Do

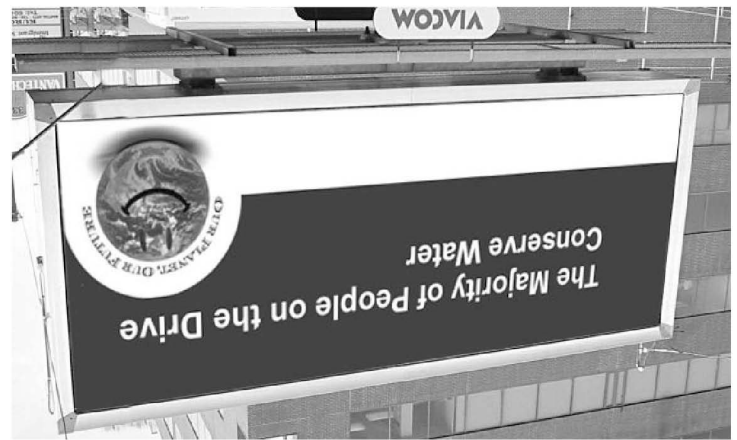
Clearly more resources need to be made available. These include:

- income assistance
- shelters
- advocacy groups
- detox & treatment centers
- mental health services
- outreach services
- social changes to reduce dislocation

In addition to these resources, society must overcome its prejudices toward the homeless and begin to see and treat homeless individuals like people with feelings and like they deserve the same respect non-homeless society members receive.

Every homeless person is someone's mother, father, sister, brother, child, or cousin. It can be easy to forget this if you judge them based only on appearance. But if you take the time to talk with some of these people you will learn that they are not so different from you or me. They are just in a less fortunate situation than we are. Some of them have lost their job and have been unable to find a new one, dealt with a crooked landlord, got hooked on drugs, have untreated mental health issues, are left suffering brain or other bodily injury following an accident, just moved to the province and have been unable to find work or housing, or they are fleeing an abusive relationship and have nowhere to go. Some or all of these situations could happen to anyone, so we ask that you try to suspend your judgment before blaming a homeless person as if they wanted to be in their current situation. And furthermore, see what you can do to help, because this is the reality of the city you live in; thousands of people do not have basic resources such as shelter, food, and clothing.

I have worked with hundreds of these individuals over the past year and sadly, I see many of them return to the shelter for various reasons. If Vancouver could provide adequate support and resources, however, together we could all end homelessness. After all, no one deserves to live on the street and be treated like garbage.



influence people's willingness to engage in more sustainable behaviours. For example, a neighbourhood specific norm such as "the majority of West Enders recycle" may be a more effective strategy to increase recycling behaviour than "the majority of people in the Lower Mainland recycle" or "the majority of British Columbia's recycle" (see examples on next page).

One of the main barriers environmentalists are up against is media influence on what is considered to be 'normative' social behaviour. The media in its many forms reinforces consumption values as normative social standards. Through movies, television, commercials, billboards and the like we are inundated with messages that consuming more makes us happy and will bring about admiration from others. One way for social activist groups to counteract the buy-and-spend media mentality is to use some of these same mediums to reinforce pro-environmental normative behaviour. One way the average person can inspire social change is to encourage the use and construction of independent alternative media (e.g., adbuster.org, unobserver.com, democracynow.org). This collaborative zine is one type of alternative media!



Here it is useful to make use of Michel Foucault's argument on power dynamics. Power, Foucault points out, has the potential to oppress and to free the masses. Discourse is dynamic and empowering. By questioning the ways in which particular power/elite shapes our understanding of our social phenomena through language use, we could create an influential force to resist their regimens of power. The first step towards empowerment, hence, is to question those ideas that we have long taken for granted. Let us begin to question the "common sense" knowledge we have never questioned. Let's question the legitimacy of what is presented to us as the truth!

It is not only through including aspects of the phenomenon that a particular discourse emerges, rather, not including of some aspects that are pertinent to the topic—exclusion or silence—contributing to the construction of a specific representation. The mass media uses these discursive strategies to normalize the ideology of those who have the most power within the society.

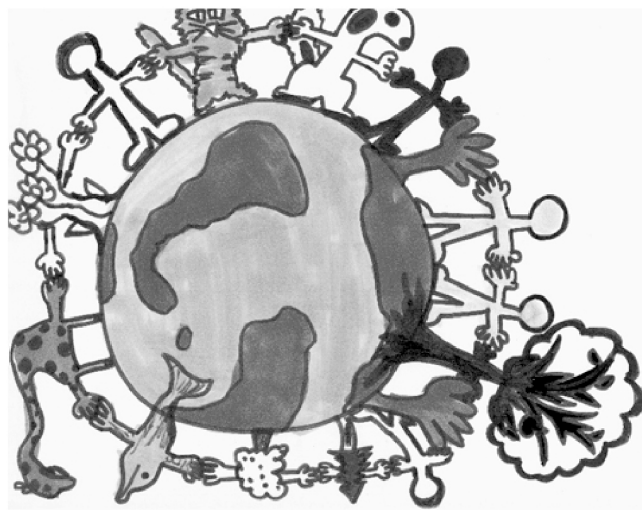
Experts are those who have the power to legitimize a point of view, they have the power to tell us what the truth is. Based on the result of our project, an overwhelming majority of the experts cited in news articles about DTES are government officials (47%). The experts whose views about the social problems are represented as the "truth", are the ones who hold the most power within our society. By citing them as the experts, the media perpetuates their power position, hence confirming the status quo.

A search for the terms "Vancouver Downtown Eastside" and "DTES" in 4 local and 2 national newspapers between October, 2008 to March 2009 generated 52 news articles. These articles were analyzed by two coders working independently. Here we focus on two aspects of the articles: whether voices of residents of DTES were represented, and who was cited as experts.

Giving voice to members of the community has an empowering effect. It allows the subjects to participate in the process of discourse formation and hence to negotiate and renegotiate their positions of power. Although the segments or statements chosen and the context in which it is presented contribute a great deal to the comprehension of the messages conveyed, these kinds of contextual analyses was beyond the scope of our little project. Nonetheless, as result of our study indicates a startling 70% of the news articles about DTES didn't include the opinion of the residents from the very same neighbourhood!

Media Coverage of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside: An Empirical Project

Chad Danyluck, Jenn McArthur, Rana Seyed-Emami, Katie Smith, Sara Yasan



identity, educators can help individuals gain ecological knowledge, understanding of their own ecosystems and issues of concern in their environment, as well as social knowledge about local institutions and knowledge of socially accepted norms and behaviours (Worster & Abrams, 2005). With this combined knowledge individuals will increase their feeling of attachment to the environment, leading individuals to place a higher value on protecting their community and engaging in pro-environmental behaviour (Bell, 2004).

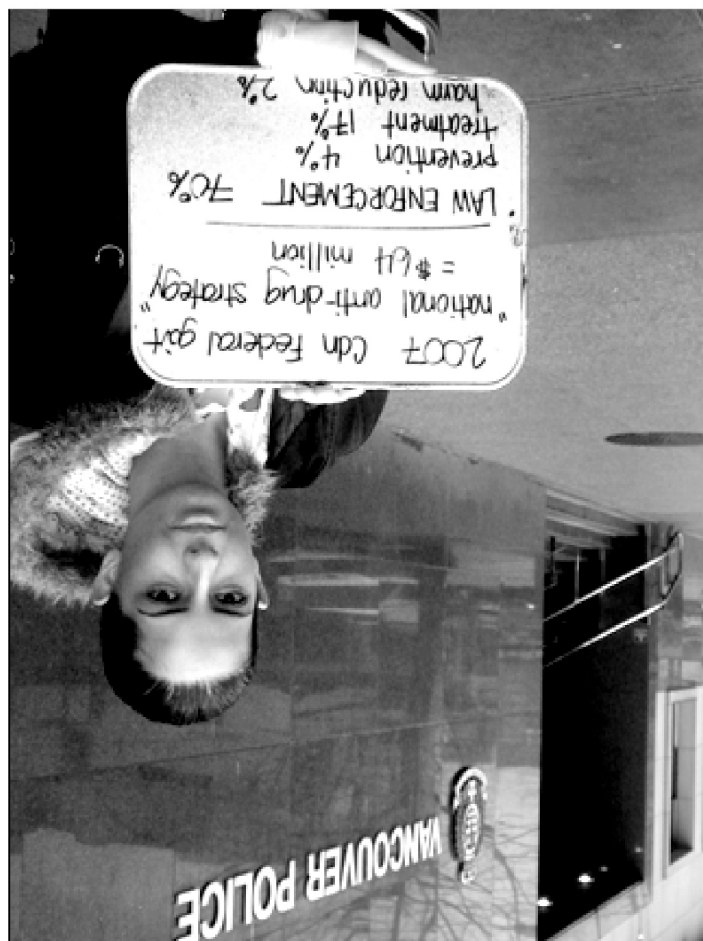
Another way to view our relationship with the environment is to promote environmental stewardship—an ethic of careful and responsible management of the planet including the atmosphere, habitats, flora and fauna. For thousands of years in which the land was viewed as a sacred trust that was the responsibility of everyone to maintain. By holding non-hierarchical views of the environment as part of our self-concept we may gain a sense of personal responsibility to our environment now and in the future.

Teaching Normative Pro-Environmental Behaviours

To help develop pro-environmental behaviour, readily accessible information sources must be available (e.g., websites, pamphlets) that clearly state the types of behaviours that are considered pro-environmental. To be effective these information sources must also explain the impact of these behaviours at the local and provincial level and how collectively these behaviours might manifest into greater global ecology. One main aspect of environmental sustainability must be dedicated to teaching normative pro-environmental or 'green' behaviours to young children. Instilling pro-environmental behaviours early on may help make 'green' behaviours more normative in future generations. Apart from encouraging pro-environmental behaviours through media or formal education, we must begin by changing our own behaviour. By personally modeling 'green' behaviour, we make this particular path easier for others to follow—in essence we are showing others what is important and 'normative' behaviour within the group. Currently, there is a multitude of 'go green' websites that list things a person can do to make changes right-now, right-where-you-are. Some of these pro-environmental or 'green' behaviour ideas include: turn down your heat and put on a sweater if you are cold, buy recycled clothing, and turn off the shower while you soap up. Check out Green Living (www.greenlivingonline.com) and World Watch Institute (www.worldwatch.org/resources/go_green_save_green) for more ideas.

Promoting an Environmental Identity

One of the primary obstacles to environmental sustainability is the attitude of ownership over nature that many humans harbour. Ownership of something often entitles an individual to use (or abuse) a thing as they see fit. As a result, we see the environment as a separate identity from humanity rather than essentially integrated. In order to live a sustainable lifestyle we must first understand our relationship with nature (Bonnet, 2006). Having an environmental identity, one in which the environment is linked to our self-concept, can lead to greater environmental awareness and pro-environmental behaviours. If we feel more connected to our environment we are more likely to view it as an important part of ourselves. To promote this



It is important to realize that the mass media, which is increasingly run by large corporations, manipulates language to advance specific goals. The purpose of the "War on Drugs" propaganda is to arouse feelings of fear and thus push people to fight the enemy, drug users, or the homeless, rather than understanding their situations. The media's representation of the so-called "vulnerable group" involves stereotypes that associate them with dangerous classes like criminals. The media labels these groups using negative language, and involves one-sided reporting, selective presentation of facts, and an overemphasis on reports of cruelty such as gang violence in its depiction of these groups. Thus as readers we must look at the media through a critical lens. We may even need to create our own media, such as community radio or newspaper, in order to receive information alternative to the drug-war propaganda.

**Costs to Society
Due to the War on Drugs**

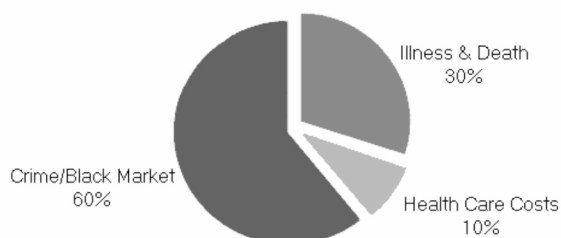


Figure 14 Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse. (1998). *Economic Costs of Alcohol in the United States, 1992*. Washington, DC: National Institutes of Health

This zine is about cultivating a new mindset. Changing people's minds and their behaviours is a slow process. Because we are promoting small changes over large and substantial changes some people may not see our suggestions as having much merit. However, once a person has agreed to a small request they are much more willing to agree to a larger one. As more and more people begin to incorporate pro-environmental behaviours into their lives, sustainable practices will become more normative. When individuals come together, more radical change is possible by making environmental issues a priority and by putting pressure on politicians to make pro-

Radical Social Change

In recent years, the media has begun to focus on green consumerism by promoting products as "green," and capitalizing on our guilt over our own consumptive behaviours. Some corporations may indeed be supporting green projects and charities and this is very positive! However other companies are charging large amounts for non-essential items because they are environmentally friendly, for example a \$3.5 million "Skycar" that flies 350 miles per hour and burns environmentally friendly alcohol from Neiman Marcus. Some companies may only be contributing minutely to an environmental charity to protect their image while continuing to run their company in an environmentally damaging way. The result is that many people are tricked into believing they can "go green" by changing what products they buy without reducing their levels of consumption overall.

Media and Advertising

To reduce environmental damage, changes are needed to curtail the consumerist ideology. What is required is a change at the top (e.g., corporations) as well as the bottom (individuals) because most consumers are, in many ways, forced to over-consume because of existing social structures and institutions (Vlek & Steg, 2007). Such social structures and institutions can be influenced from the bottom up by decreasing our dependency on consumer goods. For example, growing your own fruits and vegetables or only buying produce from local growers can have a direct impact on air pollution by reducing the amount of trucks, trains, ships and airplanes used to transport produce over thousands of miles.

Future Directions: Trying to Tackle Major Societal Forces behind Environmental Decline

Population Growth & Poverty

The world population is expected to grow from 6.7 billion to 9 billion around 2050, particularly in less industrialized countries. However, 1.3 billion people are currently living in poverty, 70% of which are women. Poverty has also been linked to overpopulation, as these individuals do not have access to family planning services. In 2002, about 201 million couples were not able to obtain family planning services. The UN estimates that providing these individuals with effective contraception and education could have prevented 52 million unwanted pregnancies (Brown, 2006). These problems are all compounded as resources dwindle, water levels rise, and weather patterns change with global warming. Although fertility rates have fallen in many places, population control is an obvious way to prevent the growth of poverty and reduce environmental impact, but it is a sensitive topic in many cultures & societies (Vlek & Steg, 2007).

Consumer Capitalism & Affluence

Increasing wealth and economic resources has been an increasing trend of many nations' buy and spend mentality. However, in industrialized countries, and for people who aren't poor, having more material goods and higher income does little to increase general subjective well-being (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). Many people gloss over what actually makes them happy--relationships and time with friends and family, and a sense of purposeful existence. Many believe that increased time at work and making more money will allow them to eventually spend more time with family and friends. The irony is that even though technology has increased work efficiency, people (especially North Americans) are not working less! Work hours have actually increased, and consequently so has consumption (www.workersoftheworldrelax.org). At the root of the problem is the Capitalist ideology that increasing profit and economic growth takes precedence over the environment.

Canada is still pursuing a policy of criminalization of drug use. Even though the federal government claims to be creating drug-free societies by pursuing a "balanced approach" to drug use and emphasizing "prevention," "treatment," and "rehabilitation," its efforts in the "War on Drugs" is still primarily focused on enforcement. Using contrived language, which is both reassuring and threatening to the public, the government defines all illicit drugs as bad and all drug users as sick, mentally ill, immoral and unlawful individuals. The political language is a major mechanism in the social construction of reality, and a pervasive linguistic

Since the 19th century, Canada, together with the rest of the world, has been involved in a "War on Drugs" that ends up exacerbating the social problem that initiated it. Failing to deter drug use and creating new problems in the process. War entails violence, wartime propaganda, spying, secrecy, suspension of normal civil rights, increased centralization of authority, and uncontrolled consumption of resources (Alexander, 1990). Beyond the visible manifestations, war entails a special mentality, or an attempt to create a "drug-free" nation by exercising "zero tolerance". The mass media are powerful determinants of public opinion. It influences our socialization so that we come to know, through its images and definitions, the reality around us and our position within the social order. Interestingly, Canadian media seem committed to the "War on Drugs" mental-ity. The government has privileged access to a variety of communicative events, including the media.

Discourse and the "War on Drugs"

Mass media are a powerful force for constructing and perpetuating discourses. It is through the mass media that concepts of control are transformed from a specific ideology to the level of "common sense." Through discursive strategies by repetition or emphasizing a point versus the other - the media naturalizes the ideology of the most powerful as the "truth" of the matter. These subtle channels of control not only provide us with the vocabulary to talk about social issues, but they gradually infuse within us their own way of thinking and talking. Those whose voices are heard loud and clear through media are often those who have the power to construct norms for social practices, perpetuate a particular representation of reality, and impose ideas about relevant and irrelevant forms of being. In this way power is exercised through what Chomsky termed "manufacturing consent", rather than through coercion or force. Thus through their almost exclusive access to the discourse on drugs and drug use, the government is able to influence the text and talk in such a way that, as a result, the knowledge, norms, values and ideologies of recipients are affected in the interest of the government.



In 1971 Richard M. Nixon declared "War on Drugs" and invited a total offensive, worldwide, nationwide, government wide, and media wide.

practice working to maintain power differentials. Hence, the government's current policy of prohibition is sustained precisely because it maintains power differentials so well.

War on Drugs fought on the level of the "verbal weapons" are a powerful means of exercising influence (Tooley, 1994). Thus in the setting where people turn to the government to deal with concerns about crime, homelessness, drug abuse, economy, linguistic cues evoke pre-conceived notions regarding the nature and the cause of the problems. Through the mass media, the government often emerges as the primary authority that helps people cope with such threats. As a result, even though the beliefs that the government hold about controversial issues such as drug use may be problematic, the general public rarely challenges such perspectives because it helps them cope with anxieties and social problems that might be potentially threatening to them. This public reaction is politically crucial, since it confers power upon professionals and spreads their norms to others (Tooley, 1999). Political language becomes especially memorable and salient when the terms that denote social problems depict a personified threat, an enemy, and a deviant criminal. For example, terms such as "junkies" and "pusher" become associated with the term "enemy". Furthermore, in the dialect of prohibition, drug use has become a national crisis. Such language overwhelms one's consciousness and limits reasonable calculations, especially when it comes to deciding on measures to be taken against social problems.

But are our attitudes toward teens justified? Are teens a danger to themselves? Do they lack the capacity to make competent decisions or to regulate their emotions and desires? Is it right to make laws restricting their freedoms? According to Jean Piaget, the pioneer in the study of child development, we enter the final stage of mental reasoning at the age of about twelve. From this point onward, we are able to reason abstractly and use advanced logical thinking to make decisions. Certainly, beyond that point there is a lot of variation in mental maturity, and we do get

decisions and excels at his or her chosen pursuits? Most people wouldn't identify the last option as one that really comes to mind when they think of the word "teenager". In fact, the idea of teenagers as incompetent, impulsive and moody is one that goes back to Aristotle and the time of ancient Greece! Most adults take it for granted that these stereotypes are accurate - that adolescence is a time of turbulence where reason takes a back seat to passion and desire. We pass laws and set rules based on the idea that teenagers need to be protected from themselves and from a world for which they aren't quite ready. Teenagers, we think, are still children, even if they are developing adult bodies.



What comes to mind when you think "teenager"? Is it a moody, troubled young person with acne and piercings? An attractive, promiscuous girl who has sex without thinking of the consequences of her actions? A sullen boy who won't clean up his room, shoplifts from the local mall and smashes windows in his spare time? Or is it a competent, responsible person who is self-sufficient, is able to make reasonable decisions and excels at his or her chosen pursuits? Most people wouldn't identify the last option as one that really comes to mind when they think of the word "teenager". In fact, the idea of teenagers as incompetent, impulsive and moody is one that goes back to Aristotle and the time of ancient Greece! Most adults take it for granted that these stereotypes are accurate - that adolescence is a time of turbulence where reason takes a back seat to passion and desire. We pass laws and set rules based on the idea that teenagers need to be protected from themselves and from a world for which they aren't quite ready. Teenagers, we think, are still children, even if they are developing adult bodies.

David Gill, Adana Lagerstrom

Adolescence, Stigma, and Delinquency

environmental policy changes. By educating people and offering cognitive alternatives to the status quo people will be able to see how they can make changes in their lives. Indeed, some changes with radical implications are easy and enjoyable, like gardening to produce some of your own food.

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For an interesting analysis of how globalizing capitalists exploit people who experience enforced and naturally occurring sources of dislocation read Naomi Klein's *The Shock Doctrine*.

In this sense of the word and as Alexander uses it, we mean to imply a compulsive obsession with any number of behaviours, not exclusively the use of drugs or alcohol. As Alexander explains (2000), people can be addicted to money, power, work, and a host of other behaviours.

Bruce Alexander, Author of *Globalization of Addiction: A Study in Poverty of the Spirit*, snazzy dresser, and all-around cool guy.



"A Discourse is a system of thought composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak."

Michel Foucault



Discourse, Mass Media, and Drugs

Sara Yasan, Rana Seyed-Emami

In our everyday life we draw upon our knowledge about language: we exchange information, express feelings, make things happen, contemplate ideas and so forth. When language is thought of as an abstract system of rule-governed structural relationships, discourse is both the source of this knowledge and the result of it. Discourse refers to a group of statements that provide a language for talking about a particular topic at a particular historical moment. Discourse constructs the topic. It governs the ways in which a phenomenon can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about. It defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. Knowledge and power are interrelated. Knowledge not only assumes the authority of 'the truth', but it has the power to make itself true. Discourse is a potent vehicle through which power structure is perpetuated and sustained. That is, those who have the power to construct a particular kind of knowledge through discourse, do so in ways that sustain and legitimize their position within the society.

Additional resources:
<http://www.checkyourhead.org/CheckYourHead-YouthGlobalEducationNetwork>
<http://www.youthrights.org/NationalYouthRightsAssociation>
<http://www.asiar.org/AmericansforaSocietyFreefromAgeRestrictions>
 Robert Epstein. The Case Against Adolescence: Rediscovering the Adult in Every Teen.
 John Holt. Escape from Childhood: The Needs and Rights of Children.

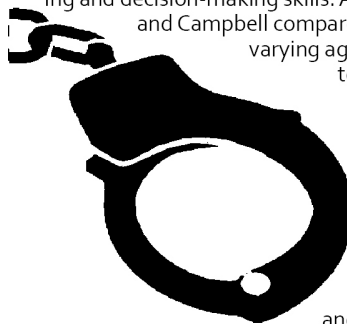
A study by Leary and colleagues (2005) found that youth who are not respected are more likely to turn to delinquency. What is even more striking is that youth rate respect from society as more important than respect from their parents. Thus, by engaging with youth as equals, you and I can significantly influence whether a youth turns to delinquency. In addition, Veneziano and Veneziano (2002) discovered correlations between abuse and offending in adolescents. These links point to the idea that abuse can lead adolescents toward delinquency; further support for this notion is found in cases where a youth's delinquent behaviour mimics that of their abuser. Finally, MacDonald and colleagues (2005) found that youth who report lower levels of life satisfaction also tend to be involved in more acts of delinquency.

Teenagers who fit the stereotype of adolescence do so, at least in part, because of how they are treated. Teens are stereotyped as delinquent, for example, and for some the stereotype fits. Statistics Canada (2003) found that adolescents only make up approximately 20% of the criminal offender population. However, the way we treat adolescents and the way they perceive their life may make them more likely to engage in delinquent behaviour.

Why are there so many troubled teens?

So, if teenagers are functioning on a roughly adult level, how can we keep treating them as if they were children? No wonder they're sometimes moody and rebellious – you would be, too, if people consistently treated you as incompetent, restricted your rights and freedoms, and insisted you didn't know what you were talking about. We prohibit teens from participating in anything meaningful, and then wonder why teen culture is so seemingly devoid of meaning. Think of everything teenagers could become, and how much they could contribute to our world, if we let them be a part of it.

better, on average, at certain kinds of decision-making as we get older, but teenagers, as a whole, are very similar to adults in terms of reasoning and decision-making skills. A 1982 study by psychologists Weithorn and Campbell compared the decision making skills of people of varying ages and found that teens scored identically to adults.



What about the recent studies that have been in the news showing that teenagers' brains are different than adult brains? What about the related studies showing differences in how teens and adults make decisions? Well, brains certainly are different during adolescence. They are also different in your thirties, forties and fifties. The human brain continues to grow and change in its makeup, structure, and functioning throughout the lifespan. That doesn't mean that teens have brains that are 'incomplete'. Their brains have the same structure, and function in the same basic way, as do adults' brains. And are there differences in how adults and teens make decisions? There are some overall differences, but it isn't clear that those differences give adults an advantage, or that adults' decisions are in any way better than teenagers' decisions.

It is important to remember that when a study reports a 'difference' between two groups, that difference is between the two groups as a whole, not between individuals within those two groups. So might adults, as a group, be better at making decisions than teenagers, as a group? Perhaps. But you'd also expect a group of people in their fifties to be slightly better, on average, at making decisions than a group of people in their thirties, given that the first group has more experience to draw on. And you can't say with any accuracy that any individual fifty-year-old will make a better decision than any individual thirty-year-old. Nor can you say that any given adult will make a better decision than a given teenager. There are many teenagers who are more competent decision-makers than many adults.

- The Government of BC's WelcomesBC site, which lists health resources for immigrants: http://www.welcomesbc.ca/en/growing-your_community/health.html
- Health Canada's "Healthy Living" site for immigrants: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/fty-spv/immigrants-eng.php>
- MOSAIC, a multilingual non-profit organization dedicated to addressing issues that affect immigrants and refugees: <http://www.mosaicbc.com/>

Canada.

It is a fundamental injustice that immigrants are denied the right of equal access to quality health care due to language and cultural differences. Yet many still see this as a problem solely caused by the immigrants' "reluctance" to overcome their "adjustment difficulties". The multiple barriers at the system's and the health professionals' levels, however, suggest that systemic changes must occur to improve immigrant health and access to the health care system. In order to motivate change, it is necessary to raise awareness on immigrant health in both local Canadians and immigrants. Immigrant health in both local Canadians and immigrants must occur grants need to look past their ethnocultural differences and realize that they all share a common identity of being new immigrants to a foreign country. Such a common identity is necessary for the group to unite and promote social change. At the health care system's level, removing obstacles for health care providers from other countries to work in Canada will improve the current shortage of professionals with relevant language skills and cultural knowledge. Translation services must be routinely provided and expanded to all health services. Finally, it is time for the Canadian government to see that they have a responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of immigrants, and to reallocate the money the system has saved (through providing standard care to immigrants) to develop services that target immigrants. In light of the growing proportion of Canadians who do not speak English or French as their first language, the Canadian government should reexamine the official language policy to see whether it accurately reflects the current demographics of

Globalization

Chad Danyluck

Globalization is a process of transformation that aims to interconnect the world into a single functioning unit that is free of economic regulation. Globalization weakens the social fabric of communities and leads to what addiction researcher Bruce Alexander calls dislocation. In *The Globalization of Addiction*, Alexander defines dislocation as an impoverished engagement with the social groups to which one belongs. It involves a loss of "psychosocial integration" which is the connection one has to the values, norms and traditions of one's culture, simultaneously disconnecting a person from one's social group and the self. Factors leading to dislocation can be numerous including torture, solitary confinement and natural disasters (Alexander, 2000).¹ It can be voluntary as is the case when individuals single-mindedly pursue some materialistic goal at the expense of building important family and community relations. Additionally, in the case of materialistic societies, like that of North America, when a society chooses to endorse values that diminish opportunities for social engagement, dislocation can become a universal phenomenon. According to Alexander's analysis Dislocation is the major cause of addiction.²

Addiction in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (un-ceded Coast Salish Territory) extends from a sense of dislocation experienced by its people (Alexander, 2000). For those who fail to find strong connection to their family and communities, addiction may form as an adaptive substitute for real, meaningful psychosocial integration. Thus, any account of addiction and poverty as experienced by members of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside necessarily must take into account the processes of globalization, whereby this community, like so many other local cultures in the world, has experienced dislocation because of the expansion of the free-market economy.

The high rates of poverty in our province are discouraging, especially when one examines the negative effects of stress on health. Many of you reading this article have probably experienced a stressful situation, one that alters your mood and general view of life at the time; these stressful situations may have even caused you to lose sleep or your appetite. However, the stressors faced by impoverished individuals and the negative effects of them are even more detrimental. When one lives in an impoverished area their "fight or flight" responses are used more often than individuals who do not. Such a frequent and prolonged activation of the "fight or flight" responses in one's body is not healthy, as it can lead to numerous negative effects on one's health such as suppression of one's immune system and increased susceptibility to illness. This illustrates that stress not only brings negative emotions to individuals living in impoverished areas, but can also lead to long-term health problems.

Stress and Health

A report published by the Health Officers Council of BC in November 2008 on the health inequities in BC suggests that poverty is the leading social determinant of health outcomes. While British Columbians have the highest rate of physical activity and lowest rates of smoking and obesity across Canada, they also have the highest poverty rates in the country. People forced to live in these economically disadvantaged situations are in an appalling position, one that makes them more vulnerable to stress and its negative health effects.

Health Inequalities

There are many problems with our healthcare system. It seems like every other week there is a news story reporting the long wait time in emergency rooms, the shortage of nurses and hospital beds, or the unfortunate reality of someone forced to seek medical attention south of the border due to lack of resources in BC hospitals. But who are the people most likely to come into contact with the barriers to our medical system?

Diana Jung, Adana Lagerstrom

Poverty and Health Outcomes





Imagine that you need a heart transplant, but before you are placed on the transplant list you need to undergo a test conducted in a foreign language. The material you need to study is written in a language you do not understand. The tests administered to you produce invalid results. A translator has been provided but they do not even speak the same language as you. After completing the test, you are told that you have failed it, and as a result you will not receive your transplant. How would you feel? Can you imagine that this situation occurs in a significant portion of the Canadian population every day, even though Canada prides itself on its "universal" health care with equal access to all?

Greenly Ho

Health Status of Immigrants with Language and Cultural Barriers

Over the past 3 decades Canada has witnessed a rapid growth in immigration. The 2006 Census revealed that 20% of Canada's population of 30 million are immigrants, and 20% of the population do not speak English or French as their first language. Most immigrants now come from areas such as Asia, where language and cultures differ immensely from the Canadian context. Poorer health status, as well as difficulty accessing the Canadian health care system, are seen in immigrants facing language and cultural barriers when beginning a new life in Canada.

Population health research has found higher illness rates in immigrants from non-Western cultures who do not speak fluent English. Immigrants often underutilize preventive services such as mammograms. The health care they receive also tends to be of lower quality, as immigrants often do not even get services that are part of standard care for their Canadian-born counterparts.

Barriers to health care access for immigrants have been identified at multiple levels. At the system's level, most health care services are only available in English. Translation services are not universally available. The government has spent much effort recruiting immigrants to Canada for economic benefits, but has paid little attention to immigrant health and wellbeing after their settlement. At the health care providers' level, there has been a shortage of professionals that are from other cultures or speak other languages. A lack of cultural competence training makes it difficult for professionals to understand sociocultural differences in health beliefs and practices. Professionals working with immigrants struggle with the lack of diagnostic tools, treatment protocols and educational resources in languages besides English. Finally, barriers at the immigrants' level, such as pre-immigration stressors, socioeconomic status, educational level, cultural differences with regards to health, resettlement stress, and prejudice and discrimination all contribute to the lower ability to access health care, make appropriate health-related decisions and maintain health.



To completely fix the health problems associated with poverty in Canada, and more specifically British Columbia, we would need to drastically reduce economic inequality. Steps could be taken to increase job security for all, which in turn can help decrease the stress that can result in numerous health concerns. Second, "workbees" could be implemented; here individuals would work together to clean up their community – a similar concept to "adopt-a-street" programs. Not only would these workbees improve the physical aspects of community, they would also allow individuals to bond with those in their community (increasing social cohesion). Overall, workbees would improve perceptions of the community both physically and socially, thus decreasing negative health costs.

Solutions – Taking Baby Steps

So why are impoverished areas more likely to be characterized by distrust and conflict? Conflict and distrust develop as a reaction to social inequality and the inability to meet the "ideal" standards of income and status set by those with social advantage. Anxiety and stress vary with social status; those higher up on the social hierarchy live healthier lives than those who are lower on the hierarchy because they live less stressful lives. It may be that the social stressors of being economically and socially disadvantaged are related to the disadvantages in health. It is thought that individuals higher up on the social hierarchy deal with less stress whereas those who are lower on the hierarchy deal with more stress. Those who are low on the social hierarchy and have lower incomes not only have less access to material resources, but they must also cope with the lack of status and power that comes with being a subordinate member of society.

Indicators

Perceptions and Health

The health of individuals living in impoverished areas is not only affected by the stress they encounter but also by their perceptions. For example, Wilson, Elliot, Law, Eyles, Jerrett, and Keller-Olaman (2009) illustrated that one's own social and physical perceptions of their community can have detrimental impacts. First, individuals who disliked the social and physical aspects of their neighbourhood also reported poor or below average health, increased emotional distress, and increased odds of chronic diseases. Second, individuals who reported wanting to change specific aspects of their neighbourhood reported lower levels of health. With the link between perceptions and health in mind, it is important to understand the vital impact social cohesion can have on individuals in impoverished areas.

Social Cohesion

Social cohesion contributes to defining the quality of a social environment. The level of social cohesion in one's environment affects their health outcomes; environments that are less socially cohesive tend to have poorer health outcomes than those with higher levels of social cohesion. When it comes to understanding the health outcomes associated with poverty, it is important to consider the role of the social environment. Homicide rates, levels of crime and violence, community involvement, and trust are common indicators of the level of social cohesion within a society and are related to inequalities in income distribution. Greater amounts of inequality predict higher rates of homicide and violence and lower levels of community involvement and trust. On the other hand, communities with less inequality tend to have higher levels of trust and community involvement and lower rates of homicide and violence. Clearly, the protective effects of social cohesion are likely to be absent in a poor social environment. In addition, living in an environment with high levels of conflict and low levels of trust can lead to a constantly stressful environment.