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THE NEXT MILLENNIUM CONFERENCE:
Ending Domestic Violence
Biases In Research
August 30, 1999

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BOS: dm

MODERATOR: -- this morning, so I'm completely inexperienced. I wasn't here yesterday, so you bear with me. We have a wonderful panel, and I presume you won't need much input from me. But, of course, you know, the idea is to really have you participate, and so we'd like to encourage you to ask questions and become part of this discussion. It's Biases In Research, the title of our panel, and I will give a short biography of our three speakers before, and then call on them.

Beginning with Margret Abraham. She's an Associate Professor in the Department Of Sociology and Anthropology at _____ University in Long Island, New York. Her areas of specialization are ethnicity and gender. She's been a researcher and activist in the field of domestic violence in the South Asian _____ Community for a decade. In 1999, she was honored for her work by _____ for South Asian women, and she has published various papers on domestic violence.

Next, I'd like to introduce Amit Sen, who's a Senior Associate with _____ Violence Against Women's Office. He coordinates the technical assistance program, which provides training and expertise to communities nationwide, and his work focuses on identifying and improving services by diverse and marginalized communities.

Prior to joining the Justice Department, he worked at the U.S. Department Of Agriculture on economic justice initiatives to combat world poverty.

And our third presenter will be Oliver J. Williams, who's Executive Director Of The Institute On Domestic Violence in the African-American community, and an Associate Professor in the Graduate School Of Social Work at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. He is both a practitioner and _____, and he has -- his work is centered on creating effective services _____ strategy that would reduce the violent behavior among African-Americans. And he has also done work on elder mistreatment. So I'm familiar with his work.

And so now, I would ask Margret to begin.

MS. ABRAHAM: Good morning. I'm going to begin, first of all, by explaining my name because it seems to always be asked. I'm always asked a lot of questions about Margret Abraham where they changed it after coming to the United States. (Laughter.) And it actually plays a role even when I go for deportation cases and when I work with women who are abused, and it's -- and with researchers and organizations. So let me start out by saying, yes, Margret Abraham is the name that I got when I was born. And I am a Roman Catholic, and I say that because they say, "Well, a lot of Catholics are the Christians in South Asia."

And when I say, "Yes, there are, and I come from the South." So this is not an Anglicized name for anybody's benefit here. (Laughter.) It is one that has been given though for rentals when it's easy among the South as your name is being hard to pronounce. (Laughter.)

Having said that, I find it wonderful to have a relatively large audience here even though there are so many other very interesting presentations to which I would like to go, and I'm sure many of you, too. Before I start, I just do want to say there are two South Asian organize -- members from two South Asian organizations here. There is three actually. Now I see some more. And I want to introduce them because, as I do my talk about my research, I think it's very important to just very briefly say these are the organizations that have helped me do my research. Could you stand up for a minute so that we -- the South Asians in the audience, and just say very briefly. _____ and _____ and then _____. All right.

Having said that, -- I say that because I think it's very important. Okay. Given that I've titled my paper, "The Politics Of Research", I'd like to begin today's presentation by briefly telling you a little about my own research. I started my research on martial violence among South Asians in the United States almost a decade ago. The conception of my research started around 1989 when I began

teaching courses on family issues from a cross-cultural perspective and discussing domestic violence with some friends who were volunteering at a shelter at Syracuse University. They were at Syracuse.

The sheer enormity of the problem led me to look and review the literature. What became increasingly clear to me was that there was considerable scholarship on domestic violence, but very little research on domestic violence in ethnic minorities. And there is this vast literature, and I am looking for names _____ communities, and it seems almost nothing there.

Around the same time, through the electronic media and a couple of talks I attended, I learned of the emergence of a few South Asian organizations who were actively addressing violence against women. Of course, given my research interest in power and gender, I decided I would look into the matter and I said, "This is what I need to do." And, of course, I want to start off by saying, there lies the first bias in the research. The very fact that it's a huge body of research and it seems as though ethnic minorities _____ and marginalized. So I think we have to first acknowledge the fact that there is this large body of research and, you know, for many years. Certain communities have not been looked into.

Of course, today, I see myself as a researcher and an

activist. Someone who clearly believes that doing research on domestic violence or violence against women involves integration, theoretical issues and _____ within a social-political context. I really think that's very important for us researchers to understand. And here, of course, I mean a social-political context in which issues such as where the research takes place, the funding of research projects, the types of questions, the data collection strategies, interpretation, dissemination, and, of course, the relationship between the researcher and the respondent are intrinsically political in nature. And I'm sure we're going to have differences in that when, you know, when people talk about it.

With that, of course, this presentation on the biases in research is discussed keeping the social-political framework in mind, so I want to acknowledge my own positioning here. Given the time constraints and, of course, we want to leave -- we have discussed that we want to leave time for discussion, I'm going to focus on some of the biases in research that I see as most problematic and imperative that we discuss if we are to make a difference in ending violence against women in the next millennium. And these are, number one, the theoretical perspectives that we bring to the research process. Two. The methodological orientation, and three, the research outcomes and their

of violence and its acceptability and, of course, _____
_____. However, there is a conscious gap in the literature
about the structure and cultural factors that _____
domestic violence among ethnic groups, especially recent
immigrant groups.

Focusing on gender alone, as Jane [Gaines (?)] points
out, keeps women from looking at other structures of
oppression, and I think that's what she spoke about today,
and there have been others who have talked about it. And as
such, works to the advantage of the dominant groups. And I
think we, as researchers, have to be conscious about that
when we bring that up.

In the context of addressing domestic violence in a
stratified society such as the United States, a
contextualized feminism must explicitly acknowledge both the
commonality and the differences of experiences based on the
intersection of ethnicity, gender, class and citizenship.
And here, when I say citizenship, be sure of legal status.
Neither the family perspective nor the feminist perspective
have really addressed these linkages in its, you know, I
mean addressed, but not adequately.

And more importantly, the relevance of ethnic based
women's organizations in addressing violence against women
has received almost no serious attention in the domestic --
I mean in the movement research, especially sociology. So

implications, particularly as they impact immigrant ethnic minority women and minority groups.

Starting with theoretical perspectives, and I'm not going to spend much time on it, but I will say that if you want more details, I can give some articles that address these perspectives. As a Sociologist, I'm going to focus a little on the sociological perspectives. Two major sociological theoretical approaches that have defined the discourse on domestic violence in the United States are the family violence perspective and the feminist perspective. And most of you, I assume, in this audience already know that, so I don't want to spend a lot of the time in discussing the two perspectives, and we can talk about that and I'll give you articles of, you know, if we need to address some of those issues.

Now, one of the problems is in the family perspective, the family is considered the basic unit of analysis whereas, in the latter, the abused women is taken as a unit of analysis. The family violence approach gives marital violence _____ from the personal characteristics of the wife or husband, or from the internal and external stress factors that affect the family. And the second theoretical perspective, one frequently termed feminist, does not limit causes of domestic violence to psychological and micro sociological factors, but considers the global pervasiveness

you see a lot of these ethnic minority organizations that have really played a very crucial role in the movement of activists, but researchers have not looked at them and brought them as a part of that historical documentation of the movement, and I think we really need to address that. And scholars need to increasingly address the intersections of ethnicity, class, race, gender and citizenship in power relations as vital to conceptualizing a framework for the analysis of domestic violence. So in terms of theoretical perspective, we need to do that.

And I -- you know, I know we have time constraints, and so I don't want to spend much time explaining that. I do have one in which I did put forth in 1995 , an article where I talked about _____ . And one of the things that I talk about is using what I call an [ethno (?)] gender approach. And I say here when I mean ethno gender, that is the multiple intersection of ethnicity gender, class and legal status as significant categories in the analysis of domestic violence.

As _____ points out, within a U.S. -- within the U.S., _____ ordered society, there are no gender relations that stand alone, but only those that are conduct -- are constructed by and between races. And I think we, as researchers, have to be, you know, aware of that. And recently, I think, there has been considerable

work that's coming out. It's still relatively new, and I think that we have to just look at the positive perspectives.

I learned that as a researcher, once talking to a South Asian organization that I worked with, and they asked me, so tell us about how we're doing. And it was a lesson to be learned. I began with the negative things and, later, you know, it was in the early stages of -- I thought I was being honest. (Laughter.) And I learned the first thing is to do say some of the positive aspects, too, you know. This is very hard work. And so I will say that in terms of the research, it's not that there isn't a lot, but there is a little bit that has come out _____, Joyce _____
_____ Oliver Williams and, you know, we have Beckie Masaki, Jacqueline Campbell, quite a few who have worked in this area.

In terms of the methodological orientation, I think this is really something that's crucial. What researchers do, why we make the choices we make, and what affects these choices have for the participants of our study, the community and the larger society must be taken into the account. It is not only what we do, but what -- but how we do it that is important. In an excellent article, Political And Methodological Debates In Wife Abuse research, _____
_ provides a comprehensive picture of some of the

methodological issues such as quantitative versus qualitative, critiques of sex bias, objectivity, et cetera. Now, while drawing upon her work, I'm going to place more emphasis on what I see as some of the important methodological issues that we currently face.

_____ researchers made serious inroads into critiquing the quantitative approach with its emphasis on scientific objectivity. An alternative paradigm has been put forth where the historical context, the qualitative research with in depth interviews, and subjective understanding are crucial components of our analysis. Researchers have made some headway into the relative importance of combining those, yet, there still remains at large, I believe, a degree a methodological bias in our work. This bias partially arises from who we study.

While research on domestic violence has clearly established the need to draw up on women's experiences and explaining the causal factors for martial violence, inadequate attention is paid to race, ethnicity, class and legal status both in terms of the researcher going into the, you know, into the research process as well as in the selection of the women who are going to be interviewed. So we don't see some -- it's almost like there is no color. There is no class. There is no ethnicity to these communities that we study.

The result, of course, is the marginalization of certain categories of women based on the intersection of gender, race, class and ethnicity. This leads to the inability to effectively capture the _____ of culture, the different situational context and historical context. Large scale telephonic surveys or mailed questionnaires leave out important segments of minorities who may not have the access to telephones or permanent addresses. The high cost entailed in translation of interviews into several dialects and the validity of these translations appear to deter many researchers from studying ethnic minority communities. It's too expensive. We don't have the money. We're struggling. And, of course, the result is that abused minority women's voices are unseen and unheard. It seems that as the activists are the only ones who have to do it, why there should really be a collaborative process.

And then, of course, researchers do get in the activists, but at a small segment. They're a footnote, a citation or a chapter. And we really have to look at what the nature of our collaborative process is. And clearly, some of these imbalances have been rectified. However, small scale in depth interviews and in depth studies _____ due to practical impediments of the data collection are often modulized as non-representative or limited in scientific scope.

So what happens then? Neither can we win by saying that we need the statistics. A lot of ethnic minority groups don't have that. It's very hard to get that information. At the same time, they're not being then included in the research or in funding because they don't have the four hundred -- I was recently at a meeting when they said, "Oh, well, we have to have -- if this fund -- it has to be funded. You have to have a sample of four hundred, and four hundred." I said, "Well, I don't think I can do that, you know, I don't think it's possible." "Well, then it won't be funded." So it's working out these logistics of that, and I think Amit is going to talk about it.

I also, you know, want to leave something for the end as we do have -- I do have about five minutes. Finally, I think a very important part is to be aware of the nature of the relationship between researcher and subject. I think increasingly so we have to do that as we go into the minority communities and to other communities, too. And we do have to be self-conscious of the voice that we have and the power our research has for these communities. I say this because, very often, I'm going to talk a little about in terms of research outcomes how this plays out. Very often, in the research process, and we'll talk about it in the question and answer session, and I'll give some

examples.

But it's very problematic because it results in stereotyping based on race or ethnic groups, how you're using it for teaching this research, especially if you have provincial students. You know, you're reinforcing stereotypes, what it does to policy, you have fragmented, you know, policy. You have distancing and class position where the researchers come out as now as experts for the community, you go to the judges. And you are maybe the South Asian expert, and there is this immigrant woman whose life, you know, is separated and distanced, and how this research gets used. I think we really have to be conscious when we're even doing the research process.

Finally, in terms of the research outcomes. Given that domestic violence is a social problem, there is a clear linkage between research and social action. As such, _____ point out, our work is action research. And I think it's important that we don't forget that even when we're doing -- even as we do this research. And the outcomes of our research have major implications at multiple levels. They're used in Congress. They're used for passing legislation. They're used in terms of what happens in the prisons. They're used in terms of teaching. So many of the places where we're using this, we have to really do responsible research.

Here, there are many issues to be discussed, but I'm primarily going to devote the rest of my one minute -- (Laughter.) -- to this thing, and we'll talk about it in the discussion. Some of them are how do we disseminate this work and how do we interpret it. For many academics, I feel that they are often male defined, and there is preference in lead journals _____ objective studies. I don't know if any of you have been hearing all the discussions that have been going on in the American Sociological Association about who do the journal -- you know, what journals have it and which are seen as special journals, which are seen as male, you know, the mainstream journals. And a lot of them do want quantitative work.

For many academics, I feel they are often male defined and there is a preference in lead journals for scientific objective studies. Then there is the question of peer reviewers and what type of interest is elicited for groups that have a third position in a dichotomy divided society? So I want to put my little pitch here and why we do talk with woman of color. It is important to realize that it's very often -- now, it's the dichotomous white and black. And what's about the third positioning? And then within the South Asian, you know, when they're put in this [ruberick (?)] of Asian, and yet we make those coalitions, but we also have to realize that Asian is not one homogenous category.

And so I do want all the experts to also think about the fact that now we've moved from the quantitative versus the qualitative, the experts versus the non-experts. Now we have many of the white feminists and, while I've learned a lot from this work, I do want to say now we've been _____, and we have the experts and we have the experts in regional areas. Thank you for giving us that space. And so I think we have to be very careful of how we do this research and define ourselves in those ways.

And at the end of it, I do want to say that if we continue research in this way, we marginalize, or tokenize the relevance of culture and social structures. To do our research, we do have to begin thinking of global ways, collaborative in nature. We must be self-reflective and do responsible research. We have to learn how to build bridges between researchers and activists not only within the United States, but in all parts of the world. We must continue to see dialogue and share our research. Most importantly, we need not to be just American centric in our research. We must let the voice of those abused at the center of our discourse. And as we move into the next millennium, we must understand that global pervasiveness of domestic violence can only be addressed if we examine heterogeneity within homogeneity. Thank you. (Applause.)

MR. SEN: Well, that's not a tough act to follow at all. I

think that I could probably dispense with this because Margret has pretty much gone through most of it. But there is a different perspective coming from not a research background, but a delegate, an agent of the federal government. I do work with the Violence Against Women's Office and my particular interest in this has been participating at the federal level with government conducted research and government funded research to see the way in which it -- or examine the way in which it frames violence against women and records the realities of violence against women. And much of what I'm going to say is actually in support or parallel to what Margret has said, so I'll try not to be too repetitive, but I think there are some distinctions just because of my perspective that I'd like to try to remember.

One of the things that we frequently say, and I want to start out with just talking a little bit about who we are, is that, as the Violence Against Women Office, our mission isn't just to make grants or just to even enforce laws, but to support the change of culture that promotes and accepts violence against women. And I think we're at the point, clearly, where we recognize that we can't do that without critiquing ideology without looking at the cultural beliefs that condone and perpetuate that violence.

But, strangely, our ideological critique is disembodied

and disengaged from an analysis of other axis of privilege. We haven't subjected racism and other identity constructs like sexuality, class, language, immigration, able bodiness to the same critical lens while we have fought very, very hard to say that violence against women cannot be constructively engaged in a political or in an ideological context. Clearly, as Margret pointed out so eloquently, for women of color, race and gender are not discreet issues. They're not separate issues, and they can't be privileged or

So one of the things that I think is important to ask is why is research important to communities of color? Why is it important to marginalize communities coming from an institutional perspective research has used to inform policy and practice at the state, local and federal level? It influences funding decisions and research allocations. I think, perhaps, most significantly, it presents a reality of what is occurring with regard to violence against women, who are battered women, who's being served, what are their experiences, what constitutes sufficient and appropriate service.

You can't answer those questions, I think, unless you look at the way in which their identities are organized, which is part of what Margret was talking about, identity construction. A lot of what, I think, Margret was getting

at, too, is the way in which we not only privilege certain spaces and certain populations, but we privilege methodologies. There's been a lot of attention in the research field and a lot of pressure to generate members, and there's been a lot of suggestion that only hard data can support conclusive findings that only hard data are useful. One of the things that that does though is that it imposes a model of identity that is quantifiable where people fit neatly into boxes. And as _____ and Margret Abraham and many others have so eloquently shown us, they don't.

My work in the government, going to these big meetings, looking at how to plan, the way we collect information on how women experience violent crime. I think efforts that several people are making, especially doing work coming out of the office, to complicate and expand the categories that are afforded to women in the way in which they can identify was met with a lot of resistance. And one of the things that I was told recently and that was kind of a consensus is, you know, there are only four races; Asian -- what was it? Asian, white, black and Hispanic. Well, I think that it's clear that, just antidotally, if you don't see yourself in this list, you don't exist. Your needs don't exist. Your realities don't exist. And clearly, services and funding can't be directed to combat the violence in your life.

Even without such an obvious example, even within a structure with, let's say, a few more choices, our _____ of identity choices, even within a structure that speaks to sexuality, that speaks to language, national origin. Being forced to constitute one's identity around a single absolute term tears many of us in half. Forcing us to privilege certain aspects of identities over others. We're forced to choose between identifying as queer or Latino when we're both. We're forced to choose between identifying as South Asian rather than Native American when our ancestor is both.

Very often to make this situation even more dire, the alternative to acknowledging multiple identification and being forced into a single category is being -- the alternative to that is being required to identify as non-white or other, which are wonderful terms. And I think these terms are deployed casually not only by people in criminal justice and in federal space, but often by researchers as well, but they have profound implications. A word like non-white clearly demonstrates that what you aren't, in this case, white, is far more significant in determining what you are; South Asian, Egyptian, _____ than who you really are. A term like other, again, banishes you irreversibly to the margin, again, to find not by what you are, but what you aren't; central, normal, named,

normative.

Even terms like outreach, which ostensibly are well intentioned. And that's part of what I want to talk about, which is kind of like the nice stuff that can be really problematic, can reinforce notions of inside and outside, center and margin rather than examining service, accessibility and delivery in terms of collaboration or partnership, which suggests equity and equality. Outreach, again, establishes who the agent is. Majority culture. Going beyond the frame to find people out there. I think that this stuff is really difficult, and I think it presents people with a lot of catch-twenty-twos, and I think Margret encapsulated that tremendously well.

Often, I think, the alternative to not being counted at all or not being seen at all is being counted by a system that is uninformed about privilege, about racism, identity and visibility and marginality, and that it doesn't confront its own biases in a manner that leads to a profound distortion of that population and its experience.

In my field work with states that we fund to coordinate services for battered women and for victims of sexual assault, a lot of it constituted around working with southwestern states and their efforts to provide services for native women. One of those states did some data collection and some research, and one of their assertions

was that this shelter that they're investing in that was surrounded by a native American reservation -- just some names from the shelter, was serving primarily native women. So they had the situation under control. I said, "What do you mean they're serving primarily native women?" And they had this all written out as part of their research and the data. "Well, ninety percent of the women who go there are native."

Well, after going and talking to the communities that surrounded that shelter, we learned that that was true. But that women typically didn't stay there longer than a day, and almost never stayed there even a week because the services were so inappropriate in terms of culture and language and because the women faced such hostility and outright bias about conceptions of violence in those communities, and violence with those people. So, at a cursory level, the data suggests that the native population was well served, and the funders looked at that data as a tremendous danger to embrace the conclusion that this native population is not in need. And that was the conclusion that the state had come to.

I think going beyond even marginality or invisibility, part of politicizing our view on race and identity the same way we've politicized our engagement of gender is looking to the critical thinkers that have worked in the tradition of

critiquing race privilege the same way we borrowed so heavily from feminist thinkers. Critical _____ that we know well, like Cornell West, [Bo Hooks (?)], and Angela Davis have documented how the conventional narrative on race conflicts the concept of minority almost inseparably with criminality and capability.

And I think there are very profound consequences that I'd like to get into, a discussion about. I think that association makes it all too easy to perceive and identify minorities as criminals, but almost impossible to fully identify minorities as legitimate victims as being a real victim requires being complete invaluable. And _____ with capability and criminality deters that. How does that affect research? How does that affect criminal justice practice? Well, women of color are under-represented not only in the criminal justice system response to violence against women, but in research about women who are victims of violent crime. How does that affect men of color? They're over-represented to the point where blackness, color, minority status becomes almost synonymous in a popular narrative about race with criminality.

One of the things I wanted to talk about is not just overt transparent _____ racist research like the Bell Curve, which promotes, you know, a nakedly white supremacist assertions, but kind of like the well

intentioned, ostensibly well intentional -- well intentioned research.

There was recently an article research and that was entitled "Disproportionate Minority Confinement", and it cited that seventy percent of the nation's incarcerated juveniles are black and Latino youth. To me, it was alarming. I mean I didn't even think it was that high. It's a pretty big article and it never uses the word 'racism', never engages the concept of racism. Instead, it looks at the bias of individuals. But that, in itself, is depoliticizing the issue. It's taking it out of the framework of a systemic ideology that informs the system as a whole. And I think the dangers of that de-contextualization is something that we're so familiar with in the battered women's movement.

There's something I wanted to read to you, and I know that this is kind of unconventional, from a Washington Post article, and it was on domestic homicide and it opens like this. It's very insightful. "Twisted into a rage by his crumbling marriage, Albert [Protosky (?)] walked into a Colorado grocery store and gunned down his wife." So, clearly, this article is telling us that this violence is not about, you know, privilege. It's not about power and control. It's not about ending somebody's life when they attempt to assert their autonomy. It's about anger. It's

about a failing marriage. It's about being twisted beyond one's own control.

I think the same de-contextualization happens when we attempt to engage concept, facts like seventy percent of the nation's incarcerated juveniles are black and Latino, by looking at individual prejudice or individual bias rather than acknowledging a political structure, a political ideology, a system of power, racism.

Again, I think that part of doing responsible research are asking all the difficult questions that Margret Abraham has compelled us to ask. And I may have them organized a little bit differently, but I want to ask them nonetheless. I think we need to ask ourselves who is studying, who has studied, how are they studied and to what end, who controls the terms of research and what are the objectives of that research, who is the intended beneficiary of the research? And again, I think a lot of this is on something that Oliver can flush out even far better than I'm doing.

In terms of looking towards what constitutes responsible research and what kind of research is needed. I think there's kind of a preferable model and an _____ model. And I think, preferably, responsible research is that which shows its findings with communities of color that it's tracked or monitored to avoid reinforcing the power dynamic by which they're studied, but don't benefit, or

remain informed about that research. And we all know of the worse case examples of that, like the [Tuskey (?)] experiment.

Ideally, however, research really needs to empower the community to do its own evaluation to produce its own conclusions to eliminate the _____ dynamic. It's not just a question of power, but a question of gays and _____ . They're not like us. Violence isn't the same in their communities. And there's some exemplary instances of responsible research -- I've got five minutes -- of that research. Like the African-American task force community based research and community involvement research in [Harlem (?)].

In terms of organizing identity constructs rather than forcing people into boxes, why don't we promote self-identification, work with the community to find a way in which it self-identifies and promote those concepts rather than trying to force communities into predetermined rigid categories that are comfortable for us, or that are better familiar with our own assumptions about identity.

I think rather than just keep talking, even though I wanted to talk more about what, I think, responsible research can look like and should look like, what I'd like to close with is that the active research itself, I think, as Margret has said, is a political act. It's one which

produces knowledge. It's one which reinforces concepts of centrality and marginality. There's so much about it that's fought with power. The very onus on communities of color degenerate numbers. Almost suggest that violence in their communities isn't legitimate or doesn't merit attention if those numbers can't be fabricated, if those numbers can't be generated. It also sets up almost a competitive dynamic that if the African-American communities have more domestic homicides than the South Asian community or the Filipino communities that these communities should compete amongst each other for under-served dollars.

I think that because research is a production of knowledge, because it is distilling to us what we experience, or what women's experiences are with violence, it's our critical learn, it's our way of understanding what violence against women is. And I think it exemplifies Audrey Lord's assessment that we'll never dismantle the master's house or the master's tools. That if we're going to change the culture that promotes and accepts violence against women, we need to change the critical lens we apply to that culture. (Applause.)

MR. WILLIAMS: So now we can take questions and answers.

(Laughter.) Actually, we had a conversation about they really set the frame for thinking about a number of things, and so what I'm going to do is not to repeat some of the

great things that they said. But I just have some _____
___ that I was sort of going over after we had our
discussion. I just want to highlight some things that I
think might be useful for us to think about and maybe to
continue to talk about.

One of the things is that I think, as researchers,
we're taught to be knowers, and I think we want to feel
comfortable with our capacity to know sometimes rather than
what it takes for you to know. So if I'm a person who feels
comfortable with my research skills and going out and
gathering information and data, there's a structure that I'm
taught and I'm supposed to feel comfortable with it. But
the question is, have I really understood the realities of
the populations that I need to work with?

I'll give you a comment that I have with a colleague
who's about to teach a class on cultural diversity, one of
the things she's going to teach in this class, and the one
thing she's not going to talk about is racism, sexism,
hetero sexism, homophobia. And I'm thinking, "How can you
teach a class like that?" And so she said, "Well, it takes
too long to understand things. So what we're going to do is
we're going to spend time having people self-assess." "Now,
what is that?" "They make some assumptions about a person's
capacity to deconstruct their own racism, the homophobia,
hetero sexism, et cetera."

So as I think about that, I think that's part of the problem. I mean, so, for example, [Ricardo Corrio (?)] and I did a presentation in San Diego about a year or so ago. And so there were a couple of researchers that were going to do something with the Latino community. So what they were going to do is take the notion of _____ and superimpose it on a population of Hispanics and then try to figure out how powerful this was as an influence, assuming that it really was a cause of abuse of the Latino community without really understanding that for Latinos the term _____ has a whole different perspective that is understood. So what they did was take a [bastardized (?)] term and then applied it as though it was real in an effort to try to figure out whether -- how -- what kind of an effect it would have.

So Ricardo was very, very polite, but what he also did was confront them about the issue, which is the first part that I want to talk about with regard to the issue of being knowers. One of the things that I think is quite important is that you have to be steeped in the population, steeped in the realities of the population that you want to work with. So I was asked -- I'm asked to do a presentation in a couple of months, and so they asked me to do a presentation on battered women. I said, "Wait a minute. Now, I'm a smart guy and I've been doing this work for a long time, but my

politics won't let me do this without doing it with a woman, and a woman who's informed about the issues of battered women."

I'm married to a woman who's Puerto Rican, but I'm not Puerto Rican. I'm not going to go -- I would do -- love to do collaborative work with her, but I can't claim to have total knowledge about her realities and how she would assess and define things. We've been married for fifteen years. I go to Puerto Rico on a regular basis, but I don't claim to have insight. There are things that she informs me about, and there are things that I learn that is inside her fabric that I can't adequately understand without making a connection with her.

And that's something that I think is important to do, but we're so arrogant that sometimes what we do is we don't take that into consideration in the work that we do. And I think it's important for us to develop collaborative relationships. So if you want to be steeped and you're not, but you care and you want to be effective, then what you do is you develop collaborations with those people who are informed.

I think of the words of Terry Cross. He says, "Oliver, I think it's important to get people with the hue, but I think it's also important to get people with the view."

(Laughter.) So you need to be able to make connections with

people who are concerned.

I mean one of the best people I can think of, Jackie Campbell, to me, is a good example. But another person who's a good example is a woman named Susan [Sorensen (?)], who's out of California, who does some really -- some really good work. Examples, and there are many more of white people who make the effort to make the connections to, and think it's important to value and honor the populations that they're trying to work with, and to be informed about. So spending time with a group.

Another thing that I think is important is to -- sometimes with different populations and different organizations, they say that people who are from the various communities who do work don't exist. So for a long time, people -- I didn't exist. I exist more now. (Laughter.) But for a long time, you know, I didn't exist. Or people are not informed about the work that's out there with people talking about the realities of their community. It's important to be able to gather the literature from people who have been trying to do the work for a period of time, and to be informed by them.

But another question I have is to what end, what's the purpose of the work that we do, and that's something that Amit said. And I guess when I think about that notion it's also what Margret talked about with respect to it being a

social action piece. You know, for me, it's different than just thinking about dealing with thinking about my thoughts. I really want this problem to stop in my community. So when I structure things and do the work, I want to find ways that it has meaning to changing things in my community, and I want people who are going to do this research to have the same commitment. I want it to matter to them that change occurs because, without it, what good is it? But I want them to understand my community before they step foot in it because they may do more harm than good without doing that. And I don't want them to be able to see me and interact with me just when it's time to do a research project. They need to be able to spend the time with me on a regular basis so to understand the texture of who I am and what my community is about. And I think that that's something that is important.

I think that there are good examples of people who are doing interesting work that may be different from the norm and sometimes gets criticized. I wish James Jackson did more work around domestic violence. We actually tried to approach him about doing it, but we don't have the bucks. So I may be approaching friends of mine to talk about different possibilities. But one of the things that I like about his work is he does this national representative sample of African-Americans to try to ask so many questions

about they're affected -- associated with different problems. Unfortunately, not one of them is -- domestic violence is not one of the ones that they ask questions about. You know, we could be informed about this issue in our community in various dimensions if we were able to include that as one.

But what he does is that he says, "I don't want to have African-Americans be a comparison group. I want them to be the group of focus. And I want to -- don't want to compare to how other people think. So, in some cases, our control group, and then you find out how bad you are. Let's end up expanding so you can understand the textures and issues and ways that people deal with problems or experience problems and find support to problems." And so I think that he's a real good example in his center at the University of Michigan, and there are other people who write with him like James Jack -- Linda [Chatters (?)] and Robert Taylor and other folks, but those are really, really good examples of people doing some important work, too.

I guess the thing that I think about, too, is just to talk briefly about the dynamics of what we don't know and how it has an impact. I'm beginning to do some thinking around the Somali community because there's a large influx of Somalis that are coming to the Twin Cities and around the country. And I've been concerned when I think of _____.

I want to find as much of a way to be as inclusive and as informed. So, as I mentioned before, I'm not doing this work by myself, so I'm going to make connections with people who are Somali who can help inform me about the issue.

But one of the things that I've become aware of is the fact that there's a big clash in terms of dealing with this issue of domestic violence as it relates to the current systems, the way that they're structured in terms of serving this population. So I have a friend who's Somali, who's an advocate and --

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MR. WILLIAMS: -- community around domestic violence. But also, what it structured to be -- to the conventional approach is it seems to be ineffective. One of the things that we don't understand is that the Somalis may end subverting conventional support services. And the reasons why they do that is because they have something that's similar to [circle sentencing (?).] Of course, it was practiced for thousands of years before we called it circle sentencing.

Now, let's talk about the strengths and weaknesses in their context. So what they're going to likely to do is to not even use the system. So even if they get called, and they get called up and get brought into, it's not -- and they don't participate in the system, it's not like a

typical domestic violence case where you see people that are not cooperating. They're going back to interact within a structure where you end up getting families and communities to spend time negotiating and responding to this issue in ways that are different than what we think about. So they have elders and they have families respond to the issue.

So what happens in domestic violence cases? If a woman is physically abused and she's scarred, then there's a certain amount of money that has to exchange between families, and it's rated similar to how you would mark not only injury, but even murder, particularly if you left a scar because this is the way that people start to value people in the community.

An interesting way for me to start to think about things. Now, I have questions about it, and the things that I don't trust and, of course, I'm an outsider and I have to learn, but one of the things that I want to understand is because it's a patriarchal system, do women feel as though they're being served adequately in that system? Do they really feel as though they're being -- that they are safe and that they are protected? In terms of some of the people I spoke to, they said, yes.

But for me, one of the things that I like to do is to identify women who live -- Somali women who have been victims of abuse and do focus groups with them. But, of

course, you have to do things like back translate, and to get people within the community to collaborate with you to be informed about the issue, and to write it up and help you develop your insights and your understanding. I mean, also, in terms of approaching the notion of female circumcision. It's something that's horrifying to me, but, within the context of the population that you're trying to deal with, how do you approach dealing with such a subject within that community? Those are things that you have to think about if you're going to be more informed about trying to be responsive and to try to be helpful. Well, there's a Somali physician that's in Atlanta, who is trying to reverse the impact of female circumcision. Don't you think she should be at the table when trying to structure such a thing?

But the thing that I think happens too often is we, as researchers, are too arrogant sometimes to do what it takes to be informed. And what we are is we're sometimes too busy and we think that we have the answer sometimes, when I'm not so sure that we understand the questions. Maybe we should start to try and understand the questions differently and try to be as collaborative as we need to be, and to be as inclusive as we need to be to try to be informed for the purpose of trying to stop the problem of domestic violence in our community. So, in a nutshell, -- (Laughter.) -- that's what I wanted to share with you, and I know we're

interested in having questions and having a further discussion with the group.

MODERATOR: Thank you. (Applause.) I think the floor is open both for the panelists among themselves and -- leave it open.

FROM THE FLOOR: (Inaudible.) I have a question, a commentary to make about the intersection -- (Inaudible due to not using a microphone.) Now, there is, I think that -- sorry.

MODERATOR: If you have questions, if you can talk into it because it will tape the --

FROM THE FLOOR: Okay. My question -- the issue goes something like this. We are, to some extent, rewarded for being arrogant in academia, and we are, to some extent, rewarded for pushing ahead our agenda in academia. And yet, my impression of the movement is that they are waiting for academics to be enlightened and to go there and to join them for the right reasons to do the work. I do -- I don't think that that is going to happen like that and that there -- this has to be some kind of leap from the movement to the academia to make us accountable to respond to their needs of the communities.

For example. You have -- we have social work programs. We have counselling _____ programs. We have all sorts of programs and we say that we're preparing people to work

with all these issues is very important. But the folks in the community know that to a great extent we are not. But I've yet to hear anybody of them commenting and saying, "You know, the folks that you're sending here know nothing about this issue of domestic violence." So, you know, today's -- I mean there is a sense in which I think we need to not only hear more from folks who are working day in and day out with this, but to really make us accountable and to _____ us to do the kind of work that means something to the agencies and to the folks in the field, and to the women and the children. That's just one thought.

The other issue that I wanted to _____ reflect about has to do with the notion that we seem to have thought all too easily about culture being a depository of prescriptions for violence, so to speak, when, in fact, the opposite is my experience to be the truth. I mean culture, by definition, is a statement of civility. We all create -- we organize together in an effort to help us not destroy it to each other. And within its culture there is the great depository of informal ways of controlling and dealing, and organizing life that prevents violence and, which, I think, a lot of our programs do not take into account, and our research does not approach our lives that way. Anyhow, just a thought.

MODERATOR: Anyone --

MS. ABRAHAM: I always address the second point a little. I think it's, you know, in my own work, I say that one of the concerns that we should have as researchers, and I think even as activists to some degree, is this notion of a dichotomous model. I think we have to look at an additive model, and what I mean by an additive model is I'm not sure we have to always see it as culture versus structure. It's both, and I think there are, you know, very positive things in our culture, but there are also those negative aspects that we have to address.

The same thing in terms of structure. I think when you look at from many immigrant communities and when in doing this research how the -- and I'm sure there are people from _____, but you know how the _____ views it, how the different institutions view it. I think you can't -- I think we have to be careful that we don't say that either we glorify culture or that we dismiss culture. I think there is a give and take, you know, an additive model where we can do the same thing in terms of organizations. Collaborate.

And you said earlier that we were at the intersections, and very often, researchers do have a certain arrogance. And I agree with you, but there's the other side where I think, in our communities, in fact, for many of us who come from _____ tradition. That we live, and I mean that is the reality. We live in a society that does

place a high value to documentation. And I think there is a responsibility of the researcher and with collaboration with organizations to document that data.

And I say this, I mean, from my own experience, and I know some of the people, you know, organizations here. _____ is here, _____. A lot of them will tell you that, you know, so often, for _____ cases and deportation they ask for research and documentation. And these advocates, very often, are running around trying to find who will do that. And then when you go to courts as a, you know, issues of conflicts of interest, who you're representing. And, you know, these are issues that we really have to seriously think about. So I'm not sure.

You know, I would like to urge people both researchers and, you know, advocates and practitioners not to make this divide between us, but to really look at it as an additive model where we collaborate so that we do have the best things. And as Amit and Oliver pointed out, to what end and to whom we're doing this for.

MR. WILLIAMS: I also wanted to add something to that. Thank you. I guess the thing that I think about is that I was sort of fortunate in my experiences at the University of Minnesota in being supported to do the work that I do, but I would have done it anyway. So, you know, either I would have been _____. "You know that Oliver Williams.

He was really nice. Where is he these days?" "Well, he had to go to another university." (Laughter.) Because with the _____ thing, you know, you have to _____ peers.

But I've been supported, but, you know, the fear that many academicians have is that if they do work that focuses on diversity or specific cultures is that it's not going to be validated and it's not going to be supported. So they don't do it. And that they think that they'll be less respected. I mean the reason why I do is because I mean I'm as much concerned about the needs of my community that I'm concerned about it, and I'm also concerned about stopping this problem. That drives me. So I would have been a visitor in that place and gone somewhere else, but I was supported. So that's the absolute fear.

There are people who I knew were applying for a position, and one of the comments that a person made when this individual was applying for this endowed chair was, "Well, you know, this person focuses on cultural diversity." It was specific cultural that they spent time with. And I had to make the point that they're likely to have read everything that you have to read in the field and then become more informed about the issues of that population to be able to make comparisons and to be responsive to the issues. So why would you see that as something that would make this person less capable? You have to be able to value

the person in different ways.

So that's the way that I think about _____ is one issue responding to your question. But the other thing, too, is making the connection to social action. There are a number of people in the field of domestic violence who do, I think, a good job. _____ is one person that I can think of. I think Jeff [Eddelston (?)] does a pretty decent job in terms of trying to make connections to make the work make sense, you know. But I think that around the issues of diversity, you have to have more of those types of things that happen as well.

FROM THE FLOOR: Yeah. I'm looking in this outline and it talks about racism, sexism and classism, but I haven't heard anything about classism in the presentation. And I think the population that we get when we treat batteredds is below a level, you know. People that are disadvantaged in terms of whether they can get legal -- whether they can hire a lawyer basically. And whoever falls below that level, no matter what race or ethnic background they are, are in that level.

And I usually start off by saying, "Yes, you are disadvantaged now. We recognize that. And that's all you're going to see in this group is disadvantaged people. So just go from there." But it's interesting that this panel didn't really -- the classism, and I wonder why that

is. Why --

MR. WILLIAMS: It seems like to me that's -- I mean there's a number of -- the number of people, particularly in domestic violence programs that you're likely to see are disproportionately low income.

FROM THE FLOOR: Yes.

FROM THE FLOOR: Okay. So when you're talking about African-American men who come to those programs -- as a matter of fact, the programs that you're talking about, most of the people that you see are black _____, that are low income _____. We need to be as more -- more informed about people, at least in the African-American communities. I think when we write things, William Oliver and I started to talk about some issues and said we have to do some more things that dealt with middle class and upper middle class because we're less informed about that. And we do our writing in terms of being focused on, but I --

FROM THE FLOOR: The research subjects --

PANELIST: Yeah.

FROM THE FLOOR: -- will come from the people who have been arrested. Therefore, there's no research other than that. The structure of our society --

PANELIST: Right.

FROM THE FLOOR: -- fixed the _____ group of -- from the disadvantaged people --

and it was something that we were expecting some of it in the discussion. I have to say that when I first started doing my research, I called it ethno gender because I did feel that at least in the South Asian immigrant community that -- and this is a while ago. I have changed it in terms of the book that's coming out in the spring of 2000. But one of the things is that class does to some degree get de-contextualized. These would be the dominant group.

I mean I am amazed at how -- while there are class tiers within the organize -- you know, within the community, very often, ethnicity becomes a primary marker of how we're identified. I'm amazed at how that's done within the court systems and, you know, the criminal justice system.

And I also want to talk about the fact that if you -- you know, in my own research, it's not just people coming to the criminal justice system that I did -- I mean I actually interviewed women. There were women who were in the corporate world. There were women who were the wives of doctors. And I think, you know, one of the things that we try to show is that it is an issue of addressing class. In fact, in our communities very often it's about also addressing class. And I think we didn't really -- you're right. I think we didn't do that.

But I think many of the ethnic minority communities are trying to address really how is class, you know, intersected

PANELIST: Right.

FROM THE FLOOR: -- in our society, which is -- which gives you skewed views on what domestic violence is.

PANELIST: Right.

MR. SEN: I just wanted to reinforce what you're saying. I think that even a researcher or criminal justice practice might preselect, perhaps, disproportionately for one class sector. It is important to remember, as you're saying, that domestic violence happens in all communities. It happens in all _____.

The other thing, I think that I think it is important definitely to look at the intersection of classes and with the other _____ of privilege. I think Margret touched on that briefly when she talked about the census and the way in which it's conducted. It's not only -- it is very class selective because it's premised on a phone survey, people who have phones, people who have stable addresses. And that in itself is certainly modulizing to huge categories of people. But also in language, it's conducted in a limited number of languages so people who don't speak the language that the census is -- that the crime victimization survey is conducted in, don't appear in that census. And I think that the intersection is important. How is it class selective? How is it [lingualisticly (?)] selected?

MS. ABRAHAM: I also want to address -- I think there was,

both in terms of who the researchers are in these communities. And I'm not too conscious that even the activists in the, you know. Because it's very easy to play the game of the oppressed. I come. And because you have no history of me, I can very easily say, "You know, I come from this low middle class -- you know, I come from a low middle class. I've been oppressed. And here's my position _____ that makes it very good for research to say those things and from the point of the activist." And if you actually historicize it, it's not.

And I think we have to also take into account within the communities who these researchers are and what -- I mean so there's class both in terms of -- actually, I want to talk intellectual class, too, in terms of university hierarchy, and where the researchers are. And, you know, I've just been valued in some grants and this next thing about who have the professional writers to write the grants out and, therefore, to get the money, and where many of the ethnic minority researchers are. And so, you know, class has to be taught not only in terms of who we get, but in terms of the research process, too. And I think, you know, you made a very valid point. That we need to engage in the discussions of researchers.

FROM THE FLOOR: I was going to say don't you think that in terms of current research is extremely ethnic centric, and

those people who are trying to do research that is not ethno related are really low down on the matter of importance, and even are not considered and may not be considered as respectable researchers because they're researching something which it, in many people's minds, can't fit into neat little categories and, certainly, doesn't fit into the four ethnic categories that Amit mentioned.

And what about the people who their system of identification leans more towards, for instance, religion than it does toward ethnicity even though -- and they -- those people may be relating to and using many different ethnic agencies and so forth only for parts of what they need because their major identification is religion and it has nothing to do with all the categories that the government and local agencies want to put them under. And since they don't accept that pigeon hole, they don't go to those places.

And then who's researching how the people use the agencies? I don't think anyone's researching that. How do people who are ethnic communities use different agencies, and what makes them choose that? When do they use religious agencies? When do they use ethnic ones? When do they use which ethnic ones, you know? And why is that? And to what extent do they use them? I think there's very little research on that.

And lastly, I find and I know that within the federal government and with the state government and local government when it comes to the religion of a _____ there is a real horrible attitude, and there's an opinion that's set in stone that _____ as a religion is a horrible, rotten religion, and it is the reason that women are the victims of violence. And so what happens with the researchers and the people who do the services that they're in the mode of moving people, women who are Moslem out of their religion and out of their communities because they feel that's what will help them, and so they don't use the services and they don't get the funding, and they don't connect.

FROM THE FLOOR: _____, thank you. I just wanted to validate what you're saying and make the connections that we're talking about. I think that the research models that you're describing, I think, quite fairly, can be described as mainstream. It's not only categories, but only assumptions that are oppressive, that are racist and oppressive. I mean disallowing a community to organize the way it organizes, the way it self-identifies around a faith access as opposed to something that is constituted around race or language is oppressive if that's the primary source of identification, or even a multiple identification.

Not only that, I think you touched on something which is absolutely enormous, absolutely enormous. And the way I

think about it is it's racism, and I think the analysis that I would like to apply to it is the same analysis that we've applied to sexism. One of the things our director, Bonnie Campbell, always says quite eloquently is, "If I were to leave this room and someone were to sexually assault me, everyone would be appalled. No one would stand for it. But if it came up, perhaps, a day later that that was somebody that I knew and that was my ex-boyfriend, all of a sudden, questions would be asked. You know, perhaps, I would be less legitimate. Perhaps, I would be less believed. People would start interrogating my reasons for being there."

And I think, similarly and very tragically, when violence against women occurs in mainstream spaces, I think we're starting to realize that, no, it doesn't -- it has nothing to do with the woman. It's not the woman's fault, right? But strangely, when it occurs in the _____ community, her faith is something that's questioned, right? To a degree to which it seems as if she has some agency in terms of the way in which that -- the problematics are framed.

I mean I think Oliver can speak probably better than anyone about the assumptions that are made about criminality in the African-American community and domestic violence. I mean why is it that, all of a sudden, race even becomes an issue? Do you see what I'm saying? Or that culture becomes

an issue? When you can have an analysis of violence against women that's premised appropriately on power and control when you're dealing with mainstream communities, but when you're dealing with communities that aren't mainstream communities, all of a sudden, faith becomes an issue. Race becomes an issue. This is part of their culture. This is who they are. This is what those people are like.

You know, we've tried to work with the states in the Southwest to improve their partnerships with native communities and they tell us, "Hey, this is real life. This is just what these people do." Well, this is what these people do, but there's just as much domestic violence in the mainstream communities. Is that what those people do, too? So, thank you. I think that that's an analysis that we need to broaden and embrace.

FROM THE FLOOR: Thank you. I'm Bernie [Octer (?)] with the National Institute Of Justice. I have a dilemma I would like to present to the panel, and it concerns research procedure versus our interest in getting good information about a particular culture. And if I could take your example of, say, Somalia, Oliver. You mentioned focus groups. Say you want to go about doing focus groups with this group in order to learn more about how domestic violence -- issues related to domestic violence in that culture, and you realize the appropriate way to do it is

with your trained researchers conducting the focus group or interviews that might be one on one.

Yet you find that this -- the group is much more responsive, or that they are reluctant to engage with you. But yet, they are, perhaps, much less reluctant to engage with advocates who might be working with them in their culture. So you decide that using the advocates to do the focus groups would be a better way. How does that, if at all, compromise your research? (Background talking and laughter.)

MR. WILLIAMS: You know, Bernie, actually that is the approach that we're going to use. We're using people who come from the culture to engage and to do the focus groups, but we are also identifying people who are researchers who understand the language, too, and also understand the culture. It's this issue about collaboration.

But, you know, there was another research project that I did with Alice Lynch in Minnesota _____ Corrections and to try to understand issues of African-American women and their experiences in domestic violence programs and such. It was the same thing. We ended up trying to identify women who had been physically abused, had a history, experiences of being either -- had been victims of abuse who were African-American, and then we trained them. You know, we had them go out and do the focus groups.

But then we paired them with people who were researchers in terms of trying to help do the analysis and they constructed the work that we were doing. But it takes more time, you know. It's not as easy.

MS. ABRAHAM: I think I want to answer that because I have this book of mine coming out and it's ten years later from when I started, and some of it has been this whole research process, how you do it. When I first went, and I thought it would be two years. I had been well trained by my advisor, and I thought two years and that's it. And then I slowly _____ and said, "Well, where did you come from this? And, you know, we'll help out."

And one of the things we really have to talk with the research process -- and I struggled with that, so I can talk from personal experience. Was when I was doing the interviews, I interviewed women, and I went to the organizations and they had to -- I did individual women and then they asked women whether they wanted to be involved in the research process.

But when the organizations had their own support groups, I never went for those, and there's a reason why. Because when I began doing the interviews and I began to talk with the organizations, too, many of the women wanted to talk about the organization and didn't feel comfortable talking to somebody from the organization or an advocate.

And they would say, "Well, are you going to say this? You know, are you sure?" You know, and I had already made it clear that, you know, their names would not be involved. So I think there's a question of how you use it and when you use it.

And what I brought about earlier, the notion of the power of people within the organization and how they deal, you know, advocates themselves, how they deal with women in the program. And I say this because there was a recent project, and I'm not going to mention about it. But one of the board members of the organization was doing some of the interviews. Now, clearly, this is problematic. I really think that kind of research where you have immense power over some of the lives of the women who are coming is jeopardized, and I think you do have to talk about it. I think one way to do it is very often to have certain arenas, certain focus groups which are collaborative, but then find researchers who are not totally involved in that. Because while it's political, you do want to do responsible research.

PANELIST: There's a woman in the back.

FROM THE FLOOR: I would just like to add some things that you have said. Most of the time when you were saying that there's not much literature on South Asians or Asians as such, most of the time, I think, _____

grants require minorities to be included. Yes, we are _____
_____ are being done. But then when the analysis is
being done, they're taken out as the noise factor. Because
we don't fit the models of many things that are measured.
Even what is measured is then used as a comparison to the
white sample that has been collected on. So it is how do
you fit a norm, a standard? And you're either for a shorter
fit or you're a _____. So you're not included at all in
the discussions that are made.

But also, when we talk about the Asian categories, Asia
is a huge area. We're talking about a humongous population,
very diverse histories. And we don't include that when we
talk about the population that we do research on here. We
exclude their entire lives before they come to the shores of
America as they're coming to America with the beginning of
their entire life here. And so what happens is our entire
research is all so skewed with it. And I think we have to
be cognizant of it.

And when we also come from cultures where English is
our language, that doesn't mean that when we can answer
surveys we understand what is being asked of us. I rate on
a mental health thing as being psychopath. (Laughter.)
Because I feel these emotions, so I should be in a mental
institution according to the psychiatrist who works with me.
(Laughter.) But I think it's the way the questions are

really talked about how do we do collaborative research. The _____ got together to talk about how they're going to do collaborative work, and I think that's a start for the millennium.

MR. WILLIAMS: You know, it's interesting what you also said, _____, regarding -- I'm sorry.

FROM THE FLOOR: _____

MR. WILLIAMS: _____. Sorry. With respect to how different communities see themselves, too. I mean the notion of -- I know in Minnesota the _____ community. There's some really interesting things. They do community assessments to determine where they are with regard to the stage of being in the United States.

FROM THE FLOOR: Right.

MR. WILLIAMS: And trying to figure out what it is that they collectively can do to be able to progress as a group. I sort of admire that. But one of the things, too, is maybe there are a number of reasons why people keep silent. But sometimes I wonder whether silence is _____ by if you're visible and you make noise than it influences how people view you.

And the thing that I wonder about is to be as informed as they can be with regard to not only the issues that really do exist, but also I think there's another tension with regard to freedom to practice your beliefs and your

asked of me. It's not that I can't speak English. And I think these are things that we have to keep in mind when doing research.

FROM THE FLOOR: I just have three small requests. One is, can we take a photograph of the documentation? This is for our newsletter. Of your panel? Would they mind?

PANELIST: No.

FROM THE FLOOR: Thank you.

PANELIST: Get our good side. (Laughter.)

FROM THE FLOOR: Thanks. Thank you.

FROM THE FLOOR: With the work that we're doing in California and a couple of things that have come up because we're dealing with all populations, also the emerging populations. There are communities that are resisting to being documented. And in some ways, we have to respect that. But in doing that, then they're also excluded from services. And one comes to mind is the _____ Moslem community. They're Moslem. They're also -- they have the South Asian link, and they also have the Caribbean link, the _____ link. So they are, right now, taking care of their own, and I can't recall right now what the population figures are.

But you all, as researchers, and especially those who are sitting in a funding position, is when we're looking at services, when we're looking at violence, and not only

thought I'd stop from boring you all to death.

But one of the things I wanted to say is that some of these invisibilizing terms like other, non-white, even words like Asian, they go beyond discreet individual identity politics. It's not just one person. It's huge populations that are rendered invisible. It's the concerns, realities, needs, experiences, conclusions of those populations that are _____.

Another thing in terms of what we're going to do about it. That's a real challenge. I think that Oliver set up what, I think, what I feel as the most responsible model that I can think of, which is to invest in the community to do its own research. Not to study the community. That, I think, is _____. There's so much power and balance and asymmetry. Not just in terms of who's controlling the terms of that research, but the _____ itself, and the way that that _____ is informed about ideology, us and them, they're not like us. We talked a lot about that.

Not to toot our own horn, but we have done a few things that are responsible. We did invest in the African-American Task Force On Violence Against Women and its research, which, to me, in a lot of ways, exemplifies responsible research. First thing. They didn't preselect for a concept of success or completeness. It wasn't how is everything wonderful, and how is everything sufficient, which I think a

violence against women, but violence in the communities, how are you going to respond to that in the next millennium?

And number two is that our educational institutes, and I've had personal interaction with that in terms of research, is when they do gather the research, and I think only recently some institutions, at least in Southern California, have decided to have a collaborative link with the communities because funding is available also. But who benefits from that research? And does that research go back to the community so that they can empower themselves to get the funding to get the resources and the services that they need? And what are you all proposed to recommend from here on with that? Thank you.

FROM THE FLOOR: I don't know. I'm not a funder.

(Laughter.)

MR. WILLIAMS: So I really want to know what do you plan to do about this? (Laughter.)

FROM THE FLOOR: Here's my wallet. (Laughter.)

MR. SEN: Oliver knows more about this than I do, but I've got the big checkbook so -- I think both of your points were absolutely -- they just really exemplify what's the core of this. It's not just how the research is performed. It's who performs the research and how is that research used. What are the assumptions that inform that research? I had more stuff to talk about with identity politics, but I

lot of researchers guided around a principal of success, especially when it's evaluation, and that success is linked to constantly being refunded.

They enlisted, as Oliver said, and trained people in the community to conduct research and interviews. They arrived at very difficult findings. That the community was really estranged from the police and the criminal justice system that reflect a difficult reality. They didn't suppress critical or negative findings. Those findings were published, shared and discussed. And now, a very relevant, a very powerful, very useful informed policy in thinking.

There's one other thing that I wanted to talk about, but it's escaping me so --

MS. ABRAHAM: I think both the points were very, very important. Let me start out by saying that and I want to ask -- I mean I want to answer one of them. Well, I think in terms of doing research, I think it behooves us to also look at how the funders, and track the funders and see how much research money they're giving to which organizations. And I think while it's made public to actually track that as research, how much is going to studying various communities. I think we haven't really done that in the ethnic minority communities. And make a little bit of more of a noise about it.

And some of it really has to do with, again, as I said

in the research process, how good your grant looks as a value to the other side. I'm conscious of that sometimes having to write those comments, say, maybe this research proposal doesn't look great because they have not had the big institute money or the big dollars to make this look perfect, but that's a very important project. And also, to look at the nature of collaboration. I think in the millennium, that's what we're going to do. I think _____ office is now doing some of that. I know Deborah is here from _____.

I think one part of answering your question, how do you respond to these issues in the millennium, is really going to be looking at it as a political process. And, particularly, in terms of policy legislation. I think we've just, you know, not taken that part into account that how, you know, we have these wonderful speeches made by the top brass and the political leaders, but, you know, is there a lot of rhetoric and not much substance in what's being then put out?

I think, you know, just in terms of very briefly -- Louella is here and I know _____. They've been doing that. I mean a part of -- was it -- I'm forgetting the days now. This is what happens when I was kid.

FROM THE FLOOR: Saturday.

MS. ABRAHAM: Saturday. The institute got together and they

customs and your perspectives.

FROM THE FLOOR: Many of these communities did not come here by choice.

FROM THE FLOOR: Right. (Talking together.)

FROM THE FLOOR: Absolutely.

MS. ABRAHAM: But I think that's where somebody has to go.

Is to look at it not by _____ are we going to get to America or --

FROM THE FLOOR: Right.

MS. ABRAHAM: That is really _____ global work and contextualize the --

FROM THE FLOOR: Actually, I'd like to ask about the concept of class because I'm in the midst of doing a dissertation and what you're looking at race ethnicity in class, and its relationship to domestic violence. And I'm interested both in the ways in which those factors affect the ways in which women are controlled, and also their access to resources.

And when I tried to define what I meant by class, it's an enormously difficult concept, particularly talking about women and you're talking about domestic violence. I mean if you're looking at income, education and occupation, whose are you looking at? The perpetrator's or hers? And if you factor in domestic violence, do women actually have access to income, and do they actually have access to education and jobs?

So I'm wondering if you have a definition that you think is the best to use around class, or if maybe social capital isn't a more useful term when we look at domestic violence.

MR. WILLIAMS: I guess the thing I think about as it relates to African-Americans is -- but also dealing with the issue just in general. Sometimes it can be sort of a difficult thing to look at in general with all populations that you're dealing with. But among African-Americans, when you're looking at the issue, sometimes I think, you know, when you're talking about issues associated with education, but also history, familia history, you know, as a piece. But the thing that you're --

I mean I'd like to know more about what you mean by socio-economic status. Sometimes I think the education of the person, I think, again, their family's history in terms of being at a certain sort of status. But I also think that there is -- where the tension is that we -- what I think you're saying is that when a person leaves a relationship, they may not have the money.

FROM THE FLOOR: Or in the relationship. (Talking together.)

FROM THE FLOOR: Right.

MR. WILLIAMS: But she may have to -- in the context of leaving a domestic violence situation, you know, what

a name like Margret Abraham and the first thing I have to say is, "You're shocked at seeing me because of all your thinking." And now when you see me, it's "Shit, she can speak English. Are we going to take the lecture?" So I take class is very complex in so far that class has to do not just with, you know, -- it's to do with ownership and non-ownership, but also who controls that. So I think it would be problematic to limit it to very small kind of -- but I think the closest is I really do believe the _____ had a lot to say about it, and I think it's the closest that I have come to believing the class and ownership.

MR. SEN: That was the profound answer and this is the simplistic answer. (Laughter.) I think what we found is that -- I you're saying that really rudimentary things and _____ by people who are saying profound things. (Laughter.) But I think what we found doing the work, doing federal funding and reporting on collecting data on violence against women is that violence occurs across classes and communities, but is recorded [dispairedly (?).] And that is a function of privilege and mobility.

Women in affluent communities commonly have resources that women in indigent communities don't like private physicians. I mean they may seek a private therapist. They may have more invested in the concept of preserving privilege because if they maybe stay with their abuser just

capital does she have?

FROM THE FLOOR: (Talking together.)

MR. WILLIAMS: And to me that's -- just in terms of thinking about it, I sort of wonder about what her status was and then define after she left. That's a whole different sort of thing. Do you know what I'm saying?

FROM THE FLOOR: Um-hmm. (Yes.)

MR. WILLIAMS: But that's just my -- that's my take on that.

FROM THE FLOOR: Do you want to go first?

MODERATOR: You have five minutes.

FROM THE FLOOR: You go first.

MS. ABRAHAM: Oh, you want an answer to that?

FROM THE FLOOR: No. I have a question.

MS. ABRAHAM: Oh, okay. This -- I just want to say quick. I think class is very complex. I have to tell my own bias. I do come from a _____ kind of background, so I do think that's something to be said about the ownership of capital. But I think there's another dimension in the context of class, and I found that my research very often it is about who has that. And you may be highly educated. I mean I find that from my own community where you're highly educated and you come here, and you do have to take a different type of job because they think your language, your accent.

I mean I see the students in my class. I walk in with

a little bit longer, one of their kids can go to college or -- there's more to lose in a way because they have privileges that indigent women don't. But I think that it's dangerous to look at that research in terms of thinking that a class -- that violence occurs dispairedly because of class. Do you want to add to that?

MR. WILLIAMS: I just want to say one -- (talking together.) It also went back to your question about issues with respect to social class. That sometimes what happens is that people can find themselves in systems and ways to be able to be included and be studied, you know, are there because they're the most easily accessible population to get a hold of. And when people talk about that -- I sort of complained about that to different groups.

One of the comments that they said is that we can't force other people to come to you. I said, "Well, look. If you look at the criminal justice system and you're saying that you're supposed to have a system that's supposed to be just and fair, then you need to find ways to be able to get access to be informed about those people." And I don't think we do that as good a job --

MS. ABRAHAM: I guess when we see the non-ownership. I mean in the relationship, too. And that's what I mean by non-ownership. Where the husband owns everything. I mean many of the women I interviewed had no joint account. They were

literally invisible to the entire society, American society. So I think when I talk of ownership, it's at a micro as well as a macro level.

MODERATOR: I think with that, I'll have to say that we've come to the end of our session. (Applause.) I want to thank -- (Applause.)-