

# Spoiled Group Identities and Backstage Work: A Theory of Stigma Management Rehearsals

John O'Brien<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*How do persons with a stigmatized identity learn potential responses to discrimination and harassment? Drawing on three and a half years of ethnographic data, this paper demonstrates how members of a group of Muslim American youth are socialized in locally dominant stigma management strategies through stigma management rehearsals. Stigma management rehearsals are small group interactions through which leaders and members encourage their peers to adopt normative stigma responses. I identify two rehearsal types that vary in their socializing function as well as in their temporal orientation toward stigmatizing incidents. In direct preparation rehearsals, individuals anticipating a stigmatizing encounter are quickly taught the normative response. In deep education rehearsals, stigmatizing incidents set in the past or hypothetical future are used to teach justifications underlying local responses and to allow for the private expression of publicly inappropriate responses. These findings suggest that intragroup dynamics and backstage processes are important considerations when investigating issues of stigma and stigma management.*

## Keywords

stigma, stigma management, discrimination, Muslims, temporality

How do persons with a common stigmatized identity work together to learn and consider possible responses to discrimination and harassment? How are members of stigmatized groups socialized in specific stigma management practices? How does stigma management operate in private, ingroup settings? Applying the concept of stigma management rehearsals, I use ethnographic data on a group of Muslim American youth and adults to explore how individuals carrying a common stigmatized identity learn about and practice ways to manage their

stigma while together in private, “backstage” space.

A stigma is commonly understood to be an attribute of a person—such as a racial phenotype, physical deformity, or perceived character flaw—that is treated

---

<sup>1</sup>University of California, Los Angeles, USA

## Corresponding Author:

John O'Brien, Department of Sociology, 264 Haines Hall, 375 Portola Plaza, University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California 90095-1551

Email: [johnob@ucla.edu](mailto:johnob@ucla.edu)

as “deeply discrediting” by others in society (Goffman 1963:3). Sociologists and social psychologists argue that it is the specific social context, including actions by powerful institutions, that allows the construction of a “relationship between an attribute and a stereotype” (Goffman 1963:3). This relationship transforms a given trait into a negatively considered stigma carrying the potential for undesirable social consequences (Goffman 1963; Link and Phelan 2001; Corrigan, Markowitz, and Watson 2004). Stigma is constructed by processes operating at both the macro and micro levels of social life. At the macro level, cultural and political processes link certain identifications with stigmatizing stereotypes during specific historical periods and in particular locations (Link and Phelan 2001; Corrigan et al. 2004). For example, due to actions of government, media, educational, legal, and police institutions, to be identified as “Irish” in the United States during the first half of the nineteenth century was to carry a stigma with social and economic consequences. By the start of the twentieth century, however, this particular stigma was no longer salient (Ignatiev 1995). Action at the micro level is also central to the manifestation and maintenance of stigma, as it is during ground-level social interactions between individuals where a given trait may be treated as stigmatized, and the negative consequences of the given stigma may be brought to bear (Corrigan and Watson 2002).

Stigma management is the attempt by persons with stigmatized social identities to approach interpersonal interactions in ways aimed at minimizing the social costs of carrying these identities. Commonly employed stigma management strategies include passing (the attempt to hide the stigmatized attribute completely), disclosure (the open admission of stigma in

hopes of acceptance), and disavowal (in which both the stigmatized and nonstigmatized parties ignore the visible stigma). Stigma management is important from the perspective of the stigmatized, as carrying an unmanaged stigmatized attribute in society can result in serious psychological costs, such as feelings of embarrassment or shame, loss of self-esteem, and a sense of responsibility for perpetuating the negative stereotype (Miall 1986; Snow and Anderson 1987; Steele and Aronson 1995). Unmanaged stigma can also lead to severe social sanctions, such as verbal or physical harassment, loss of employment, or imprisonment or institutionalization (Edgerton 1967; Spradley 1970; Schneider and Conrad 1980).

The most widely discussed and documented kind of stigma management work is that which takes place in *public*, when a person with a spoiled social identity encounters nonstigmatized others and, in response, employs one or another interactional strategy, with some help from the nonstigmatized “normals” in the interaction (Goffman 1963; Link and Phelan 2001; Major and O’Brien 2005). An equally important but less explicitly theorized kind of stigma management work takes place in *private*, when persons with a shared stigmatized identification discuss their marginal social status and potential stigma management approaches among themselves or with sympathetic allies (Goffman 1963; Schneider and Conrad 1980). Such ingroup interactions addressing stigma and stigma management response have been discussed to some degree within sociology and social psychology (for a review, see Herman-Kinney 2003:716). Goffman (1963) gestures toward the importance of these private interactions, mentioning that the stigmatized are usually taught “tricks of the trade” for managing stigma by their

like-stigmatized peers (Goffman 1963:20), and describing how “professionals” and “spokespeople” from advocacy organizations tend to give stigmatized people specific advice in how to present themselves (Goffman 1963:109–14). In addition, some ethnographic studies of small groups of individuals sharing racial, economic, or medical stigmas describe the ways in which group members help one another learn about, prepare for, or rehearse stigma management strategies (e.g., Spradley 1970; Schneider and Conrad 1980; Miall 1986).

What has been missing from these approaches is an explicit, detailed, and generalizable theorization of how these backstage stigma management rehearsals work *as interactions* and an explanation of what these ingroup encounters reveal about the local stigma management culture of different collectivities of stigmatized persons. In order to address this gap in the literature, I sharpen the focus on ingroup stigma management work introduced by Schneider and Conrad (1980) and Miall (1986). Utilizing ethnographic observations of a group of Muslim American youth and adults, I identify and label the various processes present in stigma management rehearsal interactions that contribute to their socializing power, and argue that these concepts can be usefully applied to understand other cases of stigmatized collectivities.

Along the same lines, I want to suggest that stigma management rehearsals are a unique and consequential type of small group interaction. The microsociologies of Gary Alan Fine (1979, 2000; Fine and Harrington 2004) and Randall Collins (2004) have demonstrated how small groups of repeatedly interacting individuals serve as important locations for the creation, transmission, and reinforcement of shared cultural meanings. Data on stigma management rehearsals presented here affirms this overall notion of small groups as active socializing forces and

provides evidence for the centrality of common cultural vocabulary and experience (Fine 1979)—and repeated ingroup emotional expression (Collins 2004)—to the effectiveness of small group acculturation. Theorizing the stigma management rehearsal as a distinct and prevalent type of social interaction, with its own particular variants and processes, will provide an analytical framework for investigating the backstage, ingroup dynamics that help to shape the front stage, public management of stigma across a broad range of social contexts.

### SETTING AND METHODS

As part of a larger project exploring the everyday lives and religion of Muslim American teenagers, I have conducted ethnographic fieldwork at a mosque in a major American city for three and a half years, focusing primarily on the activities and members of the City Mosque’s weekly Muslim Youth Program.<sup>1</sup> The City Mosque attracts a wide array of ethnicities and nationalities: Arab and Middle Eastern, African, South Asian, and African American, among others, including mixed ethnicities. The majority of the youth in the mosque’s youth group are either U.S.- or Canadian-born children of immigrants, or they immigrated with their parents at a young age.

Established in the 1950s, the City Mosque is one of the largest, most well known, and generally well regarded mosques in the city. Since the mosque’s founding, its leadership has intentionally sought to promote the formation of a “Muslim American identity,” and has encouraged interaction with members of other faith groups, especially Jews and Christians. Like many Muslim American

---

<sup>1</sup>Pseudonyms are used for all organizations and persons discussed in the paper.

communities, the City Mosque membership was negatively impacted by the post-9/11 social and political climate in the United States, with Muslim youth facing increasing harassment at schools, adults being questioned and/or detained by federal law enforcement and immigration officials, and members having the general sense that they were under suspicion because of their religious identity. The mosque's primary response to this situation has been one of increased community outreach, with hundreds of interfaith and educational events held every year since 9/11, both within and outside the mosque, focused on the explicit goal of reaching out to non-Muslims and "setting the record straight" about Islam.

From January 2007 to August 2010, I spent 5 to 10 hours per week at the mosque or with mosque members offsite, volunteering and participating in youth group meetings and field trips, prayer sessions, interfaith programs, community forums, and other events, as well as informally interacting with youth from the program both inside and outside of the mosque. The participants in the Muslim Youth Program can be roughly divided into three groups: youth members, youth staff, and mosque leaders. Youth members form the majority of the group and, through my fieldwork, I befriended a core group of about 8 to 10 of them, who ranged in age from 14 to 22. Youth staff members are "older" youth, aged 19 to 25, who have been given leadership roles within the youth group as group coordinators or trip leaders. I also befriended this group of about 4 to 6 youth staff, in part because this group overlaps with the core older youth members group, and in part because I was closer to them in age. Finally, the mosque leadership is represented within the youth group by two men in their 30s, Omar and Michael. Both men have responsibilities in the mosque outside of the youth group, but spend part of their

working hours supporting and leading youth group activities. Joining the group and getting to know members of each stratum was not difficult, though it took time and patience.<sup>2</sup>

I spent approximately 500 hours in the field on this project and amassed over 1,300 pages of single-spaced typed field notes. I recorded field notes in one of two ways, depending on the setting. In cases of formal youth group meetings, I wrote field notes while at the site, as writing did not create a disturbance in this setting. I would then type up these notes later the same evening or the following day. In cases of more informal gatherings—either at the mosque or elsewhere with the youth—I felt that writing notes would create a barrier between myself and the youth, so I simply observed while there. Immediately after returning from the site, I typed up what I remembered from my observations.

To analyze my data, I utilized a modified grounded theory approach, which emphasizes allowing patterns to emerge from the data, rather than seeking to prove or disprove a pre-existing theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Timmermans and Tavory 2007). The process consisted of multiple rounds of analysis, through which emergent themes were identified and analytical foci progressively narrowed. Eventually, through multiple sessions of data analysis and refocusing, the theme of stigma management rehearsals among mosque members emerged. As I

---

<sup>2</sup>I feel that two factors may have made my entry into and acceptance within the field site smoother than it may have been otherwise. First, I am a practicing Muslim and therefore have a familiarity with, and participate in, community practices and holidays. I also have some direct experience with the stigmatization and stigma management strategies that are the subject of this paper. Perhaps as importantly, I came to this project with extensive experience working with middle and high school aged youth in afterschool programs.

began to construct preliminary theories about the workings of these rehearsals through data analysis, I also utilized the strategy of “analytic induction,” in which the researcher tests the validity of the emergent theories by actively seeking out alternative explanations (Katz 2001). These approaches yielded a data-driven analysis in which local meanings of the research subjects took center stage.

### THE SOCIAL CONTOURS OF MUSLIM AMERICAN STIGMATIZATION

Carrying a social identity that is vulnerable to stigmatization in a given historical time and social space—such as being a Muslim in the contemporary United States—is not the same as being always and everywhere stigmatized. It does, however, make experiences of stigmatization, which may include the public denouncement of one’s group identification, personal harassment or abuse, or slightly differential treatment, more likely. Such stigmatizing treatment is especially likely when one is in a social situation where “cultural resources” (Lamont 1992) or “schemas” (Sewell 1992) that express or carry certain prejudices or stereotypes are readily available and, sometimes, even socially rewarded. Such is the situation facing Muslim Americans today, where a complex of social factors has left persons with this religious identification vulnerable to stigmatization and potential harassment, violence, arrest, or detention. This stigmatization and harassment stems from an array of sources, including federal government policies and actions, representations in local and national media outlets, state and local law enforcement behaviors, and actions of individual citizens. These various sources of prejudicial schemas, stereotypes, and actions—many of which serve to strengthen one another—create an environment where the

stigmatization of Muslim Americans is sometimes allowed to proceed with little or no visible sanction from any official quarter. The 2008 election year rumor that Barack Obama was a Muslim, which was commonly met with allegations of slander but not of bigotry, is a case in point. And while there has been an accompanying outpouring of social support and encouragement for American Muslims from various corners of American society since September 11, 2001 (Howell and Shryock 2003; Cainkar 2009), there have also been continued discriminatory actions targeting Muslim Americans for their religious background and its alleged link with violence and terrorism.

While the initial, most intense period of social surveillance and targeting of American Muslims after 9/11, which included incidents of mass detentions (Cainkar 2009) and registration requirements (Ibish 2008), as well a sharp rise in hate crimes (Human Rights Watch 2002), cooled somewhat after 2003, there have remained in place less overt practices that utilize religious and/or national background as a central criteria for surveillance, prosecution, or harassment. An FBI initiative launched in 2003 to infiltrate mosques in the United States with undercover agents remains operational as well as controversial (Cainkar 2009; Watanabe and Glover 2009). Stringent immigration policies put in place after 9/11 continue to create significant delays in naturalization petition processing for Muslim and Arab Americans, due to lengthy FBI name and background checks (Ibish 2008). A tight-knit group of academics and writers produces books, papers, and films attacking Islam and its adherents with titles such as *Religion of Peace? Why Christianity Is and Islam Isn't* (Spencer 2007) and *American Jihad: The Terrorists Living among Us* (Emerson 2002). Members of the same group organize annual events on college campuses,

including “Islamofascism Week,” a gathering that promotes the idea that there is homegrown violent jihadist movement brewing in the United States, and that campus Muslim Student Associations (MSAs) are a key part of this movement ([www.terrorismawareness.org](http://www.terrorismawareness.org)). Verbal and physical harassment of Muslim and Arab youth in middle and high schools has risen and remained at increased levels since 9/11 (Ibish 2008; Cainkar 2009) and in a 2007 survey, 42 percent of Muslim Americans under 30 said that in the past year they had been verbally taunted, treated with suspicion, physically threatened or attacked, or targeted by police because they are Muslims (Pew Research Center 2007). The strong public opposition to a 2010 proposal to build an Islamic community center two blocks from the site of the former World Trade Center, much of which relied on the assumption that Islam has an inherent link with terrorism (Mohamed and O’Brien 2011), is another example of the potency of Muslim stigma in the United States.

As will be seen, many of the broader political, legal, and social processes concerned with Muslim Americans and their alleged linkage to terrorism and violence filter down into the daily lives of the young members of the Muslim Youth Program at the City Mosque. The social salience of Muslim stereotyping, sometimes backed by state and law enforcement power, does not mean that the Muslim youth of the City Mosque are constantly suffering the effects of stigma, but it does mean that they are often in a situation of potential or anticipated stigmatization. As a result, there is a hyper-awareness within the community of Muslim stereotypes and their potential negative consequences, as well as consideration of how triggering them might be provoked or avoided. It is within this context that mosque youth group leaders and members utilize stigma

management rehearsals as a socializing mechanism.

### STIGMA MANAGEMENT REHEARSALS

A stigma management rehearsal is a private interaction among members of a stigmatized identity group, and sometimes nonstigmatized allies, in which a real or hypothetical incident of stigmatization is discussed and possible strategies for responding are considered. Stigma management rehearsals take place in settings that participants consider to be safely “backstage” (Goffman 1959) relevant to the perceptions of potential stigmatizers, and therefore allow members to openly discuss strategies, and express emotions, in ways normally curtailed by their everyday stigma management concerns.<sup>3</sup> Stigma management rehearsals also usually take place in small groups (Fine 1979), among individuals who have developed a common history and local culture. The sense of shared purpose, social location, and cultural vocabulary among small group members—as well as their participation in group rituals of emotional expression (Collins 2004)—make the small group an especially suitable arena for the socialization of members in strategies through stigma management rehearsals.

I find two types of stigma management rehearsals operating within a small group of stigmatized persons. In *direct preparation*, the anticipation of an impending

<sup>3</sup>This does not mean that rehearsal participants are off duty from all impression management work, however. As Goffman (1959) reminds us, the backstage of one social performance is simultaneously the front stage of another, and while members of stigmatized groups may relax impression management work regarding their relevant stigmatized status during ingroup interactions, they continue to engage in performances associated with their other social identities, as well as those directed toward other ingroup members.

interaction with outside stigmatizers spurs group leaders and other members to coach an individual in the locally dominant stigma management strategy. In *deep education*, leaders use backstage time and space to instruct members in acceptable cultural justifications for the locally dominant stigma management strategy, and to permit the expression of a wide range of potential stigma responses for pedagogical purposes. These rehearsal types represent two distinct ways that members of stigmatized small groups may be socialized in stigma management strategies within ingroup settings. Despite their different emphases, both rehearsal types work to socialize group members in the same approach—the dominant stigma management strategy of the group. A *dominant stigma management strategy*, as I term it, is the specific approach to managing stigma (e.g., passing, covering, aggression, passivity) that is most often recommended and utilized among the members of a small group of stigmatized persons.

In addition to socializing members in locally dominant stigma management strategies, stigma management rehearsals promote a sense of groupness (Brubaker 2004) among members based on shared stigma and stigma management concerns, and provide an outlet for the private expression of emotions that are generally considered inappropriate for public display. These interactional features of stigma management rehearsals—their salient emotionality and emphasis on ingroup membership—make them particularly effective sites for stigma strategy socialization. As will be seen below, local power hierarchies and interpersonal dynamics also play an important role in stigma rehearsals, as it is usually, though not always, veteran members or official leaders who promote the locally dominant response to lower status members within rehearsal interactions.

Stigma response rehearsals also demonstrate the importance of temporality when studying social interaction. George Herbert Mead (1932) argued that because the present is the only time that people ever actually inhabit, the active consideration of the past or the future requires cognitive work on the part of human actors to bring these other temporalities into present interactions. Once invoked by participants, perceptions of past or future may then impact the course of present-time interactions. Picking up Mead's thread, contemporary sociologists have begun to explore the ways in which perceptions of the future may condition present decision-making and action (Zimbardo and Boyd 2008; Mische 2009; Eliasoph and Tavory 2010). This study supports this line of research by illustrating the concrete impact of temporality on interaction. As will be seen below, the consideration of different temporalities by group members and leaders impacts the particular kind of stigma socialization work that takes place in stigma management rehearsals.

### **Stigma Management Rehearsals: The Basic Form**

The basic interactional ingredients for a stigma management rehearsal include the presentation of a real or hypothetical incident of stigmatization and the consideration and/or promotion of strategies for responding to the stigma. These elements were evident during a stigma rehearsal that took place one afternoon at the mosque when Yusef, a youth group member who attends City College, approached Abdul, a youth staff person, as they left a youth group meeting together:

Everyone walks down the stairs, out the door, and onto the front stoop. I follow them out. Yusef talks to Abdul with others looking on: "So, you heard about this thing, they're having it at

our school, called Islamo Fascism Week?" "Yeah," Abdul says, nodding his head. "They're having that at a lot of schools." Yusef says, "Yeah, I think it's next week at City or something. But, man, why are they trying to hate on us like that? I'm gonna have to go over there and . . ." He raises his arms with fists clenched as if preparing to fight. "But you know," Abdul says. "I think going to protest those people doesn't help that much. It might be better just to leave them alone, because if people go and act crazy, then other Muslims don't want to get involved. They look at the Muslims protesting and acting crazy, and then say, 'I don't want to get involved in this.' So maybe we should just ignore those people." Yusef says, "Yeah, I won't do anything crazy, I'll just handle it . . . But if I see those people at City, I'm gonna be like . . ." He mimes walking over to someone, punching them out, then, while they're on the floor, pulling out a gun, holding it turned sideways and shooting them. Then he breaks his act and smiles: "Nah."

The primary purpose of stigma management rehearsals—to socialize members in locally approved stigma responses—can be seen here, as Abdul actively intervenes to dissuade Yusef from pursuing his implicitly proposed aggressive response, suggesting instead that “maybe we should just ignore those people.” As I demonstrate, the kind of passive and peaceful response to stigmatization advocated for by Abdul is also the approach most consistently promoted by the leaders, and most members, of the City Mosque. Stigma management rehearsals like this one serve as the mechanism through which a locally preferred strategy—that of passivity—is transmitted and achieves dominance within the small group. In each of the dozens of stigma management rehearsals I

observed at the City Mosque, one or more members of the group *always* argued in favor of this passive approach to stigma response.

In addition to illustrating the socializing role of stigma management rehearsals, this example also demonstrates three other dimensions of these rehearsals: their use for backstage emotional release, their role in constructing group solidarity, and their reflection of temporal concerns. First, the rehearsal serves as a private setting where Yusef can openly express and enact his frustration at the imagined stigmatizers (“I’m gonna have to go over there and . . .”) without worrying about the perspectives or possible judgments of outgroup members. Abdul allows Yusef’s venting performance of imagined aggression toward the organizers of Islamo Fascism Week to proceed to a point, objecting specifically to the possibility that Yusef might take this display of anger public. Abdul’s momentary allowance of Yusef’s aggressive demonstration, as well as his sympathetic head nods at Yusef’s description of Islamo Fascism Week, serves to emphasize the commonality of stigma and stigma management dilemmas among the two group members. This, in turn, works toward the second additional dimension of stigma rehearsals: increasing the sense of groupness (Brubaker 2004) among members of the collectivity. As both of the interaction participants express joint recognition of Muslim stigma and their connection to it, they actively signal and reinforce their own belonging to the stigmatized group “Muslim.” Finally, the possibility that Yusef may soon directly confront the imagined stigmatizers with an inappropriately angry response orients this rehearsal toward an impending future, which makes Abdul’s instruction in proper stigma management more urgent and focused. This temporal dimension of

rehearsals will be discussed in further detail below.

The intertwining of ingroup emotional release and small group identity work evident here echoes the microsociology of Randall Collins (2004), who emphasizes that it is during such moments of mutually focused emotion and attention that symbols of group membership are created and group solidarity is increased. Working in tandem with this shared emotional expression to solidify group bonds during the rehearsal is the articulation and acknowledgment of a common “known culture” (Fine 1979) among the participants. The emotional and strategic articulations within the rehearsal rely on a foundation of shared cultural experiences—Muslim identification and stigmatization—that are common to members of this small group. Infused with a sense of group identification, charged with emotional release, constrained by temporal concerns, and aimed at the promotion of specific strategies, stigma management rehearsals represent the interactional, ground-level “supply side” of a process of abiding concern to sociologists—the emergence, or deterrence, of public action among individuals and collectivities in response to stigma, discrimination, and oppression (Moore 1978; Anspach 1979; Scott 1985).

### **Direct Preparation Stigma Rehearsals: Pre-Game Coaching**

Stigma management rehearsals fall into two types, direct preparation and deep education, and each kind of rehearsal emphasizes a different variety of ingroup stigma management socialization. In direct preparation rehearsals, group leaders and members focus on instructing one or more other members in the locally dominant stigma management strategy in preparation for an upcoming interaction with perceived stigmatizers. Because it is

oriented toward a specific and temporally approaching event with potentially high social stakes for the group, a direct preparation rehearsal is like the pre-game coaching of an athlete.<sup>4</sup> The sense of an impending and consequential encounter with outgroup members triggers the focused instruction of one or more ingroup members in the locally dominant strategy. One such direct preparation rehearsal took place on a Sunday morning as I sat and talked with twenty-four-year-old youth group coordinator Maryam, seventeen-year-old group member Sarah, and sixteen-year-old member Zeina, as we waited in the youth room of the mosque for other members to arrive.

Sarah tells Maryam, “I saw this book called the *Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam* and it was really messed up . . . It was saying that Mohammed is a prophet of war and that non-Muslims aren’t safe anywhere in the world, even in America!” “Did you see it at a bookstore?” I ask her. “Yes,” she says. “And they were recommending it! One of the staff people named Edward wrote a note that said, ‘Sometimes you have to choose between the ugly truth and being politically correct.’” Maryam shakes her head disapprovingly. “So,” Sarah says. “I walked up to the counter and said, ‘Is Edward here?’” Maryam and I laugh. Sarah continues, “And they said, ‘No he doesn’t work here today.’ And I said, ‘Well, I need to talk to him so I can set him straight about Islam.’” Zeina says to Sarah, “But if you say something to them, it will just create more anger.” Sarah says, “But we need to do something!”

<sup>4</sup>Schneider and Conrad (1980) have previously employed the term “coaching” to describe situations in which stigmatized persons practice stigma strategies with the aid of friends or family members. Here I employ a similar term to emphasize the future-oriented nature of one type of backstage stigma rehearsal work—direct preparation.

As can be seen here, direct preparation rehearsals involve the consideration of a specific, impending encounter with outgroup members (Sarah's potential confrontation with the bookstore employee) and the triggered coaching of one member (Sarah) by another member (Zeina) in the locally dominant strategy (peaceful passivity). When Sarah proposes an assertive approach to responding to the stigmatizing experience (i.e., directly approaching Edward and "setting him straight about Islam") Zeina counters by recommending the passive strategy, saying that Sarah's approach will just "create more anger." While Sarah may not be fully convinced to alter her approach by the end of the exchange, the socializing forces at work in the rehearsal are evident in the lack of support expressed for Sarah's assertive approach by the other members and by Zeina's direct counterargument. Through such interpersonal signals, direct preparation rehearsals serve to encourage members to learn and adopt the locally dominant stigma management strategy while simultaneously working to dampen their enthusiasm for the use of alternate, locally unacceptable strategies.

Two interrelated characteristics of direct preparation rehearsals distinguish them clearly from the other type of rehearsal, deep education. First, direct preparation rehearsals are oriented toward a specific and approaching future-set event and therefore have a sense of immediacy. As participants imagine the looming confrontation between the coached individual and stigmatizing outgroup members, they engage in what sociologists of time have conceptualized as the cognitive and linguistic "bringing in" of imagined people and events from the predicted future into the actual present (Mead 1932; Katovich 1987; Fine 2007). Zeina's advice to Sarah to be more passive therefore does not result from a purely philosophical consideration of the situation, but rather takes into

account and is constrained and spurred on by the imagined interests and potential reactions of a specific and temporally approaching "them." The consideration of such impending future-set encounters gives direct preparation rehearsals a sense of immediacy and causes members, with the urgency of coaches just before game time, to quickly intervene before one of their group moves to publicly respond to stigma in a normatively inappropriate manner.

The orientation of direct preparation rehearsals toward a specific, impending event also means that they are narrow in scope and focus primarily on the teaching of the locally dominant strategy. In direct preparation rehearsals, the sense that a fellow ingroup member may be about to utilize an unacceptable strategy in public triggers others to focus their energies on coaching the first member in the locally dominant strategy and dissuading them from using an inappropriate one. While they sometimes also allow for limited emotional release and the momentary expression of group solidarity, each direct preparation rehearsal witnessed at the City Mosque centered on and emphasized the urgent and explicit training of one member by one or more others in the peaceful and passive stigma management strategy. In this way, direct preparation rehearsals, in the City Mosque at least, can be conceived as a set of crude bulwarks, quickly erected by group members in an attempt to prevent inappropriately assertive or aggressive stigma responses from escaping the boundaries of the ingroup and finding expression in the public arena.

### ***Deep Education Stigma Rehearsals: The Training Ground***

While direct preparation rehearsals involve the straightforward teaching of the dominant stigma strategy to one or more members in anticipation of an

upcoming interaction, deep education rehearsals provide members with more in-depth stigma socialization experiences, including instruction in the reasoning behind the locally preferred strategy as well as opportunities to more carefully consider—and even express—stigma responses normally considered inappropriate. Rather than being triggered by a recent incident of stigma and the proposed response of a member, deep education rehearsals are initiated by group leaders and address stigmatizing incidents and response encounters set in either the remote past or hypothetical future. The perceived temporal distance between the considered incidents of stigma and response and the immediate group gathering in deep education means that group leaders can prioritize other facets of stigma management socialization besides direct coaching, including the teaching of justifications for stigma strategy and the solidifying of ingroup bonds through collective emotional release and shared frustration at stigmatization. In this way, deep education rehearsals are like a training ground—a location where members receive a broad education in locally dominant stigma management approaches via a range of pedagogical means.

In deep education rehearsals, mosque leaders commonly use one (or both) of two instructional techniques to encourage members to adopt a peaceful and nonaggressive approach to stigma response. The first is to use the discussion of a real or hypothetical incident of stigma and response as an opportunity to *explain the religious, moral, or strategic reasoning underlying the locally dominant response*. One example of such instruction took place during a Sunday youth group discussion. Adult youth group leader Omar asked the group if anyone had ever been bothered for being Muslim and, if so, what he or she did about it. During the conversation,

a tall Arab American girl named Farah said:

“I remember a bunch of us were at a picnic area one day, and there were some *mujahaba* there [older women wearing headscarves], and some younger girls wearing scarves, including Asma [another girl in the youth group]. And there were a group of skater guys skating at the park. And they kept looking at us and laughing. And this one guy actually came down and sat in front of one of the girls and pretended to meditate. We just walked away, but they were really, really rude.” Omar says, “Do you know what the Qur’an says to do in this specific situation? The Qur’an says [he recites in Arabic and then translates]: ‘When ignorant or stupid people speak to them’—and here the subject is the righteous person—they reply only “peace.” That doesn’t mean they have to actually say the word peace; it just means that what they say is not fighting words. They just brush it off; they are not affected. When you have confidence, you don’t have to worry about it.”

Whereas direct preparation rehearsals equip individuals with discrete tools for immediate stigma management, deep education rehearsals work to supply group members with the thinking *behind* the tools, so that they may emerge more richly educated stigma managers, ready to assess and handle incidents of anti-Muslim stigma whenever and wherever they may occur. When leaders at the City Mosque use deep education rehearsals to explain the reasoning behind the locally preferred stigma response, they most often provide a *religious* reasoning for the strategy and in doing so frequently draw on quotes from the Qur’an or stories of the life of the Prophet Muhammad. Sometimes, though, *moral* and *strategic* justifications for dominant

stigma management approaches are provided during deep education rehearsals. Moral justifications include the basic notion, repeated time and again in rehearsals, without explicitly religious language, that passive approaches to stigma management are simply “good” and “right” and aggressive ones are “wrong.” Strategic justifications for peaceful stigma management include the commonly articulated argument that a passive response to stigma will combat stereotypes of Muslims as violent and aggressive while an aggressive approach works to perpetuate such representations. Omar explained this strategic justification during a youth group discussion promoting the peaceful approach, saying, “When people know you’re a Muslim and see that you’re not crazy, what a difference that makes. When they think of Muslims, they’ll think of you.”

The second instructional technique used by leaders during deep education rehearsals is to *permit the emotional expression of normally unacceptable responses to stigma without immediate correction* from group leaders or other members. As was previously demonstrated, members sometimes express inappropriately aggressive stigma responses during direct preparation rehearsals, but in such cases leaders and other members quickly counter these proposals with direct coaching in the approved peaceful response. In deep education rehearsals, in contrast, leaders allow members’ expression of alternate stigma responses to stand without direct and immediate opposition, permit other members to briefly express support for these options, and sometimes even signal their own sympathy with these publicly taboo strategies and emotions.

One deep education rehearsal emphasizing the open expression of normally unacceptable responses took place during a Sunday youth group meeting. An adult staff member named Kim led a workshop

on the “Theater of the Oppressed,” a type of dramatic exercise in which small groups of participants act out social problems and the entire group discusses potential solutions (Boal 2008). The skits presented by each group reflected social issues that most urban teenagers face—gang violence, drugs, rumors/gossip, peer pressure—but the group addressing racism and discrimination presented a skit directly related to Muslim stigma:

As the skit begins, Yusef and Layla are sitting next to each other. The other kids in the skit walk over and say things like, “You guys are a bunch of terrorists!” “Why don’t you guys go bomb another building?” “Why don’t you just go back to Iraq?” Yusef says to Layla, “Man, those guys are getting me mad, but I don’t want to do anything. But I feel like I should beat them up.” He stands up and walks over as if preparing to fight them. People laugh. Kim says, “OK, what’s another way to solve this?” Yasmin comes in and says to the group of harassers: “Why are you going to say stuff about Muslims when you don’t know anything about it? You haven’t read the Qur’an. How would you know anything about it?” People applaud. Another kid, Waseem, goes up. He tells the group: “Why would you fools call me a terrorist? You (to Ali) you look like Chewbacca! And you, you look like a piece of bleep!” People laugh a lot, and Kim laughs too. Then she says, “Is that a good way to solve it?” Everyone says, “NO!” Next Adam volunteers to step in: “You don’t know anything about Islam. You don’t know who their families are or where they are from! How do you know they’re terrorists?” People nod approvingly. Kim says, “So, you should defend yourself, but not in a violent way.”

As seen here, deep education rehearsals allow group members to express and enact

a variety of locally inappropriate approaches to stigma response. In this example, group members act out multiple potential stigma management strategies, including aggressive violence and name-calling, and these normally unacceptable strategies are initially met with enthusiastic laughter from other group members, as well as group leader Kim at one point. Rather than objecting directly to these suggestions, Kim allows these expressions to be voiced and then gently guides the group toward the appropriate response by asking questions like "Is that the right response?" In effect, Kim capitalizes on the sense of group cohesion created by the brief, emotional expression of enthusiasm for aggressive responses and redirects this collective energy in service of supporting the appropriate response and denouncing the inappropriate ones.

The same permissiveness regarding the expression of locally inappropriate stigma responses by members was observed across multiple cases of deep education rehearsals. In each case of deep education, the incidents of stigma response being considered were never temporally set in the approaching future but, rather, in either a hypothetical future, as in the "Theatre of the Oppressed" example, or in the actual past. In both cases, these temporalities allowed participants to feel a sense of distance from the stigma and the stigmatizer and, as a result, permitted a wider range of stigma responses to be articulated. An example of a deep education rehearsal addressing past-set incidents of stigma response took place during Omar's large group discussion on anti-Muslim stigma and possible reactions at the annual youth group retreat.

Omar asks the group, "How many people here have been harassed because of what happened on 9/11?" A lot of hands are raised. Omar asks, "And how did you respond?" Aziz

replies, "I wanted to beat someone up." Omar says, "OK, that's a natural feeling."

While Omar went on to espouse the wisdom and effectiveness of a passive and peaceful response to harassment later in the lecture, for a few moments Aziz's aggressive response to stigmatization was allowed to stand uncorrected and even yielded an expression of sympathy from the group leader. The temporal orientations of deep education rehearsals provide them with the perceived time and space necessary for the articulation and consideration of varying stigma responses, even if these alternative responses are elicited for the ultimate purpose of promoting the locally dominant one. This more subtle and deliberate form of stigma socialization is only possible in the deep education setting, where leaders and members are not hemmed in by the sense of a temporally approaching encounter with stigmatizers that characterizes direct preparation rehearsals.

Although the permitting of initially uncorrected expressions of aggressive stigma responses within deep education rehearsals may initially seem at odds with the socializing purpose of these interactions, this practice actually seems to work *toward* the broader socialization of group members in local stigma management doctrine in two interrelated ways. First, the openly expressed, inappropriate stigma responses articulated (and observed) by members during deep education rehearsals serve as vivid rhetorical counterpoints to the dominant approach advocated by mosque leadership. As was seen in the Theater of the Oppressed example and the retreat incident, once youth offer up their own felt or enacted responses, they can be used as stigma management "don'ts" to contrast with the leadership's stigma response "do's." Experienced together by group members,

these “don’ts” become shared symbols of inappropriate *public* stigma response behavior, even if leaders and members express some sympathy for these responses in *private*. The shared experience and knowledge of the stigma response “don’ts,” then, work toward the construction of a more tightly knit group, one bound not only by shared religious identification and stigmatized status, but also by a common stigma management doctrine and perspective.

Second, the articulation of more aggressive stigma responses allows participants in deep education rehearsals to engage together in the private release of publicly inappropriate emotions in response to stigma. By collectively recounting or enacting angry responses to stigma, members experience a powerful release of these emotions in the private backstage area and are simultaneously taught that they should not express them in public. In allowing for this private release of redirected anger while using its expression to make the case for a more passive public face (see Hochschild 1983), deep education rehearsals actually contribute to the maintenance of passivity as the locally dominant response to stigma. At the same time, this jointly expressed aggression and anger toward stigmatizers creates a powerful, shared emotional experience for group members (Collins 2004), which works toward the solidifying of group bonds. These same bonds of joint accountability and trust within the group, constructed through shared aggressive emotional expression, can be utilized for the promotion and maintenance of the dominant, peaceful approach to stigma management.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Using inductive analysis of ethnographic data gathered at an American mosque, this article has demonstrated the specific

ways that individuals sharing a social stigma work together to manage their spoiled identity while in private space. Through backstage stigma management rehearsals, group leaders and members work to socialize other members in locally preferred stigma management strategies. Direct preparation rehearsals are oriented toward impending, future interactions with stigmatizers and therefore emphasize quick instruction in the group’s approved strategy. Deep education rehearsals address stigmatizing incidents and responses set in a hypothetical future or distant past and are therefore experienced as having the time and space necessary for the deliberate teaching of stigma response justifications, the permission of a looser expression of inappropriate responses, and a more intensive experience of group solidarity through collective emotional release. Both rehearsal types allow, to different degrees, the venting of publicly inappropriate emotions regarding stigma and the construction of the groupness of the collective based on the stigmatized identity and shared preferred response. Ultimately, in the current case at least, both types reinforce the prominence of a dominant stigma management strategy within the small group.

To what extent can we expect to find stigma management rehearsals operating within other groups of stigmatized individuals? A sample of qualitative studies of stigmatized persons demonstrates that stigma management rehearsals are present across groups of people with different kinds of stigma, including racial minorities (Duneier 1999), economically disadvantaged persons (Spradley 1970), and those with medicalized stigmas (Edgerton 1967; Miall 1986; Schneider and Conrad 1980), and that the stigma rehearsal types operating within these collectivities vary by the stability of the group. This literature suggests that transitory groupings of stigmatized persons,

such as homeless men spending one night in jail together awaiting trial (Spradley 1970:191) or African American men discussing the police during a brief encounter on a public street (Duneier 1999:34), use direct preparation rehearsals to advise one another regarding impending stigma management work, but do not engage in deep education rehearsals to transmit a broader philosophy of stigma management or strengthen group ties. In contrast, more stable and longer-term groups of stigmatized persons, such as support groups for deviants, nuclear families with a stigmatized member, or friendship cliques of stigmatized persons demonstrate the presence of direct preparation rehearsals (Schneider and Conrad 1980), deep education rehearsals (Schneider and Conrad 1980), or both types (Herman 1993). The correlation of deep education rehearsals with more durable group structures of stigmatized persons suggested by the stigma literature is in line with the findings of the current study, which demonstrate the importance of repeated rehearsals, strong group bonds, and emotional trust for effective deep education rehearsals and stigma management socialization.

Along the same lines, it is stable groups of stigmatized persons, especially those with hierarchical power structures, that seem likely to develop, over time and through deep education rehearsals, a single stigma management strategy that becomes dominant and normative among members. When stable groups of stigmatized persons are characterized by power imbalances between leaders and other participants, as is the case within formal organizations (the current case) or nuclear families (Schneider and Conrad 1980; Herman 1993), group leaders can employ the power of their position, which includes the authority and means to initiate deep education rehearsals, to disseminate a single, preferred stigma management

strategy among members. In less hierarchical groups of persons with stigmatized identities, such as a marriage between two stigmatized persons (Miall 1986) or a friendship clique of similarly deviant people (Herman and Musolf 1998), a single, dominant stigma management strategy may also emerge. In these cases, the emergence of such a dominant strategy is the result of a high degree of consensus among members regarding stigma management approaches rather than top-down stigma management socialization.

While group stability, power hierarchy, and ingroup consensus may contribute to the emergence of a normative stigma management approach within a stigmatized small group, what factors shape the *specific* dominant strategy that takes hold? Judging from the mosque case, as well as other examples in the literature, we can tentatively hypothesize two factors that influence the tenor of the emergent dominant strategy within a hierarchically organized group of stigmatized persons. The first factor is the particular stigma response ideology promoted by a group's leaders, an ideology that is conditioned by the cultural resources regarding stigma response most readily available to leaders as well as the leaders' particular social position. The second factor impacting the determination of a dominant strategy within a group is whether certain stigma response options are considered undesirable by group leaders because they are perceived as carrying potentially severe social consequences for group members.

Regarding the first factor, one reason that passivity emerged as the dominant stigma management strategy within the Muslim Youth Program is because mosque leaders, who initiate and set the parameters for deep education rehearsals, espoused and promoted this particular stigma response ideology. Mosque leaders embraced this strategy partly because of their own repeated exposure to cultural

resources (Lamont 1992; Sewell 1992) that supported such a response to stigma. The founders and senior leadership of the City Mosque use their various programs and activities to promote the idea that Islam is a “religion of peace” and to emphasize elements of Islamic teachings that support a peaceful approach to social conflict. As a result, passages from the Qur’an and the stories of the life of the Prophet Muhammad (*hadith*) that promote this line of thought are regularly circulated through the mosque community and are readily available to leaders, and in turn members, as interpretive frameworks through which to understand and make decisions about social conflict. Related to the availability of cultural resources promoting peace and understanding within the City Mosque is the particular social position of mosque leaders as “spokespeople” and middlemen (Pattillo 2007) representing the broader Muslim community. This role places them in a structured relationship of responsibility to both powerful institutional actors—including government officials, law enforcement organizations, and other religious and community organizations—and their own Muslim constituency. This middleman position means that promoting an aggressive, or even a strongly assertive, stigma management strategy might potentially threaten mosque leaders’ access to powerful political figures and groups or alienate the more politically cautious members of their own community.

In addition to the stigma response ideology and related social position of group leaders, a second factor that contributes to the emergence of a given dominant stigma management strategy among a small group of stigmatized persons is the perception that an alternative strategy—in the current case, the forceful assertion, or aggressive defense, of the stigmatized identity—could lead to highly

undesirable social consequences for group members. While most members of the Muslim Youth Program had not experienced severe consequences for publically asserting or defending (or simply disclosing) their religious identity, the mass arrests, detentions, and extensive surveillance that took place after 9/11 were well known within the community, in part due to stories about friends and relatives who *had* faced such penalties. As a result, the potentially severe consequences for asserting or aggressively defending Muslim identity were well known within the small group. The shared knowledge of these consequences and the broader power dynamics they signify contributed to an ingroup culture of timidity and caution regarding public responses to Muslim stigmatization, not only at the mosque under study but among American Muslim communities more broadly (Hondagneu-Soletto 2008).

Most examples of rehearsals within the broader stigma literature lack the detail needed to make wider generalizations about the influence of leaders’ ideology and social position, or the perceived consequences of using alternative responses, on the emergence of a particular dominant stigma management strategy within a stigmatized group. In one case, consistent with the current study, a group’s dominant ideology of peacefulness, high social standing among leaders, and perception of severe consequences for an assertive stigma response correlated with the emergence of a passive dominant strategy (Schneider and Conrad 1980). In another, a stigmatized small group’s system-blaming ideology, marginal social standing, and lack of concern with consequences correlated with the emergence of an aggressive dominant strategy (Herman and Musolf 1998). This suggests a potential negative case which would also support the current study’s findings. These are only individual cases, however, and

more research on small groups and their stigma management approaches is needed to draw broader conclusions.

Finally, what role, if any, do stigma management rehearsals play in larger processes of social change and destigmatization? Depending on the ideology and social position of leadership, as well as the perceived severity of consequences for identity assertion, stigma management rehearsals promoting an assertive or aggressive stigma response could work toward broader social change by teaching stigmatized persons how to openly challenge their stigma. In contrast, rehearsals teaching passive approaches might actually work *against* social transformation by facilitating the private release of anger that might otherwise be directed at powerful parties and institutions that serve to perpetuate the stigma in the first place. While the former, assertive approach is reflected in a few of the rehearsals documented in the literature (Schneider and Conrad 1980; Herman and Musolf 1998), the great majority of stigma rehearsals identified in studies of the stigmatized, as well as in the present case, are utilized to promote a passive approach to stigma management. This suggests the interesting possibility that, while capable of challenging stigma, stigma management rehearsals generally serve as a socially disciplining mechanism (Elias 1978) through which stigmatized persons are taught to tone down and control their emotional and potentially more aggressive responses to stigma. The question of the relationship of stigma management rehearsals to broader social change processes will be most effectively investigated though an approach to studying stigma that includes the consideration of backstage as well as public interactions, asks where public stigma management responses come from and, ultimately, seeks to understand the link between the

internal dynamics of stigmatized groups and their public responses to their stigmatized social status.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank the following people for their extremely helpful comments and feedback on this paper: Stefan Timmermans, the editors and anonymous reviewers of *SPQ*, Paul Lichterman, Iddo Tavory, Nazgol Ghandnoosh, Colin Jerolmack, Jooyoung Lee, Gabriel Nelson, Forrest Stuart, Matt Wray, and the members of UCLA's Ethnography Working Group. Previous versions of this paper were presented at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting in 2009, the Chicago Ethnography Conference in 2009, and the Stony Brook Ethnography Conference in 2008.

## REFERENCES

- Anspach, Renee R. 1979. "From Stigma to Identity Politics: Political Activism among the Physically Disabled and Former Mental Patients." *Social Science and Medicine* 13A:766-73.
- Boal, Augusto. 2008. *Theater of the Oppressed*. London: Pluto.
- Brubaker, Rogers. 2004. *Ethnicity without Groups*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cainkar, Louise. 2009. *Homeland Insecurity: The Arab American and Muslim American Experience after 9/11*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Collins, Randall. 2004. *Interaction Ritual Chains*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Corrigan, Patrick W. and Amy C. Watson. 2002. "The Paradox of Self-Stigma and Mental Illness." *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice* 9:35-53.
- Corrigan, Patrick W., Fred E. Markowitz, and Amy C. Watson. 2004. "Structural Levels of Mental Illness Stigma and Discrimination." *Schizophrenia Bulletin* 30(3):481-91.
- Duneier, Mitchell. 1999. *Sidewalk*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Edgerton, Robert B. 1967. *The Cloak of Competence*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Elias, Norbert. 1978. *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners*. New York: Urizen Books.

- Eliasoph, Nina and Iddo Tavory. 2010. "Modes of Beckoning: Culture, Interaction, and the Organization of Narrative Futures." Unpublished manuscript.
- Emerson, Steve. 2002. *American Jihad: The Terrorists Living among Us*. New York: Free Press.
- Fine, Gary Alan. 1979. "Small Groups and Culture Creation: The Idioculture of Little League Baseball Teams." *American Sociological Review* 44:733-45.
- Fine, Gary Alan. 2000. "Games and Truths: Learning to Construct Social Problems in High School Debate." *The Sociological Quarterly* 41:103-23.
- Fine, Gary Alan. 2007. *Authors of the Storm*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fine, Gary Alan and Brooke Harrington. 2004. "Tiny Publics: Small Groups and Civil Society." *Sociological Theory* 22(3):341-56.
- Glaser, Barney G. and Anselm L. Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City, NY: Double Day Anchor.
- Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. New York: Touchstone.
- Herman, Nancy J. 1993. "Return to Sender: Reintegrative Stigma-Management Strategies of Ex-Psychiatric Patients." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 22(3):295-330.
- Herman, Nancy J. and Gil Richard Musolf. 1998. "Resistance among Ex-Psychiatric Patients: Expressive and Instrumental Rituals." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 26(4):426-49.
- Herman-Kinney, Nancy J. 2003. "Deviance." Pp. 695-720 in *Handbook of Symbolic Interactionism*, edited by L. T. Reynolds and N. J. Herman-Kinney. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 1983. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hondagneu-Soletto, Pierrette. 2008. *God's Heart Has No Borders: How Religious Activists Are Working for Immigrant Rights*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Howell, Sally and Andrew Shryock. 2003. "Cracking Down on Diaspora: Arab Detroit and America's War on Terror." *Anthropological Quarterly* 76:443-62.
- Human Rights Watch. 2002. *"We Are Not the Enemy": Hate Crimes against Arabs, Muslims, and Those Perceived to Be Arab or Muslim after September 11*. Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch.
- Ibish, Hussein, ed. 2008. *Report on Hate Crimes and Discrimination against Arab Americans 2003-2007*. Washington, DC: American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee Research Institute (ADC-RI).
- Ignatiev, Noel. 1995. *How the Irish Became White*. New York: Routledge.
- Katovich, Michael A. 1987. "Identity, Time, and Situated Activity: An Interactions Analysis of Dyadic Transactions." *Symbolic Interaction* 10(2):187-208.
- Katz, Jack. 2001. "Analytic Induction." In *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, edited by N. J. Smesler and P. B. Baltes. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Lamont, Michèle. 1992. *Money, Morals, and Manners: The Culture of the French and American Upper-Middle Class*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Link, Bruce G. and Jo C. Phelan. 2001. "Conceptualizing Stigma." *Annual Review of Sociology* 27:365-85.
- Major, Brenda and Laurie T. O'Brien. 2005. "The Social Psychology of Stigma." *Annual Review of Psychology* 56:393-421.
- Mead, George Herbert. 1932. *The Philosophy of the Present*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Miall, Charlene E. 1986. "The Stigma of Involuntary Childlessness." *Social Problems* 33(4):268-82.
- Mische, Ann. 2009. "Projects and Possibilities: Researching Futures in Action." *Sociological Forum* 24(3):694-704.
- Moore, Barrington. 1978. *Injustice: The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt*. White Plains, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Mohamed, Besheer and John O'Brien. 2011. "Ground Zero of Misunderstanding." *Contexts* 10(1):62-4.
- Pattillo, Mary E. 2007. *Black on the Block: The Politics of Race and Class in the City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pew Research Center. 2007. *American Muslims: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.
- Scott, James C. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Schneider, Joseph W. and Peter Conrad. 1980. "In the Closet with Illness: Epilepsy,

- Stigma Potential, and Information Control." *Social Problems* 28(1):32–44.
- Sewell, William H. Jr. 1992. "A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation." *American Journal of Sociology* 98:1–29.
- Snow, David A. and Leon Anderson. 1987. "Identity Work among the Homeless." *American Journal of Sociology* 92(6):1336–71.
- Spencer, Robert. 2007. *Religion of Peace? Why Christianity Is and Islam Isn't*. Washington, DC: Regnery.
- Spradley, James P. 1970. *You Owe Yourself a Drunk: An Ethnography of Urban Nomads*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Steele, Claude M. and Joshua Aronson. 1995. "Stereotype Threat and the Intellectual Test Performance of African Americans." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 69(5):797–811.
- Timmermans, Stefan and Iddo Tavory. 2007. "Advancing Ethnographic Research Through Grounded Theory Practice." Pp. 493–512 in *The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory*, edited by A. Bryant and K. Charmaz. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Watanabe, Teresa and Scott Glover. 2009. "Man Says He Was Informant for FBI in Orange County." *Los Angeles Times*, Feb Retrieved March 14, 2010 (<http://articles.latimes.com/2009/feb/26/lcal/me-informant26>).
- Zimbardo, Philip G. and John Boyd. 2008. *The Time Paradox: The New Psychology of Time that Will Change Your Life*. New York: Free Press.

## BIO

**John O'Brien** is a graduate student in the Department of Sociology at UCLA. His dissertation project is a multiyear ethnography of a group of Muslim teenagers growing up and practicing their religion in an American city.