



Center for the Development of Peace and Well-Being

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Graduate Fellows – Project Descriptions

Neera Mehta, Psychology

The Intergenerational Transmission of Relationship Patterns: The Influence of Working Models of Attachment on the Quality of Individual, Couple, and Child Well-Being Over Time

Marital conflict has been linked to decreased mental and physical health not only for spouses, but also for their children. Therefore, to improve well-being and prevent the transmission of harmful outcomes across generations, it is essential to determine which factors contribute to satisfying relationships. Although research has shown that one of the strongest correlates of marital satisfaction is the quality of affective interactions between spouses, little research has investigated which factors lead to the development of these affective exchanges. According to attachment theory, the presence or absence of emotionally responsive caregivers in childhood fosters the development of working models of attachment. Affective interactions in adulthood are thought to activate these internalized models, which then trigger the previously learned affect regulation strategies. However, research has demonstrated that representations of childhood attachment experiences do not always predict affective behavior during such interactions. Moreover, research has shown that adults also develop working models of couple attachment, and that these two models of attachment are only moderately correlated.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the combined contribution of these attachment representations (parents and partners) to observed affect between spouses and, in turn, to marital satisfaction and stability. In addition, the link between parents' attachment organizations and their children's psychosocial functioning will be examined to further understand the intergenerational transmission of these patterns within families.

Jonathan Chow, Political Science (2005 Summer Fellow)

Reevaluating the Enemy: Overcoming Attitudinal Inertia After Interstate Conflict

How do hostile attitudes between enemies change after interstate conflicts have ended? Why do some relations, such as between France and Germany, appear to be relatively unhindered by the memory of past wars while in other relations, such as between China and Japan, the memory of past wars remains highly salient? This project hypothesizes that successful reconciliation between states is contingent upon actors changing their conceptions of one another, both at the decision-making and popular levels. While some conceptions are relatively malleable, others are highly resistant to normal processes of ideational exchange. In the latter case, revising conceptions of the enemy may be nearly impossible without some

kind of targeted effort. Drawing on the literature of cultural psychology, norms and international relations theory, I will examine processes of attitudinal shift and inertia in three cases of post-World War II interstate relations: France and Germany, Japan and China, and Japan and the Republic of Korea.