Ethnocentrism and Cultural Dissonance Among Perpetrators of the Holocaust: A Sociological Contribution to the Goldhagen Debate

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On July 13, 1942, the men of Reserve Police Battalion (ORPO) 101 arrived in Jozefow, Poland where their commander, Major Wilhelm Trapp, informed the men that they have been ordered to round up the Jews of the village and to shoot all but the working aged, able bodied men, who would be transported to a work camp, (Browning 1992:xv). Major Trapp, with tears in his eyes, went on to offer his men the opportunity to decline the assignment should they feel unable to partake. Only twelve of the 500 men accepted Major Trapp's offer, (Browning 1992:159, Goldhagen 1996:213). As the Final Solution to the Jewish question raged across German occupied territory, ordinary men like those who made up Reserve Police Battalion 101 became willing participants of genocide. Such a reality begs the question: what circumstances compel an ordinary person to commit extraordinary acts of violence? Scholars across various disciplines have analyzed the Holocaust in Eastern Europe to explore this question. Though few works have caused such heated debate as that of Daniel Johan Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust.*

The Goldhagen Debate

Hitler's Willing Executioners was an expansive work derived from Goldhagen's reward winning 1994 doctoral dissertation *The Nazi Executioners: A Study of Their Behavior and the Causation of Genocide*, (APSA 2018). Following the book's initial 1996 release was a flurry of mixed media reception across the United States and Germany, (Bellafante et al. 2021, National Book Critics Circle 1996). Goldhagen participated in a number of speaking events including a symposium held at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, (Goldhagen et al. 1996), and

was rewarded the prestigious Triennial Democracy Prize from Germany's largest political periodical, Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik's, (Hay 2000). While widely popular among non-academic and German youth, *Hitler's Willing Executioners* sparked a heated debate throughout academic circles in what is now referred to as "The Goldhagen Debate." The controversy over Goldhagen's work largely concerns the book's questionable methodology and its simplistic conclusion that antisemitism alone could explain how ordinary persons became willing participants in genocide.

Few scholars of genocide would diminish the role antisemitism played in the Holocaust. Thereby, the controversy surrounding Goldhagen's work is not in his analysis of antisemitism, but in his monocausal conclusion that antisemitism was the only contributing factor. Current works involved in the Goldhagen debate largely come from the fields of history, journalism, political science, and social psychology. While sociological themes of ethnocentrism and cultural dissonance are touched on in various works within the Goldhagen Debate, no contribution as of yet has explored these concepts as a major theme. This work has been created to bridge that gap.

To ensure readability and coherence, the body of this work has been separated into three sections. The first section offers a synapse of Goldhagen's account of premodern European antisemitism and its causal effect on Holocaust perpetrator behaviors. This synapse is supplemented with other works where appropriate to enhance contextual clarity. The second section examines recurring qualms of Goldhagen's work as expressed by his critics. It is in the third section where this author examines arguments of perpetrator behavior and enhances these positions by introducing themes of ethnocentrism and cultural dissonance.

A Note on Perpetrator Accountability

Before delving too far into this work, a note on perpetrator accountability must be addressed. Academics and non-academics alike have discussed their discomfort in humanizing perpetrators of genocide. This discomfort is largely due to a false parallel between understanding and justification, and the belief that to offer an explanation is to remove accountability. I disagree with this sentiment. I share in historian Christopher Browning's outlook that, "Explaining is not excusing; understanding is not forgiving," (1992: 9-22). With this outlook in mind, I contend that the seemingly indecipherable phenomena surrounding human made atrocities, such as mass killings and genocide, are indeed decipherable precisely because they are human. No amount of potential discomfort in the rationalizing of human atrocity outweighs the benefit of understanding human behavior-For it is through understanding that sustainable preventions may be implemented.

Hitler's Willing Executioners: **Antisemitism in Premodern Europe**

In his work, *Hitler's Willing Executioners,* Daniel Johan Goldhagen set out to create what he refers to as a "micro-physic of the Holocaust's perpetration," a process which analyzes German specific sociocultural elements that promoted individual's commitment to genocide, (Goldhagen 1996:24). Goldhagen's thesis revolves around the assertion that lifelong exposure to large spread German antisemitism was influential enough in and of itself for individual actors to exert violence against the Jewish population.

In his analysis, Goldhagen traced the roots of European antisemitism to early European Christian writers such as John Chrysostom, Peter the Venerable of Cluny, and Martin Luther. A reoccurring theme in the works of these early Christian authors was that Christianity created the most perfect union between God and humanity. As such, Judaism's rejection of Jesus as messiah

was not simply a matter of differing religious beliefs, but an open act of aggression against Christians and God himself, (Goldhagen 1996:33-34).

For Goldhagen, the most damaging proclamation that these persuasive Christian leaders argued was that all Jews, past and present, are personally responsible for the death of Jesus. Such logic proclaimed that all Jews were "Christ killers," servants of evil entities, and were personally responsible for all the ills, hardships, and natural disasters wrought upon earth and its people. As such, Jews had been marked as the most dangerous and powerful of all evils in the eyes of premodern Christian anti-Semites, (Goldhagen 1996:49-54). To explain how premodern Christian antisemitism continued to affect the worldview of nineteenth-century Germans, Goldhagen turns to cultural model theory[1].

Cultural model theory can be understood as the way in which an individual's worldview is shaped by their social interactions with others. As social psychologist James Waller explains, "culture-specific thoughts, norms, values, codes, and principles become part of an individual's perceptual frame, (Waller 2002:172). Goldhagen uses a similar description of social influence to explain how the large spread antisemitic beliefs of premodern European Christians influenced German citizens to unequivocally accept the Jewish population as subhuman and malicious.

When the eighteenth-century political writer Wilhelm Von Dohm wrote of Jewish populations throughout Germany, he proclaimed, "The Jew is more a man [human] than Jew," an insinuation that the Jewish population could be redeemed if they were to renounce their "Jewishness," (Goldhagen 1996:57). While Von Dohm may have considered himself to be a "friend of the Jews," his attitude was merely one more way in which antisemitism was displayed.

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[1] Goldhagen uses "cultural cognitive model," "cognitive model," and "cultural model" interchangeably throughout his work. I discuss the limitations of using the terms synonymously in a later portion of this work.

Ergo, when the Jewish population largely dismissed this so-called opportunity for redemption through conversion, bewildered liberals resolved that there must be an innate biological inferiority that prevented the Jewish population from assimilating fully into German society. In consequence, racially based antisemitism largely replaced religious based antisemitism throughout Germany, (Goldhagen 1996: 53-61). While religious inferiority could be corrected through conversion, racial inferiority could never be redeemed. Thereby, the Jewish population was sentenced to "an eternal thoroughbred of foreignness," (Goldhagen 1996:66), thus indefinitely marking them as separate from the rest of German society.

Perpetrator Behaviors

Goldhagen asserts that antisemitic separatism ran so deeply throughout German citizen's psyche that it manifested as uniquely barbaric practices among German guards and police units that was seldom utilized against non-Jewish prisoners (Goldhagen 1996:181-376). According to Goldhagen, because the vast majority of Germans shared in Hitler's eliminationist antisemitism, and because the perpetrators were themselves representative of German society, it can be concluded that the vast majority of ordinary Germans would have participated in the killings had they had the opportunity, (Goldhagen et al. 1996). Those who did have the opportunity were committed to make the most of it.

Assigning arbitrarily exhausting and demoralizing work appeared to be a favorite pastime for many German guards in the camps. "German masters resorted to forcing the Jews to labor in a manner intended to generate mainly suffering and death. Many former prisoners comment on their purposeless toil," (Goldhagen 1996:294). In conjunction with their purposeless toils, Jewish prisoners were subject to brutal beatings with whips, sometimes on a specialized whipping table,

electrical shocks, hours long roll calls, and public hangings in which to terrorize Jewish prisoners and amuse their tormentors, (Goldhagen 1996:293-316).

Proximity to the victims did not appear to be either a contributing or diminishing factor in German enthusiasm to partake in violence, for Goldhagen's descriptions of brutality among the mobile killing units parallels the brutalities described in the camps. One difference between these two killing operations that Goldhagen does touch base on is that of unit comradery. To establish that the members of the police battalions were not mere "robotic killing machines," Goldhagen provides various examples of leisure activities in which most unit members would regularly participate. Such as going to church, watching movies, drinking, singing, and competitive sports, (Goldhagen 1996:186-187). Even subordinate-superior relationships appeared to have a familial tone, (Goldhagen 1996:220-221, 266).

Goldhagen's Critics

A number of critic's question Goldhagen's assertion that German antisemitism was uniquely eliminationist and widespread. In attempting to empirically gauge the nature of antisemitism among elite political and cultural circles, Goldhagen contends that it cannot be done for the proper data does not exist. He continues to say that even a "run-of-the-mill" public opinion poll would be "eliminating," (Goldhagen 1996:47). Fortunately for Goldhagen, such data does exist. Erich Fromm's (1980) Weimar Germany 1929-1930 political opinion and personality survey, which happened to measured levels of antisemitism, was publicly released in 1980. A careful analysis of Fromm's findings from Robert B. Smith (1998) directly contradicts Goldhagen's claims of widespread German antisemitism. Smith (1998) resolves that economic uncertainty, Nazi coercion, and personal interests, not antisemitism, offer a more sensible explanation regarding increasing German support for the Nazi party. Smith's claims are not

unique and have been supported by a number of other sources (Brustein 1997:216-221, Anheier 1997, Gamson 1997, Turner 1996, Duverger 1963, Mason 1993, Hilberg 1997).

German antisemitism also fails to satisfactorily explain perpetrator behavior for most critics. Raul Hilberg (1997) criticizes Goldhagen's failure to acknowledge non-German participants, non-Jewish victims, and antisemitism in other parts of the world. Christopher Browning, whose 1992 work, *Ordinary Men,* had been rather clumsily criticized by Goldhagen, agreed with Goldhagen's claims that numerous ordinary Germans had voluntarily participated in the mass murder of Jewish persons. However, Browning is quick to condemn Goldhagen's methodology. "Daniel Goldhagen calls for a study of the 'combination of cognitive and situational factors' that brought such perpetrators to contribute to the Holocaust. This is a suggestion I would support. But Goldhagen does not employ such a combined approach for studying German perpetrators of the Holocaust," said Browning during a 1996 symposium at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, (Goldhagen et al. 1996). Several other critics have also condemned Goldhagen's questionable methodology (Goldhagen et al. 1996, Lerner et al. 1997, Port 2017, Roth 2004, Smith 1998) and I offer my own criticisms in the following section.

Race, Ethnocentrism, and Antisemitism

The central claim in Goldhagen's book is that the cultural cognitive model, which he uses interchangeably with cognitive model, and cultural model, provides an all-encompassing explanation for German eliminationist antisemitism. However, Goldhagen never actually defines his operational usages for these terms. While the terms are conceptually similar, they are not synonymous. Goldhagen's ambiguous usage leads to unnecessarily incoherent statements that could have easily been prevented, and perhaps even enhanced, had he used-and defined his operational usage of-these terms, nuances of the cultural model could have been explored and

likely would have aided Goldhagen's understanding of German society's ever evolving

perceptions of race.

Social perceptions of race are in a perpetual motion of change. While the majority of

persons raised in western society have been taught to understand race as a solely biological

concept, this perspective has been largely contested in recent years. Particularly so among

scholars and human rights activists, who promote a more thorough understanding of race as a

sociopolitical construct (Sanders 1969, Marks 1995, Haney Lopez 1996, Jacobson 1998, Mills

1997, Stratton 1999, Morning 2014, Omi and Winant 2015). It should be noted here that race as

a sociopolitical construct does not deny that certain biological variants exist throughout and

within racial/ethnic groups. Rather, the sociopolitical construct of race argues that our

perceptions of race come from a sociopolitical basis that subjectively measures biological

differences in a way that favors some races/ethnicities over others. Furthermore, these

racial/ethnic classifications are subject to change alongside shifting sociopolitical climates.

When Goldhagen speaks of a shift between religious and racial antisemitism, which he

traces to the eighteenth-century, he describes race as, "the way to explain the source of the Jews'

unchanging foreignness and of their enormously dangerous character," (Goldhagen et al. 1996).

What he fails to acknowledge is that all of western civilization was undergoing a similar secular

and racial reckoning during this time (Curtin 1971, van den Berghe 1978). As historian Francis

Jennings states, "in the gradual transition from religious conceptions to racial conceptions, the

gulf between persons calling themselves Christian and the other persons, whom they called

heathen, translated smoothly into a chasm between whites and coloreds [nonwhites]," (1975). As

such, religious to racial othering was not unique to the Jewish experience. I turn to the concept of

ethnocentrism for further analysis.

Ethnocentrism refers to the human tendency to evaluate and judge other cultures using the standards and norms of one's own culture (Sumner 1906). When persons use their own culture as reference to the values and behaviors they expect of all populations, there is a tendency to develop an exaggerated vanity for the self and for those with whom they share commonalities, as well as an exaggerated disdain for outsiders and deviators, thus promoting stereotypes, prejudice, racism, xenophobia, discrimination, and scapegoating (Sumner 1906, Ozcelik and Ogretir Ozcelik 2008). Scapegoating, which results from displaced frustrations onto a powerless member of an out-group in the form of prejudice or aggression, is more likely to occur during times of prolonged or sudden strain, (Stroebe and Insko 1989, Seeman 1959, Durkheim 1997), such as the sociopolitical and economic climate throughout Germany in the years leading up to and during Hitler's leadership. Scapegoating may also be seen as one of the many potential results occurring from the rationalization process during an episode of cultural dissonance.

Cultural Dissonance and Perpetrator Behaviors

As discussed earlier, the cultural model explores the process of internalizing ideas and expectations of the outside world. It is the most widely shared- or widely pushed- ideas, and expectations among community members which eventually settle into cultural norms and provide members with guidelines for behavior. Nevertheless, even the most widely distributed norms are subject to change, break down, or are no longer effective in the regulation of human behaviors (Durkheim 1997). The values that members of a community attribute to their social norms do not easily dissipate even after norms collapse. When one's internalized values misalign with current cultural norms, members of that community are susceptible to perceive their

condition as generally incoherent and demoralizing. This struggle between values and situation is known as cultural dissonance (Hart and Spiprakash 2018).

With the experience of cultural dissonance comes an equal desire to minimize or reduce the chasm between internalized values and structural conditions, which requires that either one's values or the structure itself be altered. Since the former is easier to produce than the latter, most culturally dissonant persons will opt to amend their values. Since values and social behaviors reinforce one another, once someone's values have changed, their social behaviors change soon after; and after social behaviors have changed, values are likely to change as well (Lewin 1948:38). Such may explain the initial and progressively dehumanizing actions taken by the ordinary men who became the willing executioners of the Holocaust.

Most persons will not willing abandon their culturally prescribed values without first finding or forging meaning to rationalize this shift in perspective, a process known as moral justification (Waller 2002:188). Without actually using the terms cultural dissonance or moral justification, Christopher Browning supplies a number of rationalization techniques that the men of ORPO 101 may have used to forge meaning behind their actions. Common justifications include unit comradery, pressure to conform, and the routinization of killing assignments.

James Waller and Robert Zajonc explain that once unit comradery has been established, it becomes easier for persons to exaggerate their differences with others. Not only can this fuel preexisting ethnocentrism and xenophobia, but also it may awaken an innate desire to preserve one's community, thus justifying mass murder (Waller 2002:186-188). Under such conditions, the socialization between unit members may become one of "the most dangerously manipulable facets of war psychology that promote genocide," (Waller 2002:155).

Pressure to conform goes beyond mere peer pressure as it involves the deindividuation of unit members. Deindividuation refers to the process in which an individual actor comes to view themselves as a member of the group first, and as an individual second (Darley and Latane 1968). Similarly, when the responsibility of an act is shared among members of the group, the individual is more likely to diminish the product of their personal contribution (Milgram 1977). In the context of holocaust perpetration, the individual participant is more likely to view themselves as a cog in the machine, rather than a free agent who willingly participated in mass murder (Milgram 1977, Darley and Latane 1968, Durkheim 1997). The deindividualization process becomes more radical when the behavior becomes habitual and routinized.

Wendy Stallard Flory explains that, "with very few exceptions, people have an intense, instinctive, unconscious aversion to and anxiety about killing other humans," (Lerner et al. 1997). To be able to persist in torturous and murderous activities without becoming psychologically overwhelmed, rationalization strategies have to persist alongside the killing process. The individual comes to view their behavior not as an action derived from the self, but as an expression of the self as part of a community. Subsequently, the individual, through their action, is asking that the community recognize and accept their contribution to the group (Goffman 1959:30,77).

Members who have a particular aversion to their expectant community behavior are likely to overcompensate their initial hesitations with more fervent action (Goffman 1959:30). This may serve as explanation for the particular brutality of some perpetrators. Similarly, participants who have put in the cognitive energy required to minimize their cultural dissonance will not readily or easily shift back towards their former state of incoherence. It is more sustainable for the individual's cognitive energy resources to ignore information that may

discredit or disrupt their rationalization process (Goffman 1959:141, Mills 2000:28-31). That is to say, once the killing has started, the individual must keep up their charade if they are to keep cultural dissonance at bay.

Conclusion

Daniel Johan Goldhagen's controversial 1996 work, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, was met with mixed reception among non-academics and was largely criticized among academic circles. His questionable methodology and simplistic, monocausal conclusion, in conjunction with the book's widespread distribution, prompted a heated academic debate. The Goldhagen Debate has become an interdisciplinary conversation with contributors throughout the humanities. Even so, contributions from sociological scholars and academics is limited. With this work I hope to continue this conversation, promote its expansion across the humanities, thereby expanding the interdisciplinary community of scholars and academics who are committed to the fight against genocide.

Parting Thoughts

Despite my above criticisms, Goldhagen's controversial work has compelled numerous readers to ask themselves why it is that "the only genocide about which people routinely assert that the killers did not hold the death of the victims to be desirable and just is the Holocaust?" (Goldhagen et al. 1996). Rather than attempt to answer this question, I leave you with the following statement which I implore all readers to reflect:

> One undeniably unique feature of the Holocaust-or, better said, its "reception"-is the outrage and emotion that the very act of questioning its uniqueness continues to engender. Why might that be the case? The sheer scale of death and destruction wrought by Germany over the past century has no doubt attracted so much attention in the West because it was death and destruction wrought by one of the world's most "advanced" and "civilized" nations against other civilized nations

and groups. Is that not what most distinguishes German savagery from the barbarous acts committed by other Westerners, namely, those who instead chose to impose their will, not seldom with brute force, on the "racially inferior" living in, say, Africa, Asia, or the Americas? And if that is true, does what some consider to be a disproportional preoccupation with German crimes against humanity reflect a subconscious belief that some human lives are somehow more valuable than others? My intention is not to call into question the horror or unique nature of the Holocaust. But to be unique does not necessarily mean to be more horrible, (Port 2017).

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The Lasting Impact of Genocide in America: Historical Trauma, Continued Genocide, and
Methods of Prevention

Sarah Brumfield

According to the Oxford Dictionary, genocide is "The deliberate killing of a large group of people, especially those of a particular nation or ethnic group" (Oxford University Press 2019). The term was coined in 1944 by Raphael Lemkin to have a better understanding of the atrocities carried out by the Nazis (Bechky 2012). Genocide became a crime under international law in 1946, and in 1948 the United Nations recorded an official definition in Article II of the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* as follows (United Nations 2018):

> In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:
> a. Killing members of the group;
> b. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
> c. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
> d. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
> e. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

To further contextualize such a heinous crime, and in the continued effort of prevention, Gregory Stanton, President of Genocide Watch, defined 10 stages of genocide ([1996] 2013); classification to create a bipolar "us and them" society; symbolization given to the classifications to further distinguish "us and them"; discrimination through law, custom, and political power; dehumanization by equating members of the other group with animals, vermin, insects or diseases; organization of special military groups in order to plan the genocidal killings; polarization to drive the groups apart through propaganda and laws; preparation by group leaders to enable their forces for the genocidal killings; persecution of specific groups including the creation of death lists and forced confinement; extermination through the rapid and mass killing

of members of the persecuted group(s); and denial of the events through destruction of evidence, intimidating witnesses, and blaming the events on the victims.

When framing the events of the past 500 years in the United States using these definitions and stages, it is difficult to deny that Native Americans experienced genocide. The sheer population loss alone is more than enough evidence; most scholars agree that there was a 95 percent decrease in the population of Native Americans in North America between the arrival of Columbus in 1492 and the end of the 19th century (Plous 2002). This decline is attributed to both the intentional slaughter of Native peoples, and the exposure to diseases and other inhospitable conditions. More instances of genocide were experienced during the boarding school era; from the opening of Carlisle Indian Industrial School in 1879, Native children were forcibly removed from their homes and sent to government-run residential schools (Adams 1995). These children were stripped of their Tribal identity, beaten for speaking their language, and often succumbed to preventable illnesses (Child 1998). It wasn't until the passing of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 that parents were given the right to deny the removal of their children (Szasz 1999).

There is a lasting and devastating effect of the past among many Native Americans. Brave Heart and DeBruyn (1998) suggest that the "legacy of chronic trauma and unresolved grief across generations" is the cause of the problems faced by many Native Americans. Historical trauma suggests that trauma suffered by one generation is then passed on to other generations through biological, psychological, environmental, and social means (Sotero 2006). Mortality disparity rates from 2009-2011 as reported by Indian Health Services (IHS) show that Natives died from all causes at 1.3 times the rate in comparison to all other races in the United States, including heart disease (1.1 times), influenza and pneumonia (1.8 times), kidney disease (1.5

times) and diabetes (3.2 times). Chronic lower respiratory diseases, stroke, Alzheimer's, and hypertension all had higher rates as well. When compared with any other group in the United States, Native American individuals have the lowest income, least education, and highest poverty rate (Denny, Holtzman, Goins et al. 2005). They have the lowest life expectancy (CDC 2010), and higher suicide rates than the national average (CDC 2007). Among Native youth, suicide is the second leading cause of death, and suicide rates are over three times higher than the national rate (CDC 2018). Non-Hispanic Native American adults are also at a much higher risk of experiencing feelings of psychological distress, poorer overall physical and mental health, and unmet psychological and medical needs (Barnes and Adams 2010). Though there has been increasing research in the field of historical trauma among Native Americans and means for healing (Brave Heart, Chase, Elkins, et al. 2011), current literature lacks consideration for ongoing events of genocide, or possible methods of prevention.

A 2017 report published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stated that Native American women suffer from the second highest homicide rate in the United States (Petrosky, Blair, and Betz et al.). According to data from 1999-2002, Natives were the victims of violent crimes at more than twice the rate of all United States residents, and 88 percent of violent crime committed against Native women was committed by non-Native perpetrators (United States Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs). Data gathered by Indian Health Services (IHS) from 2009-2011 showed that Natives died from assault at 2.1 times the rate of all United States races. And, a study conducted in 2017 found that 38 percent of Natives had reported that they or family members had experienced violence, 34 percent had been threatened or harassed, and 15 percent said they had avoided seeking health care because of anticipated discrimination (Findling, Casey, Fryberg et al.).

In 2016 alone there were nearly 6,000 reported cases of missing or murdered Indigenous women and girls, yet only 116 cases were logged by the US Department of Justice's federal missing persons database (Lucchesi and Echo-Hawk 2018). Despite these staggering statistics, the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) has not been seriously addressed by many law enforcement agencies until recently. In 2017 the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that Department of Justice "did not know the total number of Native American victims who received services under human trafficking grant programs" (United States Government Accountability Office). A course providing specialized and detailed investigative tools for agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Indian Affairs working exclusively in Indian Country wasn't created until 2016 (Johnson 2018). There has been progress with "Savanna's Act", a bill that requires the U.S. Department of Justice to strengthen training, coordination, data collection and other guidelines related to MMIWG cases. Savanna's Law was introduced in 2017 after the brutal murder of Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind, however, it was not signed into law until the fall of 2020 due to funding issues (Flores 2020). The MMIW crisis is an ongoing event of genocide enabled by the continued dehumanization of Native Americans, which is a direct result brought about by the attitudes of color-blind racism and the perpetuation of outdated or overly sexualized conceptions of Native Americans.

The passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 marked a new era in the United States; not a post-racial society with equality for all, but rather a society of implicit bias and color-blind racism. Color-blind racism is "racism without racists" (Bonilla-Silva [2003] 2017), a new and more subtle, yet equally damaging set of attitudes and behaviors. Bonilla-Silva framed color-blind racism within four major concepts; abstract liberalism (opposing affirmative action), naturalization ("segregation is normal because they do it to themselves"), cultural racism ("Black

people have too many babies"), and minimization ("it's better now than in the past"). Though he was centering his work on the Black/White binary in the United States, Bonilla-Silva's concepts of color-blind racism apply to Natives. Data from the RNT study supports the concepts of color-blind racism applying to Natives with 53 percent of Americans believing that Natives receive benefits simply for being Native, and 32 percent of the country strongly agreeing that the "past is the past" when it comes to the tragedies suffered by Natives (First Nations Development Institute and Echo Hawk Consulting 2018).

Further compounding the issue of color-blind racism is the fact that Natives are incredibly underrepresented in many domains of contemporary life. Fryberg and Stephens (2010) contend that Natives have become "invisible." This is seen in the constant "othering" of Native peoples, an active, insidious means of erasing them from the narrative. The most blatant and recent example was CNN labeling Natives as "Something Else" in an Arizona exit poll during the 2020 Presidential Election coverage (Zornosa 2020). When there is visibility, it is almost predominately images of the past. A team of researchers conducted an image search on Google and Bing using the terms "American Indian" and "Native American" and examined the first 100 results for each. 95.5% of the images on Google and 99% of the images on Bing were historical representations of Natives (Leavitt, Covarrubias, and Perez et al. 2015).

And if the images are not ones of the past, they are often problematic in other ways. Two stereotypes applied to Native people are pervasive and have been perpetuated through time by Hollywood and the media: the Red Savage and the Noble Savage. The Red Savage has no redeeming qualities; they are bloodthirsty seekers of war and violence. Because they can never be redeemed, they must be exterminated. Native mascots celebrate the Red Savage stereotype, with their war cries and warrior imagery. The Native mascot issue is one that is widely debated

and most often misunderstood by non-Natives who argue that Native mascots are "honoring"
Natives. This argument disregards the impact of these generic, comical, or offensive images.
Fryberg et al. (2008) studied the effects of these mascots on Native students and found that they
reported lower self-esteem and community worth. In another study, Burkley et al. (2017) found
there was an increased activation of negative stereotypes among non-Natives when exposed to
Native mascots. Despite knowing the damaging effects, only 39% of the country supports a ban
on Native mascots (First Nations Development Institute and Echo Hawk Consulting).

Equally as damaging as the Red Savage stereotype is the Noble Savage. The Noble
Savage is one with the nature; they commune with the animals and spirits. Yet it is important to
remember that they are still not one of us, and thus they don't belong. One of the most dominant
representations of the Noble Savage is Pocahontas, who Disney likes to tell us fell in love with
John Smith, saved his life, and helped bring peace between her people and the White settlers.
Historic accounts from tribal oral histories portray a much darker reality. Pocahontas, or her birth
name of *Matoaka,* was no more than nine or ten years old when the colonists arrived. She likely
only knew John Smith in passing and they certainly were never involved romantically. When she
was 15 or 16, she was kidnapped by the English colonists and forced to give up her first child,
then was later raped and became pregnant with her second child while being held captive. After
marrying John Rolfe, she was forcibly converted to Christianity and taken to England to be
shown off, then died on the voyage back; she was no older than twenty-one at the time of her
death (Schilling 2017). Despite the truth of *Matoaka*'s life, the romanticized and often sexualized
image of the "Noble Savage" remains. A search for "Sexy Pocahontas Costume" on Amazon
returns four pages of results (Amazon 2019).

When a society, but especially the dominant culture of that society, believes that racism is no longer an issue there remains little impetus to change or desire to acknowledge the issues at hand. The belief that nothing is wrong with the way things are and that nothing needs to change in the first place perpetuates the damaging stereotypes affecting Native people. If there is no awareness of the truth behind Pocahontas and what the idea of the "Noble Savage" really represents, then there is no harm in major retailers selling offensive costumes. If there is no perceived racism faced by Natives, then the issue of Native mascots becomes not one of how damaging these mascots truly are, but instead of how the teams are "honoring" Native peoples. To deny Native peoples their history, to deny the implicit racism and sexism in popular portrayals, is to deny them of their humanity. When someone is seen as less than human, it is all the easier to end their lives through violence.

The idea of education as an interventional tool in prejudicial attitudes is not new. A 2007 study found that there was a greater awareness of racism and a greater support for affirmative action after students completed a required diversity course (Case 2007). Another found that students reported an increase in awareness of racism after completing courses that examined racism and prejudice (Kernahan and Davis 2007). A study conducted in 2000 found that hearing about someone's experience with racism increase the awareness of racism in the society (Harrell), and even a 20-minute video was effective in producing increased racial awareness (Soble, Spanierman, and Laio 2010). Further analysis of the RNT data by Brumfield and MacArthur (N.d) revealed that prejudice towards Natives decreased as education increased, and a study published in 2013 (Carvacho, Zick, and Haye et al.) found education to be one of the strongest predictors of prejudice.

Education in and of itself, however, is not a simple solution to prevent genocide when it was once a tool of genocide. Because the dominant voice in education has been that of the White male, the subject matter offered comes primarily from the viewpoint of the White male. Western structures of knowledge validation hold little to no consideration for the validation of any other voice aside from that of the dominant culture (Hill Collins 2000). The experiences of Native Americans are then considered "invalid" and are excluded from what counts as knowledge. Though the dominance of White male academics and their shaping of what is considered "valid" has greatly— and detrimentally—affected curriculum, there are challenges to these traditional views of education. Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged in the late 1980s from critical legal studies on race issues. It not only recognizes that race is a social construct, but that this construct then creates an inequality which benefits the dominant group. The concept of CRT was first introduced to the field of education in 1995 by Ladson-Billings and Tate. They stated that race remained a significant factor in society in general, particularly in education, yet race was under-theorized as a topic of scholarly inquiry in education. Because of this, they proposed that critical race theory should be used to examine the role of race and racism in education. CRT, however, "does not address the specific needs of Tribal peoples because it does not address American Indians" liminality as both legal/political and racialized beings or the experience of colonization" (Brayboy 2005).

The better means of challenging the system, then, relies on Tribal Critical Theory (TribalCrit), a theory emerging from CRT because of the unique experiences of Native Americans in this country. What is important to note about TribalCrit is that while it does emphasize the endemic nature of colonization, it also acknowledges the role played by racism. By addressing both issues of colonization and racism, TribalCrit builds upon the foundation of

CRT in education to offer the most useful tools to shape curriculum related to Native Americans.

In 2005, Brayboy laid out the nine central tenets to TribalCrit as follows:

- Colonization is endemic to society.
- U.S. Policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain.
- Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.
- Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge Tribal sovereignty, Tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.
- The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens.
- Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation.
- Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups.
- Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being.
- Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change.

Using the frame of TribalCrit, education has the potential to serve as an intervention in the cycle of genocide. A curriculum shaped by TribalCrit that recognizes colonization and racism, that accepts stories and oral histories as valid sources, and that emphasizes the importance of Native voices is critical in reducing the amount of racism and discrimination faced by Native Americans. Student learning objectives for one section of NAMS 1100 include some, but not all of the tenets of TribalCrit such as recognizing Tribal sovereignty, self-determination, and self-identification; recognizing the problematic goal of assimilation; and recognizing that Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understand the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups.

Through Native-centered education, more non-Natives become aware of the issues at hand. This leads to the shedding of the Eurocentric viewpoint endemic to the American education system. By reshaping the Master Narrative, there is a better understanding of why things are the way they are, and why they should not be that way. Rather than breeding bias and prejudice, a Native-centered education creates better allies and advocates. More voices can speak out in unison against inequality, and education can finally be used as a tool of prevention rather than a tool of destruction. The whitewashing of American history can be eliminated at the origin, and if incorporated into schools as early as the primary level, Native-centered education has the potential to create a bottom-up approach to eliminating discrimination and prejudice.

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Teaching Middle School Students About Fast Fashion and how to Avoid it

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February 1, 2021

Teaching Middle School Students about Fast Fashion and how to Avoid it

The shift towards a consumer culture of fast fashion in developed countries over the last 30 years has had a significant impact on both the conceptualization of fashion and its purpose as well as the economic structure and human rights violations of people who work in the industry. Fast fashion came about in the United States around the same time millennials became teenagers and had buying power. Millennials, as defined by people born between 1981 and 1997, are making less than previous generations and have much more student loan debt and less equity in houses and mortgages (Boone 2019). This decrease in wealth within the American middle class has not surprisingly coincided with the rise of cheap clothing and knockoffs produced for a fraction of the price. As the economy has fluctuated in the last 20 years, stores like Forever 21, have grown and taken over vacant space in malls and have increased floor space to hold a large amount of clothing (Debter & Gross, 2019). Recently, retailers have moved to a larger online presence after seeing little benefit from maintaining and expanding floorspace as evidenced by Forever 21 (Debter and Gross, 2019).

The increase in online sales can even further hide the low quality of clothing produced through the use of deceptive or inaccurate images. It is also difficult to compare quality and material when purchasing an item online. This is in stark contrast to how major clothing retailers previously released around two new lines each season, and would anticipate trends much farther in advance due to the length of production time. In 2017, fashion from a traditional lifestyle brand typically took around 36 weeks from design to delivery, compared to the four week average for a fast fashion company (Berg et al. 2019). Large retailers like Zara and H&M produce and release new lines similarly quickly, getting product on shelves around once a month, in order to increase profit margins (Crewe & Goodman, 2000). Fast fashion has made a dramatic

impact on the fashion market sector, with revenue growing by 8.2% in 2017 in comparison with the overall fashion market which grew by 3.5% (Berg et al. 2019). Fast fashion has become deeply entrenched in the American economy and seems to be gaining a strong foothold. Unfortunately, the negative impacts of fast fashion have impacts that are far and wide reaching.

In 1991, Jeff Ballinger released an expose on the consequences of Nike's labor practices in Indonesia, including evidence of low wages and poor working conditions (Robertson, 2020). After public outcry against Nike, the company has been able to rebrand itself as a sustainability leader and supporter of ethical worker treatment (Robertson, 2020). While Nike has significantly increased monitoring and audits preformed at factories as well as increasing the minimum age of workers, they have also distanced themselves from the Workers Rights Consortium, an independent organization focused on evaluating the sustainability of companies' labor and production practices (Robertson, 2020). While the Human Rights Consortium provides valuable feedback, it has its limitations. For example, even when companies are being upfront about labor practices in their production, they may still be purchasing fabrics or other materials that are being sourced or produced unethically ("Human Rights", n.d.). Human rights injustices happen even in developed countries which have labor laws and protections for workers. One such case was a sweatshop in Los Angeles where Fashion Nova was responsible for $3.8 million in unpaid wages and where workers, often undocumented, were making on average $2.77 an hour (Kitroeff, 2019). What these work place violations boil down to are human rights violations made profitable by consumer culture.

As younger generations are exposed to fast fashion, it is unlikely that they will remember the days before it was a ubiquitous part of the middle-class lifestyle. We are doing them a disservice by not providing them with the cultural awareness of the consequences of an act as

mundane as purchasing a new t-shirt. Young people today are more aware of social injustice and tend to have more progressive views, but also spend much more time online (Parker & Igielink, 2020). They tend to spend the most time on Youtube, Instagram and Snapchat (Anderson & Jiang, 2018), all of which market cheap clothing using algorithms that target viewers based on age, race, gender and other demographics. Middle school aged kids are at the right age to begin thinking about social injustice and also how their future consumer habits will affect others. At a time when they are most focused on both fitting in and standing out, ethical based decision making will likely mesh well with their world view and value system. For example, people born after 2007 are more keenly aware of race relations and injustices in the United States (Parker & Igielink, 2020). Furthermore, learning about social justice issues that are happening in the world now will help the content stay relevant to their lives and develop their sense of their impact on the world.

According to Human Rights Watch, a well-documented and covered catastrophe captured international attention: workers in Bangladesh have been subjected to conditions that are in violation of many human rights injustices such as being harmed by factory owners for being part of a labor union (2015). Working conditions in a large sweatshop were brought to worldwide attention when a large multi-story sweatshop, called Rana Plaza, collapsed (2015). Workers and employers were warned of the building's structural instability due to large cracks the day before when workers were ordered to leave the building but were threatened with losing their jobs if they did not return the following day (2015). Rana Plaza collapsed killing 1,100 people and injuring 2000 (2015). In response to the backlash, the Bangladesh government encouraged the creation of labor unions through legislation (2015). However, there have been continued reports that individuals who tried to exercise their right to form unions were beaten, fired or not paid

owed wages (2015). Remaining workers become reluctant to join unions after seeing the horrible consequences and the lack of support from the government in protecting them ("Whoever", 2018). The consequences of poor worker treatment make it unlikely that working conditions will change any time soon without some kind of outside pressure.

The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights is not upheld when employers use scare tactics to prevent workers from unionizing. For example, keeping workers from unionizing and scaring them into submission through physical force goes against the right to form and join trade unions in Article 23 (United Nations, 1998). Furthermore, lack of safety and threats of unemployment when working conditions are not safe is also expressly mentioned in article 23, as well as the lack of pay for hours worked due to joining a union (United Nations, 23). The situation in Bangladesh has been relatively well-documented following the horrific events of the Rana Plaza collapse and a series of fires which also killed and injured workers ("Bangladesh", 2015). However, poor worker treatment happens across the board in many countries who rely on cheap materials and cheap labor. In Malaysia, women were being forced to take birth control and pregnancy tests to avoid getting fired ("Triple Discrimination", 2018), contrary to article 25 which focuses on the protections of motherhood (United Nations, 1998). Another huge problem is the fashion industry's substantial reliance on child labor (Moulds, n.d.). Children are being denied the special care and assistance provided to them in article 25 as well as a right to education as provided to them in article 26 (United Nations, 1998).

Methods and Materials

Preparing a curriculum to teach middle school aged students about the fashion industry's current impact on workers around the world should be done with care. Helping preteens to develop a deeper awareness right around the time that they become more independent and able to

shop on their own as well as being at the age where many fast fashion brands will be targeting marketing towards drawing them in as consumers can help to combat the growth of this sector. Since preteens are particularly drawn towards social justice causes, increased awareness of the plight of workers responsible for providing them with fashionable clothing along with some suggestions on fashion mindfulness can begin to change the conversation and consumption of fast fashion. A gradual release of instruction for a lesson on fast fashion is outlined below, consisting of an hour-long lesson for middle school aged students. One piece of clothing for every two students is suggested, with tags indicating that it is from a well-known fast fashion brand and a tag identifying the country where it was made.

The anticipatory set begins with a quick discussion of the instructor's background with fast fashion. For example: "I remember when I got my first job babysitting my next-door neighbor's kids, and my friend and I were so excited that we would have money to spend because I didn't get an allowance. We would ask our parents to drop us off at the mall and head right into Forever 21, a giant two-story store that was brand new in our mall. Every time we managed to get there; it was as if the entire store was filled with entirely new clothing. As we both agreed, clothing was a way to communicate how edgy and cool we were to the world. We wanted new things that shocked and awed our classmates, but once the initial shock wore off, we didn't really want to wear them anymore. This was good because often after a few wears they looked way more worn out than the clothing our mothers insisted on buying us from what I imagined were old people stores. We didn't know it at the time, but although our clothing habit was costing us very little money, it was costing other people their rights!"

Objective/Learning goals

I will know what the definition of fast fashion is and how to avoid it

I will be able to determine if something was likely made unethically

I will have strategies to think through a purchase to determine if I will get a lot of use out of it.

Guided Teaching

Say: something as simple as putting on our clothing in the morning is something we do automatically. You might think about what to wear, but I bet you never wondered who made your clothing or about the long journey it made to get to your closet. Many people, an estimated 40 million, work to sew and create clothing for us to wear. Many of these people are women, and also work in unsafe and unsanitary conditions for very little money. Today we are going to read a short passage translated from Bengali into English, so that we can learn what it is like for these workers.

> "My name is Shuma Sarkar, I am a garment factory worker. I have a son and I am a widow. My husband died in a garment factory fire. In my family we are three sisters and one brother and my father and mother living together. I work on trousers (pants) in the garment factory. Primark, Tesco, and Sears are some of our buyers. In the factory I work in, the conditions are very poor. The bathrooms are unclean, the drinking water is bad. The pressure of production is so high that workers are unable to drink water. Not being able to drink water causes a lot of the workers to fall ill. Some girls get jaundice, kidney problems and other illnesses. (blood pressure and heart problems are mentioned) Some parts of the factory have too much light whereas other parts don't get enough light at all this affects the eyes of many workers. The noise level in the factory is so high that it causes a lot of workers to suffer hearing problems. The inside of the factory is extremely hot and the windows are small allowing no air ventilation. The suffocating heat also causes a lot of the workers to fall sick. Many of the materials used in the factory contain

harsh and toxic chemicals which cause many workers to suffer from skin problems especially on their hands. In the place where I live the conditions are very bad because of the meager salary I receive. I am unable to afford decent housing. I am forced to live in a slum which is extremely unhygienic and causes many problems. With the salary on which I live, it is not possible to change housing. Only if my salary is increased. I can move with my family to a decent house and live with them. I joined a trade union because it is one of my rights and I also wanted to learn about the rights I am entitled to. Because the factory conditions are so poor I wanted to know more about my own rights as a worker and what should be done about these conditions." (Sarkar, 2009).

We are now going to look at two articles of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. This is what we decided were the things that every person in the world deserved.

The first is article 23.

"Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests" (1998)

The second is article 25

"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control" (1998).

Modeled

Teacher will share one example of a connection of a human rights violation that Shuma talked about and where it is found in one of the articles. For example: Shuma talked about how her husband died in a fire at a garment factory. In article 25 it is stated that she has a right to security in the event that she is widowed. We know she does not because she says she makes so little money she cannot support her family.

Shared Instruction

Ask students to give examples of what they heard from the video and how it connects to one or both of the articles from the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

Guided Instruction

Fast Fashion is when clothing producers create new outfits very quickly for very cheap. The speed and low prices they want rely on factories like the one Shuma works in. Now we are going to talk about what we can do and how to identify fast fashion. The three parts we are going to focus on are looking at clothing labels, researching brands and mindful buying.

Independent Instruction

The teacher will project a clothing label onto the board. On the label, the teacher will point out the country that the piece of clothing was made as well as the material it is made from. The teacher will list the most common countries where workers are exploited using figure 1 ("Top Four", 2019). The teacher will then show students how to look the brand of the clothing up on the website Good For You and guess based on the rating if it is fast fashion or not.

Figure 1

TOP FOUR COUNTRIES	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
CHINA	21%

VIETNAM	14%
BANGLIDESH	14%
INDIA	12%

The teacher will ask students to pair up. The teacher will pass out a piece of clothing such as a t-shirt to each pair of students. The students will be asked to identify if it came from one of the top countries. Next students will be asked to look at the item and see if it has any tell-tale signs that is low quality like being abnormally thin, having uneven seems, or loose threads. Teacher will then have students look up the brands on the Good For You website to see if it is a fast fashion item.

Wrap up

Finally, students will be told to imagine they that they are buying this item. Teacher will ask students if they think that they will wear this item 30 times before they get rid of it. Items that look too flimsy to last 30 wears or items that are too trendy to wear often both fall into the do not buy category. If the item falls into either category, chances are that it was made in a fast fashion factory. Tell students that even if they choose to buy items from fast fashion retailers, wearing the item more and buying less create less demand for new items to be produced. These practices slow down the need for brands to keep speeding up their production lines at workers' expense.

Summary

Remind students of the working conditions that fast fashion creates and how this violates people's human rights. Tell them that there are many ways that they can impact the chain of production by being aware of where their clothing comes from. Ultimately, buying less often and

wearing clothing more creates less demand, and buying from clothing companies that can prove that they are ethically sourced also supports the goal of reducing fast fashion consumption.

   As we have moved towards late-stage capitalism in most developed countries, the need for more clothing at a faster pace and lower cost has become a reality. It hurts workers who provide us with these clothes and it violates their rights. Despite global action and laws in countries where these abuses are happening, it is clear that often the profit still makes it worth exploiting people. Despite the various loopholes and lack of oversight, it is becoming more and more clear that individuals will be able to drive, or at least nudge the market in a more ethical direction. Starting with pre-teens when they are newly able to start participating in the fashion economy and are also very sensitive to human injustice can create change quickly. Furthermore, teaching students about this in a developmentally appropriate way has been outlined to show how this can also broaden their understanding of human rights. Many generational statistics suggest that preteens today may be much more open to hearing this discourse and that they are more likely to want to take action. Providing them with resources and tools to learn about how they can identify unsustainable clothing when they are shopping can also help them to feel like they have concrete steps to opt out of condoning these practices.

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An Exploration into the Barriers Blocking an Individual's Right to Health

By LeeAnna Lui

Primum non nocere is Latin for "first, do no harm" [1]. Along with the Hippocratic oath, these concepts govern how health care providers' work. These notions, while not legally binding, set the precedence for patient care. While they cover bioethical issues, like autonomy and justice, different situations lend themselves to different interpretations where each must follow human rights. In 1946, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared health a human right, defining it as the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health [2]. The testament further explains a State's obligation to support this right and the components necessary for its success [3]. Rather than claiming everyone must be in perfect health, WHO explains that States must provide their citizens with the ability to achieve their highest health. Therefore, both a chronically sick and a healthy individual should have the same priority and access to proper health care. Sadly, this is not the case for many States. Access, social determinants, public health, and ethical conflicts all influence health. By examining these factors, we can better understand the disparity seen in human rights.

A person's health is multifaceted, affected by numerous factors. One major barrier in health is the accessibility of affordable, quality health care at any stage of illness [4]. This access depends on its affordability, availability, and inclusivity. When a population lacks one or more of these, access to health care decreases. The cost deters many patients from seeking treatment. Patients under Medicaid, who have low income and resources, are more likely to be treated in the emergency department, which means these cases tend to be more exacerbated and at higher risk for complications [5]. Poorer subpopulations wait until their illnesses are fatal rather than handling them at a manageable level [6]. Furthermore, accessibility is tied to its availability, as several populations lack access based on their location. Hospitals are disproportionately scattered, making health care more inaccessible for many rural and indigenous communities, who must travel hours to their nearest hospital [6]. Lastly, accessibility is affected by how inclusive science is. With systemic racism and discrimination built into scientific studies, many well-known symptoms are based on major populations [7]. With little diversity, minorities, like women and people of color, are less represented in research, leading to more misdiagnoses for these populations. Shortcomings in affordability, availability, and inclusivity all violate human rights and make health care inaccessible. By finding solutions to address these disparities, like telehealth or diversity in trials, we may be closer to meeting these rights for everyone.

In addition to accessibility, social determinants play a big role in one's health. Social determinants are factors caused by an individual's lifestyle and workplace that can affect health risks and outcomes. These include their access to clean water, adequate housing, pollutants, employment status, and a nutritious diet [2]. For disadvantaged populations, there is a higher mortality and morbidity rate for non-communicable diseases [3]. These diseases, like cancer or cardiovascular disease, are noninfectious. Instead, genetics, lifestyle, and other environmental factors cause their presence. Therefore, the increase of non-communicable diseases in these populations indicates how detrimental one's environment can be. To offset these disparities, a State must be responsible for aiding these social determinants. When further actions are taken to combat these inequalities, human health and other rights are closer to being met.

Public and global health initiatives that are promoted by the State to benefit community health. Depending on how effective these initiatives are, they can cause barriers to health rights. These initiatives include widespread vaccination, handwashing promotion, smoking cessation, and more [8]. When left unfollowed by the community, these factors can encourage diseases, as seen with secondhand smoking or a lack of vaccinations. Secondhand smoke can cause different respiratory infections, ear infections, and asthma to nearby nonsmokers [9]. Those who refuse vaccines can spread diseases to immunocompromised patients, like babies and transplant individuals [10]. With the public's resistance to specific health initiatives, an individual's health is indirectly at risk. This poses a problem, as these issues can only be solved effectively by laws on the population. By prohibiting or requiring certain actions, community health is overall benefitted. However, by imposing these laws, individual rights are hindered, creating the ethical dilemma of choosing between the right to health or autonomy.

In health care, there are many cases where ethical conflicts arise, and it becomes difficult to know how to follow human rights. The human rights of health include the four pillars of medical ethics: patient autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice [2]. These standards guide physicians: making sure they put patient interest and wellbeing first, that they do no harm, and that all decisions are fair. When these ethical standards are violated, human rights are as well. An infamous example of this the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, where scientists recruited impoverished, African American sharecroppers [5]. The study attempted to study the effects of untreated syphilis in exchange for free medical care. Men were given placebos or ineffective medicines, leading them to believe they were being treated for another disease. However, even after penicillin was determined as an effective treatment, the placebos continued to be given instead of penicillin [11]. This horrible violation of ethics had many further implications, creating distrust in medicine and clinical research, especially among African Americans. It called for human studies regulation and protection, forming the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) [11]. These violations, while horrible, sparked laws and accountability measures that ensure that human rights are followed. By recognizing current violations of medical ethics, we can better follow the rights of an individual.

Health is synonymous with wellbeing, indicating just how important one's health is to their happiness in life. With how critical it is, its inclusion under human rights is obvious. This right includes more than the ability to attain the highest health. It also covers patient autonomy, freedom from torture, and other factors. However, with the expenses of medicine, it becomes difficult to uphold these rights as a State. These rights are affected by multiple factors, including the accessibility to health care, social determinants of health, the efficacy of public health initiatives, and ethical conflicts. By examining each of these, the causes of human rights violations can be identified. It is through this, that promising, intertwined solutions can be invented. By addressing these factors and issues, we can be a little closer to meeting the rights of health for everyone.

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Travis Munyer

25 November 2020

Adulteration of the Relationship between Mental Health and Gun Violence

Citizens with even minor mental health conditions are done a disservice by politicians as the scapegoat of choice for violent events. A common argument during and after events involving gun violence is to blame mental health, and this frequently occurs without enough data to make a proper diagnosis. This unfortunate oversimplification can degrade daily life of individuals affected by mental illness, through increased prejudice and stereotyping. Compassionate mental health care should be freely and easily provided to those in need. Easily accessible mental health care would reduce the stigma around those with mental health issues, it would increase the study of the correlation between mental health and violence, and it would simply allow those in need to get assistance.

A major issue regarding the correlation between mental illness and gun violence is that there is little to no scientific backing or study directly relating such claims. Without proper studies/research, politicians and the media are loosely utilizing mental health as a tool to calm the people after gun violence, which depicts people with mental health issues as more likely to become violent. While serious cases of mental illness certainly can induce acts of violence, this is an oversimplification. Paul Steinberg wrote in a New York Times article entitled "Our Failed Approach to Schizophrenia", "[Lanza's] acts [of slaughter] strongly suggest undiagnosed schizophrenia" (par. 6). This claim was following an event involving Adam Lanza's slaughter of 26 people at an elementary school. While this was a horrifically tragic event, incriminating schizophrenics without a proper examination and diagnosis degrades the reputation of high functioning schizophrenics with little basis on fact.

Doctors Carl Fisher and Jeffery Lieberman discuss some of the implications of gun control and gun violence in their article, "Getting the Facts Straight About Gun Violence and Mental Illness: Putting Compassion before fear." In this article, Fisher and Lieberman mention, "people with these conditions [(schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and depression)] represent 3% to 5% of total violence" (par. 5). Since it seems violence is blamed on mental health more than these percentages reveal, this statistic does not appear to represent the claims of some politicians and media sources.

Frequently, the action taken by politicians and media sources after gun violent events is to suggest legislature that prevents people with mental illnesses from owning firearms. While this may succeed in a few cases, this is akin to placing a band-aid on a substantial wound. This results in affecting those who are not violent individuals because it is difficult to diagnose future violence. This does not have a goal of assisting these citizens with their illness, it is only attempting to cover it up.

It is uncommon for media to report individuals with mental illness as victims in violent events, when in practice they are more likely to be victims than perpetrators of violence. According to Doctors Johnathan Metzl and Kenneth Macleish in the article, "Mental Illness, Mass Shootings, and the Politics of American Firearms", "these persons [with mental illnesses] are far more likely to be assaulted by others or shot by police than to commit violent crimes themselves" (par. 22). The entire story needs to be considered when expressing a view to the public about a particular population, and those with mental illnesses are infrequently given that benefit.

Cost commonly prevents those with mental illnesses from receiving proper care, while copious funds are spent on debate aimed to control these individuals. Some individuals with

mental health may not have insurance, or the finances to pay costs present after insurance coverage. Those in need of mental health care should have compassionate assistance readily available for them. This could be in the form of assisting with insurance, or with covering the cost of care. A potential solution for this issue should be to leverage excessive debate and recent research funding to extend care to those in need, all while expanding research parameters. These acts of compassion could be substantially more effective than simply reducing access to firearms to all individuals suffering from mental illness because it allows for healing as a solution before infringing citizens' rights.

Increasing access to mental health care has a few key benefits. Most importantly, this compassionate care could be a tool for expanding research data. According to Swanson et al. in the article "Mental Illness and Reduction of Gun Violence and Suicide: Bringing Epidemiologic research to policy", "the goal of synthesizing the evidence into a coherent, comprehensive explanation of violence risk in people with serious mental illnesses – and thus to render gun violence, in particular, somehow predictable and preventable in psychiatric patients – remains elusive" (par. 21). We do not have much direct information on the relationship between mental health and its ties to violence. Even though this does not sound compassionate, this research can only occur if applicable patients are studied. Employing these patients in research while granting them care does not have to be an uncompassionate test subject scenario, where no one truly improves. This should be optional and allow varying degrees of involvement, from permitting anonymous notes to be utilized in studies to full inclusion in research trials.

There is not much data on the correlation between mental health issues and gun violence, likely because of politically charged decisions in the past. According to Erber in the article, "Funding for Gun-Violence Research Ends 20-Year Drought," research on topics regarding gun-

violence became nearly nonexistent after the Dickey Amendment passed in 1996 (par. 2). This amendment prevents federal funds from being used in research that could potentially promote gun control. Congress decided as recently as 2018 that "federal funds could be used for gun violence related research as long as they don't support lobbying for gun control" (Erber, par. 2). Funding for this research will finally come in the form of $25 million dollars to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health sometime in 2020 (Erber, par. 1). While this means that research attempting to relate mental health and gun violence will soon begin, it also means that we do not yet have solid data on the correlation between mental health and gun violence. At this point in 2020, it is unknown that assisting those with mental health issues would impact gun violence. Even if the correlation between gun violence and mental health is found to be unimpactful, increasing access to mental health care for those who find themselves unable to access it would improve situations for the less fortunate.

Increasing research data would reduce the mental health stigma because there would be more evidence to prevent misrepresentation of mental health from politicians and the media. Substantial information would allow politicians to base their arguments on fact, instead of speculation. If they do not utilize facts in their political stances, there would be research to inform misguided politicians otherwise. Swanson et al. explains a study where one group was given a news story depicting a violent event with an individual with a diagnosed mental illness as the perpetrator, and another group not given a news story to read (par. 6). The individuals that read the news story "reported significantly higher perceived dangerousness of, and desired social distance from, people with serious mental illness in general" (Swanson et al., par 6). Therefore, the opinion that politicians and the media present to the public about mental health is clearly impactful.

The fear of reaching out for help is not the only factor preventing individuals with mental illnesses from receiving the care that they need. The expense of mental health care is studied in a document published in the Nation Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) libraries entitled, "Access and Cost Barriers to Mental Health Care by Insurance Status." In this article, researchers Rowan et al. explain that, "64.0 percent of the uninsured with serious mental health problems reports a problem accessing care as a result of cost, compared to 18.2 percent of those with public insurance and 30.3 percent with private insurance" (par. 31). The mental illnesses themselves can hinder individuals from affording the psychiatric care that they need.

Mental health care is certainly expensive, and this fact is a major opposition to increasing access to mental health care. Rowan et al. mentions that individuals with serious mental health problems are significantly more likely to be uninsured (par. 26). Covering either the costs of insurance or the costs of the care itself for these individuals would certainly require no small amount of finances, especially since up to sixty-four percent of uninsured individuals with mental illness cannot afford the cost of care. Public spending on gun violence and health care debate is exorbitant enough that if a fraction of this spending went to directly improving problems such as these, it may be enough to begin the process of increasing access to mental health care at minimum.

Mental health care is an important resource that should be publicly and freely available. The funding for this exists in the form of existing research grants and from a reduction of debate related expenses. Mental illnesses can often become the cause of an individual's inability to access care. Promoting an individual's ability to receive care while utilizing funds already dedicated to improving all citizens lives is a fitting way to propel nations towards proper decisions.

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Upholding Our Right to Protest Injustice

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In May of 2020, the unjust killing of George Floyd at the hands of a police officer prompted citizens to take to the streets of Minneapolis to protest his death, inspiring people in other states to follow suit. While his death was the catalyst for these protests, they were largely fueled by years of unjust treatment of black people from law enforcement. However, instead of their demands for justice being heard, protesters were subjected to harsh treatment from the very police officers they were protesting against. The many documented incidents of blatant human rights violations against people exercising their first amendment rights raises many issues. It served as an attempt to invalidate a movement that has valid concerns. Furthermore, the reaction from the government poses grave implications for the future of peaceful protests in America.

When these mass protests broke out across the United States, many steps were taken to try to deter the Black Lives Matter movement. Mass arrests were a common occurrence in every state, often with people claiming that they were arrested and not given a reason. Cities enforced curfews, often with limited notice, with the purpose of dispersing crowds and limiting the amount of time people had to gather. The internet became flooded with disturbing videos of police officers blatantly using force against protesters- many of whom did nothing to warrant such excessive force. Tear gas and other measures were used as a means of breaking up crowds. You could not scroll down social media sites without seeing images of huge crowds being handled with tear gas, rubber bullets, and riot shields. According to Ernest Coverson, Amnesty International USA's End Gun Violence Campaign Manager, "The research shows that people who were simply exercising their human right to peacefully protest were met with such violence that they lost eyesight, survived brutal beatings, and suffered seizures and severe wounds" (Amnesty, 2020).

There is irony in protests against police brutality being met with exactly that. While the majority of demonstrations were peaceful, they were still subjected to violence from police officers who used excessive force in an attempt to bring these protests to end. The treatment of Black Lives Matter protesters calls into question exactly why fighting against injustice is met with discouragement and intimidation from those in power. "Law enforcement repeatedly used physical force, chemical irritants such as tear gas and pepper spray, and kinetic impact projectiles as a first resort tactic against peaceful protestors rather than as a response to any sort of actual threat or violence." (Amnesty, 2020). With large numbers of officers in full riot gear policing protests, you would think that the crowds were out of control, but it was mostly the opposite. These measures should not have been resorted to unless it was a very last resort. The actions of these officers show us what happens in this country when people of color come together to fight for a cause.

The problem is this: there was no justification for law enforcement to use force against protesters. These documented instances show an alarming pattern of excessive force that did nothing to make protests safer. Instead, they seemed to be deliberate acts meant to control crowds even if there was no indication that protests would even become violent. There is no excuse for this violation of our basic human right to protest. Instead of this response, police officers should have been attending protests to make sure that they were safe, and that social distancing and the use of masks were being enforced. Peace simply did not have to be met with violence, and it is concerning how quickly protesters were labeled as dangerous. This only serves as an example of how Black people have been seen as violent throughout history, and it is these stereotypes that have led to many instances of police brutality against black people in the first place.

This was an attempt to silence Black Lives Matter activists by ensuring that all of their efforts would be discouraged. Treating protesters like criminals furthers the fact that law enforcement wants people to remain silent when the wrongdoings of their own officers are brought to light. President Trump was a figure who openly detested protesters, calling for "crackdowns", defending police officers, and encouraging a militarized response (Presnall, 2020). Furthermore, comments from the president also contributed to the narrative that protesters were dangerous criminals. Painting protesters in this light only takes public attention away from the issue they are fighting for. This matters because when those in power try to undermine a movement, it spreads fear and discourages people from exercising their right to protest.

The narrative surrounding Black Lives Matter activists also contributed to the effort to undermine the validity and goal of the cause. Words like "rioters" being used to describe the protesters only fueled opposition to the cause. The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) used information from over seven thousand protests across the United States and found that about 93% of protests were peaceful (Presnall, 2020). There were instances where protests did become violent, which led to things like looting and property damage. However, these far fewer stories were pushed to the forefront in an attempt to overshadow peaceful protests that were happening that made up the majority of demonstrations. The few instances of looting that were recorded caused people and media outlets to try to use these examples to generalize the whole movement. Painting all protesters as dangerous criminals is simply not right, and it only serves to pit the public against activists.

There are many things that can be taken away from the Black Lives Matter protests this past summer. The most glaring is the issue of police brutality against Black Americans that has been largely fueled by systemic racism. The inability for government officials and law

enforcement to exercise empathy and hear protesters out suggests that they want people to remain silent and not question their methods of "justice". However, this situation also highlights what dangers arise when protesting is met with harsh treatment and brutality from the law. It sends a message to those who are fighting against injustice that their concerns are not being considered. It tells people that they are wrong to stand up for what they believe in. There is great harm in sending this message. Protesting is an important human right, and it is one we must continue to uphold. Throughout our past, historical advancements on social issues could not have taken place without the organized efforts of those who were not afraid to stand for something. There is no doubt that protesting is a valuable tool for change, and if this is something that a government actively suppresses, then oppressed people have little hope of furthering their causes. When mass amounts of people show up to support a cause and the government does nothing to help enact change, people of color will continue to suffer. The unjust treatment of protesters may set a dangerous precedent for future demonstrations by Black people in this country. There is serious reform needed when it comes to how the United States views protesting, especially when it is done by people of color.

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Manali Mukherjee

Human Rights Essay Contest

January 16th, 2021

<center>Human Rights in the Digital Age</center>

Illegal drugs and software. Although at first glance these words seem to have no correlation, they do have one significant thing in common. "They are the only two industries that refer to their customers as 'users'." This observation made by computer scientist and professor at Yale University, Edward Tufte, signifies that unlike most industries, in software the primary goal is not to serve us. In this day and age, our existence on the internet begins before we are even conscious of it. And despite this, there is a concerning dearth of appropriate new laws and regulations to protect us. As the internet becomes an inevitable part of existing in our rapidly advancing society, it is essential that we truly understand our rights regarding our digital presence, and whether these rights truly fall into line with the human rights that we are all entitled to.

We provide information through being on the internet, both knowingly and unknowingly, at a colossal rate. A prime example of this is social media. We knowingly share posts, comments, messages, etc. However, what many are not aware of is that nearly every single action taken on these apps is recorded and used to further develop them. As the software industry has become increasingly competitive, the collection and analysis of our data as consumers have increased with it. Our every search, tap, share, time of engagement, location, etc. is information that may be collected, analyzed, and sold to affiliates and partners who aim to make improvements. Something to note about social media apps is that they are free. And because social media is free, it is easy to be deceived into believing that it still serves us. However, this is not the case. Although seemingly serving us, we are not the priority of social media companies. We are the product. Because these apps are free, companies must make a profit in some other way. And this way is the advertising of products. To maximize the profit that they make through these

advertisements, our every action is analyzed to make sure that we are viewing and engaging with them. This analysis of our every behavior on social media is controversial, as it seems to possibly be a violation of one of our most basic human rights; The right to privacy. No action on the internet is ever truly private. Although most likely mentioned in the pages and pages of privacy policies that everyone so enthusiastically reads (not really), many users of social media would be uncomfortable to hear of the way their data is actually handled, and how the aim of this data being shared is to develop apps to become more and more difficult to get off of. And as a study from Science Direct shows, "210 million people are estimated to suffer from internet and social media addictions". So the tremendous amount of data collected truly is benefiting social media companies. After all, more time spent on the app results in more ads viewed, and more profit gained by these companies. And that is exactly what matters to them. Profit. Even if it involves violating the basic human right to privacy.

This past summer, there was a surge of activism centering on the Black Lives Matter movement. A video of a 46-year-old black man having his neck kneeled on by a police officer for eight minutes and forty-six seconds rapidly spread across the internet like wildfire. The man's name was George Floyd. This was the catalyst for international outrage. Social media quickly became something to foster resources, information, the voices of Black people, and so much more. In June, many noticed that on the popular video-sharing app called TikTok, videos with #BlackLivesMatter or #GeorgeFloyd in the caption were gaining zero views. This infuriated a multitude of people. After some time, TikTok came out and said that they would be creating a "creator diversity council" to prevent an instance like this from occurring again. However, this is not enough. Because the problem goes far beyond this singular situation involving Tiktok. For the first time in history, many have the ability to spread and consume information all with the simple tap of a screen. And while this has both numerous benefits and pitfalls, there is one extremely alarming issue that arises with it. The ability for major movements to become vulnerable to censorship, which threatens another basic human right; the freedom of opinion. The violation of this right becomes all the more unnerving when considering the blind trust that many people very naively place in the internet.

This censorship creates the risk of influencing opinion in a way that undermines coming to personal conclusions, for which learning as much information as possible is crucial. Although some regulation of free opinion on the internet may be necessary, we must question the motives of this censorship while remembering that the freedom of opinion has been challenged many times before. However, overcoming these challenges has oftentimes been the thing to propel our society forward.

Although there remains a plethora of concerns that involve the internet conflicting with human rights, appropriate change is slowly but surely beginning to occur. For instance, COPPA, which is the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, deals with laws concerning children's protection online. COPPA protects the privacy of children under thirteen by forcing sites that target children to have a full written notice about their disclosure practices and acquiring parental consent. This is a significant stride in the right direction, especially as more and more young kids gain access to the internet. Another example of new laws and regulations concerning human rights online being put into place are the "Right to be Forgotten Laws" in the European Union. These laws give both individuals and corporations the ability to request that their information be deleted from certain sites. Through small changes like these, we are moving in the direction of a world where human rights do not have to be neglected in order to exist in this increasingly digital world.

All things considered, it is clear that numerous human rights are being compromised in this Digital Age. However, the issue getting worse is not an inescapable outcome. Although the internet comes with many complications, there is also power in the opportunity we now have for information to spread rapidly. Many companies have been held accountable for their violations of human rights through the very services that they provide us with. There is much work to do, but luckily, our voices can be heard more than ever before.

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Ben Schott - Untitled

The Declaration of Independence states that "all men are created equal" and that "they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Even though this document was written nearly 250 years ago, our world and the people in it, still can't seem to get this right. Our history is full of stories of racism and atrocities that are hard to understand. But many atrocities continue today. Why is it so hard for people to recognize and believe that all men, and women for that matter, are equal and all have a right to live their lives and simply be happy.

Within the last couple of years, we can see that racism is still very much an issue in the United States. People of color being gunned down while they jogged in a nice neighborhood, simply because it wasn't their neighborhood (Ahmaud Arbery). People of color are being tasered multiple times and drugged by their hair, while the police officers laughed at them, and later dying (Zachary Bear Heels). Many times, minorities are being killed by the actual hands of those that are supposed to protect them. Eric Garner's and George Floyd's last words were "I can't breathe" as one was placed in a chokehold and the other had an officer kneeling on his neck for over 9 1/2 minutes. These victims aren't mere names. They are someone's son or daughter. Each name is someone's loved one who is no longer here because of who they are not because of what they did.

What do all these stories have in common? Most of these cases involve a judgement being made based only on the person's appearance. To say this more bluntly, judgement was made based on a person's race and once this judgement is made, the person was treated differently. Someone felt as though these individuals were not their "equals" and for that reason they were not granted the simple rights identified in our Declaration of Independence.

Where does this mindset begin? How do we stop it? Will it ever go away? There is no easy answer to any of these questions but we all must recognize that racist is taught and in many cases it's generational. Many people don't even realize they are racist but others relish in the fact that they are and surround themselves with others who have the same ideologies as themselves. Some of these groups include but are not limited to white supremacy groups such as the Proud Boys, the KKK, and Neo-Nazi groups.

The important question to be answered is what can one do to combat racism and discrimination. First of all, don't be a bystander. Get involved and get others involved. Talking about it and acknowledging it is one of the first steps to combating it. You can also report it. By reporting it, you are letting others know that you are NOT ok with it and hopefully others follow your lead. You can also challenge it by speaking up when you see a conflict or unacceptable behavior. Other than these items, one can also treat others with kindness and respect. Many think that acts of kindness can become infections. Just like when someone buys your meal through the drive through and then you buy the person's behind you and so on. Kindness is shown to increase the love hormone, energy, happiness and even one's lifespan. And on the other side, kindness is shown to decrease pain, stress, anxiety, depression and high blood pressure. So simple acts of kindness can have a huge impact on others.

In closing, it is everyone's responsibility to take action against racism and discrimination no matter how big or small the acts are. In order for change to happen, good people must not sit by and do nothing. During the 1950's and 1960's, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was one of the most visible activists in the Civil Rights Movement. Many of his quotes from decades ago are still as impactful as they were when he first spoke them. "The time is always right to do what is right" and "In the end, we will remember not the works of our enemies but the silence of our friends" are two of my favorite quotes from Dr. King. We must never take steps backwards when dealing with any issue of hate or bigotry. We must always move forward and fight intolerance at every opportunity because everyone has the right to live happily and free from racism and discrimination.