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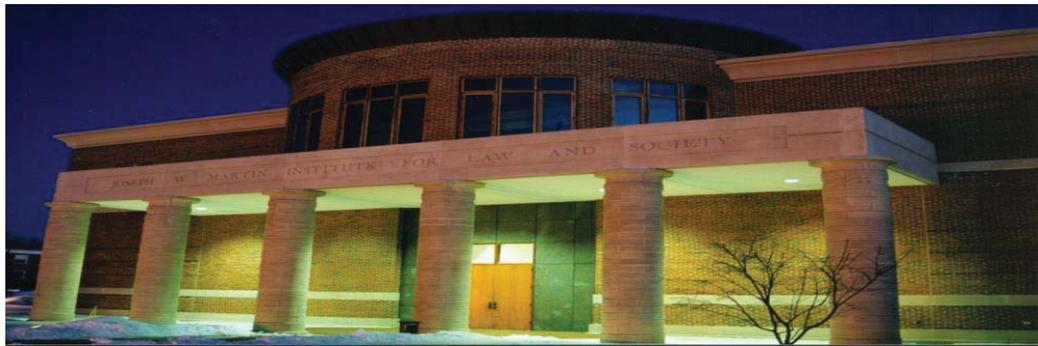
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THE MARTIN INSTITUTE: PRINTS



The Martin Institute: PRINTS is a peer-reviewed undergraduate journal that aims to support and promote the scholarship of Stonehill students in the fields of sociology, criminology, political science, and anthropology.

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The Non-Medical Use of Prescription Opioids

By: Nicole Russo

Introduction

The non-medical use of prescription opioids has reached an epidemic level in the United States. What began as a paradigm shift in the medical world to better address the treatment of pain in the 1990s has turned into an escalating public health problem, with highly addictive prescription opioids becoming more readily and often legally available to the public than any other illicit drug. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, more than 16.7 million people in the United States ages 12 and older abused prescription drugs in the year 2012 (McHugh, Nielsen, & Weiss, 2015). Drug overdoses have become the leading cause of accidental death in the United States. Of the 52,404 known people who died of a drug overdose in 2015, 20,101 of these deaths were caused by prescription pain relievers (Owens & Smirnova, 2018). As a result of the opioid epidemic in the United States, there has been a wealth of academic literature dedicated to understanding what they are, how they are used, and some of the factors associated with misuse of prescription opioid medications such as ease of access, gender, age, the context of one's environment, the lower perception of harm associated with them, and social stigma attached to their use.

What Are Opioids?

Opioids are a class of drugs naturally found in the opium poppy plant but they can also consist of man-made substances crafted using chemicals with the same structure (Brady, McCauley, & Back, 2016). Examples of opioids include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and prescription pain relievers such as oxycodone (OxyContin), hydrocodone (Vicodin), codeine, morphine, and several others (Becker, Sullivan, Tetrault, Desai, & Fiellin, 2008). Once ingested, opioids attach to opioid receptors located on nerve cells in the brain, spinal cord, and other parts of the body. After the receptors are blocked by opioids,

pain messages can no longer be effectively sent throughout the body. While opioids are often able to relieve pain for those who suffer from injuries or chronic conditions, they carry considerable risks for addiction, misuse for nonmedical reasons, and overdose.

Medical vs. Non-Medical Use

As previously explained, there are opioids that can be licitly used with a prescription under the supervision of a doctor. As a result, the literature distinguishes between medical and non-medical use of prescription opioids using a variety of terms to characterize the misuse and abuse of opioids. *Medical use* of opioids is defined as use in accordance with a legitimate prescription from a doctor in terms of dosage, frequency, method of ingestion, and duration of treatment (Brady et al., 2016; Sehgal, Manchikanti, & Smith, 2012; Cochran et al., 2014). Medical use of opioids is not without its potential consequences, however. Even when used as directed by a doctor, any regular use of prescription opioids is associated with *physical dependence*—manifesting as symptoms of withdrawal when use is abruptly stopped or decreased—and *tolerance*—occurring when more of the drug is required to achieve the same effect. (Brady et al., 2016). However, the literature emphasizes that being physically dependent does *not* necessarily mean that an individual has an opioid use disorder if they are taking the medications as prescribed (Brady et al., 2016; Buchman, Leece, & Orkin, 2017).

Non-medical use of opioids is used as an umbrella term in the literature to characterize any use of opioids without a prescription or in a way that does not comply with the doctor's instructions in their prescription (Brady et al., 2016; Sehgal et al., 2012; Becker et al., 2008; Cochran et al., 2014). *Misuse* is another term in the literature used to describe either knowingly or unintentionally using a substance in a way inconsistent with legal or medical guidelines, such as sharing medications or altering doses. *Abuse*, however, consists of misuse of a medication with more serious consequences such as using a substance to modify one's mood or state of mind in a way that is illegal or harmful to oneself or other people. Consequences of abuse include accidents, injury, blackouts, and increased likelihood of unsafe sexual behaviors, among others (Sehgal et al., 2012). Within this category of nonmedical use of opioids is *drug diversion*, referring to the intentional transfer of a controlled substance that was legally prescribed to one person to another person for illicit use (Brady et al., 2016; Cochran et al., 2014; McHugh et al., 2015). The concept of drug diversion is particularly relevant for opioids compared to other illicit drugs, as they are more likely to be obtained from family members, friends, or acquaintances (Owens & Smirnova, 2018).

Aberrant drug-seeking behavior refers to a broad range of behaviors that are inconsistent with a prescribed plan of care ranging from mildly problematic—stockpiling medications to have extra during more severe pain—to illegal actions such as forging prescriptions. However, the literature highlights the difficulty in distinguishing between individuals using opioids illicitly and those for whom the behaviors are manifested out of uncontrolled pain (Sehgal et al., 2012). In their work, McHugh et al. (2015) emphasize the resulting unclear boundaries between “appropriate” and “inappropriate” use or abuse of opioids, writing that, “Although motives to feel high and to enhance social experiences are common, this population also uses these medications to manage symptoms of pain, anxiety, sleep disruption, and other conditions that are receiving inadequate

treatment” (p.6). The status of prescription opioids as drugs that can be necessary for treatment while simultaneously being abused and used illicitly creates a dilemma that does not exist when considering other illicit drugs such as heroin.

Factors Associated with Non-Medical Opioid Use

Ease of Access

The literature universally suggests that the relative ease with which individuals have been able to acquire opioids compared to other drugs has contributed to the epidemic of misuse, abuse, and addiction (McHugh et al., 2015; Brady et al., 2016). According to Brady et al. (2016), doctors were often criticized for undertreating pain prior to the paradigm shift that occurred in the late 1990s. Pain became the “fifth vital sign,” with doctors transitioning to a full-force treatment of pain with opioid medications. As a result of the continually growing practice of prescribing opiates, the number of opioid prescriptions in 2012 (259 million) was nearly equivalent to the adult population of the entire United States. Because opioids can be obtained legally and are subsequently present in many households, it has become much easier to obtain them than other kinds of illicit drugs. In fact, most adolescents participating in the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health reported receiving prescription opioids for free from a friend or relative through drug diversion, misusing their own prescriptions, or taking them from friends or family members without asking (McHugh et al., 2015). Why pay for or risk trying to obtain illegal drugs when they can steal their friend or loved one’s pain medication from the medicine cabinet?

Gender

Much of the literature surrounding opioid use determined that there are gender differences in terms of prevalence, methods, and motives for opioid use (Back, Payne, Simpson, & Brady, 2010; Back, Lawson, Singleton, & Brady, 2011). In their work, Back et al. (2010) analyzed results from 55,279 (26,746 men and 28,533 women) non-institutionalized participants of the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. The survey collects information on the prevalence and correlates of drug use among civilians ages 12 and older. They found that significantly more men than women had indicated both lifetime (15.9% vs. 11.2%) and past-year (5.9% vs. 4.2%) non-medical use of prescription opioids. Additionally, men were found to be more likely than women to obtain their opioids through drug diversion from family and friends or buy them from a dealer as compared to obtaining a prescription. This distinction highlights that men may have easier access to these drugs in comparison to females which contributes to their higher rates of use. In terms of ingestion methods, men were found to be more likely to use opioids with alternative routes such as crushing and snorting pills rather than oral consumption. Finally, women were found more likely than men to receive prescriptions for opioids in combination with sedatives, which has been identified as a risk factor for accidental overdose. The combination of opioids and sedatives has been linked to women being more likely to use these drugs to cope with physical, sexual, emotional, or mental abuse that they experience at greater proportions than men.

In their qualitative study, Back et al. (2011) conducted in-depth interviews of 24 non-treatment seeking adults (12 men and 12 women) who had experienced prescription opioid

dependence in the previous year. Back et al. (2011) found that women were approximately six years older than men when they initially engaged in prescription opioid use, but only three years older than men when beginning to use them regularly. From this finding, they suggest that women experience an accelerated progression of addiction and increased use. Consistent with Back et al. (2010), they found that men were significantly more likely (75% vs. 16.7%) to crush and snort prescription opioids. Finally, Back et al. (2011) found that the women participants were significantly more likely than men to be motivated by the desire to cope with interpersonal stress and consequently use opiates first thing in the morning.

Age

The majority of the literature suggests that younger adults are at highest risk for non-medical use and abuse of prescription opioids (Becker et al., 2008; Cochran et al., 2014; Hu, Griesler, Wall, & Kandel, 2017; West, Severtson, Green, & Dart, 2015). In their study, Becker et al. (2008) analyzed the results of 91,823 respondents ages 18 and older from the 2002-2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Ultimately, they found that younger ages—particularly 18-21—were significantly associated with past-year non-medical use of prescription opioids. Cochran et al. (2014) conducted an investigation using a large commercial insurance claims database to identify variables that distinguished people who received an opioid abuse or dependence diagnosis within two years of filling an opioid prescription compared to those who did not receive a diagnosis. Compared to those who were not diagnosed, those who had been diagnosed were on average younger (37.9 years old compared to 47.7). In a larger study, Hu et al. (2017) collected data from 542,556 individuals ages 12-34 who participated in the 13 consecutive National Surveys on Drug Use and Health between 2002-2014 in order to examine age-related patterns in nonmedical prescription opioid use and disorder among past-year users. In concurrence with Becker et al. (2008), they found that past-year nonmedical prescription opioid use increases during adolescence and peaks at ages 18-21 then decreases between ages 30-34. Additionally, Hu et al. (2017) found that use during the ages of 12-34 decreased from the 1984-1987 birth cohorts to more recently-born cohorts. These findings suggest that the trend of opioid use in younger people may be slowing down. As with any survey-based research, these studies have the limitation of relying on self-reported data that may not reflect completely accurate proportions of drug use. However, they reveal a great deal of information regarding the disproportionate non-medical use of opioids among younger individuals.

Focusing on older adults, West et al. (2015) examined trends in the misuse and fatal outcomes related to prescription opioids among those ages 60 and over and compared them to trends among younger adults ages 20-59. To do so, they analyzed data from 184,136 cases and 1,149 deaths associated with misuse of oxycodone, fentanyl, hydrocodone, morphine, oxymorphone, hydromorphone, methadone, buprenorphine, tramadol, and tapentadol that were reported to the U.S. Poison Centers of the Researches, Abuse, Diversion and Addiction Related Surveillance (RADARS) System between 2006 and 2013. In concurrence with the other literature, they found that rates of abuse of prescription opioids were lower for older adults

than younger adults. However, they found that mortality rates and suicidal intent among the older individuals had an increasing linear trend and had exceeded rates for younger adults in both 2012 and 2013, suggesting a need to direct more efforts towards those who are most often prescribed such medication, namely, the elderly.

Rural vs. Urban Environment

The distinction between living in a rural or urban environment has also been examined by the literature for its potential impact on opioid use (Keyes, Cerda, Brady, Havens, & Galea, 2014; Havens, Young, & Havens, 2011). In their study, Havens et. al (2011) used a nationally representative sample of 17,842 individuals ages 12-17 interviewed about their drug use habits in the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health to determine whether or not rurality is an independent risk factor. For the purposes of the study, rural areas were defined as counties having less than 1,000,000 residents and that do not reside within a metropolitan statistical area containing 50,000 or more residents. Their findings indicated that adolescents in rural areas were 26% more likely than their urban counterparts to indicate non-medical prescription drug use. A significant limitation of this study — as with any based on such a survey — is its reliance on self-reporting, particularly with a sample of adolescents who could have been worried about admitting to drug use.

The literature aims to explain this association between geography and opioid use by examining the cultural, structural, and social differences between rural and urban environments. In their work, Keyes et al. (2014) use empirical bases to hypothesize that four factors can explain the pattern of increased nonmedical prescription opioid use in rural areas as compared to urban settings. The first factor is the increased sales of opioid analgesics (painkillers) in rural areas compared to urban areas, leading to greater availability for nonmedical use through diversion. Keyes et al (2014) explain that rural populations are on average older than urban populations, resulting in more chronic pain for which prescription opioids are used. Further, Keyes et al. (2014) note that prescription drug use is embedded in the culture of rural areas such as Appalachian Kentucky, where narcotics are frequently prescribed to maintain workflow in mines and other heavy labor industries (p.54). With more opioids available, there is an increase in opportunity for illegal markets. Keyes et al (2014) identified the out-migration of upwardly mobile young adults from rural areas as the second risk factor. This out-migration has led to an aging workforce population that may require more opioid prescriptions. Additionally, this migration has resulted in increased economic deprivation in rural areas, with higher rates of unemployment resulting in an aggregation of young adults that are at high risk for drug use.

The third risk factor identified was the tight kinship and social networks typical in the cultural context of rural areas. Contrary to other illicit drugs often obtained through the illicit drug market, one of the main sources of prescription opioids for nonmedical use is the diversion of prescriptions legitimately filled by parents, relatives, friends, or acquaintances (Owens & Smirnova, 2018; Keyes et al, 2014; Buchman et al., 2017; Brady et al., 2016; McHugh et al., 2015). The close ties within family and social networks in relatively isolated rural areas ultimately allow for faster diffusion and diversion of prescription drugs to nonmedical users.

The fourth and final factor tying rural areas to increased opioid use are the structural stressors of modern rural living (Keyes et al, 2014; Hanes et al, 2011). While there are undoubtedly stressors associated with both urban and rural environments, the literature suggests that rural areas have been more adversely affected by economic downturns. According to Keyes et al (2014), rural areas in particular “have faced job sector and industry shifts as populations shift to meet the labor demands of changing markets, resulting in long-term economic deprivation, high rates of unemployment, and fewer opportunities for establishing a long-term career with...upward mobility” (p.55). Financial problems and work stressors have been determined to lead to prescription drug abuse as a maladaptive response to cope with these issues (Hendy, Black, Can, Fleishcut, & Aksen, 2018; Becker et al., 2008). While Keyes et. al (2014) identified these factors in their work, they did not test them. Additionally, they identified the limitation of not being able to accommodate for how demographic factors such as race interact with these four factors they identified.

Lower Perceptions of Harm

Another factor contributing to the abuse of prescription opioids is the perception that they are “safer” than using other illicit drugs, either because they are provided by trusted sources such as doctors, family members, and friends or that they are not as “hardcore” as other drugs (Owens & Smirnova, 2018; Keyes et al., 2014; McHugh et al., 2015; Fleary, Heffer, & McKyer, 2013; Buchman et al., 2017). In their study, Fleary et al. (2013) administered an online anonymous survey to a sample of 465 students ages 18-24 from a public college in the Southwestern United States. In the survey, students were asked about their non-prescription and prescription drug use, other substance abuse, and their perceived risk and perceived social stigma of nonprescription and prescription drug use as compared to that of illicit drugs. In concurrence with their hypothesis, the level of perceived risk was found to be predictive of misuse. Fleary et al. (2013) also found that perceived risk of nonprescription and prescription drugs was lower than for crack or cocaine but higher than marijuana, leading to the conclusion that adolescents and young adults perceive misuse of prescription and nonprescription drugs as a “middle ground between too little and too much risk” (p.4). This determination supports the idea that individuals choose to commit or refrain from behaviors at least in part because of the risk they perceive to be associated with it.

In their qualitative study, Owens and Smirnova (2018) interviewed 40 incarcerated women about their experiences with the prescription drug market and other drug markets in order to understand differences in perception between the markets. Based on these interviews, they found that overall, the women perceived that the prescription market was less dangerous, involved different users and dealers, and carried less risk in terms of social disapproval and legal repercussions. A woman named Rihanna was quoted, “The people that I got the Xanax and stuff from were my friends, they were in a way, thinking that they were looking out for my best interests” (p.401). In terms of perceptions of legal harm, Dee-Ann was quoted, “You don’t have as much to lose because if the cops...kick your door in, you have a prescription for it. What are they going to say? To where if you have a pound of meth sitting in the corner you’re really screwed” (p.404). In their review of the history of the opioid epidemic, Buchman et al. (2017) also recount this difference in perception. They write, “Drugs used in a medical context are considered legitimate and relatively harmless, and unlike ‘street’ drugs, issues of legality

and social permissibility are less relevant” (p.611). The stark contrast between the perceptions of harm associated with prescription drugs and other illicit drugs demonstrates that there is less incentive to abstain from prescription opioid use compared to more “hardcore” drugs.

Stigma

While people generally have lower perceptions of harm and risk associated with opioids compared to other drugs, opioid use is not without social stigma. In their work recounting the moral and regulatory history of the opioid epidemic, Buchman et al. (2017) identify two kinds of persons that have been socially constructed through the process of screening and diagnosis for pain management involving opioids: the “deserving pain patient” and the “undeserving addict” (p.614). According to Buchman et al. (2017), this classification has been made as a result of a transition from an objective description of medical issues to a normative process that makes a moral statement about the legitimacy of a person’s suffering and attaches a negative connotation to their existence. An example provided was the “Good Medicine, Bad Behavior: Drug Diversion in America” exhibit in a DEA museum that was created “to educate and increase public awareness on prescription drug abuse” (p.614). The title itself creates a perception of the prescription drugs being morally “good” while the individual using them is depicted as morally bad. Ultimately, those patients who develop substance use disorders from using opioids are often labeled as difficult and undeserving as a result of aberrant behaviors and are thus less likely to receive the treatment they need for both pain management and addiction.

Conclusion

What began with a medical shift towards the increased treatment of pain in the 1990s has become a public health problem of epidemic proportions. With the drastic increase in prescriptions of opioids came the development of a drug market that operates within family, friend, and medical settings, putting opioids in nearly every household to be taken incorrectly, diverted to other people, or sold. The academic literature surrounding the nonmedical use of prescription opioids, however, provides considerable information that can be used to better understand and address the problem. The information presented about differences in opioid use between the genders suggests the need for targeted efforts to address the fact that women are more likely to use opioids as a method for coping with interpersonal stress than men. The data collected about age highlight that while peak nonmedical use occurs in the early adult years of approximately 18-21, older adults over the age of 60 require more attention to address the higher mortality rates and suicidal intent associated with opioid use. The higher concentration of nonmedical prescription opioid use in rural areas compared to urban demonstrates the need for more resources to be diverted to these relatively isolated locations that have been the most adversely affected. The fact that there are still such lower perceptions of harm associated with prescription opioid use despite the danger they have posed to public health demonstrates a need for better education surrounding the actual risks faced by those taking opioids in any capacity. Finally, it is clear that we should not depict these drugs as morally “good” and the individuals who use them, become addicted, or are suffering from pain as morally “bad.” The literature has demonstrated that the stigma attached to drug use has merely served to fuel the epidemic itself.

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Lying: A Political Moral Burden

By: Kennedy Muise

Introduction

Lying as a political leader poses a difficult moral dilemma. For some, it is never morally excusable for politicians to lie. For others, it is morally excusable for a politician to lie in some circumstances, but not in others. According to John Mearsheimer, an American political scientist, there are many reasons why a politician would lie. Mearsheimer provides various examples of lying in politics, such as to cover-up a policy that turned out badly, to hide a controversial political strategy, to protect the country's interest, to conceal one's weakness from an adversary, and various others (Mearsheimer, 2011). Given these reasons, one can understand that a politician is often put into positions where they may have to lie, and these are different than those positions of the average person. Assuming that politicians lie given different sets of circumstances, let's consider the following moral dilemma: I am a recently-elected politician and through my position, I know that I may have to lie due to the complicated nature of politics. What professional moral code do I follow to decipher when it is morally excusable to lie and when it is not? To create this professional moral code for politicians, one must consider possible conditions that make lying in politics morally excusable. Assuming that lying is inevitable in politics, it is morally excusable for politicians to lie under a professional moral code. This moral code requires politicians to accept the moral burden associated with lying and to express guilt as evidence for feeling the impacts of this moral burden.

Under this professional moral code for politicians, lying in politics is morally excusable when the politician accepts lying as a moral burden, that is a sense of responsibility for a decision which has moral implications. It is important to note that this professional moral code makes lying morally excusable, not morally justifiable.

About the Author

Kennedy Muise is a member of the Stonehill Class of 2019 and is originally from Nashua, New Hampshire. She is majoring in Political Science with a concentration in International Relations and a minor in French. Kennedy wrote this piece for a political science course at Stonehill and was based off readings and class discussions regarding whether or not citizens should allow politicians to lie. After her time at Stonehill, Kennedy hopes to work for a non-governmental organization to provide humanitarian services internationally or domestically to underserved communities.

According to Michael Walzer, an American political theorist, the difference between excuses and justification is that “an excuse is typically an admission of fault” while “a justification is typically a denial of fault and an assertion of innocence”(Walzer, 1973). In this way, the moral code presented here asserts that lying in politics is immoral and a politician who lies is at fault for engaging in this immoral act. Politicians are not justified or made innocent under this unique moral code for lying but, are rather pushed to acknowledge and publicly admit their engagement in this immoral act.

The politician’s professional moral code first makes lying morally excusable if the politician encounters some level of contemplation *before* he or she lies. In the essay, “Political Action: the Problem of Dirty Hands,” Michael Walzer describes his “mob boss” example. In this example, Walzer explains how contemplation is what the public should use to assess the morality of a politician who lied. Walzer describes that since the politician was “extremely reluctant even to consider the deal” with the mob boss, and because the politician had “scruples of this sort, we know him to be a good man”(Walzer, 1973). In this way, Walzer argues that although the politician made a deal with the mob boss, he/she is morally excused because he/she contemplated it first. This means that the politician knew lying was immoral, considered the potential consequences, and decided to accept the moral burden of lying. If a politician does not contemplate lying and the potential consequences, then the politician would not think that it is immoral at all. Therefore, we know that a politician is keeping him/herself to a moral standard if he/she encounters some level of contemplation before engaging in an immoral act, namely lying, thereby accepting the burden that comes along with it.

The second requirement of the politician’s moral code dictates that lying is morally excusable when it includes the consultation of others, such as a council or a cabinet. According to Sissela Bok, a Swedish-born American philosopher, “only deceptive practices which can be openly debated and consented to in advance are justifiable in a democracy”(Bok,1978). Bok believes that lying, or deception, is a contradiction to democracy “unless it can be shown that there has been a genuine consent [from the public] to deceit”(Bok, 1978). For Bok, Walzer’s argument advocating that private contemplation is a moral excuse for lying is not enough to make lying in politics morally excusable. This is because the politician did not debate his/her decision with the public or consider the public’s consent to the lie; the politician only considered the consequences of lying based on his/her perspective alone without the perspective of the public. Therefore, to protect democracy and hold politicians accountable for lying, their actions must also be openly debated and consented to in advance by the electorate.

While Bok’s argument is persuasive, it seems difficult to imagine that a high-ranking politician, such as the president, would gather consent from the entire public before he/she made a decision. . In order to make up for this and to also respect Bok’s argument, politicians such as the president, senators, and representatives should identify a cabinet or council that can help them make morally challenging decisions. In this way, the politician isn’t exactly obtaining the consent of the entire public, but he/she is considering the voices of others. This may help the politician further consider the necessity to lie and the implications of lying outside of his/her personal moral perspective. By consulting others before lying, the politician is again displaying that he/she is concerned about lying, knows it to be an immoral act, and accepts the moral burden which makes lying morally excusable under the politician’s professional moral code.

Finally, the last requirement of the politician's moral code is that the politician must express guilt as evidence that he/she understands the impacts of the moral burden associated with lying. It is important to understand that the politician must not only feel guilty for lying, but he/she must also publicly express this guilt. This shows that the politician not only accepts the moral burden of lying, but the politician also feels bad about acting immoral to the point that he/she is willing to publicly admit to it. Referring back to Walzer, he explains another moral dilemma about a politician's decision to authorize the torture of a captured rebel leader who might know the location of bombs hidden around a city. After presenting this example, Walzer argues that the politician's decision to torture the rebel leader is morally excused because the politician feels guilty about his/her decision, the politician acknowledged the moral crime he/she committed, and the politician ultimately accepted the moral burden that came along with it(Walzer, 1973). Using Walzer's argument, one can make the case that lying as a politician is morally excusable when the politician feels guilty about lying after the fact. However, as Bok argued above, the politician's feelings of guilt are not enough to make lying morally excusable. Instead, it is best to combine Walzer's and Bok's arguments to say that the politician should feel guilty about lying and he/she should publicly acknowledge, and potentially even apologize to the public, for engaging in an immoral act. This combination of Walzer's and Bok's argument is particularly persuasive because it pushes the politician to publicly admit that he/she has engaged in a wrongful act; by publicly expressing one's guilt, the politician holds him/herself accountable for acting immoral and allows the public to hold the politician accountable as well.

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The Nyanza Superfund Site: The Effects of an Environmental Crime on a Community

By: Erika Dennery and the Fall 2018 Crimes of the Powerful Class



Introduction

Environmental crimes have been taking place across the United States for years, going mostly unnoticed in the modern industrial society. Environmental crime refers to a variety of behaviors that violate existing environmental regulations as well as unregulated willful harms to the environment and human health. Corporations who act negligently in their waste disposal can unknowingly commit environmental crimes by not being aware of how their actions can harm others. Harms to the environment that arise from corporate actions do not only include deliberate actions but also lack of action or negligent actions. Ignoring regulations with no regard for the implications should also be viewed as deviant behavior. Although many provisions address “knowing violations,” actions that are performed as a result of recklessness or negligence need to be included in the definition of environmental harms (Harrell, Lisa, & Votaw, 2009).

The crimes of Nyanza Color & Chemical Co., are a prime example of an environmental crime. In 1982 this was one of the first sites to be deemed a Superfund site, a site that has been contaminated by hazardous waste and that poses a threat to human health and the environment. Nyanza Color & Chemical Co., Inc. was a synthetic dye manufacturing company operating in Ashland, Massachusetts from 1917 to 1978. The site was deemed hazardous in 1971 when pollution was found in the nearby Sudbury River due to improper waste disposal which contaminated the surrounding areas. Approximately twenty years after Nyanza ceased operations, the residents that had grown up playing in the contaminated areas of Ashland found themselves developing rare forms of cancer. Government cleanup actions were influenced by these illnesses, and their impact brought more awareness to the issue, but Nyanza did not face any formal repercussions. This paper explores how the events in Ashland exemplify an environmental crime.

About the Author

Juniors and seniors from Stonehill College were members of the Fall 2018 Crimes of the Powerful class. While taking this course, students researched the environmental crime that took place in Ashland, Massachusetts, at the Nyzana Color and Chemical Co. As a whole, the class had a shared interest in learning how to prevent crimes of the powerful from occurring in the future. Along with this, the class wanted to bring awareness to the environmental harm that occurred in Ashland in order to help the victims seek justice. In the future, students will be working in their respective fields of either Criminology, Sociology or Environmental Science with hopes to help others in need.

To do this, the paper begins by elaborating on the role of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in curbing environmental harm. A description of dye and chemical manufacturing is provided to determine the extent to which these processes were harmful to the environment and human life. Finally, the experience of those affected by the contamination is explained and the various community actions that were taken to achieve justice are discussed.

Class Research

To conduct this research, students in the Crimes of the Powerful class organized a case study on the Ashland Nyanza incident and site. The main goal was to identify if the Nyanza case constitutes an environmental crime, what effects this event had on the local community, and the roles of the corporation and the state in this case.

To compile the case study, various sources of information were consulted. These sources include government documents from the EPA & the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), analyzing interviews with community members, a site visit, studies on chemical contamination, and other open source information. This research was also built on work compiled by Dan Borelli and Marie Kane, community members and activists who lost friends and family to cancer due to the improper waste disposal at Nyanza.

Environmental Harm and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Prior to the creation of the EPA, environmental concerns were widely unregulated (Lewis, 1985). The EPA was officially established on December 2, 1970, in response to discussions regarding growing environmental problems. The original goals of the EPA were to establish and enforce environmental protection standards, to combat environmental pollution, and to develop and recommend to the President new policies for environmental protection (Lewis, 1985). Due to the mismanagement of waste disposal, Congress responded by holding hearings about the dangers of toxic dumping in 1979 (Lewis, 1985). After a year of deliberations, Congress passed the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA). This act created the Superfund program which fell under the jurisdiction of the EPA. A Superfund site is defined as any land contaminated by hazardous waste. The EPA identify such sites as candidates for cleanup because they pose a risk to human health or the environment. Once identified, these sites are placed on the National Priorities List (NPL).

In 1981, The Nyanza Chemical Waste Dump, located in Ashland, Massachusetts, was ranked in the top ten sites on the EPA's Interim National Priority List of 115 sites (Engineering and Science Unit, 1990). The cleanup plan for the Nyanza site was to be addressed in five stages: one initial action phase and four long-term remedial actions. The long-term phases included source control, cleanup of the soil, off-site groundwater, wetlands, and the Sudbury River. To control the contamination, the EPA excavated all outlying sludge deposits and contaminated soil and sediment. The hill on which the contamination occurred was capped off to divert surface and groundwater flow around the contaminated area. The system was designed to prevent human contact with the contaminated area as well as to prevent contaminated soils from entering ground and surface water. The cap spanned

13.5 acres and the EPA spent \$14 million in order to make it possible (Environmental Protection Agency, 1991).

Dye Manufacturing & Chemical Contamination in Ashland

In 1917, U.S. Color & Chemical Co. was established in Ashland when the import of dyes from Germany to the U.S. was halted during World War I. In 1926 the corporation was renamed to U.S. Chemical & Dye Co., and its merge with Nyanza Color & Chemical Co in 1930 gave the site its current name. Nyanza was producing a number of different aniline and alizarin colors for different fabrics, as well as textile chemicals such as synthetic detergents and water-proofing compounds (Nyanza Color and Chemical Company, 2006).

One of the biggest impacts of the Nyanza Chemical Site was the contamination of groundwater and sediments in the surrounding areas by chemicals that can lead to cancer. Cellular organisms were damaged due to the toxic metals that were disposed of improperly and the metal ions which were discarded have been found to cause DNA damage. This damage occurs through an interaction with nuclear proteins that can cause conformational changes which leads to cell cycle modulation like carcinogenesis or apoptosis (Tchounwou, et. al, 2014).

The EPA mandates that a minimum criterion be applied to all surface waters. It states that they must be pollutant free, there should be no odor, color, or radioactive substances, and they should be free of any toxins that are dangerous to humans, wildlife or aquatic life (EPA, 2010). The buried and expelled waste from Nyanza contaminated the soil and groundwater at the site, and a large cocktail of over 100 different chemicals remains underground today (ACAC, n.d.). Pollution in the brooks and wetlands traveled to the Sudbury River, which carried the chemicals downstream and spread the contamination beyond the town of Ashland (DARRP, 2018). Nyanza's widespread contamination was in direct violation of the EPA's environmental standards and regulations; it was an ongoing environmental harm that the company was aware of yet still allowed to continue.

Two studies conducted in 1990 by the MDPH looked at the elevation of kidney and bladder cancer in the area. The first study was conducted in response to finding chemicals at the site that were already linked to an increased risk of kidney and bladder cancer (MDPH, 2006). When this study did not reveal a pattern, the MDPH analyzed data on residents who were between the ages of ten and eighteen years old between 1965 and 1985. This study focused on a cluster of five men with rare sarcomas and also found that out of 1,387 study participants, 73 reported having cancer (MDPH, 2006). The study found that there was a raised cancer rate during the time of contamination which was statistically significant (MDPH, 2006). Study participants who reported activities related to any type of water contact near the Nyanza plant, specifically swimming or wading, showed an increased risk of cancer diagnosis which was statistically significant. The increased risk of cancer was two to three times greater than the risk of cancer for participants who reported no contact with these areas of the Nyanza site. Further, for individuals who reported water contact and a family history of cancer, the risk of cancer increased to nearly four times the risk of participants who reported no family history of cancer (MDPH, 2006). These results were limited to residents who were children at the time of contamination; teachers and other residents

of the Ashland community who could have been contaminated by Nyanza's waste disposal were not included in the study.

Victims of the Ashland Nyanza Contamination

In Ashland, the victims of the contamination can be grouped into three different categories, direct, indirect, and unknowing victims. Direct victims are those who are directly affected by a crime, which can include mental and physical harm (Rothe & Kauzlarich, 2016). Indirect victims are those who feel the impacts of a crime but are not directly victimized (Rothe & Kauzlarich, 2016). Unknowing victims are those that are unaware they are being victimized because they see harmful behavior as normal and therefore accept it.

An example of a direct victim is Kevin Kane, who was the ninth child in his family. In high school he played football, wrestled, ran track, and was the captain of the golf team. Kevin graduated college in 1994 and became a case-worker for the Department of Social Services. Kevin died in 1998, a year after his cancer diagnosis. His death was a catalyst that prompted the community to take action in an effort to get justice (Kevin Kane's Life, n.d.). Another direct victim of this case was David Keddy, who was diagnosed with the rare Ewing's Sarcoma two weeks after his high school graduation and died two years later. Indirect victims, in this case, were the community and family members that witnessed the loss and pain of loved ones, such as Kevin and David.

Unknowing victims are those that are affected but unaware of the problem. Unknowing victims may even be facilitators of their own victimization through compliance, support, consumption, or complacency in light of rights and freedoms being limited or retracted by a corporation or the state. People willingly accept these limitations and the resulting victimization, or have normalized the resulting harms. In this case, those living in Ashland were used to the Nyanza site operating as a part of the community. Despite some in the community rallying together to make a change, many remain unaware or complacent in the company's environmental crimes.

Community Action

The Nyanza corporation acted as a criminal organization, and as a whole was culpable for the illegal dumping of thousands of tons of toxic waste (EPA, n.d.). Orders by officials in the company lead to dumping. Just as important, however, was the lack of action taken by others that were aware of the dumping but chose not to react. Nyanza chose to neglect environmental regulations and prioritize saving money over abiding by important environmental policies. For Nyanza and other businesses, environmental regulations may be seen as an obstruction to their efficiency because reducing costs is paramount. These corporations do not realize the true extent of the harm that their actions can cause. Furthermore, the impacts of these crimes are widespread, and the perpetrators are difficult to catch. Environmental crime is often a crime of the powerful. Those with wealth and authority can influence the criminal justice system to reflect their interests. This allows the powerful to manipulate environmental programs and how they are enforced. The dangers posed by environmental crime are seen with the example of Nyanza where corporate interests collided with environmental regulations.

Due to the lack of action and enforcement by the government, community members felt the need to fight for justice relentlessly over the course of several decades. The Ashland Citizens Action Committee (ACAC), a community group, was created to bring awareness to the problem of the chemical contamination. This group also focuses its efforts on bringing awareness to the lack of cleanup at the Nyanza site as well as to ensure that the government conducted the necessary cleanup operations. Even today, ACAC's main goal is to prevent others from being affected by the contamination.

Conclusion

The Nyanza Superfund site in Ashland, Massachusetts is an example of an environmental crime with widespread impacts. Throughout their years in operation, the company generated large quantities of industrial waste, which were not disposed of properly despite existing regulations. Environmental regulations were willfully ignored, and waste was discharged from the site into the surrounding environment without any regard to the impact on the environment or human life. Pollution in the brooks and wetlands travelled to the Sudbury River, which carried the chemicals downstream and spread the contamination beyond the town of Ashland (DARRP, 2018). The pollution in the environment created health issues for animals, plants, and citizens of Ashland. These impacts, along with other environmental harms such as soil contamination and deaths of fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals, indicate Nyanza is an example of an environmental crime (DARRP, 2018).

This site now serves as a reminder of the dangers of unchecked corporate action. The impacts on the town of Ashland prove the severity of damage that can be caused by environmental crime. Nyanza was aware of the potential harm of the waste they were dumping but they continued to do so anyway. When the government finally got involved with the cleanup process, their operations were drawn out and lacked the requisite urgency. The actions of the community were essential to ensure the government fulfilled its mandate, but even today it remains an incomplete process. The government was complicit through its inaction, making it easier for Nyanza to illegally dump waste and thus easier for others to do the same in the future. The Ashland residents continue to fight for their right to a clean and safe environment—a right that they should have been granted in the first place. Environmental crimes have the potential to affect everyone, and therefore it is paramount to be involved in community action so that no harm goes unnoticed. These crimes continue to take place all across the United States and they only gain attention once irreversible harm to human lives has already been done. It is time that corporations are held accountable for their crimes, and it is time that communities come together to hold them accountable.

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Effects of Globalization on Female Health in Sub-Saharan Africa

By: Paige Ferreira



Paige Ferreira is a 2019 graduate of Stonehill College with a double degree in French and Political Science with a concentration in International Relations. Her main interests within her field include human rights and female access to the public health sector within peripheral countries. In addition, her interests have expanded to researching peace and conflict studies in imperialized nations. Her other past accomplishments have included interning for the Executive Office of Governor Baker in the Fall 2018 semester at the Massachusetts State House and a past internship in summer 2017 for Alliance Française de Providence, a global French nonprofit encouraging and promoting French culture and language. Her future plans include either pursuing a law degree in human rights or a Master's in peace and conflict studies.

Introduction

The imperial residue from colonization and the aftermath of a western country colonizing a peripheral nation has created many different forms of economic, political, and regional instability. The consequences from colonization degrade the prosperity and economic livelihood of people within these nations. Consequently, one of the greatest victims of socioeconomic degradation are Sub-Saharan women. Sub-Saharan women are at a disadvantage regarding maternal responsibilities, economic stability, and specifically public health. As the wave of globalization has brought prosperity and advancement across Europe and North America, the positive effects of international economic influence along the periphery are much more difficult to reconcile. While globalization has brought foreign dollars into the economies of developing nations, it has also sparked political turmoil, migration, and other forms of political and social uncertainty. International measures to assist women in the periphery, especially sub-Saharan African nations, need to promote economic equality as well as political equality in order to achieve true progress.

Legacy of Globalization in Sub Saharan Africa

Worldwide globalization is the liberal exchange of goods, capital, and labor among countries, which has sparked immense economic growth, especially in Westernized nations. Historically, the repercussions of colonization can still be felt in Sub-Saharan regions where the aftereffects of “extractive” colonial policies “did little to protect property rights, support market development, or stimulate other economic activity” (Rodrik, 2011, p. xiv). These consequences have created a precedent and legacy restricting the economies of developing nations. Additionally, globalization’s effect on women in

developing nations has created a paradox of whether foreign influence will “improve the lives of all citizens, including women” or “worsen existing inequalities as well as create new ones” (Richards and Gelleny, 2007, p.857). The well-being of the female population is a significant inroad to a more globalized and progressive economy in the SSA. This then requires a re-thinking of international interventions to repair the lingering effects of colonization and to prevent further global exploitation in Sub-Saharan nations.

Globalization Widens Economic Gaps in SSA

Since the early 1990s, globalization has set into motion a new world order where countries vie for economic advantages. Globally, competition has replaced the “fear that a lack of reform would cause social and political turmoil” (Rosanvallon, 2016, p.16) as were the concerns of nations in the early part of the twentieth century. The onset of World War II served as an aftereffect of the political turmoil and economic disparities brought on by the Great Depression. Globalization has replaced the “fear” that economic inequalities will spark war or violence among nations. No longer are nations working to suspend political differences through social programs that bridge vast economic inequalities. Today, globalization is an economic force that rewards wealthier nations and “further emphasizes the gap that exists between the world's rich and the world's poor” (McCann, 2006, p.293). While globalization has sparked “rising fortunes of the developed world, particularly China and India,” its effect on Sub-Saharan nations has been fraught with more negative than positive consequences (Bourguignon 11).

In many of these developing nations, governments and their political structures have underutilized a significant resource---the inclusion of women in political, social, and economic realms. The oppression of women along with inherent inequalities has never been more prevalent than in the nations in Sub-Saharan Africa. Women in Sub-Saharan African nations have been subjected to poor living conditions and the negative effects of patriarchal governments since colonization. The effects have limited women in both social, political, and economic terms. Women are denied property rights, proper healthcare, education, and autonomy because of archaic social institutions and cultural taboos, which not only hinder their life expectancies and access to vital health care, but also stunt any economic or social progress. The governments of Sub-Saharan African nations and the international community fail to realize that globalization will not be successful unless the economic, political, and civil rights of females are improved.

Health, Education and Maternal Duties

Women are the primary providers of healthcare within the home, yet they are underrepresented in the healthcare industry. While globalization is intended to “facilitate higher government expenditures on health, education, and other services that would directly benefit women,” based on the state of health and education for many African women, the opposite is true (Richards and Gelleny, 2007, p. 858). Women account for over half the population in Africa (WHO). However, the region experiences a high maternal mortality rate, which the organization deems to be “largely preventable” (WHO). Additionally, Sub-Saharan women suffer from other “noncommunicable” diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer at higher rates than their Western counterparts (WHO). Women’s inadequate healthcare is determined by many “international forces” that mute the female

voice in advocating for better healthcare for both women and their families (Richards and Gelleny, 2007, p. 858). This public health crisis prevents women from participating in the economy and reaping the rewards of globalization. Government officials miss the “interconnectedness” between women’s health and economic gain (WHO).

Suppression of the Female Voice

In addition to limited healthcare, women are also denied full access to education because of forces beyond their control including a lack of voice to control their own destinies. These forces limit women’s participation in their local economies, which in turn hinder the benefits of globalization. Furthermore, women’s education is not only affected by economic limitations, but also “social stereotyping that keeps girls at home” (WHO). Women’s roles are perceived to be more related to domestic service to the family. When a mother dies, it is the female members of the family who must step up to care for younger siblings and manage the household duties. This responsibility often means that girls will have to drop out of school. In extreme cases, girls are “forced into early marriage in times of drought to secure a bride-price that will guarantee the survival of...families until the next season” (Lake and Mugwendere, 2005, p. 132). Unfortunately, domestic roles are not the only inhibitors to a girl’s education.

Poverty is another factor in Sub-Saharan Africa that negatively affects the education of girls more than boys. Often, women do not attend school because of the costs associated with education. Priority is often given to male members of the family first as “gender biases regarding the perceived higher value of boys’ education over that of girls” (Wangari, Kamau, Kinyau, 2008, p. 298). Lastly, the lack of “sanitary wear” often forces girls to stay home because they cannot afford to purchase proper and safe forms of menstrual protection (Lake and Mugwendere, 2005, p. 134). In Ghana last year, menstruating girls were prohibited from crossing the Ghana River, essentially preventing them from attending school (BBC). The larger repercussions related to girls dropping out of school are their inability to participate in a “virtuous cycle” of opportunity offered through a formal education (Lake and Mugwendere, 2005, p.132).

Female Education and Economic Vitality: Educate a Woman, Feed a Village

Girls who are educated become educated women who yield strong economic power as well as serving as role models for others girls to attend school. The economic vitality of a female education benefits not only the individual, but also the entire family. Families with educated women have lower pregnancy rates, lower poverty, and a greater opportunity to realize the relationship “between investment in education and economic returns for individuals and nations” (Mukudi, 2002, p. 234). Women who are uneducated have a greater chance of unwanted pregnancies and are at a greater chance of being poor. Education is directly connected to “the economic cost of maternal and newborn mortality [which] is over US \$15 billion annually in terms of lost potential productivity, of which roughly half is attributed to women and half to newborns” (WHO). Therefore, the education of girls has a positive effect on an entire nation's economy “where a one percentage point increase in female education raises the average gross domestic product (GDP) by 0.3 percentage points and raises annual GDP growth rates by 0.2 percentage points” (Bourne). Moreover, as globalization has advanced the economies

within the SSA, the need for more high-tech jobs has increased. However, because of gender gaps in education, these nations cannot meet the needs of more qualified workers where “nearly half of East African employers in a 2014 survey cited a lack of skills as the major reason they did not fill vacancies” (Council on Foreign Relations). Essentially, women’s well-being is inextricably linked to globalization and economic vitality of the SSA.

Globalization Sparks Demand for Cash Crops; Limits Food Productions

Globalization has also negatively impacted land reform policies in Sub-Saharan Africa as greater demands for cash crops such as tobacco often receive high priority over food production. In countries like Kenya, women produce “80 percent of food in Africa” (Wangari et al, 2008, p. 295). Additionally, land is also the main source of collateral to secure loans and is in itself a significant form of currency. However, in many Sub-Saharan African nations, women are prohibited from owning land or own a fraction of land, if permitted in the individual African nation. Often, land ownership is connected to a woman’s husband or family. Seldom do women own land independently of a man. Women are faced with a difficult proposition as their labor becomes less focused on food production and more concentrated in working for global interests to expand “consumption of resources which disadvantage the Third World” (Wangari et al, 2008, p. 292). Moreover, Sub-Saharan African nations have a disadvantage in competing globally and often must lower the costs of agricultural products because of an inability to meet the price demands that are easily reached by Western nations who yield the same products. Western nations have an advantage through technological advancements that allow for higher crop production, which translates into an ability to produce and sell crops cheaper. Subsequently, Sub-Saharan nations must in turn lower prices for their crops to compete with the lower prices offered by more developed nations. These actions translate into lower profits for the periphery. Even within Africa, northern nations control the flow of agricultural products and the assigned tariffs that accompany them. Essentially, Sub-Saharan nations have no control over the products they sell on the market, and these countries are subjected to an economic system that is stacked against them. This scenario, in turn, causes mass migrations of women and families who seek to find more accessible land to maintain a living standard.

Lack of Land Agency in SSA Equals Human Rights Violations

The SSA women’s inability to voice their opinion or control their land stems from a violation of their human rights. The lack of voice and control over land highlights a significant element in globalization’s effect on Sub-Saharan women. The economic ambitions of international organizations are the major players of human rights abuses in the SSA. The introduction of foreign interests in Sub-Saharan Africa have given women limited voice in shaping economic policies. This limited voice has been powerless in shifting land use from exporting cash crops to utilizing land for food production. Profits are prioritized before the welfare of people--especially women, who are the primary growers of food. International rights organizations such as the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women have worked to emphasize that “women’s rights are human rights” (Wangari et al, 2008, p. 293). The actions of the United Nations to equate women’s well-being to human rights are intended to highlight the inherent abuse that exists with private control of land and give nations more autonomy over private corporations, who are often the “principal violators of human

rights” (Wangari et al, 2008, p. 293). An example of this abuse is evident in the utilization of contract farming in many nations in the SSA. Here, foreign corporations contract local farmers to produce certain cash crops or other highly profitable crops. However, this practice is often fraught with inequalities against women as it “shifts land away from food crops and allocates resources to the production of urban or export-oriented crops” (Weatherspoon, Cacho, & Christy, 2001, p. 725). Essentially, globalization at the hands of international corporations are creating impediments to women’s progress by inhibiting women’s access to land both for sustenance and for economic reasons. Rather than a measure of “livelihood” for women and their families, globalization has transformed land into “cash crops for Western consumers” (Wangari et al, 2008, p. 292).

Protection of Third World Women from Western Capitalizers

The international community needs to ensure that women in the periphery are protected against the profit-seeking entrepreneurs who tout the benefits of globalization while ravaging the lives of women and other poverty-stricken people in the SSA. International monitoring systems and individual SSA nations must ensure that women are healthy, educated, economically-fit, and land owners in order to facilitate better. The effects of globalization are producing a paradoxical effect; instead of bringing profits and better living conditions to these areas, globalization is driving greater income inequalities between the rich and poor. Globalization continues to affect living conditions in some African nations where “life expectancy has dropped to the mid thirties from being almost sixty in the 1970s” (McCann, 2006, p. 295). The identifiers of whether a nation is cultivating an atmosphere of inequality and poverty are best measured in its treatment and well-being of women as women are the primary caregivers in the home.

Assistance from IGOS and Western States

The first step in addressing the ill-treatment of women in Sub-Saharan African nations is to recognize that the solutions lie with international human rights organizations. A global effort must recognize and concede that women are largely the victims of human rights violations in the SSA. Thus, more effective protections are needed that specifically target those acts perpetrated against women since these acts are gender specific and impact a woman’s ability to prosper both socially and economically. Women’s ability to maintain economic independence and to demonstrate buying power is the key to both proper access to healthcare and education. For this reason, the international community should prioritize SSA women’s economic rights. International corporations need to take on a greater moral responsibility in ensuring that women in the SSA are not removed from resources that they depend on. Examples of these resources are water and land for farming. If need be, greater measuring systems from international rights organizations should be requirements in order to do business in Sub-Saharan Africa. Additionally, both corporations and individual nations need to join together to recognize the importance of land to a woman’s livelihood and ability to be successful economically and socially. This success is not limited to women, but also affects the overall economy of the SSA. Land in the SSA continues to be a source of empowerment that helps women obtain healthcare and an education, as land sometimes is a form of currency. Women need to be allowed to purchase land outside of their family. In addition to addressing economic rights, women’s right to education needs to be enforced. Education should also include “legal literacy.” This knowledge

equips women with the procedures and laws that protect them, so that women and girls can participate in citizenship policies that affect their well-being. Legal literacy gives women the voice they lack in changing or at least speaking out against policies that limit their autonomy. As globalization moves more steadily into the SSA, international rights organization need to monitor the effects of globalization on women, and if needed, institute processes that protect the region's primary resource--women.

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Transitions to Democracy

By: Jacqueline Davis

Introduction

Although the Sandinista Revolution occurred nearly 40 years ago, Nicaragua still struggles to consolidate the democracy that the revolution instituted. With a history of outside intervention and struggles against the United States, Nicaragua has faced a tumultuous journey to democratic consolidation. Specifically, under President Daniel Ortega, Nicaragua exhibits warning signs of a potential slip back to authoritarianism that the Sandinista Revolution intended to end. Since Ortega took power in 2007, he has weakened democratic institutions such as the judiciary, and he has consolidated his power in all branches of government. Electoral exploitation has increased, and corruption has worsened without effective institutional blocks.

Colonial Legacies

As a former Spanish colony, Nicaragua has battled the legacies of colonialism throughout its history and on its path towards democracy. When the Spanish arrived in 1524, the indigenous peoples faced disease and forced labor in the mines of Peru that decimated the population-- a decrease from one million before colonization to 50,000 by the 1540s (Wiarda and Kline 377, Vanden and Prevost 572). Therefore, without a large indigenous population, Nicaragua lacked "significant racial, linguistic, [and] religious differences," and instead, ideological cleavages emerged (Vanden and Prevost 571). As Rustow contends, "conflict and reconciliation are essential to democracy," and thus divisions emerged between the Conservatives in Grenada and the Liberals in León (Rustow 338, Vanden and Prevost 572). Aligned with the Catholic Church and composed of the aristocratic class, the Conservatives engaged in economic rivalry with the Liberals, a group of lower class colonizers in León who relied on international trade and were loosely connected with ideas about democracy and progress (Vanden and Prevost 572, 593).

About the Author

Jacqueline is a junior at Stonehill College and is majoring in English and Political Science & International Relations with a concentration in Government & Politics and a minor in Latin America Studies. At Stonehill, Jacqueline is a member of the English Society Transitional Board. During her sophomore year, Jacqueline took a course entitled "Transitions to Democracy" where she studied democratic development in Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Guatemala. This semester she is pursuing this interest further with her directed study about Brazilian Democracy and will be completing a SURE project this summer about democracy and party system development in Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Venezuela.

Independence and Intervention

With independence from Spain won in 1821 and state sovereignty gained in 1838, the Liberals and Conservatives continued to struggle for control of the nation while outside intervention from Britain and the United States intensified tensions within the state (Vanden and Prevost 573). In a dispute over control of the mouth of the San Juan River, Britain and the Vanderbilt Transit Company signed the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty in 1850 and agreed to work together on a transoceanic transit route—a decision made without the input of Nicaraguan government, even though the river mouth falls within their borders (Vanden and Prevost 573). Additionally, in 1855, the Liberals hired an American, William Walker, to organize a force against the Conservatives in Grenada, and Walker became president until he was exiled in 1857 (Vanden and Prevost 573). These instances of outside intervention continued into the twentieth century and characterize much of Nicaragua's history.

Under Liberal dictator José Antonio Zelaya's rule from 1893 to 1909, the globalization of coffee cultivation allowed the elites to "dispossess peasants and Indian farmers in the northern highlands" which led to peonage—debt servitude—on coffee plantations (Booth, Wade, Walker 98). The United States encouraged the overthrow of Zelaya and the institution of a Conservative leader; however, the Conservative-backed leader performed poorly, and a widespread rebellion occurred that the U.S. eventually put down (Booth et al. 98). The U.S. then remained in Nicaragua from 1912 to 1932 after a war between the resistance, led by Augusto Sandino, and the partnership of the U.S. Marines and the Nicaraguan National Guard (Booth et al. 99). The leader of the Nicaraguan National Guard, General Anastasio Somoza García, had Sandino assassinated and then consolidated power by establishing the Somoza family dynasty that would last until 1979 (Booth et al. 99).

The Somoza Family Dynasty (1937-1979)

The new Somoza government was repressive and depended on the United States and the corrupt National Guard for support (Booth et al. 99). Despite the rapid industrialization and economic growth of the 1960s and 1970s, the policies of the Somoza government left the people impoverished with union repression and low wages. Nicaraguans suffered increased income inequality, a rise in unemployment, and "a palpable drop in their ability to feed and shelter their families" (Booth et al. 100). This economic turmoil inflicted on low and middle-class Nicaraguans resulted in the appearance of new opposition groups such as the Democratic Liberation Union, anti-Somoza factions of the old Liberal and Conservative parties, and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) (Booth et al. 102). The FSLN initially failed to mobilize popular support in their guerilla effort against the Somoza government. However, people increasingly lost faith in the failing Luis Somoza Debayle government with its blatant human rights violations and exploitation of the Christmas Earthquake for personal gain. As a result, the opposition forces united under FSLN leadership as the National Patriotic Front and overthrew the Somoza dynasty (Booth et al. 102, Vanden and Prevost 579).

Challenges to Democratic Government

In 1979, the opposition coalition led by the FSLN assumed power in the National Directorate, but several challenges still stood in the way of constructing a new democratic government. For example, one obstacle facing the new FSLN-led government was how to deal with the human rights abuses of the previous regime.

Although many of the Sandinista leaders “were victims of torture,” the Ministry of the Interior, Thomás Borge Martínez, “tried to keep human rights violations low” when trying previous leaders for those past abuses (Merrill 39). Although the unjustly treated prisoners of the Somoza era “were given a trial” under the new Sandinista government, Nicaragua never fully reconciled with its past (Merrill 40). Because the “political leaders have little incentive to redress historical injustices of the revolutionary era” (BTI 2016) and benefit from these cleavages, there has not been a wide-scale effort to deal with the human rights violations of the past.

Another challenge facing the FSLN-led coalition surrounded the party composition of the new ruling body. The FSLN took power within a broad coalition composed of groups with different ideas about Nicaragua’s future: middle and upper-class groups (Conservatives, Liberals, and Social Christians) wanted political power for themselves within the traditional party structure while the Sandinistas (peasantry and urban poor) wanted more radical social, economic, and political change (Vanden and Prevost 580). Using the Council of the State, the Sandinista government organized land reform, expanded health care and education, and “broadened its diplomatic contacts to include Eastern European socialist countries and the Non-Aligned Movement,” which provoked the US opposition to the Sandinistas (Vanden and Prevost 581).

With the 1984 elections approaching, the Reagan administration attempted to isolate Nicaragua and overturn the recent revolution as an extension of the Cold War (Booth et al. 106). Accordingly, the U.S. gave the CIA \$19.8 million to establish an exile-army of counterrevolutionaries (Contras) to defeat the Sandinistas (Booth et al. 106). However, despite the economic and humanitarian atrocities committed during this guerilla war, the FSLN defeated the Contras with substantial help from the Soviet Union (Vanden and Prevost 582). Despite the devastated economy and the 30,000 lives lost in the conflict, Nicaragua held its first honest elections in 1984 that were “open to all Nicaraguan citizens sixteen years of age and above” (Vanden and Prevost 582).

Constitution of 1987 and Challenges to Democratic Consolidation

Winning the election of 1984, the Sandinistas led the construction of the Constitution of 1987 and styled their government after those of the West in order to “legitimize Sandinista power” (Vanden and Prevost 581). The Constitution established a presidential system with four branches of government—the executive, the legislative, the judicial, and the electoral—and with a system of checks and balances. However, many of these limitations on power have been either constitutionally amended or ignored, especially under Daniel Ortega (Cherry 2014). The executive branch functions as the most powerful of the four branches with a “large administrative apparatus” and the president’s right to appoint justices to the Supreme Court (Vanden and Prevost 588). Nicaragua’s unicameral legislature, the National Assembly, comprises 90 members that are elected through a mix of proportional representation. This institution has the power to oversee the budget, to summon the president and minister, and to appoint members to the electoral council (Vanden and Prevost 588).

The judicial branch houses the Nicaraguan Supreme Court made up of 16 justices, and like the president and members of the National Assembly, justices serve five-year terms (Vanden and Prevost 588). Importantly, the Supreme Court lacks the power of judicial review, and thus its primary obligation is “applying and interpreting laws rather than making them” (Vanden and

Prevost 588). The fourth branch of the government contains the Supreme Electoral Council that oversees Nicaraguan elections. The electoral branch, like the judicial and legislative, has increasingly lost legitimacy overtime as presidents such as Ortega consolidate their power and manipulate the original constitutional design intended to create a representative democracy.

With the promulgation of the Constitution of 1987, Nicaragua began its path to democratic consolidation. As Larry Diamond contends, one of the threats facing liberal democracy stems from the “erosion of traditional mediating institutions: established parties and mass media” and “weak and inefficient political institutions” (Diamond 2017) such as political parties. Correspondingly, although Nicaragua’s party system initially began to consolidate, over time, it has weakened with the deterioration of the right-wing opposition and the consolidation of power in the FSLN under Ortega. Specifically, in the 1990 election, two parties emerged with ideological differences—the FSLN and the anti-Sandinista coalition, the UNO—and competed in a competitive election (Vanden and Prevost 595). However, because “defeated presidential candidates who win over 1 percent of the vote are given a seat” in the National Assembly, the party system further fragmented (Wiarda and Kline 381). Therefore, by 2001, the Conservatives won only one seat, and its presidential candidate received only 1.4 percent of the vote—a weakening of the conservative opposition to Ortega’s FSLN and Alemán’s Constitutionalist Liberal Party (PLC) (Wiarda and Kline 383).

Additionally, although the electoral system initially allowed for many parties to compete in elections, after 2000, “changes in the electoral laws and pact politics between the PLC and FSLN reduced the number of parties competing at the national level” (Vanden and Prevost 594). Thus, the political opposition to the two liberal parties weakened. As a result, “it is not clear whether Nicaragua can generate a stable and truly competitive national party system in which the party of the left—as well as the party of the right—can compete for the presidency with a real chance to win” (Anderson 278). By 2011, “a hegemonic party system has developed in Nicaragua,” in contrast to the two or three-party systems of the past (BTI 2016).

Specifically, the change of the electoral system has permitted the further consolidation of power in the executive branch and the prominent political parties. This consolidation of executive power has ultimately undermined the legitimacy of Nicaragua's political system and reduced citizens’ faith in their democracy. With the U.S. intervention and pressure to remove the Sandinistas from power, Nicaragua voted out the FSLN in the 1990 election (Vanden and Prevost 582). Most significantly, however, “the FSLN became the first revolutionary group in Latin American history to cede power to an opposition force” (Vanden and Prevost 582). Nevertheless, this type of election did not last, and politicians began manipulating the electoral system to consolidate power. For instance, the Alemán-Ortega Pact of 1999, among other things, “rewrote electoral law to advantage the [PLC] and the FSLN at the expense of all other parties and political movements,” which resulted in “sharp reductions of smaller-party representation” (Wiarda and Kline 119). This pact led to the resignation of several Sandinistas who rejected the “undermining [of] important party principles of democracy and pluralism” (Wiarda and Kline 119). Moreover, another constitutional deal between Alemán and Ortega allowed a presidential candidate to win an election with only 35 percent of the vote and a margin of 5 percent over the next candidate (Vanden and Prevost 595). With this change in electoral thresholds, Ortega won the 2006 presidential election and returned the FSLN to power for the first time since 1990.

Ortega and the Threat to Nicaraguan Democracy Today

With the FSLN back in power, the manipulation of the electoral system continued under Ortega. Although the Nicaraguan Constitution provides for a Supreme Electoral Council (CSE) intended to protect elections and prevent fraud, it has grown largely ineffective and inefficient with the changes initiated by the FSLN and the Liberals in 2000. They eliminated “provisions requiring broad representation of political parties in the administration of local polling stations and giving the CSE virtual carte blanche in the appointment of these officials... This ensured that the FSLN and the Liberals would have to agree on members and that smaller parties would have no effective voice in the process” (Wiarda and Kline 382). Essentially, the destabilization of the CSE paved the way to the allegations of fraud in the 2008 and 2012 municipal elections and the 2011 presidential election (Booth et al. 124). In particular, in the 2011 presidential election, the European Union’s election observation mission found “deterioration in the democratic quality of Nicaraguan electoral processes, due to the lack of transparency and neutrality with which they were administered by the Supreme Electoral Council” (Booth et al. 124). This EU report reveals the corruption hidden within the electoral system which influences other branches of government, affecting both the party system and the consolidation of power in the executive under Ortega. President Ortega further consolidated his power with the 2014 constitutional amendment that eliminated “the two-term limit for the president as well as the ban on consecutive reelection” and an additional provision that allowed government officials to remain in their positions after their terms had ended (Cherry 2014). Thus, according to Freedom House, Ortega has “consolidated all branches of government under his party’s control,” marking his 2016 election as “severely flawed” with “post-election” violence occurring in the 2017 municipal elections (“Freedom in the World: Nicaragua Profile”).

Similarly, the fraud and corruption problems that permeate the electoral branch also infect the judicial branch. The judiciary finds itself under the control of the Ortega government and unable to effectively regulate the widespread corruption that ravishes Nicaragua and threatens democratic stability. In Nicaragua’s 2018 country profile, Freedom House noted that “the judiciary remains dominated by the FSLN and PLC appointees [part of the Alemán-Ortega Pact], and the Supreme Court is a largely politicized body controlled by the Sandinista judges” (“Freedom in the World: Nicaragua Profile”). According to a Community, Information, Empowerment, and Transparency (CIET) conducted poll, “40 percent of respondents pointed to corruption in the judicial branch; and 32 percent recognized that they paid bribes to court officials directly or through their lawyers” (Krylova 40).

Thus, instead of fighting the corruption that plagues Nicaraguan politics, the judicial branch takes part as the judges capitalize on their positions. For example, when President Alemán was finally charged for embezzling over a million dollars, the Supreme Court overturned his 20-year prison sentence in 2009 due to a deal between Ortega and Alemán where Alemán would win his freedom and Ortega would gain control of the National Assembly (Krylova 42). Ortega’s ability to manipulate the Supreme Court and the ability of Alemán to avoid corruption punishment highlight the scale of corruption that infects Nicaragua. As Levitsky and Murillo suggest, “stable window-dressing institutions are often accompanied by informal rules that help to guide actors’ expectations

in context of limited enforcement” (102). Thus, individuals recognize the fragility of the judicial system and the underlying rules — those that Ortega creates that function beneath the appearance of an independent judiciary.

Similar to the judiciary’s inability to convict corrupt politicians or resist the political pressures of the ruling government, the forces responsible for enforcing anti-corruption law face their own corruption. Although Nicaraguans respected the honesty of the Sandinista police of the 1980s, by 2009, “49 percent of Nicaraguans pointed to corruption in the national police; and 9 percent of respondents recognized that they paid bribes to police officers for their services” (Vanden and Prevost 592, Krylova 40). With a police force where “bribery and corruption have developed on a widespread basis in the context of the desperate economic situation and low police salaries,” institutional legitimacy falls, and citizens lose trust in democratic government (Vanden and Prevost 592). Thus, this “uneven rule of law has long enabled powerful actors to violate or ignore certain rules with impunity” (Levitsky and Murillo 101). The laws lack legitimacy without a police force to enforce them and the anti-corruption reform instituted was largely ineffective.

The anti-corruption agencies such as the Office of Citizen Complaints and the Office of Public Ethics lacked the independence to investigate and prosecute corruption allegations effectively (Krylova 42-43). The frequent corruption scandals such as the Chamorro and Alemán government stealing \$4.9 billion (ten times the state budget) and constant deal-making characterized the “rules of political competition and lawmaking more than courts and constitution” do (Vanden and Prevost). Additionally, with “the justice system and other public bodies... subservient to Ortega and the FSLN” and Ortega appointing his son, daughter, and wife to ambassador, presidential advisor, and vice president respectively, according to Coralie Pring, 52 percent of Nicaraguans believe that corruption increased in 2017 (Pring 10)

According to Krylova, “the escalation in corrupt activities were magnified historically by processes of economic and political reform financed by IFS [international financial institutions] after 1990, particularly liberalization and privatization processes which shaped the political economy into clan-based patronage system” (Krylova 41). Therefore, corruption and the economy become closely linked as one influences the other, and the “weak political and market institutions allow a variety of illicit practices to flourish” (Johnston 4). Specifically, in 1990, already economically devastated by the Contra War, President Chamorro introduced neoliberal policies that “exacerbated the misery of the ordinary Nicaraguans” with high unemployment, underemployment, and homelessness (Booth et al. 114). Although economic growth increased by 1995, the remaining unemployment and poverty indicated that “the effects of neoliberal policies on the masses were far less positive than promised and often imposed increased hardships” (Vanden and Prevost 586).

Under Ortega, however, the Nicaraguan economy has grown more than twice the Latin American average with his “highly favourable... tax policy [that indicates] an increasingly friendly relationship between business sectors and the Ortega government” (BBC 2016, Vanden and Prevost 590). This economic stability as well as his “expansion of social programs aiming to reduce poverty” has contributed to his consolidation of power (BTI 2016). Despite corruption allegations that have marred the majority of Nicaraguan administrations, according to the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) 2016 report, “the legitimacy of democracy seems to have

increased gradually since 1990” (BTI 2016). Significantly, however, while the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) in 2012 found that 73.8 percent of Nicaraguans support democracy, they also found that “the perception of the economic performance and political support, mainly for the FSLN and Ortega’s government” influenced how individuals felt about democracy (BTI 2016). Nevertheless, according to Pew Research Center, in 2011, only 10.8 percent of the Nicaraguan population was middle class—a 3 point increase from 2001 (Pew Research Center 2015). Thus, many Nicaraguans still live in poverty despite Ortega’s reforms. According to M & R Consultore, in 2014, 73.4 percent of Nicaraguans felt that the Ortega government unites the country, and 73.3 percent are pleased with Ortega’s presidency (Rico 2014). Therefore, Ortega gains the majority of his support not from the small and weak middle class but from a wider socioeconomic population.

The Nicaraguan contentment with the economy must then stem from the economic growth and the social programs that President Ortega has introduced. For example, he launched a Zero Hunger program that reduced the malnourishment of Nicaraguans by half in just six years (Vanden and Prevost 588). Additionally, in 2009, the United Nations declared Nicaragua free of illiteracy with an adult literacy rate of 78 percent in 2012, and 88.8 percent and 85.2 percent among females and males aged 15-24 respectively (Vanden and Prevost 588, UNICEF 2013). Despite the improving literacy rates, “state education is known to have low quality,” with only 4.2 percent of the GDP spent on funding education, and the mean number of years spent in schools at 5.8 (BTI 2016). Furthermore, “education is badly distributed,” which exacerbates the inequality that plagues that country and leaves it with a low Human Development Index, (ranked 132 out of 187 countries), though “academic freedoms are generally respected” and not deeply politicized (BTI 2016, “Freedom in the World: Nicaragua Profile”). While the reform initiative of plebiscitarian presidents yield positive economic results, there is substantial risk of a slide into a kind of “soft authoritarianism” in which economic success is used by the ruler to chip away at constitutional limits on his power” (Haggard and Kaufman 13).

The Future of Nicaraguan Democracy: The Risk of Backsliding

During his presidency, Ortega has embodied this strategy of undermining constitutional limits on power, and this flirtation with authoritarianism has endangered Nicaraguan civil rights. Diamond’s asserts that “executive abuse of power” from “weak constraints on executives by constitution, parliament, [and] civil society” manifests in the civil rights abuses that injure Nicaraguan democracy (Diamond 2017). Particularly, the Ortega administration has engaged “in systematic efforts to obstruct and discredit media critics,” with journalists receiving death threats for covering political protests (“Freedom in the World: Nicaragua Profile”) . This “erosion... of mass media” and freedom of assembly threatens democratic stability in Nicaragua as control over the media allows Ortega to restrict his opposition and thus consolidate his power (Diamond 2017). Similar to the censoring of Nicaraguan media outlets, the “weakness of the judiciary impedes the state’s ability to respond to violations” of civil freedoms and human rights formally protected by the constitution (BTI 2016). Nicaragua’s abuses towards the indigenous populations and the LGBT community, as well as an increase in violence against women, do not adhere to Diamond’s definition of liberal democracy: “minority rights [in] freedom, equality, and civic culture” (“Freedom in the World: Nicaragua Profile”).

Ultimately, the decline in rights, as well as the consolidation of power in the executive, suggests a potential backsliding towards authoritarianism. From the weakening of the party system to the manipulation of the electoral system to serve personal interests, Nicaraguan democracy seems to be in danger, though the people continue to support democracy and the Ortega administration. The ability of Daniel Ortega to alter and ignore aspects of the constitutional democracy reveals the weaknesses that plague the system and emphasizes the institutional fragility that cannot withstand the corruption ravishing Nicaragua. Essentially, Ortega's consolidation of power threatens the stability of Nicaraguan democracy and shows its illiberal tendencies that may lead to authoritarianism.

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Dr. Jack McDevit is the Director of the Institute on Race and Justice at Northeastern University. Dr. Jack Levin is the Director of the Brudnick Center on Violence and Conflict, also at Northeastern University. Among their many publications in Criminology, they are co-authors of *Hate Crimes: The Rising Tide of Bigotry and Bloodshed* as well as *Hate Crimes Revisited*. Their presentation at Stonehill's *Confronting the Violence of Hate-Bias Crimes in Transition* discusses various aspects of hate-bias crimes. Their presentation included a description of the typology of hate-bias crimes and changes in hate-bias crimes over the past decades. Dr. Devit and Dr. Levin also propose several effective pathways for preventing and responding to these crimes.

The Violence of Hate-Bias Crimes in Transition

By: Meaghan Gemma, Molly Parent & Riley Bast

"Don't forget where the problem starts: in the silence of ordinary people"

~Dr. Levin

On Monday, February 25th the Joseph W. Martin Institute for Law & Society presented: *Confronting The Violence of Hate-Bias Crimes in Transition*. At this event, Stonehill welcomed Dr. Jack McDevit and Dr. Jack Levin to their campus. The Martin Auditorium was filled with students, faculty and other members of the Stonehill community who anxiously awaited to hear the two men's expertise on hate crimes. Dr. McDevit and Dr. Levin began the event by sharing an objective description and understanding of hate crimes. The two doctors then transitioned by applying this knowledge to today and explaining its relevance in our society. The event concluded with Dr. McDevit and Dr. Levin's advice to our community and potential actions the audience can take to combat the prevalence of hate crimes.

Dr. McDevit began the event with a definition of a bias crime, "a criminal incident motivated entirely or in part by a person's difference". This difference is not limited to one's physical attributes as a difference could be categorized as sexuality, religion or socio-economic status. Therefore, Dr. McDevit states that we are vulnerable to these bias crimes though the victimization process differs by the difference being targeted. The prevalence of these crimes have fluctuated over time. In today's society, the increasing presence of firearms has caused us to see a higher rate of bias crimes in our country. Dr. Levin reiterated the idea that factors which are unique to our country have influenced the presence of bias crimes. Dr. Levin posed that the well-known saying

“make America great again” which once started as benign has been made hateful by people in society. Offenders of these bias crimes have employed this message to justify their acts of hate toward various populations.

Dr. Levin and Dr. McDevit then shared their proposed typology of bias crime offenders: thrill, defensive, retaliatory and mission. Dr. McDevit explained that thrill offenders commit these crimes for their own personal enjoyment. Often, these offenders are younger and offend with a group. According to Dr. McDevit, this group of offenders are the easiest to deter. Due to their young age and how their acts are typically done out of convenience, they are not as committed to completing the act. In contrast to thrill, the defensive offender commits bias crimes because they believe that the targeted group is a threat to their identity. Dr. McDevit states these crimes are largely based on geographic area, these offenders act out when they feel that a different population is “infiltrating” an area that is mainly populated with their identity group. Defensive offenders are similar to another subset of offenders: retaliatory. Retaliatory offenders commit bias crimes against populations who they associate with a triggering event. This event is considered a perceived harm by the offender and their crime is done out revenge for this harm. Finally, mission offenders are the most severe offender. This typology is committed to a hate group and therefore committed to a life of evil. Though the number of this type of offenders is small, Dr. McDevit asserts that they are dangerous in the fact that they recruit other members into their ideology and persuade to commit bias crimes for it. The prevalence and acts of these four types of offenders have changed with the surrounding society.

Bias crimes dating back to the 1990s were reported as less organized and not recognized in the ways that they are today. Rates of bias crimes in America skyrocketed after the terrorist incident on 9/11. This incident sparked a level of hate and fear towards certain populations. As a result, the rates of retaliatory and defensive offenders rose significantly. These bias crimes targeted anyone who was perceived as foreign or an outsider to the United States. For example, the number of attacks against Muslims and Arabs increased by 1600% in the time following 9/11. Dr. Levin stated that this introduced a theme of utilizing violence as a defense mechanism, where individuals place blame on certain populations for issues and events outside of their control. This has only increased with the use of mainstream media as this message can now be shared on platforms with large audiences. “Online, they [individuals with biased ideologies] find propaganda yes, but they also find company, and it is plenty of company in their hatred that spurs them on.”

These targeted populations vary by the event in question. As demonstrated through the election of Barack Obama and the subsequent violent attacks on African Americans such as the burning of an African-American church in Springfield, MA. This is consistent with the high rate of bias crimes against the LGBTQ+ community after the nationwide legalization of same sex marriage in 2015. As the prevalence of bias crimes continues to grow in the United States, Dr. McDevit and Dr. Levin offer a number of effective societal responses.

The response to bias crimes is not a simply one, as both doctors expressed, “there is not one step but many”. The proposed solutions began with the emphasis that members of society need to take hateful acts seriously. This includes responding to all hate crimes regardless of how minor they may seem. Dr. Levin suggests that hateful acts often start small such as the use of slurs or derogatory terms. These acts commonly go unnoticed as they are perceived as minor and nonviolent. However, any act of hate needs to be considered harmful and requiring preventative action. On the other hand, the doctors stressed the need to reward positive behavior. These behavior is categorized as any that combats hatred as well as supports diversity and inclusivity. In terms of addressing past grievances against certain populations, it is necessary to acknowledge the wrongs committed by the country and become familiar with the history of bias and hatred. Dr. Levin and Dr. McDevit concluded with challenging society. They asserted that we must change our thinking, we must become more interdependent and find areas of commonality so that we may succeed together.

Interview with Professor Erica Tucker

By: Meaghan Gemma & Riley Bast



Erica Tucker is a Professor of Anthropology at Stonehill College. Professor Tucker started on the path of anthropology at Beloit College in Wisconsin. There, Tucker enrolled in many Anthropology courses and earned a bachelor's degree in the field. Upon completing her undergraduate schooling, Tucker moved to Poland where she taught English to Polish students. After living in Poland for a year, Professor Tucker returned to Wisconsin to attend graduate school at University of Wisconsin where she continued her anthropology studies. Professor Tucker taught as a Professor of anthropology at Butler University before joining the Stonehill community.

What is anthropology?

Anthropology is the study of human culture, both the past and the present. Anthropology has four major focuses: cultural anthropology, linguistic anthropology, archeological anthropology and biological anthropology. Here at Stonehill, the anthropology major is focused on cultural anthropology with some linguistic and archeology anthropology.

How did you get involved in the field of anthropology?

My mother was the first to suggest I enroll in an introduction to anthropology course. At the time, I was a student at Beloit college and I was trying to decide what I was going to study. My mother worked as a foreign language teacher and she knew how much I enjoyed learning about different languages. I enjoy learning about these languages because it gives me a window another world and culture. I think my mother knew that about me and for that reason she pushed me to anthropology and so I decided to take her advice. From there, I found the anthropology courses very enjoyable and I became very interested in learning about other cultures. I found the class materials to be very intriguing. I especially loved to read the ethnographies, I found they were really interesting and very easy to read.

Are there any anthropologists that you would say have influenced your thinking?

Barbara Myeroff and her studies strongly influenced my future work and research topics. Though Myeroff conducted studies focused on Native Americans in New Mexico, her work with immigrant Jewish family was most influential to me. This study focused on memory within older members of Myeroff's sample family. I found this very intriguing and it inspired me to study memory in my future work as well as helped me find an interest in working with older populations. Specifically, Myeroff influenced one of my first anthropology studies in Warsaw. In this study, I looked at how older members living in a Warsaw neighborhood and their memories of the German occupation. My experience studying abroad in Poland my junior year at Beloit also influenced my future work in the field and is what inspired me to conduct this study in Poland.

What would you say are your research interests?

I have had a variety of research interests throughout my career. My research study in Warsaw focused largely on memory. At the time of my study, Poland just gained freedom of the press which sparked my interest. I was interested in how one's ability to talk about an event impacts their remembrance of said event. In other words, "what happens to a memory when you cannot publically acknowledge it?". I conducted a second study in Warsaw pertaining to a museum which commemorated the uprising of 1944. I was interested in how the museum represented history to the public. What really interested me about this museum was how popular it was among the people of Poland. I was curious to why the museum was so popular, it was very intriguing to me. My research looked at the museum and how it popularized history as well as how it created an identity for the people of Poland. This inspired me to study how history is portrayed in the United States through a study on how history is portrayed in children's books. My most recent research interest is the new, modern interest in genealogy. More specifically, I am interested in what people do with the information about their family lineage and how it changes their sense of self. This is something I am going to look into on my sabbatical next spring.

Do you have any publications you are particularly proud of?

My most recent publication is a chapter in the Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research studies. In this chapter I explain how to study museums. I have also published a book titled, Remembering Occupied Warsaw, which is a collection of memories of Polish peoples who lived in Poland through World War II.

Anthropology has recently been added as a major here at Stonehill. Could you discuss what the major will consist of?

Students within the major will be required to take 10 courses. The required courses include Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, Qualitative Research Methods, History of Anthropological Theory and their Capstone, which will most likely be a directed study. In addition, students will be required to take two elective courses where they will be able to explore other disciplines that pertain to anthropology. Anthropology majors will also take two courses pertaining to specific regions and two classes that focus on a subfield of anthropology.

What classes do you teach here at Stonehill?

I teach Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, Language and Culture, Families and Cultural Perspective, Qualitative Research Methods and occasionally I will teach a course on the Holocaust and East Europe.

What is your favorite course to teach and why?

My favorite courses to teach are Introduction to Anthropology and Language and Culture. I enjoy teaching Introduction to Anthropology because the material is so familiar to me that the course allows me to really focus on the students and their responses to the material. I enjoy teaching and Culture because I find the topic so interesting. I really enjoy discussing with my students how we, as a society, interpret language. Everyone has ideas about proper and improper language and it is fun to explore that with my students in class.

What do you like most about teaching at Stonehill?

I really like the small class size at Stonehill. The class size allows me to get to know my students and form relationships with them. A small class also brings a certain kind of energy to the class which makes it enjoyable to teach.

What advice do you have for students going into the field of anthropology?

I would advise students interested in anthropology study abroad in a place of interest to you. Further, I think it is a good idea to learn a foreign language and study in a place where you have the opportunity to practice those skills. For students graduating in the field, I would advise focusing on a graduate school that is a good match for you and your research interests. Be sure that the schools you are applying to have the resources and opportunities for you to further your research interests.

Do you have any fun facts?

I really enjoy plants, I have them all around my office here at Stonehill. Sometimes I even give my plants away to my students. I also enjoy knitting and I recently taught Sociology Professor Gill how to knit. I also knit clothing for professors in the department who have had children recently including Professor Buckman and Professor Carkin Lacorazza.