

Revue **YOUR** Review

Volume/Tome 8 (2021)



York **O**nline **U**ndergraduate **R**esearch

Intended to showcase York University (Toronto, Canada) student research, *Revue **YOUR** Review* is an annual, refereed e-journal offering an opportunity for York University students to prepare a paper for publication. The journal is multidisciplinary, open-access, and bilingual: articles are published in English or in French.

*Revue **York Online Undergraduate Research Review*** is associated with York University's annual, multidisciplinary Undergraduate Research Fair. Articles are revised from top essays submitted for York University credit courses and accepted as poster presentations at the juried Research Fair. Submissions are reviewed by an Editorial Board comprised of York University faculty members, writing instructors, librarians, and students, and may also be sent to expert readers within the discipline. Together, the Research Fair and its associated e-journal offer students an educational experience in researching, writing, preparing an abstract, designing and presenting a poster session, and revising a paper for publication—all components in the cycle of scholarly knowledge production and dissemination. Author rights are governed by Creative Commons licensing.

Revue **YOUR** Review

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Volume 8 (2021)

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Natalia Bonczek. (2019). [Misster E](#) [acrylic on canvas, 32"x36"]



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* Posters can be viewed on the Revue *YOUR Review* website: <http://yourreview.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/yourreview/issue/view/2214>

Student Success. An Interview with Collette Murray

Editorial

Welcome to the eighth volume of *Revue YOUR Review (RYR)*, an academic journal celebrating undergraduate student research. The journal is an opportunity for York University (Toronto) undergraduate students to experience the process of writing, revising, and editing their research work for publication in a refereed academic journal. As a new member of the *RYR* editorial board, I know what the editing and revising experience is like from an editor's perspective, but I was curious to hear more about the experience from a student perspective. In April 2021, I met with one of this journal's first student-authors, Collette Murray, who completed a guided writing experience with us in 2015.

Featured in the second volume of *RYR*, Murray's article, "Altered Beauty: African-Caribbean Women Decolonizing Racialized Aesthetics in Toronto, Canada," uses Critical Race Theory to examine the everyday racism of Black beauty standards and decolonial strategies. At the time, Murray was an undergraduate student in York University's Bachelor of Arts in Race, Ethnicity and Indigeneity program, and completing a Certificate in Anti-Racist Research and Practice. Murray went on to obtain a Master of Education at York University and is now a doctoral candidate in Dance Studies. She also has a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of Toronto. Over the years, Murray has balanced work and studies. She has served three York University faculties as a fulltime, non-academic employee, and is currently Graduate Program Assistant for both the Critical Disability Studies and the Health Policy & Equity graduate programs. A community-engaged artist and contributing writer to *The Dance Current* and *Dance Collection Danse*, Murray was happy to speak with us about her guided experience in writing and publishing and its influence on her educational and career paths.

In 2014, Murray, who is of Guyanese descent, wrote a term paper inspired by her own experience with hair texture and skin shade, and explored ties to beauty standards in the Black Canadian community, internalized colonialism, and anti-racist strategies. That year, she presented her research at York University's second annual

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Undergraduate Research Fair. Winning the Research Fair award for best poster and presentation encouraged Murray to take her work to the next stage and share it further.

The *RYR* editorial board invited all Undergraduate Research Fair presenters to shape their work into an article and submit it to this journal for consideration for publication. Most undergraduates have never pursued this step in the research process and, initially, it can seem intimidating. “Your work goes through the peer-review process, and you don’t know what that process entails or how your work will be received, so you are anxious,” said Murray. Prospective authors attend a writing-for-publication workshop organized by the journal’s editorial board to help them understand the revision process.

After her paper passed the first stage of peer review and was conditionally accepted, the editorial team partnered Murray with a faculty writing coach to help her revise her submission for publication. In editing her essay, Murray learned that she had to “contextualize my personal, life-embodied experience because the reader may not deal with it on a day-to-day basis. It’s about articulating the argument and clarifying a phenomenon. How can I clarify an internalized process? You don’t have to explain it to individuals who have that lived experience, but you have to make that conversation explicit so that others can understand and learn from it.” Her writing coach helped her expand the background and context and adapt her writing for a general academic audience.

These skills proved to be very useful when a national dance magazine invited Murray to write a column on a dance performance that teemed with stereotypical misrepresentation and cultural appropriation. To ensure that critical sections explaining the racial insensitivity of the performance weren’t edited out due to word count limits, Murray engaged in several conversations with the magazine’s editor. She said it was thanks to the back-and-forth experience of revising, with a supportive writing coach from *RYR*, that she “had the confidence to do that negotiation.”

Publishing her research in *RYR* also validated Murray’s decision to collect and analyze other experiences of those in Toronto’s Black community. In “Altered Beauty” (2015), Murray experimented with the interview methodology she’d learned about in class. Her article helped fill a void in the literature that, otherwise, focused predominantly on an American perspective. “What was happening within the Toronto space was different,” said Murray. “There wasn’t much written on hair and skin shade within Latin American communities in Canada, so it was important for me to write about the Canadian experience.”

A few years later, Murray noticed another gap in the scholarly literature and again she conducted oral interviews—this time, for her master’s work on African, Caribbean, and Black arts educators working with diverse school populations in Ontario, Canada. Murray plans to use interviews once again in her current doctoral research, which will document the history of African-Canadian diasporic dance companies and choreographers who, beginning in the 1970s, created their own

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mentorship networks and spaces for cultural dance education. This pattern—of filling scholarly gaps by gathering evidence rather than building on pre-existing literature—repeats throughout Murray’s research experience, and echoes that of many undergraduate students and aspiring scholars who wish to academically engage with their own lived experiences in communities historically excluded from the scholarly landscape. The extra labour needed to overcome such obstacles monopolizes valuable time and energy, which could otherwise be dedicated to research and community contributions.

Murray nonetheless finds time for her own community-engaged artistic practice. Known as Miss Coco in the dance world, she runs a mobile dance education business that highlights the history and social practice of cultural dances from the African and Caribbean diasporas, through performances, workshops, and instruction. She is also the artistic director of Coco Collective, an intergenerational, multidisciplinary arts collective that operates across Canada. To help secure funding for her artistic endeavours and award-winning community projects, Murray draws on the communication skills she developed through her writing-for-publication experiences to convey the importance of her work to broader audiences and to prepare successful grant applications. In 2019, the Toronto Arts Foundation awarded Murray the Neighbourhood Arts Network Community Arts Award, a \$10,000 cash prize celebrating her significant contributions to community arts.

Reflecting on our conversation and on Murray’s incredible achievements, I now see how students can continue to develop and apply skills fostered during their guided writing experience with our journal to future successes, such as pursuing graduate studies or mobilizing endeavours in their communities. *Revue YOUR Review* offers a unique opportunity for experiential learning in writing and publishing to undergraduate student-authors at York. This year, it’s especially important to celebrate the inspiring perseverance of contributors to this issue of *RYR*, who transformed their class essays into academic articles under the challenging circumstances of a global pandemic. Warmest congratulations to all our authors on achieving this milestone in their educational journey.

Katrina Cohen-Palacios
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The Editors-in-Chief

NATALIA BONCZEK

Misster E (2019)

[On the cover](#): Artist's statement

Acrylic on canvas, 32"x36"

This painting is a commentary on the increase in popularity of drag performance in pop culture. This painting is the alter ego of my non-binary drag persona named Misster E, a gender-bending, glamorous drag king. Drag culture has gained more traction through drag queens and shows such as RuPaul's Drag Race, and drag queens have been featured on beauty magazines; however, there is less representation of drag kings in mass media. This painting is set in a household, signifying a more intimate photoshoot, aided by trusted artist Molly Darlene Short, rather than on a stage or set where you would often see drag performances. Misster E is encouraging us to write our own stories about gender and who we are. Through this alter ego, I present a more confident self, unharmed by the harsh binaries of expectations of "normal woman" or "normal man." This painting may be uncomfortable because it challenges these norms, but I also hope to create space for alternative interpretations of gender and the performance of it.



Hostile Streets

Designing for inclusive public space

This paper is an intervention in the dehumanization of unhoused persons. I examine the intersection of urban design, public space, and homelessness through the lens of infrahumanization. Informed by a literature review and media scan, this paper questions whether unhoused people are considered valued human members of the public in urban design decision-making processes in the city of Toronto, Canada. This study raises new questions about the possibilities of human-centred design that might address the exclusionary consequences of hostile design practices and disrupt the infrahumanization of unhoused persons as devalued outcasts of the city.

Keywords: Toronto, homelessness, infrahumanization, public space, hostile design, human-centred design

HOSTILE STREETS: DESIGNING FOR INCLUSIVE PUBLIC SPACE

The idea for this paper was sparked by a moment that happened in Toronto, Canada, one day as I was walking out of Union Station just after the afternoon rush hour. While waiting on the street for the pedestrian signal to change, I saw a skateboarder jumping over something on the ground. When my eyes turned toward the object, I was shocked to see he was jumping over a human being wrapped in a sleeping bag. Horrified, I tried to blink this disturbing image away but, as the light changed and I walked closer to the skateboarder, I saw the tell-tale cardboard sign, the coffee cup containing a few coins, the duffle bag, and, most disturbing, a video camera—proving that the jump over the unconscious person was not accidental. This indeed was real and happening in the heart of the Financial District. This memory encapsulates the most heart-wrenching moment of human poverty I have ever witnessed and one that I cannot seem to erase. A human body was seen as a piece of the city—more human than object, but less than a full person. This paper is an intervention in that moment and memory, allowing me to, perhaps, understand how a human body could be so devalued and so enmeshed in the mundane urban landscape that another citizen had no emotional attachment to this being.

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Unhoused persons break essential social conventions of capitalist societies by living outside of the economy in a visible way. The homeless lack walls and property rights, and homelessness places an individual's private life under the gaze of the public. Homelessness provokes a moral controversy over who is to blame and who is responsible. Attempts to answer this question typically fall into one of two camps: it's an issue either of personal meritocracy (failing on behalf of an individual) or of systems failure (failing to care for an individual). While it is undoubtedly useful to consider the origins of problems as big and complex as homelessness, blame is unproductive.

Unhoused people are subject to inhumanization—a term introduced by Leyens, et al. (2000), referring to a tendency for people to perceive individuals in other groups as less human. The purpose of this article is to investigate the intersection of urban design, public space, and homelessness through the lens of inhumanization. Informed by a literature review and media scan, one of the questions this paper will address is whether unhoused people are considered valued human members of “the public” in urban design decision-making processes in the City of Toronto.

This paper has three main sections. In the first, I discuss homelessness in Canada, with a particular focus on the homelessness crisis in Toronto. The second section focuses on an empirical case study of hostile urban design in Toronto and sheds light on how the concept of inhumanization normalizes the day-to-day invisibility of unhoused persons on city streets. In the third, I draw attention to human-centred design and new questions raised by this research, asking, for example, how design can be used as a tool of repair to create more inclusionary public spaces.

BETWEEN VISIBILITY AND INVISIBILITY: HOMELESSNESS, DEHUMANIZATION, AND PUBLIC SPACE

In this paper, the term homeless will refer to the issue itself and the term unhoused persons will refer to people who are in a current state of being homeless. This distinction was brought to my attention by American philosopher Robert Rosenberger in his book *Callous Objects* (2017, p. 60), where he argues that, for some, “the term homeless has become weighed down with negative connotations” and, I would add, these negative connotations are frequently and specifically criminal. Living outside is often conflated with living outside the law.

According to Johnstone, Eunjung, and Connelly (2017), the diminution of the Canadian welfare state through neo-liberal policies is associated with an increase in housing precarity and homelessness in the country. Their research shows how the responsibility for housing was passed down through different levels of government and is directly correlated to the rise in homelessness seen in Toronto. The authors argue:

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In 1993, the federal provision of social housing was withdrawn and sole responsibility was passed to the provincial governments. In Ontario, the election of the Conservatives in 1995 saw further downloading of public responsibilities to the municipal level. In 2001 and onward, Ontario was reported as having the highest rate of homelessness present in Canada, and Toronto as in crisis. (p. 1444)

Research conducted by York University's Stephen Gaetz shows us how focusing on short-term solutions (such as emergency shelters) costs more than implementing long-term solutions for homelessness. Gaetz explains that, by "providing [unhoused persons] with housing and the supports they need, we lower the costs associated with hospital admissions, emergency outpatient services, incarceration, and other emergency services" (2012, p. 14). Citing Gordon Laird in a report from 2007, Gaetz points out that, "between 1993 and 2004, Canadian taxpayers spent an estimated \$49.5 billion maintaining the status quo on the homeless problem in Canada" (p. 3). In a fact sheet compiled by the City of Toronto, the primary causes of homelessness are listed as the economy and the housing market—specifically, the "increasing costs of rental housing in Toronto over the past ten years" (Anderson, 2018). Social Planning Toronto's 2020 report, *Toronto After a Decade of Austerity*, offers a snapshot of how underfunding in the past decade has compounded the crises in homelessness, public transit, and childcare. This report highlights similar trends to Gaetz's nationwide study of homelessness in Canadian cities.

According to the most recent Street Needs Assessment conducted in 2018 by the City of Toronto, there are over 8700 unhoused persons in Toronto. Writing for *PressProgress*, Mitchell Thompson (2019) quotes Cathy Crowe—a Street Nurse and Distinguished Visiting Practitioner at Ryerson University—who claims that Toronto's shelter system has, for years, surpassed its 90 percent limit, exacerbating dangerous and overcrowded conditions. A snapshot of Toronto's daily shelter census in March 2019 demonstrated that co-ed, men's, women's, and youth shelters had reached a 96–99 percent occupancy rate, while family shelters were at 100 percent capacity (City of Toronto, "Daily shelter & overnight service usage"). More than just a cold weather snap, these numbers reflect a chronic homelessness crisis that is worsening. Gaetz argues that "when we as citizens say we cannot afford an 'affordable housing strategy,' we are missing an important point: the lack of such a strategy in fact costs us a substantial amount of money" (2012, p. 14) and, I would add, our shared humanity. Pushing homelessness out of the public eye is a short-sighted reaction to a long-term and complex problem. Hostile designs encourage further dehumanization because there are no long-term solutions that seek to invite unhoused persons into the Toronto community, and yet there are designs to deter their presence in the public sphere.

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In a 1999 paper on public spaces and crime prevention, criminologist Rob White details how “strategic urban planning” can prevent crime, writing that “the message is that public places are for the ‘people.’ However, some people are made more welcome than others in the public domain” (p. 11). White argues that the street as a multi-functional space has been transformed, both architecturally and socially, into a more regulated and managed space with the advent of consumer-oriented capitalism. Public and commercial architecture reflect a neo-liberal economic shift that has become more focused on individual consumers and shopping as a leisure activity. The privatization of public space is an important factor in the development of hostile design as it points to how and why hostile design came to be used. As public spaces are privatized, the use of hostile design increases and unhoused persons are pushed out.

When unhoused persons are ejected from public spaces, they are viewed as separate from the group that is allowed and encouraged to take up space publicly. Social psychologist Herbert Kelman writes that “extreme dehumanization... becomes possible when the target group can readily be identified as a separate category of people who have historically been stigmatized for one or another reason” (1973, p. 50). Due to widespread homelessness in Toronto, seeing humans in poverty has become routine. Kelman explains that routinization “reduces the necessity of making decisions, thus minimizing occasions in which moral questions arise” (p. 46). Thus, actions such as stepping over unhoused persons on the street or looking away when we catch a glimpse of them because it is uncomfortable becomes normalized through repetition. When design is used to force behavioural adaptation without addressing the underlying causes of homelessness such as unaffordable housing and the reduction of rooming houses, it is expensive, unproductive and cruel. Funding is allocated to minimizing the appearance of homelessness by shifting unhoused persons around the city without addressing underlying policy and financial deficits for additional shelters, additional subsidized housing, increased wages, and other monetary factors which would help reduce homelessness.

A CASE STUDY OF HOSTILE DESIGN AND INFRAHUMANIZATION IN TORONTO

Hostile design and its various conceptualizations—anti-homeless design, defensive design, hostile architecture—refer to urban design practices that intentionally discriminate against or deter people from using public space as their private space. As British artist Stuart Semple explains, hostile design is where “public spaces are modified to deter certain activities such as rough sleeping and skateboarding,” adding that it is “a stealthy way of policing public space.” These designs “legitimize the point of view that homeless people are the enemy” (quoted in Shaw, 2018). The simplest example of hostile design is the public bench. A bench is intended to serve a purpose—providing a place to sit. But the design of a public bench is frequently broken up by arm rests or bucket seats or small details that separate a long rectangle

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into smaller compartments. These armrests are sometimes referred to as anti-loitering or anti-sleep features (Semple, quoted in Shaw, 2018). Thus, objects have what Rosenberger terms *multistability*, meaning that the bench can fulfill uses beyond its intended design (2017, p. 7). The plausible deniability of hostile design is one reason why it is both pervasive and effective as a means of asserting social control over public space. Once design becomes overtly anti-homeless, it's more likely that individuals will call attention to its inhumanity.

A recent example of hostile design can be seen on Toronto's new subway platforms, including those at York University. Aesthetically, the platform seating keeps with the style of each station, yet the seating at all stations includes anti-sleep features. Likewise, Toronto's University Health Network (UHN) installed metal bars atop a warm-air grate outside the Toronto General Hospital, allegedly to "deter homeless people" (Doherty, 2018). Sleeping on heating vents is a common way for unhoused persons to stay warm and keep from freezing to death in Toronto winters. According to Dr. Charlie Chan, then interim president of UHN, the reason for installing the bars was to improve the safety of the public's access to the emergency room entrance by reducing foot traffic and hazardous objects such as discarded needles (Doherty, 2018). However, UHN did not consider that the heating grate possessed a multi-stable function: while the need to improve safety was met, no thought was given to where the persons who used the heating grate for warmth would go. After backlash online and in the media, the bars were removed. Although the overall increase of hostile design has not been measured, it cannot be considered a deterrent to homelessness given the increase both in shelter use and in the number of unhoused individuals—from 5253 in 2013 to 8715 in 2018, a 40 percent increase (Street Needs Assessments, 2013 and 2018).

The City of Toronto is responsible for the designs of its public furniture, including the previously mentioned benches. According to its official website, the City entered into a twenty-year agreement with Astral Media for the "supply, manufacturing, installation and maintenance of 25,000 street furniture elements" (City of Toronto, "About the Street Furniture Program"). The agreement benefits both parties by providing Astral with "advertising exclusivity" and the city with "free installation and maintenance of furniture, [and] revenue sharing from advertising." The downside of this agreement is that the people who use street furniture the most are not considered. The chosen design dehumanizes unhoused persons by pushing them out of public space in a failed attempt to make them invisible.

What this sequence of events shows is that, if there is no resistance, hostile designs become tacitly approved and incorporated into the fabric of the city. Design communicates value. Tacit approval sends the message that homeless persons should not be seen and, to this end, city officials will continue to design environments that range from somewhat uncomfortable to completely inhospitable. The public bench with anti-sleep features and the metal bars blocking hospital heating grates shape

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behaviour and limit the ways space can be used and who can have access to these spaces.

HUMAN-CENTRED DESIGN: TOWARD AN INCLUSIVE PUBLIC SPACE

Urban design is a tool capable of harm and repair. Critical geographer Don Mitchell frames this idea as being informed by “two opposed, and perhaps irreconcilable, ideological visions of the nature and purpose of public space” (1995, p. 115). However, the empathic philosophy of human-centred design provides a bridge between these ideological visions. This approach is embraced by Danish architect Jan Gehl, who states that “the rationalist design of cities was detrimental to civic health and vitality, as the urban landscape often prioritized machines over people” (quoted in Goldsmith, 2019). In 2021, the Gehl Institute (an American non-profit organization promoting people-friendly urban design) and SPUR (an American non-profit public policy organization) produced a key report entitled *Coexistence in Public Space: Engagement Tools for Creating Shared Spaces in Places with Homelessness* (Huttenhoff, 2021, pp. 13–17). The report outlines creative and inclusive strategies such as place stewards, zoned lighting, spaces designed to facilitate meaningful dialogue, rules co-designed by the community instead of “management” through enforcement, and a dedicated social worker in public parks. The goal of the report, and the tools highlighted within it, is to “shift the narrative from: ‘the park will only be great if there are no homeless people in it’ to: ‘the park will only be great if we design for coexistence’” (Huttenhoff, 2021, p. 12). Similarly, architect Jan Gehl points out that “we now know that first, we form the cities, but then the cities form us” (Louisiana Channel, 2017). Environment can be changed through thought, and environment can also change thought. Human-centred design takes many forms, from the simplest of infrastructures to augmented reality (Archdaily, 2020; Bousquet & Goldsmith, 2018). Success is measured by how effectively design interacts with life. In his 2005 book *Designing for the Homeless: Architecture That Works*, Sam Davis, architect and professor emeritus at UC Berkeley, provides blueprints and explains how homeless shelters can function to support and transition homeless persons into the Toronto community.

Space may be engineered for one community without the explicit intention of excluding another. This acknowledgement does not detract from the fact that the design of space can be harmful and can dehumanize or punish those it was not designed to include. What my research has shown is that it is more often lack of thought, consideration, consultation, or even compassion that results in hostile design rather than pure malice. A lack of resources does not make a person criminal. Living in a community and a nation—which proudly claim to value equality—entitles all persons to public space and to fundamental human rights such as safe housing.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper is to build knowledge and compassion. Rather than offering a prescribed solution from my own perspective, I ask that readers think with me about the processes of inhumanization and our daily interactions with unhoused individuals. How do these encounters make you feel? How do you think unhoused people feel in their daily interactions on the streets? What can be done to humanize these interactions? Responses to these questions challenge the normalization of homeless bodies on the streets as invisible objects. When we *do* see them, when we make the choice to *not* look away, the funding will follow, inclusive design will follow, and we will see that the budgetary and design problems we are trying to solve have more to do with human value than is comfortable to admit.

I contend that, moving forward, it is integral that we recognize the cycle of influence in how we think about homelessness and unhoused persons, how we choose to structure and spend budgets allocated to resolving homelessness, and how we build environments, both physical and communal. These factors are inextricably linked to one another. By articulating how specific designs impact unhoused persons, this paper is a call to city planners, urban designers, architects, and citizens to reimagine and modify urban visions to include unhoused persons, not just as objects to be managed in the city fabric, but as a part of urban communities.

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How Photography Shaped the Portrayals of Japanese Women in Late 19th- and Early 20th-Century Japan

*Japanese photography, in the new capitalist consumer age of visual media, places women in the role of consumer or site of commodification—objectified as a commodity for monetary gain. While late 19th-century photographs of Japanese women portrayed them mainly in subordinate roles as sites of commodification, it can be argued that photography at the turn of the century introduced women in more dominant roles—as consumers with purchasing power in new forms of visual media, controversial images, and advertisements. This article investigates the history of photography in Japan and its visual representation of women in early media, artistic photography, journalism, and advertisements. By exploring various themes, historical events, and artistic/political movements in late 19th- and early 20th-century Japan, I observe some clear trends and shifts in how women came to be represented, as well as how they chose to represent themselves. Photographs, articles, and a case study of a popular Japanese women’s magazine, *Fujin Gahō*, reveal how Japanese women were at times a symbol of modernity that challenged old ideas, but also served to promote the traditional image and expectations of Japanese women.*

Keywords: Japanese photography, Japanese history, Japanese women, 19th century, 20th century, advertisements, *Fujin Gahō*

INTRODUCTION TO JAPANESE PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography was first invented by William Henry Fox Talbot in 1839 and, by 1848, had made its way to the ports of Nagasaki. During the Tokugawa shogunate, Japan adhered to an isolationist foreign policy known as *sakoku*, a policy it maintained until 1853 (Laver, 2011). Under this policy, which lasted for over two hundred years, foreign visitors were prohibited, Japanese nationals couldn’t leave the country, and ports were closed. After the abolition of *sakoku*, trade with America and Europe



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brought foreign businessmen and tourists to Japan in the late 19th century. With the influx of international visitors, Japanese photography and photographic studios flourished, and tourism played an enormous role in the international circulation and popularization of images of Japan. Some of the most well-known 19th- and 20th-century photographs of Japan were taken by foreigners.

Early Japanese photography focused predominantly on portraiture and landscapes. During the late 19th century, thousands of inaccurate photographs featuring sex workers, tradeswomen, or actors dressed as geisha or samurai made their way to Europe (Tucker, 2003). At the turn of the 20th century, artistic photography became increasingly popular and sparked vigorous debate over the best uses of photography. There were those who “advocated photography’s utilitarian and practical potential,” while others “promoted its aesthetic possibilities” (Ross, 2015, p. 3). It is important to understand that Japanese debates on aesthetics in photography “mirrored Japan’s simultaneous responsiveness and resistance to artistic movements in the West,” which is particularly evident in their depiction of women (Tucker, 2003, p. 43).

Pictorialism, Japan’s first major aesthetic movement in photography, “demonstrated that photography could address the same kind of themes as paintings yet retain an individual expression that reflected the inner dimensions of the artist” (Ross, 2015, p. 3). Artists practiced painting prints by hand to give them colour and heighten their aesthetic appeal. Late 19th-century photographs were mainly produced in studios as souvenirs for tourists or as portraits for wealthy clients. The popular image of the Meiji Empress Haruko, photographed by Uchida Kuichi in 1872, is an example of portraiture for the wealthy (Figure 1).

In later years, “alienation of urban life following the Great Kantō Earth-quake of September 1923 marked the turn towards modernism in art photo-graphy” (Ross, 2015, p. 3). The 1920s and 1930s marked a period of rising consumerism, when photographs became increasingly common in newspapers and advertise-



Figure 1. *The Empress Haruko* [albumen print, 1872]. Photographer: Uchida Kuichi. Public domain.

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ments as forms of visual media. The proliferation of photography for consumer and artistic purposes led to the expansion of photographic themes, perspectives, and portrayals of Japan and its people in the early 20th century. It is imperative to consider political, social, economic, and military aspects of early 20th-century Japan to better contextualize the representation of women and the female image in photography. Furthermore, using photographs for the study of gender in Japanese history is useful to reduce generalizations and Eurocentric perspectives, and to evaluate the causes, nature, and effects of women's depictions in visual media.

While late 19th-century photographs of Japanese women portrayed them mainly in subordinate roles, it can be argued that, at the turn of the century, photography presented women in more dominant roles—as consumers with purchasing power in new forms of visual media, controversial images, and advertisements. This categorization takes into account the motives of those producing and circulating these photographs, as well as the potential consequences arising from the propagation of these images. Through the analysis of photographs from the late 19th and early 20th century, this paper examines how photographs from various decades characterize women as sites of commodification or as consumers or both. More specifically, this paper spans the documented beginnings of photography in Japan (with photographs dating back to the 1870s) to the end of the Taishō period in 1926. During the Shōwa period (1926–1989), Japanese photography saw a dramatic change in themes, ranging from nationalism and patriotism to the photojournalism and photographic realism that documented war atrocities. For this reason, this paper focuses on earlier time periods to emphasize the period of transition that led to the photographic evolution of the Japanese woman.

SALVAGE TOURISM AND THE COMMODIFICATION OF THE FEMALE BODY IN PHOTOGRAPHY

The earliest example of the commodification of the female body through photography in Japan can be seen in late 19th-century touristic photography. Photographers, businessmen, and other foreigners visited Japan and produced images as souvenirs to take home. According to Fraser (2011), “the sense of Japanese identity cultivated by these photographs was of a timeless exotic land; yet paradoxically, Japan was rapidly changing into an industrialized nation, an image directly at odds with the vision conveyed in the photographs” (p. 41). These images, focusing on the traditional and primitive aspects of Japan as seen by European foreigners, “fitted the concept of ‘salvage’ tourism—the idea that it was the obligation of Western colonial powers to document and record traditional cultures before they slipped away” (p. 41–42). The popularity of salvage tourism in the late 1800s and early 1900s propelled the photographic industry in Japan to produce images that would be sought by wealthy foreigners.

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These travellers seemed “to have been driven by what Sigmund Freud called ‘scopophilia’ or an obsession with the pleasure of looking” (Hight, 2011, p. 9). Scopophilic desire also implies that looking is a form of possession, which explains the consumptive nature and popularity of photographs, souvenirs, and collectibles. The proliferation of photographs targeting foreign consumers during this period led representations of Japanese women to “stand precariously between fact and fiction, documentation and art” (p. 3). It also encouraged what Susan Sontag has called “a chronic voyeuristic relation to the world” (p. 3). Photographs of young women, prostitutes, and geishas were very popular in the early 1900s as many foreigners flocked to collect images of exotic, traditional Japan. This ultimately led to sexualized representations of Japanese women, as male foreigners sought to satisfy their scopophilic desires to view the female body.



Figure 2. *Three Women and a Girl* [hand-coloured albumen print, ca. 1877]. Photographer: Felice Beato. Public domain.

The phenomenon of foreign salvage tourism (recording a culture’s dying traditions) and scopophilic desire (possessing through looking) can be seen in many early 19th-century photographs of Japanese women. These photographs were known to have been staged by photographers wishing to depict women in traditional Japanese costumes or as prostitutes in provocative portraits. Many Yokohama photographs were delicately coloured by hand, which heightened their aesthetic appeal (Fraser, 2011). In Figure 2, three women wearing traditional kimonos stand side by side and look directly at the camera. To the right of the women stands a young girl in silhouette, seemingly unaware of the photographer. She may be a servant or she may have wandered into the photograph by chance. Her simple clothes and grooming are notably different from the

elegantly dressed women. This photograph, taken by Italian-British photographer Felice Beato during a visit to Japan, shows the contrast between everyday people and the staged portrayal of wealthy women or actors intended for an audience of consumers. Beato was one of many foreigners who were fascinated by Japanese costumes and customs.

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Elements of photographic voyeurism are evident in Figure 3, which depicts a prostitute partially covering her chest and looking into the distance. Her body language and gentle demeanour, with hands placed modestly over her chest, suggest submissiveness. Lack of eye contact with the photographer or the camera was a common element, a voyeuristic device that gave the viewer the impression of watching the model without being seen. Many foreign photographers took an interest in seeing women do everyday tasks such as washing hair, cleaning, or painting, as if to salvage or document the lives of exotic and supposedly primitive people, compared to Europeans.

The propagation of these images abroad led Japanese women to be viewed as exotic and sexualized, when seen through the voyeuristic gaze of foreigners. The image of Japanese feminine docility contrasted with foreign masculine imperialism—the latter consisting of visual imperialism, commodification of the female body, and power through consumerism and the possession of souvenir images. In fact, this was a misrepresentation of the time, as Japan was undergoing a period of rapid industrialization and few women dressed in the traditional costumes portrayed in studio images. As a result of the photographic export of these staged images, many Western museums continue to misrepresent late 19th- and early 20th-century Japanese woman, even today.

THE COMMODIFICATION OF THE FEMALE BODY IN JAPANESE ARTISTIC PHOTOGRAPHY

The commodification of the female body through photography was also evident in images produced by Japanese photographers in the early 20th century. While some claim that photographer Nojima Yasuzō's "Taishō and early Shōwa era nudes of earthy, robust young women are classics of Japanese photography" (Charrier, 2006, p. 48), they can also be a clear example of scopic desire of the female body through the capture and possession of nude images. Charrier (2006) observes that, although



Figure 3. *Untitled [Prostitute]* [hand-coloured albumen print, ca. 1880s]. Photographers: Raimund von Stillfried & Hermann Andersen. Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University. Public domain.

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the majority of these photographs were not exhibited during Nojima's lifetime because of their erotic subject matter, they remain widely celebrated in Japan and internationally. Contemporary critics set these images apart from pornography and interpret Nojima as a "serious, thoughtful artist who developed an appreciation of the feminine that transcends the superficial and the shallowly erotic" (p. 48). Nojima's work also displays aspects similar to foreign salvage tourism by emphasizing voyeuristic elements such as depicting women in submissive positions looking away from the camera.

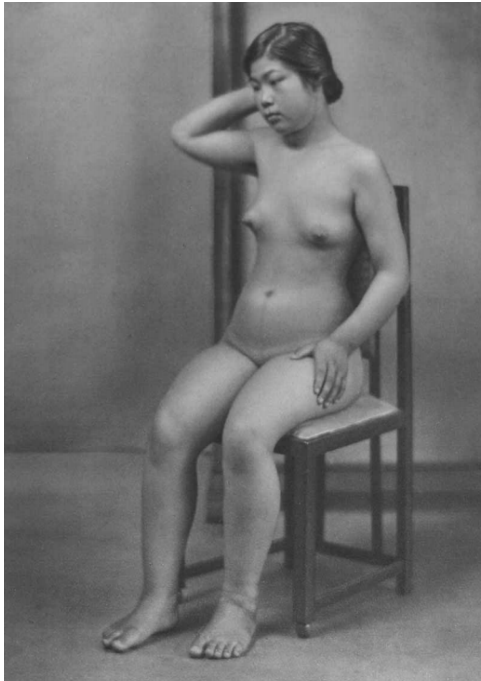


Figure 4. *Untitled* [gum bichromate print, 1921]. Photographer: Nojima Yasuzō. The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Japan. Public domain.

The disquiet apparent in Nojima's female models is an important distinguishing feature of his photographs, and sets them apart from Japanese and Western nudes that focus on the narrowly prescribed ideal female form (Charrier, 2006). This can be seen in his 1921 photograph of an unknown woman, depicted in Figure 4. Her posture looks awkward and uncomfortable, and she avoids eye contact with the viewer. Compared to other studio portraits, this woman seems not to be wearing makeup and her hair is unadorned, suggesting that she is from a lower class. Nojima's photographs "reinforced the notion that the primordial vitality and erotic spirit of the 'common' woman—but also her manifest inferiority—were inscribed in her physique and physiognomy" (Charrier, 2006, p. 50). He explored these themes through what he calls "primitivistic eroticism." For this reason, Fraser (2011) concludes that Nojima's work

"appropriated a Western Oriental fantasy of the submissive, exotic, primitive female 'Other,' but translated it into class, rather than racial, difference" (p. 61). Contrary to Western scenarios, the lower-class Japanese female is the "other" being gazed upon by the upper-class Japanese male artist, thus changing the paradigm to one that is class based (Fraser, 2011). Unlike the images produced by foreign photographers, Nojima does not focus on women's costumes or "backwardness" or make these appealing to the viewer. Instead, it is the models' submissiveness, primitiveness, and docility that is aesthetically appealing to both foreign and Japanese photographers.

THE COMMODIFICATION OF THE FEMALE BODY IN ADVERTISEMENTS

The commodification of the female body can also be seen in advertisements targeting male audiences. Before the 1920s, “beauty posters were known for their illustrative images, but by 1922, designers began to use photography” to appeal to consumers (Thornton, 1989, p. 9). The 1922 Japanese port wine ad in Figure 5 depicts a woman appearing to be nude, holding a glass of wine. Her gaze is directed at the camera as if looking at the viewer and offering a drink. Advertisements such as this one depart from the submissive image of the Japanese woman portrayed in both touristic and artistic photography. However, as the bare-shouldered model is likely not wearing clothing, the woman in the image is still portrayed as vulnerable and subordinate to the (male) viewer.

Art historian Kenneth Clark (1957) has observed that “consciously or unconsciously, photographers have usually recognized that, in a photograph of the nude, their real object is not to reproduce the naked body, but to imitate some artist’s view of what the naked body should be” (Weisstein, 1957, p. 360). For this reason, it is important to understand photographers’ varied perceptions of the female image in order to comprehend how changing interpretations affected the representation of Japanese women both within and outside of images. Whatever the purpose—tourism, advertising, art—all photographs are intended to appeal to the viewer in some way. Depictions of women reveal the desires, imaginings, and expectations of viewers and artists alike, and photography serves as a projection of patriarchal society and of the notion of what a woman is, or should be.

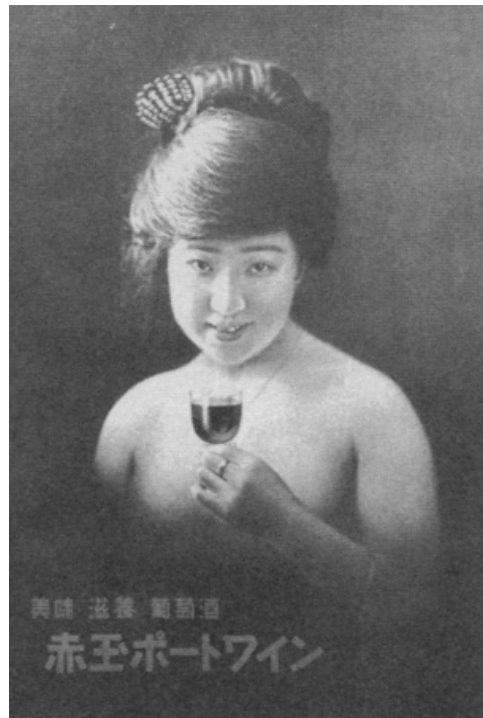


Figure 5. *Port Wine* [gum bichromate print, ca. 1922]. Photographer: Mokuda Inoue. Designer: Toshiro Kataoka. Public domain.

THE TRANSITION PERIOD: CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARD CIRCULATING IMAGES

Early attitudes about the circulation of women’s images were negative, and people were reluctant to accept photographs of women as anything other than signs of a lack of modesty and self-respect. While the media wanted to use the female image

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for advertising to increase patriotism and consumerism, rapid technological advancement in visual media left many conservative people opposed to the idea of immodestly circulating images of women.

The ideal example of this phenomenon is the 1908 National Beauty Contest held by the newspaper *Jiji Shinpō*. This newspaper invited the people of Japan to send in photographic portraits to find the most beautiful woman in the country (Fraser, 2011). The newspaper “framed the competition in frankly nationalistic terms, asking



Figure 6. Beauty contest winner Hiroko Suehiro from *Nihon bijinchō* (*Book of Japanese Beauties*, ca. 1908). Photographer (attributed): Kiyoshi Esaki. Public domain.

for contestants willing to engage in a beauty battle that would help cement Japan’s reputation as a player on the world stage” (pp. 52–53). By this time, photographs of beauties (*bijin*) had long been popular in Japan, and images of the most beautiful geisha were purchased *en masse* by both Japanese and foreign consumers (Bardsley, 2012). After many images were submitted, the newspaper selected sixteen-year-old Suehiro Hiroko, shown in figure 6. The daughter of a wealthy and distinguished family, she attended the famous Gakushūin school in Tokyo. Suehiro, who was unaware that her photo had been submitted by her brother-in-law, was immediately expelled from school once the photograph was published (Bardsley, 2012). The principal of the school took such drastic action because “he knew that any hint of improper behaviour on the part of a female student or teacher would only fuel public suspicion that education corrupted girls” (p. 42).

Women who published images of themselves were seen as unchaste and immoral. Even though the image of the sixteen-year-old beauty contest winner does not appear to be inappropriate or sexualized, it still maintains voyeuristic elements—in particular, the lack of eye contact with the camera. The image may have been negatively associated with Western consumer photographs of prostitutes or lower-class actors, taken to appeal to foreigners’ desires. Public opinion about images of Japanese women reveals much about expected roles and attitudes. In the case of the beauty contest, the actions of the principal exemplify the fears and conservative attitudes ordinary Japanese people would have had regarding the female image.

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However, controversies in Japan during the 1910s and 1920s over circulated photographs of women eventually began to change the social norms that expected women to be modest and retiring, and away from the public eye. The rise of consumerism and advertising in magazines, newspapers, and other forms of media ultimately parallels the progression of women from commodification to representation in more varied roles—for example, as consumers themselves. Photography also “functioned to frame the New Woman as a foreign import to Japan” and served to blur the lines “between respectable—and ostensibly private—women” and “women much less respected because of the sexualized and public nature of their work” (Bardsley, 2012, pp. 39–40).

By 1910, photography was a part of people’s daily lives in Japan, and the emergence of the Bluestockings—modern, intellectual women—as the New Woman “put photography at the centre of controversy” (p. 41). Thus, when their photographs appeared in public, they “functioned to obscure the borders of respectability even further” and “topped the risqué attraction of the schoolgirl by offering a new representation of the Japanese woman, an intellectual, adult woman who was also a desiring one and had no qualms about publishing her photo for all to see” (p. 42).

Increasingly, it became more acceptable for magazines, newspapers, and advertisements to portray the female image; however, the early controversies around images of the Bluestockings can be interpreted as a form of activism that demanded that women be noticed on a national level. Photographs of women in advocative or political roles were a symbol of progressiveness and a newfound identity for many Japanese women. Ultimately, for



Figure 7. *The Bluestockings’ Public Lecture* (ca. February 1913). Public domain.

some, photographs of the Japanese woman became a form of activism and a reaction to patriarchal rules and gender expectations. For example, photography made it possible for women to be seen giving political speeches, working non-traditional jobs, and dressing in modern and non-traditional clothing. Figure 7 shows Iwano Kiyoko giving a public lecture in Tokyo in 1913, during a time when political involvement for women was illegal. Controversial images of members of the Bluestockings resulted in some of them losing their jobs and facing social rejection, which eventually led to the disbanding of the group. While photography played a major role in defining the New Woman and presenting her to the world, it also paved a path for use as a medium to challenge the status quo. This exemplifies the transition

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from women's one-dimensional representation as a site of commodification to more diverse portrayals enabled by new forms of visual media. This is not to say that women's bodies were no longer commodified; indeed, they continued to be objectified throughout much of the time period, and still so today. However, this transition acknowledges the appearance of new narratives and characterizations of women that encouraged the exploration of modern ideas in art, as well as the evolution of women's roles.

GENDER ADVERTISING, THE MODERN GIRL, AND WOMEN AS CONSUMERS

While photography helped exhibit the New Woman in the first decade of the 20th century, the Modern Girl (*Modan Gaaru*) became the face of the consumer in the 1920s and 1930s. Photography quickly made its way into new popularized forms of visual media such as magazines that appealed to the Japanese female buyer. According to Miriam Silverberg (2007), the Japanese Modern Girl was a middle-class consumer in late 1920s and 1930s urban Japan—often characterized as apolitical, morally corrupt, sexually promiscuous, and “liberated . . . from age-old traditions and conventions” (p. 52).

Rita Felski (2005) observes that discourses on the topic of consumerism were frequently centred around the female body and typically depicted the woman as a consumer. As Rosalind Williams notes, “to a large extent, the pejorative nature of the concept of consumption itself derives from its association with female submission to organic needs” (1991, p. 208). In the early 20th century, photography was the prime means of depicting the ideal female consumer in advertising.

Historians have pointed out that, in Japan, the “Western fantasy is perhaps the most prominent strategy used by publishers to promote sales” (Hayashi, 1995, p. 190). Increasingly during this time period, magazines taught female readers how to attain a better quality of life by marketing Western independence and individualism, whereas earlier images of women “were crystallized by the term *endure*, i.e., to suppress emotions, deny ambitions, and adapt to any environment” (p. 190). Magazines and visual media schooled readers on practices that caused profound cultural transformations. Women were taught to desire material things and shown images of the ideal female consumer that they ought to emulate (Inoue, 2007). The Modern Girl increasingly became the target of advertisements and companies wishing to promote the lifestyle desired by these women, while, at the same time, encouraging women to see themselves as loyal consumers.

JAPANESE FEMALE CONSUMERS AND THE “WESTERN FANTASY”

The “Western fantasy” was not something new in 20th-century Japan. Technological advancements, urbanization, and the accessibility of photography and visual media to everyday people resulted in its popularity at the turn of the century. Photographs of Japanese women in western-style clothing date back to the beginnings of Japanese

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photography. Early visual consumption of photographs was accessible only to the wealthy. During the late 19th century, wealthy Japanese women indulged in having their portrait taken as a “status-enhancing act” and a marker that they were “participating in the latest fad connected to modernization” (Fraser, 2011, p. 45). In these early portraits, western-style clothing “often indicates social status, particularly for women” (p. 45). Figure 8 shows Kaneko Shibusawa photographed in the late 19th century wearing a western-style dress. She is pictured in what appears to be an intricately staged studio or household setting, indicative of her status and wealth.



Figure 8. Kaneko Shibusawa [albumen print, ca. late 1800s]. Public domain.

In the 20th century, the popularity of western-style dress was due to the accessibility of visual media, newspapers, and magazines to everyday women. For the first time, technological advancements had enabled the distribution of images on a wider scale. The first newspapers produced by “metallic movable type were published in the 1870s” and, within ten years, the technology was widespread and media distribution had expanded “beyond the possibilities of woodblock printing” (Frederick, 2017, p. 12). By the 1890s, it was possible to distribute newspapers and magazines at larger scales due to more efficient postal systems (p. 12).

While newspapers, photographs, and magazines became easier and cheaper to produce, how did they revolutionize the depiction of Japanese women as

Modern Girls and consumers? Urbanization and the increasing number of working women meant that salaries gave everyday women independent purchasing power for the first time. From the turn of the century, “women comprised about 80 percent of the workers in textile factories” and around “20–40 percent of [female] factory workers” read magazines that were often shared in dormitories or factory lounges (Frederick, 2017, p. 16). Moreover, while many of the contracts sent wages back to the workers’ families, “separation from parental supervision allowed greater freedom in how they spent what money they had” (p. 16). Thus, businesses flocked to advertise fashion, cosmetics, habits, and the “Western fantasy,” no longer only to wealthy housewives, but also to young working-class women. Ultimately, this led to the diversification of women’s representation as more independent consumers.

A CASE STUDY OF A JAPANESE WOMAN'S MAGAZINE: *FUJIN GAHŌ*

Japanese women's magazines reflected women's desires to change their traditional roles. This is particularly evident in early magazines with nationalist overtones such as *Fujin Gahō*. First published in 1905, it targeted primarily housewives and unmarried women, using images, ads for commodities, and self-help literature. Effective advertisements promoting cosmetics presented an image of the ideal woman (Inoue, 2007). A photograph, with its "illusion of capturing the whole person," enhanced dreams and possibilities, making them seem "tangible to countless viewers" (Bardsley, 2012, p. 53). Ultimately, magazines that offered self-help "advice on how to cook, how to raise children, how to manage a household budget, and how to engage in sexual activities" attracted women through the promise of change and modernization but, at the same time, created their own "brand of stereotyped images of women steeped in commercialism not tradition" (Hayashi, 1995, p. 189). Hayashi observes that "the core of these magazines' power is the gender asymmetry they create" between contradictory social demands of traditional values and independence (p. 189).

This concept is exemplified in issues of *Fujin Gahō* in the early 20th century. The February 1906 issue of *Fujin Gahō* in Figure 9 shows a Japanese woman wearing an extravagant western-style dress paired with a hat and numerous accessories. The woman's posture and expression are serious, and are reminiscent of earlier forms of portrait photography, as opposed to the more artistic styles of photography of later years. Pictures such as this one would have been relatively uncommon in 1906, as many models wearing western clothing were Westerners, Chinese, or royals. The aspirations of everyday women to wear western-style clothing grew with each passing year, but, in reality, most still wore kimonos. The "Western fantasy" was still unrealizable for most Japanese women; however, photographs illustrated these fantasies and made them more widespread.



Figure 9. Atsuko Otahara. (ca. February 1906). From *Fujin Gahō*. Public domain.

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Figure 10. Photograph of a geisha (ca. 1906). From *Fujin Gahō* supplement. Public domain.

argues that it is important to consider the implications of gender in advertising because the systematic arrangement of male-female differences allows us to “think profitably about the way in which self-definition is guided and externally determined” (p. 25). Thus, more life-like attributes in photographs of women allow them to be seen from perspectives that characterize them differently. The portrayal of women in active rather than passive roles in photographs affects how they are characterized, how their role in society is perceived, and how gender expectations change. For instance, in the 1920s, women are seen in more candid photographs that have movement and life compared to studio-staged photographs. This 1925 issue of *Fujin Gahō*, shown in Figure 11, depicts

The style of photographing women developed rapidly from formal portrait photography to more artistic interpretations of geishas and other beauties. The *Aesthetic Picture Report*, published as a supplement to *Fujin Gahō* in 1906, depicts artistic images of Japanese women. Figure 10 shows a popular geisha wearing what appears to be a western-style dress with short sleeves, delicately holding flowers while gazing away from the camera. The setting, feel, and expression in this photograph contrast markedly with the image in Figure 9: even though both photographs were published in the same magazine in the same year, the model in modern dress displays more movement and life.

According to Erving Goffman (1987), “advertisements overwhelmingly and candidly present make-believe scenes, the subjects or figures depicted being quite different from the professional models who pose the action” (p. 25). He



Figure 11. Women’s Western Costume (ca. 1925). From *Fujin Gahō*. Public domain.

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urban women walking—most dressed in western-style clothing. The illustrations in this issue show the shift from studio photography to candid, outdoor photography, shot in a journalistic manner.

While the increasingly active depictions of women cannot necessarily be said to be more empowering, photographic images intended to appeal to the female consumer begin to show her in ways that she would like to see herself. Many advertisements during this period continued to portray Japanese women's bodies as sites of commodification. However, corporations began to entice women into consumer behaviours through modern and even controversial depictions. Thus, it can be said that photography and other new forms of visual media paired with capitalist consumptive patterns to lead to dramatic changes in how Japanese women were portrayed in the early 20th century.

THE VALUES AND LIMITATIONS OF PHOTOGRAPHS FOR HISTORICAL STUDY

Historians have access to more than 130 years of photographic manipulations, propaganda, and imaginative artistry that have shaped views of Japanese culture. Through photographic portrayals, historians can hypothesize the experiences of Japanese women as well as the roles and expectations placed upon them. According to Hight (2011), “the spread of photography throughout Japan both paralleled and mirrored the rapid westernization of the country, but chronicling this photographic history came much later” (p. 3).

There are many values and limitations to using photographs for historical study. While photographs convey a large amount of visual information, they also leave room for varied interpretation. Photographs allow the viewer to look back in time and are known to effectively set the *zeitgeist* of a period through depictions of fashion, technology, architecture, and more; however, historians must continuously question the intentions of photographers in an effort to interpret history accurately. They may also want to consider how and why these photographs came to be preserved and for what purposes—especially when studying a time period known to have produced many staged images for consumer purposes.

Many museums preserve not only artifacts, but also images as cultural property, art, and photojournalism—all effective sources of primary data for the study of contemporary history. According to Joshua Brown (2007), “photography far surpasses other archival visual media as a pictorial source used by historians, but for the most prosaic of reasons: as uncritically handled illustrations confirming or, more often, merely reiterating the physical appearance of places and persons discussed in the text” (p. 10). This paper analyzes a limited number of photographs from various collections in order to understand the social depictions, roles, and expectations of Japanese women in late 19th- and early 20th-century Japan. All of the photographs were sourced from photographic archives and publications on the topics of Japanese history or photography. Many of these photographs were staged in studios for the

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purpose of tourism, advertising, or pleasure viewing. It must be noted that the agendas and motives of photographers affect their composition and the messages they construct; however, rather than detracting from the usefulness of the image, these messages, when critically analyzed, add value to the photographs. How women are portrayed in a given society reveals a substantial amount of information about their expected roles, conduct, sexuality, and status. Thus, photographs and visual media are indispensable to the study and understanding of gender roles, as well as to social history.

CONCLUSION

The photographic portrayal of Japanese women promoted traditional images, attitudes, and roles but, at times, photographs also served as symbols of modernization that challenged old ideas. In late 19th-century Japan, women were primarily depicted in subordinate roles. Portraying women in traditional feminine roles allowed the female image to become a site of commodification, while salvage tourism exoticized and sexualized Japanese women for foreign touristic consumerism. The rise of consumer-driven scopical desires, enabled through photography in Japan's period of industrialization, was instrumental in determining how Japanese women were perceived. At the turn of the 20th century during Japan's capitalist consumer age, photography presented women in more dominant roles as consumers. Advertisements and products that targeted the female consumer were more likely to depict women wearing modern fashion, and introduced new and more progressive ideas of femininity. Although visual media continues to objectify women even today, the rise of capitalism and the emergence of the urban consumer diversified traditional perspectives and shone a new light on ideas of what it meant to be a woman in 20th-century Japan.

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Mindfulness for Depression?

A critical analysis of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT)

Originating from Buddhist traditions, mindfulness is intended to cultivate inner peace through non-judgemental observation and acceptance of our moment-to-moment experiences. However, conflicting perspectives emerged as these practices were introduced and proliferated in the West. This article will define mindfulness, elaborate on the controversy surrounding mindfulness in Western wellness spheres, and assess its efficacy when integrated into standardized therapeutic approaches. Specifically, this article will include a literature review evaluating mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) for depression. Despite criticisms on mindfulness, there is evidence that mindfulness skills gained in therapy are beneficial and can act as mechanisms for change in patients' experiences of depression. MBCT has demonstrated success as a supplementary treatment and relapse prevention method for recurrent depression. Compared with other treatments, MBCT significantly decreases depressive symptoms and increases response rates among vulnerable patient groups at a higher risk of relapse and those with treatment resistant depression. A final discussion of implications related to the COVID-19 pandemic will highlight how online MBCT can help address the increasing need for accessible mental health services. Given the significance of these findings, future research should examine the efficacy of MBCT as a stand-alone therapy, and its generalizability to other disorders.

Keywords: mindfulness, mindfulness-based intervention, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, depression treatment, relapse prevention, online therapy

With increasing coverage in media and accessibility to services through mobile apps (e.g., Calm, Headspace), mindfulness has gained traction in Western wellness spheres. Its traditional form has been distilled into mainstream adaptations seemingly to enhance marketability and appeal to consumers. Critics emphasize issues with secularization, commodification, and weaknesses in definitions and methodologies used in research. Despite controversy around mindfulness, it is important to consider proven benefits of mindfulness-based interventions for patients with depression. In



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this article, I will expand on definitions of mindfulness from various cultural perspectives and explore contentious issues in research. A literature review will then support my argument that criticisms on mindfulness should not discredit the efficacy and effectiveness of standardized therapeutic approaches that incorporate mindfulness. Focusing on mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT; Segal et al., 2002), my goal is to raise awareness of its viability for reducing depressive symptom severity and preventing relapse. The article will conclude with a discussion of the increasing need for mental health support during the COVID-19 pandemic, advantages of online MBCT, and overall implications of findings.

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

There are many things that come to mind when one thinks of mindfulness. For some, these practices may easily be associated with peace and conceptions of Zen; for others, they may breed resistance to a trend proliferating across the Western world. However, the applications of mindfulness in Eastern traditions and Western clinical settings extend beyond these preconceived notions. So, let's set some definitions. What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness involves acknowledging inner experiences amid the everchanging backdrop of our external world. Eastern mindfulness originated in India through Buddhist philosophies and traditions; it stems from the ancient Pali word "sati" which can sometimes be translated as "awareness" or a clarity of mind that is focused yet open to passing thoughts, breaths, and sensations (Carmody, 2014; Olendzki, 2014). In this context, it is intended to enhance inner peace by replacing ignorance and desire with self-awareness (Carmody, 2014). As the practice of Buddhism has expanded, the expression of its core principles and overarching goals has undergone significant alterations to adapt to the structures available in the languages of its diverse practitioners. The transformation in the conception of mindfulness in this context has resulted in the accentuation of differences between East and West (Carmody, 2014; Djikic, 2014).

The integration of mindfulness and meditation into conventional medical settings and Western society at large has been significantly influenced by the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn, according to whom mindfulness is a universal practice that shines a light on each person's ability to experience awareness at any given moment, completely and wholeheartedly; it inspires a present-centred state of being, encouraging us to observe and accept our experiences without judgement; and it promotes insight through sitting comfortably with both pleasant and unpleasant experiences, all of which is meant to alleviate suffering, enhance well-being, and carve out transformative paths toward healing (2015). Since we all have the capacity to turn inward and access presence, mindfulness can be cultivated in daily living and extended to those struggling with mental illnesses.

CRITICISMS OF WESTERN MINDFULNESS

Adapted to suit Western lifestyles, mindfulness prompts various critiques on the transference of a traditional practice to the mainstream as well as on the lack of consensus in concepts used in research. Loy (2013) emphasizes how processes of secularization and commodification have led critics to dismiss Western mindfulness as “McMindfulness.” Mindfulness was removed from its traditional and religious roots to appeal to consumers, which disregards the ethical foundations and core purposes of the practice in its origins (Loy, 2013). Hyland (2016) reiterates the flaws of this reductionist approach to a practice rooted in deeper understandings of the self and suffering and expands on the notion of “McMindfulness,” stressing its use of streamlined practices for quick-fix solutions, predictable and quantifiable procedures, and control on human behaviours through non-human technology (e.g., mindfulness apps). By capitalizing on more marketable aspects of mindfulness, its authentic qualities are disrupted, and its origins are threatened. This could be viewed as a form of cultural appropriation in which acceptable aspects of a culture’s practices are being embraced while others remain neglected.

Van Dam et al. (2018) reviewed existing sources on mindfulness and meditation and analyzed two major issues that have not been sufficiently treated in the literature: definitions of mindfulness and the methodologies that have been employed. The researchers emphasized how conceptualizations of mindfulness, including Kabat-Zinn’s, disregard the lack of consensus in the word’s meanings and scientific measures used across studies. For example, mindfulness questionnaires varied depending on types of “mindfulness” evaluated (e.g., general, observing, awareness, nonjudging) and whether it involved a specific practice (e.g., meditation). With regard to methodological issues, Van Dam et al. explained that ambiguity makes it difficult to ensure that researchers are measuring the concept they intend to. Inconsistencies in delivery of mindfulness-based interventions and interpretation of results risk misleading individuals who suffer from serious diseases. The criticism that Van Dam et al. offer highlights gaps in this field of research, as well as areas demanding clarification and rigor.

Critics claim that mindfulness is often sold as a quick-fix solution that glosses over profound suffering and is plagued with ambiguous definitions and flawed research methods; yet this is where major contention arises. Carmody (2014) reflected on the potential superficiality of Western mindfulness, while also acknowledging the stance that it is not as important how differently the practices are led if positive effects are achieved. Regardless of the shortcomings of Western mindfulness, we must acknowledge the value of MBCT developed specifically for depression. Mindfulness may not be the answer to all life struggles; however, learning these skills in therapy can enact change and prove beneficial to individuals with depression and potentially with other mental illnesses.

HOW IS MBCT DIFFERENT?

Over the course of our lifetime, many of us have either experienced or know someone who is experiencing the pain and resilience of mental illness and recovery. Of particular concern is the prevalence and severity of depression, which calls for treatment and relapse prevention options that help to reduce distress and impairment in functioning. In the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (2013), depression is classified as a mood disorder commonly characterized by feelings of sadness, worthlessness, and hopelessness. Other symptoms may include difficulty concentrating, decreased enjoyment in daily activities, weight loss or gain, fatigue and low energy, trouble sleeping or excessive sleeping, and thoughts of suicide. Despite criticisms of Western mindfulness and the fact that research is in preliminary stages for its use in the treatment of other mental illnesses (e.g., eating disorders and substance-related and addictive disorders), the efficacy of MBCT for depression is well documented with strong research support (Division 12 of the American Psychological Association, 2016).

As a third-wave cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), MBCT integrates mindfulness to inspire self-awareness and encourage a shift in patients' attitudes toward their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours, according to the description given by Philippot & Segal (2009). They report that it was adapted from Kabat-Zinn's mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR; Kabat-Zinn, 1982; 1994) program involving mindfulness exercises to reduce stress in individuals with health conditions. Zindel Segal, Mark Williams, and John Teasdale designed MBCT with components of psychoeducation and cognitive therapy to prevent depressive relapse and maintain remission for those who have already undergone treatment. These components support patients in identifying symptoms of relapse, irrational thoughts associated with depression, and concrete ways to prevent depression (Philippot & Segal, 2009).

Following a manualized set of guidelines, therapists ensure MBCT is consistently administered across settings and patients. Within specified guidelines, patients are required to commit to 2.5-hour group sessions once a week over the course of eight weeks. These meetings begin with a mindfulness exercise (e.g., body scan, sitting meditation), followed by a check-in about the exercise and discussion on homework from the previous meeting. A topic of focus is then presented to enhance understanding of aspects of mindfulness, and how they can be practiced. For example, presentations might touch on staying present when the mind wanders or moving away from autopilot and stepping into awareness. Before the end of session, a daily 45-minute practice of mindfulness is assigned as homework, and sessions conclude with another mindfulness exercise (Philippot & Segal, 2009).

The manualized approach of MBCT clears up ambiguity in definitions and preserves consistency in therapy administration and outcome evaluation. This short-term intervention equips patients with tools to carry out mindfulness in everyday life, thereby strengthening neural pathways into sustained habits for positive well-being.

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For individuals looking for supplements to treatment as usual (TAU), MBCT can help decrease depressive symptom severity and prevent relapse, especially in vulnerable populations and those resistant to treatment.

EFFICACY OF MBCT FOR DEPRESSION

Extensive research on MBCT substantiates the powerful effects for patients with residual symptoms and recurrent depression. In real-world healthcare settings, nascent evidence suggests that MBCT is a safe, effective, and acceptable second-line treatment for various stages of depression (Tickell et al., 2019). This builds on research demonstrating that MBCT can be efficacious in reducing depressive symptoms (Finucane & Mercer, 2006; Kenny & Williams, 2007; Kingston et al. 2007; Eisendrath et al., 2008; Kuyken et al., 2008; Barnhofer et al., 2009) and preventing relapse/recurrence (Teasdale et al., 2000; Ma & Teasdale, 2004) even as effectively as maintenance antidepressant medication (Kuyken et al., 2008; Segal et al., 2010). The course of mental illness is often complex, and healing is not linear; still, there is hope in MBCT as an option for reducing depressive symptoms and risk of relapse regardless of the number of prior depressive episodes (Geschwind et al., 2012). These benefits, among others, are reflected in recent advancements in research.

In line with symptom reduction, benefits were noted in a study conducted by Van Aalderen et al. (2012) who compared MBCT + TAU to TAU on its own. In this case, TAU included antidepressant medication or prior experience with CBT or meditation. The researchers primarily focused on pre- and post-intervention and follow-up responses to interviews assessing symptoms of depression. Results indicated that in comparison to TAU alone, the addition of MBCT significantly decreased symptoms, worry, and rumination predictive of depression, and significantly increased psychological aspects of quality of life and mindfulness skills protective against relapse. Also, patients who were experiencing a depressive episode at the time of the study, as well as those who were not, experienced improvements attributed to MBCT.

This adds to what is known about MBCT and its efficacy for patients at different stages of depression or remission. The findings suggest that along with its originally intended use to prevent relapse, the benefits of MBCT extend to individuals suffering a depressive episode at the time of intervention itself. When delivered through structured therapeutic programming, mindfulness teachings can be effective tools for protecting against depressive risk factors. By increasing metacognitive awareness, or the ability to separate oneself from negative thoughts/feelings and view them as passing events (Teasdale et al., 2002), MBCT taps into mechanisms of change that help reduce depressive symptoms and relapse.

Additional research has found that MBCT is especially effective for individuals deemed more vulnerable in their experience of depression. Williams et al. (2014) compared MBCT + TAU to cognitive psychological education (CPE) + TAU, and to

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TAU alone for patients with recurrent depression. Since all patients were in remission, TAU involved continuing any treatment regimens required or suggested by their doctor. CPE was designed to follow psychoeducation and cognitive therapy components of MBCT while excluding mindfulness practices. By narrowing in on comparisons this way, the researchers could illustrate whether it was the mindfulness component in particular that was creating differences between outcomes.

To evaluate the impact of these interventions, Williams et al. (2014) administered interviews to assess how much time had passed before a depressive relapse occurred—pinpointed as accurately as possible by date of onset. Results demonstrated that MBCT + TAU was as effective as other interventions used for comparison, and all three were quite strong in protecting patients from relapse. Analyzing the data through a different lens, the researchers then compared patients who had a history of childhood trauma against those who did not. They found that MBCT + TAU was significantly more successful than CPE + TAU and TAU alone at preventing relapse in patients with childhood trauma caused by abuse and parental indifference.

A similar pattern emerged when Kuyken et al. (2015) compared patients on maintenance antidepressants for relapse prevention to those in an MBCT with support to taper or discontinue antidepressant treatment (MBCT-TS) group. There were no significant differences between MBCT-TS and medication alone until researchers took into account severity of childhood trauma and found a lower rate of relapse for more vulnerable patients in MBCT-TS. As noted earlier, MBCT supports the development of mindfulness skills and shifts perspectives surrounding negative thoughts or feelings. Although alternate treatment options exist and have shown comparable success, MBCT should be noted for its more-pronounced effects within a subgroup of patients at greater risk for relapse due to traumatic childhood experiences. The findings highlight the added benefit of sitting with deep-rooted pain and attending to it with mindfulness for enduring maintenance of remission in at-risk groups.

Additionally, MBCT is valuable in its potential to reduce symptom severity for patients with treatment-resistant depression (TRD). TRD is characterized by the failure to go into remission after trying two types of antidepressants, leading to lower quality of life and poorer predicted course and outcome of the disorder (Eisendrath et al., 2016). In response to the need for suitable TRD interventions, Eisendrath et al. evaluated differences in patient outcomes between MBCT and a health enhancement program (HEP) as add-ons to medication TAU. HEP required participants to engage in healthy physical and nutritional activities, and MBCT was adapted specifically for patients with TRD. While researchers have found equivalent effectiveness of these treatments for patients in remission from major depressive disorder with residual symptoms (Shallcross et al., 2015), MBCT has greater benefits for patients with TRD. Eisendrath et al. (2016) found low remission rates for both interventions among TRD

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patients, which is not unusual since this form of depression is often resistant to treatment; however, results illustrated a higher percent decrease of depressive symptom severity and a higher percent increase in response rates among patients receiving MBCT + TAU compared to HEP + TAU.

In comparison to TAU, Cladder-Micus et al. (2018) also found that chronic, TRD patients completing MBCT + TAU benefited from significantly higher quality of life, mindfulness skills, and self-compassion. Moreover, a larger proportion of MBCT + TAU patients attained partial or full remission, lower rumination, and lower depressive symptoms if they attended more than four treatment sessions. As a supplement to medication, MBCT invites a sense of relief and hope for TRD patients who have not found success in antidepressants alone. Overall, the novel experience of positive change stemming from MBCT may create momentum and inspire openness to healing for symptomatic patients, patients in remission, and more-vulnerable patient groups.

ONLINE MBCT

Another advantage of MBCT is the ease surrounding its adaptability and utility in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although mass quarantines have been imposed to minimize the spread of COVID-19, they have also resulted in prolonged periods of isolation, worry, and inevitable psychological effects. Based on trends from previous infectious disease outbreaks, it was predicted that frontline workers, survivors of the illness, individuals with pre-existing mental illnesses, and other vulnerable groups would be most largely impacted (Levin, 2019; Usher et al., 2020; Galea et al., 2020; Rubin & Wessely, 2020). Similar trends are reflected in emerging data. For example, a nationwide survey found that 40% of Canadians reported that their mental health has deteriorated since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, with vulnerable populations accounting for higher proportions of those struggling (Canadian Mental Health Association, 2020). Now more than ever, the importance of cultivating resilience has been brought to the forefront. Levin (2019) suggests that helpful techniques include seeking support, implementing proactive treatment plans, and practicing mindfulness and relaxation. MBCT would provide a refreshing perspective to support healing, and virtual group offerings would create a sense of community to enhance patient well-being.

Lockdowns and physical distancing regulations have also required therapists to adapt their services and offer sessions over phone or via video calls. The move to online therapy was quick and drastic for many therapists who previously were not comfortable, interested, or trained in this medium (Aafjes-van Doorn et al., 2020). Not only has this reframed the way therapists work and the way patients access services, but it has also revealed wider-spread long-term benefits filling a gap that already existed. The growing trend toward online therapy is particularly beneficial to patients who faced difficulties accessing services even before the pandemic. Some

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examples may include patients who live in rural communities and those who struggle with financial barriers, specific disorders, or obstacles in scheduling and distance that make it inconvenient or impossible to physically show up in session regularly (Bouchard et al., 2007; Simpson et al., 2015; Varker et al., 2019).

Although there is promise in MBCT to reduce relapse and residual symptoms, there have been access barriers and shortages in trained professionals qualified to conduct sessions (Dimidjian et al., 2014). Online therapy increases accessibility, and it has proven to be as effective as in-person therapy for mental illnesses (Varker et al., 2019). This is significant because numerous clinics offer online MBCT groups, and researchers have found success in online adaptations. Mindful mood balance (MMB) is an online version of MBCT with components of CBT and mindfulness to support emotion regulation, improve depression management, and help patients relieve negative thought patterns. Programming consists of personal practices and reflections, interactive learning modules, and learning material offered in videos, audio files, and handouts (Dimidjian et al., 2014).

Boggs et al. (2014) analyzed patient responses to interviews at the end of MMB, or at the time of early withdrawal, to gauge subjective experiences of learning materials, website functions and features, and parts of the program that helped or hindered patients in following through on their home practice. Responses were categorized into key themes, and researchers found that patients had a good grasp of the concepts and provided helpful feedback for program improvements. For example, the lack of in-person group meetings or an actual therapist impacted accountability and relational benefits of MMB groups. Time and commitment challenges emerged for some, while flexibility in accessing the platform provided a sense of personal agency for others. Patients generally described positive impacts associated with meditating often, affirming that they would consciously use what they learned moving forward.

In addition to these findings, Dimidjian et al. (2014) reported that MMB significantly reduced depressive symptoms, more effectively than usual depression care, and effects were sustained up to six months after treatment. This aligns with findings on the positive impact of traditional in-person MBCT. Results also showed that MMB reduced rumination and improved mindfulness for the whole sample, but not for a subgroup of patients with residual depressive symptoms. Although MMB was deemed an acceptable form of therapy, levels of engagement were not as optimal as they had been for in-person MBCT (Dimidjian et al., 2014). Considering time elapsed since these MMB evaluations were published, it would be interesting to investigate whether there have been program modifications and shifts in engagement since therapists and patients were forced to become accustomed to online therapy during the pandemic. As mental health services adapt, therapists must tap into a sense of mindful creativity to keep patients motivated and actively engaged—whether that be in person or through a screen.

CONCLUSION

While criticisms exist surrounding research on mindfulness and its commodification and secularization in the West, mindfulness-based interventions have proven efficacious for various life stressors and as an add-on treatment for depression. The numerous definitions of mindfulness complicate attempts at quantifying the concept; however, a standardized therapeutic approach has allowed researchers to attribute patient outcomes to the manualized procedure being followed. There is evidence that MBCT is not only efficacious in its intended use to prevent depressive relapse, but also in its ability to increase mindfulness and decrease symptom severity, worry, and rumination during a depressive episode. These effects are especially pronounced for patients with childhood trauma, those at a higher risk for relapse, and those with treatment-resistant depression. While critics of “McMindfulness” also oppose mindfulness practices mediated by technology, circumstances hindering in-person gatherings reveal advantages of online therapy. Online adaptations of MBCT address accessibility barriers and hold great potential for supporting patients with depression, particularly during difficult times of increased mental health challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic still afflicting the world at the time that this article is being published. Ongoing acknowledgment of constructive criticism and improvements based on feedback will only help enhance the healing properties of mindfulness-based interventions delivered in person and online.

In fast-paced societies of the West, mindfulness skills support patients in fully experiencing and accepting the present moment rather than harbouring pain by focusing excessively on unreliable distortions of the past and projections into the future. Given the findings on MBCT’s efficacy in research clinics, as well as its effectiveness in real-world healthcare settings (Tickell et al., 2019), future research could explore its potential as a stand-alone therapy, as well as treatment integration for subclinical depression and other mental illnesses (e.g., eating disorders and substance-related and addictive disorders). Continued research into MBCT is essential given its potential to improve patient quality of life and reduce strain on the healthcare system by addressing mental health issues before they worsen or even arise.

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Legalizing MDMA-Assisted Psychotherapy for the Treatment of Trauma-Related Mental Health Disorders

3, 4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine, or MDMA as it is commonly known, is classified as a “Schedule 1” substance in Canada and the United States. For decades, the compound has been shrouded by the stigma of being a dangerous party drug thought to kill brain cells and be severely addictive. However, when it was originally discovered, it was experimentally used in clinical settings as an adjunct to therapy. This idea is now resurfacing as researchers are turning back to MDMA as an innovative way to treat trauma-related mental health disorders like post-traumatic stress disorder. Considering the limitations of existing treatments for trauma-related disorders, MDMA’s pharmacological and psychological effects, and the growing body of methodologically sound research on MDMA-assisted psychotherapy, legalizing this type of therapy could provide much-needed relief to people struggling with the severe, painful, lifelong effects of trauma and related psychological disorders.

Keywords: 3, 4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA), MDMA-assisted psychotherapy, trauma, treatment-resistant, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

In Canada, the lifetime prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was once estimated at 9.2%, with the current PTSD rate being 2.4% as of 2008 (Ameringen et al., 2008). In fact, trauma itself has been identified as a public health issue with effects that cascade from the individual through to their relationships, the community, and even society (Magruder et al., 2017). Post-traumatic stress disorder is one of the most common and severe instances of trauma, causing high rates of disability and impaired daily functioning. In the United States, missed days at work due to PTSD resulted in losses in productivity once estimated to be over \$3 billion dollars (Kessler, 2000). There is even some evidence that substance use disorders may also be strongly related to PTSD (McDevitt-Murphy, 2010). Although reasonably effective pharmacotherapies and psychotherapies are being used to currently treat this disease, recent meta-analyses reiterate the need for more effective treatments, especially for



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treatment-resistant populations (Foa et al., 2013; Puetz et al., 2015; Watkins et al., 2018). In response to this critical need, certain researchers are turning to more controversial methods to treat trauma and its related disorders. 3,4-Methylenedioxy methamphetamine (MDMA)-assisted psychotherapy is one of these methods used to treat PTSD and based on the results of studies testing this approach, additional studies examining this new therapeutic intervention should be funded and supported by governments and academic institutions. Considering the shortcomings of current treatments, MDMA's documented physiological and psychological effects, and the results of studies measuring the efficacy of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy, MDMA-assisted psychotherapy is emerging as a revolutionary treatment for trauma that should be legalized for clinical use.

MDMA, or as it is colloquially referred to, "Molly" or "Ecstasy," is classified as a "Schedule 1" substance in Canada and the United States (Ameringen et al., 2008; Danforth et al., 2016). For decades, the compound has been shrouded by the stigma of being a dangerous party drug that can cause neurotoxicity (Danforth et al., 2016). However, when it was originally discovered, it was experimentally used in clinical settings as an adjunct to therapy (Greer & Tolbert, 1986). This approach is now resurfacing as researchers are reconsidering MDMA as an innovative way to treat trauma-related mental health disorders like PTSD (Danforth et al., 2018; Mithoefer et al., 2011; Oehen et al., 2013; Ot'alora G et al., 2018). Alexander Shulgin, a chemist, was the first to report the psychological effects of MDMA as he explored its ability to induce controlled altered states of consciousness (Amoroso, 2015; Greer & Tolbert, 1986). After this, Dr. George Greer and Requa Tolbert were the first people to study MDMA and administer it in a clinical setting (Greer & Tolbert, 1986). Before this, throughout the mid-1970s, MDMA was legally provided by mental health professionals to thousands of people as a complement to therapy. Although positive effects were reported anecdotally, no methodologically sound research was published (Danforth et al., 2016). Amid mounting concern about the abuse potential of MDMA and the ongoing "War on Drugs" sparked by President Nixon in the United States, MDMA was labeled as a "Schedule 1" substance (Cutcliffe, 2014). The studies and literature in the decades to follow largely focused on whether the use of MDMA could result in neurotoxicity and brain damage (Danforth et al., 2016).

Although the stigma of its street reputation touted MDMA as a dangerous, addictive drug, all subjects in Greer and Tolbert (1986) reported some benefit from the experience. The majority of subjects reported a variety of cognitive improvements, including a more open worldview, insight into one's personal patterns as psychological issues, and even an enhanced ability for self-examination. The methodology from Greer and Tolbert (1986) differed from other studies as the dosage was controlled and used in conjunction with psychotherapy. Decades later, studies have begun to build on this model by administering MDMA as an adjunct to psychotherapy for small samples of people suffering from various levels of trauma;

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with results indicating lasting and significant improvement in the subjects (Bouso et al., 2008; Mithoefer, 2011). This begs the question of whether this compound should be legalized to help those suffering from PTSD and other trauma-related diseases. Based on the limitations of current treatments, the indications that MDMA is physiologically and psychologically tailored to treat trauma, and the growing body of sound research demonstrating high efficacy rates for MDMA-assisted psychotherapy, legalizing this innovative intervention could be a positive step in alleviating the suffering of people struggling with severe trauma-related mental health issues.

Currently, PTSD is treated using both pharmacological and psychological approaches. The most common pharmacotherapies used to treat PTSD involve selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and tricyclic antidepressants (Puetz et al., 2015). These are prescribed to treat the resulting anxious and depressive symptoms that normally accompany PTSD (Hutchison & Bressi, 2020). Meta-analyses have found that although these medications do produce a statistically significant change in PTSD symptoms with a modest effect size, some studies in contrast indicate that psychotherapies, such as exposure therapy, had higher efficacy (Foa et al., 2013). While these pharmacotherapies are somewhat effective, reviews of relevant literature still call for more research into pharmacological interventions for treatment-resistant PTSD, particularly those that can address cognitive symptoms, such as avoidance and intrusive, upsetting memories (Foa et al., 2013; Puetz et al., 2015). Therefore, the modest and selective improvement in symptoms with pharmacotherapy, along with the inability to treat the root cause of the disorder, leaves a gap in the PTSD therapeutic milieu that some psychological treatments attempt to address.

The most well-known psychological treatments for PTSD are cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), Eye-Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy, and psychodynamic therapy (Foa et al., 2013). Reviews of accepted psychotherapies to treat PTSD have found that trauma-focused methods like cognitive processing therapy and prolonged exposure therapy are most effective (Paintain & Cassidy, 2018; Steenkamp et al., 2015; Tran & Gregor, 2016). Both of these psychotherapeutic modalities are built around the concept of exposure therapy (Steenkamp et al., 2015). This component of therapy involves provoking and eliminating involuntary, overactive fear responses. This is achieved by guiding patients through re-experiencing the traumatic event in some way within the therapeutic setting, so that they may learn to re-process the feelings, emotions, and triggers associated with the event (Foa et al., 2013; Steenkamp et al., 2015). Re-exposure to the traumatic memory can be evoked in a few different ways; however, regardless of the method, the patient must be emotionally engaged enough to stimulate the activation of their autonomic fear response without overwhelming them with the anxiety of reliving the experience (Foa et al., 2013; Mithoefer et al., 2011). Those who suffer from PTSD are often susceptible to states of emotional numbness

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and extreme anxiety, with very little space between thresholds in either direction. This space has been referred to as the optimal arousal zone or “Window of Tolerance” (Corrigan et al., 2011). However, studies and reviews have shown that the anxiety induced from exposure and the fear of re-traumatization often leads to high rates of dropout and deters clinicians from using it in their practices (Paintain & Cassidy, 2018; Zoellner et al., 2011). This is where MDMA may find its role in the PTSD therapeutic milieu. The emerging research on MDMA is starting to convincingly exhibit how this stigmatized compound can reshape the way we process trauma and the mechanisms by which this works. With an understanding of the shortcomings of pharmacological treatments and the challenges involved with best-practice psychological treatments, analyzing the known physiological and psychological effects of MDMA can illustrate how MDMA will address these limitations.

Studies seeking to unveil the physiological and psychological mechanisms of action of MDMA have begun to outline how MDMA is tailored for use in the treatment of trauma-related disorders like PTSD. MDMA has been found to stimulate increased levels of oxytocin (Hysek et al., 2014), which is a compound that has a rich evolutionary history of being associated with pair-bonding, attachment, and pro-social feelings and behaviour in humans and other mammals (Danforth et al., 2016; MacDonald & MacDonald, 2010). Oxytocin and MDMA are also both associated with reducing activation and stimulation of the part of the brain that is responsible for modulating the brain’s response to fear-inducing stimuli, and our interpretation of negative emotions in others (Gamma, 2000; Hysek et al., 2014; MacDonald & MacDonald, 2010). These studies show how MDMA and its stimulation of oxytocin might address gaps in current treatment plans by helping to create a strong and healthy therapeutic relationship between the client and therapist, while also facilitating intense emotional engagement in the client as they attempt to address traumatic events in the therapeutic context.

The psychological effects of MDMA may be the best indication of how MDMA could be useful in treating trauma. Early studies on MDMA indicated that it increased emotional engagement, self-acceptance and self-confidence, enhanced one’s ability for honest self-reflection and communication, while also increasing feelings of closeness and connection to others (Greer & Tolbert, 1986). Its ability to increase sensory awareness may even be beneficial in allowing the patient to re-experience the traumatic event more authentically during exposure, as such memories often involve vivid sensory information. In another study, participants on MDMA were asked to remember their best and worst memories while functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) was used to detect unique changes in blood flow in the brain (Carhart-Harris et al., 2014). These researchers discovered that the participants found their worst memories more tolerable and their best memories even more pleasurable and vivid (Carhart-Harris et al., 2014). All of these effects are extremely valuable in fostering a strong relationship between the therapist and patient, with the

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potential of widening the optimal arousal zone for inducing exposure and reprocessing traumatic memories. These reported effects of MDMA, along with increased interest in this compound's utility to treat trauma, have spurred researchers to conduct studies that can demonstrate the efficacy of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy as a treatment for PTSD.

The legalization of a drug for clinical purposes is based upon empirically proven data that confirms the safety and efficacy of a particular treatment. Studies addressing these concerns for MDMA-assisted psychotherapy are showing to be very promising, with results that are demonstrating reductions in symptoms that are relatively greater than those reported by meta-analyses for current treatments of PTSD (Mithoefer et al., 2018; Puetz et al., 2015; Tran & Gregor, 2016). One of the first studies to report such findings was a randomized, double-blind, control trial on subjects that had chronic, treatment-resistant PTSD (Mithoefer et al., 2011). After just one session of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy, mean scores on the Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS-IV) for the experimental group were reduced from 79.2 to 37.0, compared to a five-point reduction to 74.1 for the placebo group (Mithoefer et al., 2011). These benefits were strengthened by the second session and sustained until the 2-month follow up, with 10 of the 12 people in the experimental group not even meeting the CAPS-IV threshold for a PTSD diagnosis (Mithoefer et al., 2011). This is quite significant as the participants, on average, had been suffering from PTSD for 19 years and had been resistant to the normal forms of treatment. Additionally, attention, information processing, memory, language, and visuo-spatial abilities were assessed before the experimental sessions and at the 2-month follow up, and there were no signs of any functional cognitive impairment (Mithoefer et al., 2011). To determine the lasting effect of these results, a long-term follow-up of this study was conducted approximately three years after the 2-month follow-up sessions were originally completed (Mithoefer et al., 2013). After the 3-year period, 14 of the 16 formerly treatment-resistant subjects maintained significant decreases in the CAPS-IV score (Mithoefer et al., 2013). This study, although conducted with self-reported measures, also confirmed that there were no persisting functional cognitive impairments, nor were there attempts to find MDMA outside the clinical setting (Mithoefer et al., 2013).

Based on promising safety and efficacy results from the previous studies (Mithoefer et al., 2011; 2013), Phase 2 randomized, controlled, double-blind, dose-response studies trials were granted approval in the United States; a critical stage in new drug legalization (Hutchison & Bressi, 2020). One such study compared groups that received three different doses of MDMA (Ot'alora G et al., 2018). Two active-dose groups each received doses of either 100 mg or 125 mg of MDMA, while one comparator group received a 40 mg dose, which was considered to produce enough drug effect to be an appropriate blind without having a significant effect on the CAPS-IV score (Ot'alora G et al., 2018). Results of the CAPS-IV scores, one month after the second active dose, did appear to be dose-responsive with very small changes

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detected in the 40 mg group compared to the 100 mg and 125 mg active dose groups (Ot'alora G et al., 2018). More significantly, 12 months later, 19 of 25 participants did not meet the CAPS-IV score criteria for a PTSD (Ot'alora G et al., 2018). These findings are important as the participants had been suffering from PTSD for an average of 29.4 years and had been resistant to currently accepted treatments including, but not limited to, CBT, EMDR, and pharmacotherapy. Mithoefer et al. (2018) also published the results of a Phase 2 trial with slightly different dose groups, with the active control being given 30 mg of MDMA and the experimental groups receiving either 75 mg or 125 mg. After the two blinded sessions of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy, seven of seven subjects in the 75 mg group, and eight of 12 in the 125 mg group did not meet the criteria for a diagnosis of PTSD (Mithoefer et al., 2018). One year later, 16 of the 24 who completed follow-up assessments were no longer diagnosable with PTSD (Mithoefer et al., 2018). This prolonged improvement in symptoms again highlights a key finding considering participants were first responders and veterans who had been unresponsive to multiple different treatment combinations (Mithoefer et al., 2018). These results have spurred clinicians and lawmakers alike to see the possible benefits of this therapy for people suffering from severe and chronic bouts of PTSD. This was further exemplified when the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently granted MDMA what is known as Breakthrough Therapy Designation in the United States (Hutchison & Bressi, 2020).

Although the United States's FDA granted MDMA Breakthrough Therapy Designation in 2017, it remains a Schedule 1 illegal substance across North America (Hutchison & Bressi, 2020). Ever since its placement in this category by the United States's Drug Enforcement Agency in 1986, the greatest concerns among scientists and researchers regarding MDMA have been that it can cause neurotoxicity in the brain and had a high potential for abuse (Danforth et al., 2016). MDMA's reputation as a party drug commonly used at raves and in other uncontrolled situations perpetuated these views and informed much of the ongoing literature at the time. Many of the studies that support these notions use animal subjects such as rats and monkeys and employ continuous, binge administration of MDMA over many days or even a couple of weeks (Cadoni et al., 2017; Danforth et al., 2016; Ricaurte et al., 2002). The doses given were also much higher than the equivalent human doses and were sometimes administered intravenously, which greatly alters the nature of the drug effects, and is generally never done in human cases (Amoroso, 2015; Danforth et al., 2016). In fact, the authors of one of the more influential studies claiming to have found evidence for persistent MDMA-related neurotoxic effects in squirrel monkeys retracted the article and its results a few years later, citing that they had mistakenly been administering methamphetamine to the monkeys and not MDMA (Ricaurte et al., 2003).

Another common criticism of legalizing MDMA for any kind of therapeutic use is its abuse potential, with studies upholding this claim often drawing from

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recreational Ecstasy users who reported to health professionals or other substance use disorder (SUD) programs (Cottler et al., 2001; Danforth et al., 2016; Jerome et al., 2013; Parrott, 2013). Sampling from recreational users who reported substance abuse issues introduces several confounding variables, including varying and extreme dosages, multiple substance use or “stacking,” and dangerous environmental conditions (Danforth et al., 2016). On the contrary, of all participants in the studies that used MDMA as a clinical adjunct to psychotherapy, only three reported MDMA use after the experimental sessions and each only one time (Mithoefer et al., 2018, 2013; Oehen et al., 2013; Ot’alora G et al., 2018). One of these studies followed up at 2-, 6-, and 12-month intervals with urine drug tests and confirmed that no participants sought out and used MDMA after the subject treatment (Oehen et al., 2013). In some reports of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy and its effects, subjects reported a reduced desire for other substances like alcohol, marijuana, or coffee (Bouso et al., 2008; Greer & Tolbert, 1986). Considering its ability to address trauma, MDMA-assisted psychotherapy has actually been considered to treat the root causes of substance abuse (Jerome et al., 2013). Regardless—bearing in mind the relatively mild to moderate abuse liability for MDMA, its availability as a street drug, and the high rate at which PTSD and SUD comorbidly occur—it should only be administered to those who are not currently struggling with substance use issues (Hutchison & Bressi, 2020). Accordingly, all studies testing the effectiveness of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy took this into consideration, excluding any subjects who had active substance abuse issues within 60 days of the treatments (Hutchison & Bressi, 2020). Ot’alora G et al. (2018) postulated that the process of remembering and reflecting on traumatic events in one’s past creates an experience that is not completely devoid of unpleasant feelings like anxiety, sadness, or depression, which in turn, may reduce the likelihood of subjects seeking MDMA outside of the clinical setting (Ot’alora G et al., 2018).

For decades MDMA was relegated to the peripheries of society as a party drug thought to kill brain cells and to be severely addictive. As such, the potential therapeutic benefits sensed by a few forward-thinking scientists when MDMA was first discovered were stifled by a stigma that persists to this day. However, over time, studies addressing these concerns have shown that this socially conditioned fear was based on information with questionable validity (Danforth et al., 2018). Lately, more researchers are interested in conducting methodologically sound experiments that are aimed at shedding light on the way MDMA works in the body and mind (Bedi et al., 2009; Carhart-Harris et al., 2014; Hysek et al., 2014; Kuypers et al., 2017). Furthermore, results of studies exploring the power of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy to treat PTSD are proving so efficacious that it now has Breakthrough Therapy status in the United States (Hutchison & Bressi, 2020). Phase 3 trials attempting to replicate benefits on a larger scale are in the process of being completed, which is a critical step in new therapeutic drug discovery (Hutchison & Bressi, 2020). If these trials are

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successful, they will provide a strong case for the legalization of this therapy for PTSD. MDMA is a compound that, when applied appropriately, has the potential to dramatically help many people struggling with the severe, painful, lifelong effects of trauma and related psychological disorders. Legalizing MDMA as an adjunct to psychotherapy would be the first revolutionary step in learning more about how this misunderstood compound could be applied to reduce the suffering of so many.

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How Can We Improve Canada's Public Health System?

This paper aims to explore the issues within the Canadian public health system and suggest effective policy changes to address them. It will focus primarily on inequality and various shortcomings of the healthcare system that create and exacerbate health disparities. Through reviewing scholarly articles about the Canadian healthcare system, I found that it is built mainly for emergency physical care, but it does not efficiently treat chronic diseases or provide less urgent services such as dental care, nor does it consider the social determinants of health (SDOH). Much of the care citizens do receive is unnecessary or ineffective, and many people experience difficulty accessing care to begin with, especially rural and Indigenous Canadians. To improve Canada's public health system, lawmakers should implement policies that focus on increasing the effectiveness of spending, improving the comprehensiveness of care, and including SDOH to improve health equity, especially for Indigenous Canadians. I investigated strategies implemented in Canadian, foreign, and small-scale health systems to determine which methods work best to accomplish these goals. This is increasingly important as the prevalence of chronic diseases rises, especially in racialized and marginalized communities, and as the racial prejudices built into Canada's socioeconomic system come to light in the current health and sociopolitical climate.

Keywords: healthcare, public health, public policy, health inequity, Indigenous health, social determinants of health

INTRODUCTION

Canada's universal health care system is a major source of pride for Canadians because of its implications for the equality of our society. The primary aim of the Canada Health Act upon its implementation in 1984 is "to protect, promote and restore the physical and mental well-being of residents of Canada and to facilitate reasonable access to health services without financial or other barriers" (Government of Canada, 2020, para. 2). However, as evidenced by extensive research, Canada's healthcare system is not fully achieving this objective, and it often ranks poorly



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compared to other countries in the developed world (Dhalla & Tepper, 2018). Notably, the system focuses on emergency biomedical care but does not sufficiently address the social determinants of health (SDOH), which are “the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age” that influence health outcomes, including socioeconomic, cultural, political and environmental circumstances and the broader systems that shape them (Magnan, 2017, para. 1). For several marginalized groups, especially rural and Indigenous Canadians, their demographic characteristics and geographic location are barriers to accessing health and healthcare (Public Health Agency of Canada [PHAC], 2018). The Canadian healthcare system is rife with inefficiencies and does not sufficiently provide care for chronic and mental illnesses. Significant changes are necessary to make the system truly universal—to accomplish equitable access to high-quality healthcare for all Canadians (Dhalla & Tepper, 2018). This paper will analyze the available literature to evaluate issues within the Canadian healthcare system—primarily those that exacerbate health inequalities—and suggest possible policy-based solutions based on strategies utilized in other health systems. This is of particular importance now, as the COVID-19 pandemic strains Canada's health system and intensifies socioeconomic-based health disparities.

HEALTH INEQUITIES

The universal healthcare system was intended to remove socioeconomic barriers to accessing healthcare—providing equal access for all—but several marginalized communities still face obstacles. Because Canada's healthcare system is not truly comprehensive, and systemic and interpersonal racism still exist, health inequities due to race, gender and socioeconomic status are stark (PHAC, 2018). Recent immigrants often struggle with language barriers, unfamiliarity with the health system, and discrimination, which results in a distrust of healthcare professionals (Browne, n.d.). Implicit bias against people of colour, especially Indigenous people, women, and LGBTQ+ people is also prevalent among healthcare professionals. This bias is correlated with poorer healthcare, therefore worsening health disparities (FitzGerald & Hurst, 2017). Additionally, specialized health services are often few and far between in rural and remote areas. Residents of these areas thus have to travel for hours to access these services. This travel is costly and stressful, especially due to separation from friends and family (Browne, n.d.). These disparities in access to healthcare are further exacerbated by the system's disregard for the SDOH. To address systemic bias, the health and social service sectors should be integrated. This would allow for the consideration of SDOH beyond what the health services system is capable of on its own (Magnan, 2017). Health disparities should be routinely monitored with corrective policies being enacted based on the findings. To address interpersonal bias, awareness of health disparities could be increased through creating training opportunities for health professionals, improving curricula for

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healthcare students, and providing awareness programs for the general public (PHAC, 2018).

INDIGENOUS CANADIANS

Indigenous Canadians are a particularly disadvantaged group. They have traditionally “viewed health in a balanced and holistic way, with connections between spiritual, emotional, mental and physical dimensions,” but colonization destabilized their culture and put them at a drastic disadvantage (PHAC, 2018, p. 7). The process of colonization involves “cultural genocide, the spread of deadly diseases, the banning of Indigenous languages, forced assimilation, and the illegalization of social, cultural, and spiritual practices” (Mitchell et al., 2019, p. 78). In Canada, colonization also involved the alienation of Indigenous people through forced displacement from their traditional territories and the removal of Indigenous children from their families and their culture, first to Indian Residential Schools—in which children were abused and Indigenous culture and language were forbidden—and then through the Child Welfare System (Phillips-Beck et al., 2020). These practices severed Indigenous people from their spiritual, cultural, and physical connections to their land and traditional way of life (Ayo, 2012).

These factors have negatively impacted the SDOH of Indigenous people, including education, income, and food security (Mitchell et al., 2019). As a result, when compared to the overall Canadian population, Indigenous people have worse health outcomes including a higher prevalence of various physical and mental illnesses and a significantly lower life expectancy (Phillips-Beck et al., 2020). Many Indigenous communities currently “live in situations comparable to third world conditions,” including lack of access to adequate water and sanitation, despite being citizens of a developed country (Mitchell et al., 2019, p. 76). The colonization of Indigenous people has also led to systemic social exclusion and racial discrimination against them that persists to this day. Indigenous people are often faced with interpersonal racism when they do try to access healthcare. The case of Brian Sinclair, an Indigenous man who died in a hospital waiting room because the staff assumed he was drunk, is an extreme example of the consequences anti-Indigenous racism can have (Blackstock, 2012).

The Canadian government has attempted to lessen the health disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians by implementing Indigenous-specific health programs. The Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program was created to provide health care for Indigenous people, but it does not cover non-status or Métis people (Blackstock, 2012). Jordan's Principle was created to provide necessary health services to Indigenous children before the resolution of jurisdictional disputes between federal and provincial governments over which party should cover the costs (Blackstock, 2012). It was named after Jordan River Anderson, a 5-year-old Indigenous boy who died in hospital after waiting over two years for the federal and

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Manitoba governments to decide who would pay for his at-home care. The Principle is incapable of achieving its purpose, however, because the program has strict requirements for eligibility that very few cases meet. More children like Jordan continue to be denied care because the federal government states that Jordan's Principle is "procedural and nonbinding and does not create a right" (Blackstock, 2012, p. 370). These policies should be corrected to ensure that healthcare is equitable in access and quality for all Canadians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike. To reduce interpersonal and systemic racism against Indigenous people, more healthcare delivery programs that are led by, and/or specialized for, Indigenous people should be implemented. Awareness programs should also be created to inform the general public about Indigenous culture and anti-Indigenous racism, and health service providers should be trained on how to identify and counteract their implicit bias (Mitchell et al., 2019).

NEOLIBERAL AND BIOMEDICAL APPROACH TO HEALTH

In contrast to the Indigenous holistic approach to health, the Canadian healthcare system takes a neoliberal, biomedical approach (Mundel & Chapman, 2010). Neoliberalism views health as a matter of individual responsibility (and, thus, poor health as a personal failure rather than a social issue), and biomedicine treats health at the biological level within the context of a physician-patient relationship. Combined, these approaches neglect the underlying SDOH that shape population health, and thus fail to make meaningful improvements (Horton, 2020). In contrast, health promotion from a holistic lens conceptualizes health, focuses on prevention, and calls for the improvement of social and economic conditions. As a result, this approach "holds greater potential for promoting Aboriginal health than relying solely on biomedicine" (Ayo, 2012, p. 99). However, most attempts to implement health promotion frameworks, such as the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, have been overridden by an individualistic approach. For example, rather than urging investment in the determinants of good health such as education and employment, most highly endorsed Canadian health promotion frameworks "suggest that all will be well if individuals simply exercised 30 minutes a day and ate more fruits and vegetables" (Ayo, 2012, p. 101).

This strategy deepens inequalities, which worsen population health. This has been illustrated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has most adversely affected marginalized groups including women, people of colour, and poor people (Horton, 2020). For example, women, immigrants, and racialized groups (especially Black and Filipino people) disproportionately work in occupations such as nursing and meat processing that increase COVID-19 exposure and infection risk. Consequently, in Toronto, racialized groups constitute over 80% of all COVID-19 infections (PHAC, 2020). Indigenous communities are also particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 due to "exacerbating conditions, such as limited access to clean water, lack of health

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professionals/services, a high prevalence of chronic diseases and crowded living conditions” (PHAC, 2020, p. 12). Although the PHAC acknowledges these inequities (and the role of SDOH and Canada’s history of colonization and systemic racism in creating them), most of Canada’s COVID-19 control efforts have been focused on biomedical approaches (PHAC, 2020). However, as stated by Horton (2020), the vulnerability of minorities and poorly paid workers indicates “that no matter how effective a treatment or protective a vaccine, the pursuit of a purely biomedical solution to COVID-19 will fail. Unless governments devise policies and programmes to reverse profound disparities, our societies will never be truly COVID-19 secure” (p. 874).

INSUFFICIENT HEALTHCARE COVERAGE

As a result of Canada’s neoliberal and biomedical approach to healthcare, the health system is not adequately comprehensive. While hospital and physician expenses are covered, many other health services that are crucial for overall well-being must be paid for by private insurance or out-of-pocket. This makes services such as out-of-hospital pharmaceuticals, dental, and eye care unattainable for low-income Canadians who do not have employer-provided insurance and cannot afford to pay out-of-pocket expenses. Consequently, these patients often go without essential treatments (Dhalla & Tepper, 2018). This is a widespread issue; according to a 2016 Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) study, nearly one-third of Canadian primary care doctors thought their patients often experienced difficulty paying for medications or other out-of-pocket costs (CIHR, 2016). This can cause their health issues to persist or worsen, thus increasing costs to the public health system due to repeated doctor or hospital visits. Insufficient coverage also exacerbates the health inequity between races and genders, because women and people of colour are significantly more likely to be of a lower socioeconomic class (PHAC, 2018).

The Canadian healthcare system also focuses on treating illnesses rather than preventing them and facilitating holistic health. To be truly comprehensive, a health system should invest heavily in preventive health measures through an emphasis on primary health care. Among developed countries, health systems centred around primary care have better health outcomes, lower expenditure, and greater patient satisfaction. Leslie et al. (2016) found that the integration of family-focused preventive programs into primary healthcare settings can reduce several negative behavioural health outcomes and produce widespread public health improvements. These interventions also result in “more economic benefits to society than they cost, because of their effects in preventing future behavioural health problems including depression, violence, crime, and drug abuse” (Leslie et al., 2016, p. 107). Primary care should be reformed to be more team-based, with a group of healthcare professionals—for example, physicians, social workers, nutritionists, and counsellors—working together in one location to accomplish holistic patient health.

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Team-based practices increase the accountability of providers and prevent burnout by lessening the workload of each provider. Interdisciplinary healthcare teams have been shown to enhance overall patient health and reduce readmission rates (The Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement, 2017). The shift to primary care may also correct the issue of physician-dominated healthcare provision (Jacobson, 2012). Canada has also failed to implement programmes and policies that incorporate a health promotion approach and address the SDOH. A more comprehensive healthcare system would represent more effective and culturally appropriate care for all Canadians, especially Indigenous people (Phillips-Beck et al., 2020).

PROBLEMATIC PHYSICIAN PAYMENT SYSTEM

The fee-for-service (FFS) model is used to pay doctors in Canada. Under this model, the amount of payment is determined by the number and complexity of treatments. As a result, FFS incentivizes doctors to perform more procedures—especially those that incur high fees—and to increase the frequency of consultations, even when this is unnecessary (Hewak & Kovacs-Litman, 2015). Additionally, to cycle through patients quickly and garner additional visits, FFS doctors often restrict patients to mention only one issue per visit. This practice is unsuitable for the many patients who have chronic or complex health issues, and forces them to determine which of their symptoms is most urgent without the knowledge needed to do so. In an extreme case, a patient died of a heart attack one week after a doctor dismissed her concerns about chest pain because she had already brought up a different issue (Adhopia, 2019). The Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons of both Manitoba and British Columbia have discouraged this policy since 2012 and 2016, respectively, but the federal government needs to impose a stricter ban (Adhopia, 2019). The physician remuneration model should be changed to a fixed payment scheme such as capitation or salary. Doctors paid by capitation are motivated to contain resource use and expenses; thus encouraging them to provide effective disease prevention and treatment so that fewer patient visits are necessary. The salary system may not be ideal for most doctors, but it is valuable for certain cases such as rural doctors who have a small patient base. Doctors paid by salary have no deterrent to investing more time and resources into patients that require it, so they are three times more likely to accept complex enrollees (such as Indigenous, poor, mentally ill and/or homeless people) compared to doctors paid using FFS (Hewak & Kovacs-Litman, 2015). As a result, payment by salary would help to reduce socioeconomic-based health disparities.

CONCLUSION

As stated in a 2018 Canadian Medical Association Journal article, high-quality healthcare is “safe, timely, effective, efficient, equitable and patient-centred” (Dhalla & Tepper, 2018, p. 67). All of these factors need to be improved in the Canadian healthcare system. Despite being generally appreciated by residents, the Canadian

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public health system is far from ideal. Many issues today stem from the flawed history of Canada's health system, including the effects of colonialism and neoliberalism that continue to undermine the quality of healthcare practices as Canada tries to operate in a global market dominated by these forces. These factors have created and exacerbated health disparities, which have been further intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, as evidenced by the differential rates of infection between racial groups (PHAC, 2020). In order to achieve the tenets of good healthcare proposed by the Canada Health Act, policies should be implemented to correct the numerous shortcomings in comprehensiveness, accessibility, and effectiveness. The Canadian government should also ensure that tax dollars are used as effectively as possible, that healthcare is equally accessible for all citizens, and that healthcare is fully comprehensive. In particular, the SDOH need to be considered in the healthcare system, and the harmful policies that put Indigenous people at a disadvantage must be reformed. This can be achieved by implementing a health promotion approach that prioritizes primary and preventative health and addresses the SDOH and socioeconomic disparities. The successful implementation of these changes would result in a health system that more efficiently and equitably serves its population, resulting in a healthier and happier Canada.

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Colonialism and the Failure of Retribution in the Canadian Justice System: How to Support Indigenous Offenders

Analyses and policy recommendations to the Correctional Service of Canada

I am proposing intersectional policy solutions that favour a restorative justice approach over the retributive approach that currently exists in the Canadian justice system to ensure that Indigenous inmates' needs are adequately met. I introduce recommendations for the Canadian penitentiary system to address significant cases of mistreatment against Indigenous inmates; declining physical and mental health rates; and overall losses of cultural identity that Indigenous inmates experience. My objectives address: the exploitation of solitary confinement in prisons; the disproportionate lack of support available to Indigenous offenders compared to non-Indigenous offenders; and the cycle of colonialism that Indigenous prisoners experience from ineffective criminal justice policies. The goal of these suggestions is to combat the intergenerational trauma from residential schools and other vestiges of colonialism that continues in Canadian prisons. Secondary data were analyzed through two research strategies: 1) qualitative analyses of academic journals, Canadian laws, comparable cases from New Zealand's prison system, and previous cases of mistreatment and Indigenous inmates' deaths; and 2) quantitative analyses on statistics of Indigenous inmates in Canada. The findings support promoting reintegration with Indigenous communities and implementing mental health, educational, and cultural workshops to lower mental health concerns like suicide and the possibility of recidivism. Thus, the proposed policy solutions challenge the use of retribution and encourage rehabilitation to improve Indigenous offenders' mental and physical health, educational background, and cultural identity.

Keywords: Indigenous rights, Canadian Justice System, solitary confinement, reintegration, retribution, restorative justice, residential school legacy, colonialism, systemic racism



INTRODUCTION

I begin this article by stating that I am a second-generation South Korean Canadian immigrant woman who is non-Indigenous. I start this paper with respect to Indigenous peoples and the acknowledgement that Canada is made up of broken treaties and stolen lands from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. My research discusses horrifying colonial atrocities like residential schools that continue to propagate a culture of systemic racism in the Canadian correctional system today. I recognize that the land that I reside on consists of the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Anishinabewaki, Huron-Wendat, and the Haudenosaunee, who are its original caretakers. You may be reading this article online from a different location and I encourage you to learn more about the Indigenous territories and histories in your area.

Kinew James was an Indigenous woman who died at the age of 35 from a heart attack that could have been medically treated if prison guards had not ignored her requests for medical assistance during the hour in which she passed away (Razack, 2014). Her death exposes flaws in the Canadian Justice System and how there must be appropriate changes made to ensure that Indigenous lives are led with dignity in prisons. I write this paper in honour of her life and the countless other neglected Indigenous offenders who will eventually return to society. In this forum, I recommend policy amendments and changes to provide more programs to improve Indigenous inmates' mental health and connections to their communities. I suggest cultural workshops led by Indigenous leaders and mental health initiatives led by external workers such as psychiatrists, psychologists, and other mental health professionals. Recommendations for changes to the "Structured Intervention Unit" (SIU) are explained below and I advocate for the creation of a new healing lodge for women only to lower recidivism rates, reduce financial constraints from the current prison model, and encourage rehabilitation for Indigenous offenders.

BACKGROUND: COLONIALISM AND RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS IN CANADA

Before analyzing my policy recommendations, we must acknowledge the colonial structure that has been imposed on Indigenous peoples in Canada. The country's colonial policy toward Indigenous peoples has been one of forced inculcation that once used residential schools to "attempt to destroy Aboriginal cultures and languages and to assimilate Aboriginal peoples so that they no longer existed as distinct peoples" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 153). Physical force, religion, and laws were used to disengage Indigenous peoples' languages and cultural practices from the 1880s to the late 1990s (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRCC) reveals that many survivors have coped with their trauma through violence and illicit activities, which has ruined thousands of Indigenous families and continues to affect Indigenous communities today.

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Indigenous people who have moved from reserves to urban areas are often subject to “crime, poor education, low income, and single parenting” at a higher rate than the Canadian average because of intergenerational abuse and structural inequalities (Balfour, 2013, p. 87). For this reason, the TRCC is the start of conversations about change, but not the end.

Moving from the past to the present, we witness the oppressive relationship between the Canadian Justice System (CJS) and Indigenous communities evolve. These individual and collective Indigenous experiences can be characterized as “systemic racism,” which in the North American Indigenous context is when policies and institutions actively deny Indigenous people access to rights and resources (Smedley, 1999). Systemic racism contributes to the false belief that people, policies, and institutions are not racist because inequalities are woven into society’s fabric. In the prison context, Indigenous offenders are physically separated from their cultures; Indigenous spiritualities, customs, and languages are neither taught nor encouraged, which affirms the emotional and social divorce that Indigenous offenders endure. The over-representation of Indigenous adults in prisons suggests that they are excessively scrutinized by law enforcement (Monture, 2006). The rate of Indigenous incarceration in federal prisons has escalated at a shocking rate in recent years. According to the government of Canada, “the Indigenous inmate population has increased by 43% whereas the non-Indigenous inmate population has increased by 13%” (Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2020). To demonstrate further, from 2006-2017, there was an 18% increase of Indigenous adults in federal correctional services despite representing only “4.1% of the Canadian population” (Malakieh, 2018), a clear indication of systemic racism.

INTERSECTIONALITY AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

To provide more context to my policy recommendations and the current landscape for offenders, it must first be noted that the CJS officially adopts a retributive discourse, which means that it operates through punitive measures focusing on sentences that are intended to be proportionate to the offences committed (*R v. M*, 1996).¹ Restorative approaches, on the other hand, are superior because they address root causes and factors of criminalization, which retribution does not. The term “intersectionality,” coined by Kimberle Crenshaw (1991), challenges one-dimensional perspectives of oppression in a critical-analysis framework by focusing on factors like age, race, gender, and class together and the inequities tied to these factors. I use an intersectional method to address structural inequalities like class

¹ The *R v. Man* case (1996) solidifies that the CJS acknowledges that retribution is an important principle in sentencing (line 77). The Canadian Sentencing Commission in its 1987 Report on Sentencing Reform also endorsed retribution as a legitimate and relevant consideration in the sentencing process (line 78), so the CJS has explicitly stated and acknowledged that retribution is a legitimate framework that has been used from 1996 to the present.

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disparity, the educational gap, and high rate of poverty that Indigenous people face as a way forward in the process of mending the effects of colonialism. Residential schools in particular not only marred individuals and Indigenous communities' identities, but also how other people and institutions perceive them. Without an intersectional lens, important factors like age, race, gender, and class are disregarded. It is crucial that various factors be acknowledged in an effort to lower rates of recidivism and address root causes of criminality.

To demonstrate an intersection between race, class, and health in prisons: Indigenous offenders generally exhibit elevated rates of physical and mental health problems stemming from intergenerational abuse, and they often lack formal education; moreover, the distinction between “criminals” and “victims” is untenable because both identities converge in prisons (Chan and Chunn, 2014). A restorative approach attempts to address root causes of harm, which is why an intersectional perspective is employed as multiple factors are taken into consideration. Important perspectives need to be examined together, especially when it comes to why an Indigenous person may have committed a crime since intergenerational trauma and other complicated histories may influence an individual to commit crime.² Damages to the perpetrator, the victim(s), and responsive communities emphasize that an intersectional method must be taken so that appropriate reparations may be made.

My proposed policy solutions incorporate a restorative justice approach by providing social support for both the offender and the larger community to which the individual will return (Braithwaite, 1996). The current retributive system is not functioning because as of 2017, Indigenous youth represented over 45% of the total youth population in prisons, despite comprising less than 10% of the total Canadian youth population (Malakieh, 2018). The disproportionate rate of Indigenous youth in prisons insists that the Canadian criminal justice system needs to change. Specifically, the fact that Indigenous youth—in addition to Indigenous adults—are overrepresented in prisons demonstrates that Indigenous communities are broken apart from a young age, a trend that continues into adulthood. This rate of criminalization exposes that both Indigenous youth and adults are targeted. A survey conducted by the Indigenous Justice Inquiry of Manitoba (2001) revealed that “61% of indigenous [sic] people feel like they are not being treated fairly in prisons.”³ Being sentenced to prison is a punishment; however, the lack of programs focusing on improving offenders' skills puts those who have served their time at a further disadvantage upon their release. Offenders' time could be productive through workshops and educational classes to diminish chances of reoffending and for

² The case *R v. Gladue* (1999) sets out specific criteria on sentencing principles for judges to consider Indigenous people's background and history because of colonial challenges.

³ The reason why I have added “[sic]” to this quotation is to show respect to Indigeneity without removing the value of the original researcher's quote and statistic.

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individuals to gain new, transferrable skills. Restorative justice practices were implemented in Nova Scotia in 1997. This approach prescribes that victims, offenders, and community members meet to create an agreement on how the offender will make reparations. This initiative partners the community and the government together, relieving citizens' concerns over what restorative justice is, and has ultimately garnered positive responses in that province (Elliott, 2011).

FIRST INITIATIVE: CULTURAL AND MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOPS AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

I am proposing a network of cultural workshops to connect Indigenous offenders with different cultural traditions, practices, languages, religions, healing practices, and ceremonies. This is to ensure that there are opportunities for Indigeneity to be a part of everyday life in prisons and these initiatives would be led by Indigenous leaders so that a non-colonial perspective might be present. I am endorsing mental health workshops in an effort to reduce mental health-related tragedies such as suicide. Through a restorative justice lens, these workshops would promote healing and growth. Lastly, I am putting forward the vocational training workshops and classes to encourage Indigenous offenders to pursue higher education or different career paths when upon release or parole. All these initiatives are committed to connecting Indigenous offenders with Indigenous communities and to encourage a lifestyle that would replicate, to the extent possible, how one might live outside of prison.

1. In my first initiative, mental health workshops will be implemented to respond to the needs of Indigenous offenders. They will be led by community leaders, trained psychiatrists, psychologists, and other mental health professionals. The workshops will focus on identity-building, mental health awareness, and legal methods to find employment and housing, and will be held Monday to Friday during the daytime to ensure that inmates adhere to a similar work schedule to those outside prison in preparation for release or parole. There will be completion certificates awarded to Indigenous offenders who willingly participate in and complete the workshops.
2. It will be recommended that Indigenous offenders attend vocational training workshops and classes and that those who have not completed their high school education obtain their Adult Basic Education (ABE)⁴ or complete a certain number of skills-oriented courses.
3. There will be new cultural workshops implemented in Canadian prisons and healing lodges led by community leaders and Elders. Guards and officers will not be leading these workshops, but rather Indigenous leaders, community members, Elders, and former Indigenous offenders. Cultural traditions, practices,

⁴ The ABE is the Correctional Service of Canada's educational program in prisons that would be equivalent to grades 1 to 12 education levels.

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languages, religions, and healing practices will be encouraged in the cultural workshops. Indigenous offenders will engage in conversations about different Indigenous identities and cultures. The curriculum in these cultural workshops will not be altered or otherwise influenced by guards or officers. The National Aboriginal Advisory Committee (NAAC) will oversee these workshops by providing input, updates, and edits to the curriculum where necessary.

Comparison to New Zealand's mental health initiatives

In this and following sections, I will cite some analogous examples from New Zealand's correctional system and its relationship with the island nation's Māori population that reveal promising findings supporting the mentioned mental health initiatives that I outline above. Tamatea and Brown (2016) provide anecdotes where Māori inmates sought help from professional psychiatrists that received positive results in New Zealand, such as that of an inmate identified as "Mr. D." Mr. D was a violent offender who served ten years in prison and attended group therapy, but who, after having displayed aggression towards his peers, was recommended individual therapy (2016, p. 178). After behavioural improvement had been identified with his therapist, Mr. D was invited to rejoin group therapy to participate in positive Māori culture experiences. In a Canadian context, there should be similar results because there would be Indigenous leaders, psychiatrists, psychologists, community leaders, and non-profit organizations leading these mental health workshops rather than prison officers. The suggested group workshops and individual therapy sessions will follow a similar format to the New Zealand initiative which addresses underlying mental health concerns. My policy solution advances further by connecting offenders with community members and leaders in preparation for the reintegration process in hopes of eliminating stigmatization. From 2009 to 2016, over 70% of inmates who died from unnatural deaths like suicide or murder had a history of substance abuse issues or mental health disorders (Correctional Service Canada, 2017). Consequently, these concerning factors highlight the need for mental health providers, wellness programs, and mental health workshops to actively check in with inmates.

Cultural advocacy in prisons

Cultural workshops for Indigenous people are significant because Bill C-262 (2018) seeks to ensure that "the laws of Canada must be in harmony with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*," which proclaims "a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous [sic] peoples of the world" (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007). Article 8 of Bill C-262 makes it clear that there should be no "force of assimilation or destruction of Indigenous peoples and individuals and their culture" (2018). Despite these imperatives, current Canadian prisons neglect to teach and encourage the use of Indigenous cultural practices, languages, and

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religions, thereby creating an environment of forced assimilation and cultural destruction. Cultural workshops would provide offenders the opportunity to learn about their communities' histories, cultures, and spiritual beliefs through the lens of Indigenous leaders rather than the prevailing "Canadian perspective." The goals of these cultural programs are threefold: to provide offenders with knowledge and awareness of their cultural histories, with the opportunity to practice cultural traditions in prisons, and with tools that encourage positive identity building.

In the section that follows, I review New Zealand's advocacy for cultural identity in prisons and the need for cultural workshops. Māori lawyer Moana Jackson states, "you can't look at a young Māori man in prison and divorce him from the history of what has happened to our people," which view could be extended to Indigenous offenders in Canada (Manhire, 2015). An interesting parallel is how there are high rates of over-representation of Indigenous inmates in Canadian prisons like Māori inmates in New Zealand. Tamatea and Brown (2016) emphasize the importance of adapting treatment programmes for the benefit of Māori prisoners because "culture is an important responsibility issue" (p. 173). By ignoring significant Indigenous values there are consequences that alienate an offender further from their community (Tamatea & Brown, 2016). Disregarding practices that Indigenous offenders consider fundamental is harmful to their identity: this leads to hatred towards the criminal justice system, hatred towards their own cultures or communities, increased mental health issues, and ultimately recidivism. Encouraging the use of cultural programs and traditional and modern strategies acknowledges individuals' identities and affiliations to their respective communities. Low-risk offenders will eventually return to society, so why ignore their needs? By encouraging the use of cultural workshops, Canadian prisons would advocate for Indigenous cultural practices, languages, and religions. The suggestion of cultural workshops will actively encourage Indigenous inmates to combat assimilation in adherence to Bill C-262. When an Indigenous person is processed through the criminal justice system, they are ostracized from their friends, family, and community; cultural workshops would allow for Indigenous offenders to have the opportunity to practice their cultural traditions to help them retain their connection to these important institutions (Tamatea & Brown, 2016, p. 174).

SECOND INITIATIVE: AMENDMENT TO BILL C-83: REMOVAL OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE "STRUCTURED INTERVENTION UNIT" FOR INDIGENOUS OFFENDERS

Bill C-83 amends the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* by removing solitary confinement and replacing it with the SIU. Changes include meaningful time spent outside of the unit and the elimination of using segregation for disciplinary reasons. Bill C-83, clause 10 defines the SIU as a separate environment for an inmate who is removed from the larger inmate population "due to security or other reasons," in which the inmate is provided with opportunities to have contact with others,

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“participate in programs and have access to services” (2019). The SIU system is a replacement for solitary confinement but there are questions surrounding what the difference between the SIU and solitary confinement is.

The following revisions I propose are under the Policing, Justice and Emergencies Department with specific changes to the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC). The policy recommendations are to encourage the use of activities and mental health initiatives so that Indigenous offenders socialize and learn despite being in the SIU. The changes listed below are to ensure that Indigenous individuals’ mental health and wellness are prioritized.

1. The first revision is for Indigenous inmates who are in the SIU. The time spent outside the unit should be at a minimum of six hours to participate in activities such as mental health initiative programs, cultural workshops led by an Elder or community leader, appointments to see an Elder, and visitations from family or friends.
2. The individual in an SIU must meet with either a registered psychiatrist, a member from the Indigenous wellness committee, the Indigenous Liaison Officer, or an Elder if the offender has been in the SIU for more than two weeks. Indigenous offenders must see a therapist and an Elder at least once a day, especially if they have a history of mental health issues, abuse, or trauma. If it is not the offender’s first time in the structured intervention unit then the inmate must see any of the recommended officials listed regularly.

Grounds and factors

In this revision, the Commissioner of the prison, the Indigenous wellness committee, and the Indigenous Liaison Officer will have the grounds to determine if an Indigenous inmate should remain in an SIU. There must be substantial evidence that the inmate who would be reintegrating in the general prison population would jeopardize the physical or psychological safety of other inmates who participate in cultural practice workshops, cultural ceremonies, mental health programs, or educational workshops in the penitentiary.

Solitary Confinement and the “Structured Intervention Unit”

The decision to remove solitary confinement came about as a result of several poignant cases that changed Canadian history. First, that of Adam Capay, a 23-year-old First Nations man who spent four years in solitary confinement without trial. Paul Dubé’s 2017 Ombudsman report revealed that Capay’s case was completely mismanaged all because there was missing paperwork (White, Friesen, and Morrow, 2018). Typically, the cases of inmates who are in solitary confinement are reviewed periodically, so either he was completely forgotten about, or he was denied leaving solitary confinement every time his case was up for review. It is unclear which seems

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to be the case but either decision is concerning. The fact that Capay was in solitary confinement for such an extended period is disturbing; segregation has permanent psychological and social affects which insists upon the need for changes to the SIU. Second, the tragic case of Ashley Smith, who, having been held in solitary confinement for a total of 1,047 days, strangled herself at the age of 19 while on suicide watch. Smith had experienced humiliating treatment from guards, including being assaulted, pepper-sprayed, and denied toilet paper or feminine products, before taking her own life (White, et al., 2018). Her case was a catalyst for change insofar as an inquest and adjustments to correctional services were implemented (Ware et al., 2014, p. 168). Third, the case of Kinew James, mentioned above, who died of a heart attack despite her having used the distress call button for requests for help (Razack, 2014, p. 16). James had spent most of her sentence in solitary confinement, which argues that her mental health needs were ignored. Alarming, all three victims experienced systemic violence ranging from the insufficient support programs to abusive treatment from guards, and in the cases of Ashley Smith and Kinew James, it led to their deaths.

In the second section of the policy proposal above, I suggest mandatory sessions with a psychiatrist and Elder, which increases the focus on mental health and wellbeing. A concern is that prisons have become a dumping ground for Indigenous inmates who have mental illnesses because they do not have access to mental health resources. Using solitary confinement as a disciplinary measure is a temporary fix, but with devastating long-term social and psychological ramifications. The original Bill C-83 did not detail the duration one would be held in the SIU; therefore, it was left to the officer's discretion, which is always subjective, and leaves open the likelihood of some form of abuse. This intersection between law and public health aims to protect the psychological health and Indigenous inmates' rights.

THIRD INITIATIVE: NEW HEALING LODGE FOR MINIMUM SECURITY INDIGENOUS WOMEN

The suggestion for a new healing lodge for minimum security Indigenous women follows a rehabilitative approach. Due to high rates of addiction and culturally irrelevant programs that exist, Indigenous women are susceptible to poverty and addiction while incarcerated and on release (Pollack, 2009, p. 118). A proposed healing lodge would address both key factors to criminality and root causes such as trauma or abuse. Providing Indigenous women access to seek counselling and social support is a direct response to the increasing incarceration rates, financial constraints in the prison industry, and the high rates of mental health issues that are exacerbated in a traditional prison.

1. After discussing with directors from CSC, NAAC, and directors from existing healing lodges in Ontario, there will be a decision made either to turn one of the

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existing healing lodges, the Sagashtawao Healing Lodge, into a healing lodge for female Indigenous offenders or to build a new healing lodge. After a decision is made, necessary renovations should be prepared based on financial factors and the maximum occupancy number.

2. The proposed healing lodge will encourage the use of ceremonial objects, traditional medicines, and traditional healing practices including a sweat lodge.
3. There will be an appointed Elder or Spiritual Advisor decided by the CSC and NAAC to help provide guidance and healing strategies for women at the new healing lodge. The lodge will be run by CSC in cooperation with an Indigenous community.

By proposing a new healing lodge, the aim is to provide a diversion option for Indigenous women. This recommended healing lodge is specifically for women because “32% of federal women prisoners are Indigenous women,” which is clearly a disproportionately high number of the federal prison population (Pollack, 2009, p. 115). Transferring some Indigenous women inmates to the healing lodge will minimize rates of over-incarceration among this demographic. The victim-centred programs will target criminogenic factors such as exploring previous trauma or relationship building exercises with other women (Braithwaite, 1996, p. 16). From an intersectional perspective, women will be able to explore personal accounts of intergenerational trauma, and racist, sexist, and ageist experiences. Appointed Elders, Spiritual Advisors, and community leaders will guide exercises, workshops, and conversations in a holistic way. The programs will provide methods for offenders to learn how to heal and grow from their trauma (Faith, 2000, p. 20). To explain further, providing cultural and educational programs in prisons will offer positive support systems for Indigenous people to learn about different Indigenous languages, cultural practices, and traditions. This may inspire offenders’ families or friends to pursue new cultural learning avenues as well.

Quirouette, Hannah-Moffat, and Maurutto’s research (2015) brings awareness to integrating different strategies to address social issues, including addiction, housing insecurity, and unemployment (p. 375). The proposed lodge will have traditional healing sessions to provide tools and resources for offenders to mend relationships and move forward from traumatic experiences. Buffalo Sage Wellness House director Claire Carefoot states that traditional Indigenous ceremonies and teachings focus on healing (McCue, 2018). With role models and a new healing lodge, this suggests that offenders and parolees can take responsibility for their actions in a safe environment; the new healing lodge will decrease the stigma surrounding imprisonment. Stigma has an impact on an offender’s behaviour after having been released, such as reoffending, substance abuse, and mental health complications (Moore et al., 2016). The healing lodge is a diversion method that seeks to diminish stigma because of its focus on rehabilitation.

Criticisms and responses to criticism of the use of healing lodges

Healing lodges provide a cost-effective solution to the expensive traditional prison system. Cohen (1985) stated that Canada’s incarceration rate was not declining and that there must be alternatives to prevent overcrowding, riots, and exacerbated mental health problems (p. 44). Over 35 years later, the same problems exist, despite the fact that the Canadian government spent nearly three billion dollars on corrections in 2018 alone (John Howard Society, 2020). This exposes the need for cost-effective alternatives like the healing lodge. The new healing lodge will significantly reduce financial costs for the CSC because it will be less expensive than maintaining a formal prison. Faith believes that “diverting funds from prison expansion to less expensive community services” will benefit the offender, the state, and various communities (2000, p. 25).

One criticism of healing lodges is that they are lenient in comparison to the traditional model of prisons (Weinrath, Young, & Kohm, 2012). In response to this, I would challenge readers to view healing lodges not from a punitive perspective, but a rehabilitative one. Residents must participate in ceremonies and practices that are group-oriented and that challenge individuals to rethink how they operate (Boesveld, 2019). At the Thunder Woman’s residential lodge, counselling and life-skill classes are offered to provide residents opportunities for new avenues once they enter parole (Boesveld, 2019). Carefoot assigns a list of tasks that must be accomplished daily for offenders, which emphasizes the shift toward reintegration into society (McCue, 2018). Although offenders are in a healing lodge and not in a cell, there are rules that they must follow as they would in prison. A misconception is that healing lodges provide lighter sentences than prisons. In response to this, former correctional investigator of Canada Howard Sapers clarifies that healing lodges are not about how light or heavy a sentence is, but the fact that they ultimately provide a better outcome (Boesveld, 2019). Lessons will be led by Elders, Spiritual Advisors, and Indigenous community leaders who are all people in authoritative roles, which is a reflection of the fact that healing lodges as a concept and an established institution are no less goal-oriented than formal prisons. The objective of healing lodges is to reduce recidivism rates by targeting causes of why individuals may have committed an offence. Offenders will learn to take responsibility for their actions, complete tasks, and follow a regimented schedule, which will guide them to reintegration into society. Contrary to popular belief, healing lodges lower recidivism rates by at least six percent (Ferrerias, 2018). Despite the controversy surrounding healing lodges, they provide an alternative to the traditional prison model and there is empirical evidence that healing lodges benefit Indigenous residents. In summary, the function of cultural and mental health workshops in healing lodges is for Indigenous inmates to learn new skills, to pinpoint why they committed crime(s), and to move forward.

CONCLUSION

As I reflect on my suggested policy recommendations, I cannot help but think about Kinew James's life and death. I think about how she fought this legal system that worked against her. I consider the fact that she spent most of her life in prison without receiving proper mental health support. She completed her high school certificate in prison and was determined to leave prison a different person; however, her formal complaints were denied, she was physically abused, and she died a brutal but preventable death (Razack, 2014, p. 13). I write this article in an effort to radically alter the way society views Indigenous inmates and to change how they are treated in prison, and ultimately for a better reintegration back into society.

One limitation that I found in conducting this research was the lack of recent testimonials from Indigenous inmates from 2018 to the present. Future studies are necessary to validate Indigenous voices that are typically unheard to provide newer insights into the dynamic Canadian Justice System. Reform is imperative, for prisons cannot undo the nation's colonial past, but they can change the future for Indigenous offenders.

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How Is Africa a Neoliberal Utopia?

An analysis of God complexes, Eden, and development

*This paper explores the different ways that Africa is a neoliberal utopia for the Global North. On the one hand, the introduction of neoliberal ideologies into African society was assisted historically by the transatlantic slave trade and by the subsequent period of European colonialization and, on the other hand, these neoliberal ideologies are now the reason that neo-colonialism thrives in Africa. This paper uses both Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972) and William Darity's "Africa, Europe, and the Origins of Uneven Development: The Role of Slavery" (2005) as its theoretical foundations. Within this framework, I analyze the formation of Africa as a neoliberal paradise, from the historical 'original sin' of enslaving people to the political, social, and economic implications, both in historical and contemporary contexts. Most importantly, I offer two primary theoretical interventions to the discussion of neo-colonialism and neoliberalism in Africa today. They are the analogy of 'original sin' and a phenomenon I term 'race to the baton.' These interventions show the distinctions between the overtness of historical processes of colonialism and the contemporary covertness of neo-colonial processes that define the relationship between the Global South and the Global North.*

Keywords: neoliberalism, race to the bottom, race to the baton, Africa, capitalism, structural adjustment

INTRODUCTION

It is apparent that Africa is a neoliberal utopia for the Global North and, most recently, for China, in myriad ways. The groundwork for this ideal neoliberal setting was first laid through the historical exploitation of the African continent and has culminated in the political, social, and economic impacts that persist today. Accordingly, the working definition of neoliberalism used in this analysis is the "[prioritization] of a 'growing economy' ideology over the holistic well-being of people's lives" (Gatwiri et al., 2020, p. 86). This paper uses both Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972) and William Darity's "Africa, Europe,

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and the Origins of Uneven Development: The Role of Slavery” (2005) as its theoretical foundations. Within this framework, the paper analyzes the formation of Africa as a neoliberal paradise, from the historical ‘original sin’ of enslaving people to the political, social, and economic implications, both in historical and contemporary contexts. The first part of the article elaborates on the contents of the theoretical framework and gives a historical background of exploitation-colonialism in the form of the original sin. I use two primary theoretical interventions: namely, ‘original sin’ and ‘race to the baton.’ These interventions outline the difference between the overtness of historical processes of colonialism and the contemporary covertness of neo-colonial processes that illustrate the relationship between the Global South and the Global North. Finally, I explore the negative effects of Western interference on the political, social, and economic structures of the African continent—interference which has resulted in systemic detriments that affect Black people globally.

HISTORY

*In the beginning was the West and the West was with God and the West was God, or was it? It was certainly not by divine right.*¹

To understand how the West continues to pillage and plunder present-day Africa, we need to know the history of the past-day territories that are now known as Africa.² Many European countries, including Portugal, Britain, France, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, and Sweden, have directly benefited from the looting (human and otherwise) of Africa. For instance, in 1471, the Portuguese sailed to the Gold Coast (now known as Ghana), paving the way for other European traders such as the Swedes, Danish, and Norwegians to help themselves to the continent’s wealth (Graham, 2013). The early colonizers met massive resistance from indigenes and ultimately retreated until, beginning in 1872, British monarchs sanctioned unimaginable military violence and British forces seized the entire Gold Coast (Graham, 2013). However, the accumulation of wealth by Europe in its entirety superseded any one nation’s interests. As a result of this coordinated European access to resources, peoples, and territories, the battle lines were drawn. In effect, it was Europe against Africa, and the Partition of Africa³ took place so that European colonizers would not fight among themselves (Talton, 2011). This mercantilist form of accumulation prioritized military

¹ Many colonizers believed that it was ordained by God to reside on their land or claim the land of others.

² Colonial borders, often drawn arbitrarily and by foreign authority, have dictated the formation of nation-states in Africa. See Rodney’s *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972).

³ This is also known as the “Scramble for Africa.” See Southall and Melber’s *A New Scramble For Africa?: Imperialism, Investment and Development* (2009).

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power and economic wealth as major tools for national policy (Darity, 2005). In contemporary times, we have seen all the global economic superpowers⁴ repeat the same pattern. The United States uses more overt neoliberal policies, but nonetheless focuses on the acquisition of military power and economic wealth. Historically, this was achieved for European colonizers through the transatlantic slave trade (15th to 19th centuries), which resulted in huge wealth disparities between the Global South and the Global North and the underdevelopment of Africa by Europe (Darity 2005; Rodney 1972). Alternatively, the main strategy of neo-colonizers is to secure influence over a government and relevant economic and political policies (Brett, 1985).

To use the original sin analogy, the forbidden fruit was the very process of historical colonialism which was overtly detrimental to Africa. During this period, there were no illusions about the cause of Africa's economic and social suffering. A very clear and explicit connection could be made between the processes of colonialism and the exploitation of African resources, people, and societies. However, neo-colonialism and its ideological framework of neoliberalism are more implicit. There is no longer an obvious forbidden fruit, no identifiable apple. Rather, there is the promulgation of the idea that there are few bad apples in a barrel of good ones. The reality is that one bad apple spoils the bunch. Neoliberalism is thus peddled as an ideology where all policies which prioritize the market and foreign capital are presented as being in Africa's own self-interest, for its own good. Or, to continue with the apple metaphor, the good apples can remain good despite the odds. Any rot is the fault of the picker rather than the apple tree. Neoliberal thinking puts the blame on the individual rather than on the political conditions that accentuate the need to make certain decisions. This methodological individualism characteristic of neoliberalism carries significant consequences in the political, economic, and social realms.

POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

Despite shifts in power and structural changes that have accompanied the transition from the colonial to the post-colonial era in Africa, its climate nonetheless remains inviting for the bourgeoisie—regardless of their country of origin—looking to exploit. Indeed, Africa is a neoliberal utopia for the Global North and for emerging powers such as China, because the vast majority of the African political elite have sought allegiances with their counterparts in the Global North. According to Walter Rodney, political development consisted of the “ruling elements” deciding to “dialogue, trade or fight.” The Global North has succeeded in exploiting these strategies to maintain

⁴ China's recent engagement with various African economies shows that it is employing these same neoliberal strategies (Lee, 2008).

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a certain degree of political control over Africa and ensuring that the economic conditions were in place to make it a neoliberal utopia (1972, p. 3).

First, the pre-colonial political structure in traditional African⁵ society consisted of elites such as chiefs, obas, and queenmothers, so the colonizers sought to use them as a way to control the masses (Bassey, 2011, p. 30). Subsequently in the 1950s, the colonial political structure, especially in sub-Saharan countries like Ghana and Nigeria, involved the British monarchy employing a relatively *laissez-faire* approach and leaving the enforcement of their mandates to white missionaries and to the new Black political elite (Bassey, 2011; Kilson, 1963). This is because “enormous opportunities were created for European-trained Africans who were needed to perform minor administrative duties” (Bassey, 2011, p. 31). To a large extent, this emergent group of African elites had been taught in colonial missionary schools. Coleman argues that Western education was a nationalist tool that made the case for the transfer of political power to Indigenous Africans on the basis of Western libertarian values (as cited in Bassey, 2011, p. 35). It is important to note that the aim of educational indoctrination was not for the colonized people to see themselves as equal to the colonizers, but rather to make it easier for religious indoctrination to take place (Bassey, 2011). Furthermore, the funding and pursuit of the young Africans’ higher education was facilitated by colonial-adjacent countries such as the United States. This process led to “the rise to political power of the early political elites” and the internalization of certain neoliberal ideals that altered post-colonial Africa’s political structure upon their return (pp. 30, 35). As a result, the independence movements in Africa did not bring about a total overhaul of the colonial system. Instead, they provided a sanitized version of the colonial system because Western education served as a mechanism to craft a cult of the elite (p. 36). These returnees harnessed their ability to communicate with a wider audience and appeared to challenge the colonial status quo. Returnees included African nationalists such as Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe), Nnamdi Azikiwe (Nigeria), and so on (Bassey, pp. 36, 37; Rodney, p. 3; Kilson, 1963). The transition of political power in the 1950s and 1960s shifted from the old elites to the new elites. It was not a transfer of power from colonizer to colonized people; colonization had taken on a new approach.

The relative political stability of these newly independent countries created the appearance of equality in the global political sphere, but this political stability was maintained only if these countries prioritized the Global North’s interests through

⁵ Africa is often referred to as a country by the uninformed. Above, I represent it as a monolith due to the singularity of its colonial experience and the power gained from solidarity. Some African scholars suggest that Africa should be a country, a position formed by political education, not by limited geographical understanding. Each country has its traditions; for instance, chiefs and queenmothers are applicable to most of West Africa, while obas are Nigerian.

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mechanisms like the Commonwealth, under the guise of assistance and collaboration (Kilson, 1963, p. 427; Babatola, 2013, p. 8). For instance, presidents who led the transition—such as Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana 1960-66) and Julius Nyerere (Tanzania 1962-64)—faced “internal crises”⁶ (Babatola, 2013, p. 6). These crises were sponsored or encouraged by foreign countries when the African leaders decided that their countries would not be political and economic pawns serving the interests of the Global North. Furthermore, this interference was not limited to democratic regimes as even military coup d’états,⁷ in relation to the supply of weapons and so on, were funded by external influences (p. 12). These invasions of African sovereignty served as deterrents for other new republics that may have wanted to follow suit. In other words, these conflicts were seen as the wages of sin from resisting colonial rule, as opposed to the original sin of perpetuating colonial rule in the first place.

Additionally, little financial and technical capital was available to African countries during this period, resulting in an uneven power dynamic and fewer options to oppose a political structure perpetuating neoliberal ideologies. This led to a division of class interests because the only people benefiting from this system were the elites on both sides. Often the military became a means of political intervention for the poor and for urban workers by ousting either a democratic regime or another military regime (Babatola, 2013, p. 14; Kilson, 1963; Bassey, 2011). The schism between classes was the result of continued oppression in both the colonial and post-colonial time periods, abetted by a flagrantly uneven accumulation of wealth, status differentiation, and the suppression of the rights of the non-ruling class (Babatola, 2013, p. 14; Kilson, 1963; Bassey, 2011; Rodney, 1972). As a result, this political divide has had an impact on social interactions.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As an ideology, neoliberalism centres on the individual, and this methodological individualism has substantially altered the nature of social interaction and structures in Africa. There are numerous ways that colonialism ultimately led to neoliberalism’s influence over Africa’s social existence. Here, however, I will primarily focus on family, religion, and education. Pre-colonial African society may have had a hierarchy of sorts, but it was still largely communal (Bassey, 2011). The trading of enslaved people destroyed the familial fabric of African society. In terms of the family, scholars have noted the “deterioration in the status of women owing to colonial rule” as the colonial state intensified the subjugation of women in society (Rodney, 1972, p. 226). It would be intellectually dishonest to assert that pre-colonial

⁶ These internal crises refer to foreign interference in domestic political affairs, similar to the way in which the CIA sponsors rebels who advance American interests in the Global South.

⁷ If the Global North did not like a certain military government, they could overthrow it for another military government.

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Africa was a feminist utopia because exploitative gender power dynamics often existed in polygamous arrangements and disputes (p. 226). However, there was a general tendency to ensure the dignity of women across independent pre-colonial African society (p. 226, 227). For instance, “mother-right” was a common part of African societies and this translated into political and social power, as they were seen as the keys to inheritance (p. 226). The traditional gendered division of labour, where men cleared the land for farming and so on, gave way to men entering the “money sector” and leaving women to retain the home front, in addition to fending for children in some financial capacity (p. 227). There is no term that specifically addresses the systemic way that economically disadvantaged Black women in the Global South are socially excluded; therefore, I will refer to this phenomenon as ‘race to the baton.’

‘Race to the baton’ can be defined in three ways. Firstly, it is a sociological concept that encompasses the feminization of poverty, where the people who benefit the least from the ‘race to the bottom’ phenomenon are poor Black women in the Global South. This is due to the multiple layers of exploitation in the form of womanhood, poverty, Blackness, and geographical location. This means that the social division of labour ensures women are poorer due to being saddled with more obligations, a condition that is exacerbated by additional marginalized identities. Thus, when the race to the bottom happens, they are the most vulnerable group. Secondly, ‘race to the baton’ can be defined as an analogy of the game of life. Herein Black women, particularly poor and in the Global South, play on a more difficult level than their counterparts in the Global North. This involves a race fraught with obstacles to reaching the baton before the relay race even begins. The race both literally and figuratively takes place on an uneven playing field. Indeed, the game is rigged in advance.

Finally, ‘race to the baton’ can exist as a combination of the above definitions. This is a play on the phrase ‘race to the bottom,’ used in economics to indicate the predatory tactics of corporations who seek investment and outsourcing opportunities by pitting countries against one another in order to undercut wages and other costly regulations. This phenomenon has undervalued African women’s work in a Western capitalist framework, and has ethnocentrically labelled it as ‘traditional’ and, by extension, ‘backward’ (Rodney, 1972; Williams, 2013; Garba, 2007). Additionally, communal and familial ties were not conducive to the “ruthless accumulation”⁸ of capital that neoliberalism espouses (Rodney, 1972).

Historically, foreign traders in West Africa felt little social responsibility due to anti-Blackness attitudes that prevented them from seeing citizens as their kin. On the

⁸ From the late 19th century onward, Lebanese traders in Ghana and Nigeria exploited the market more than did African capitalists. See Winder’s article “The Lebanese in West Africa” (1962).

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other hand, African women were cajoled into patriarchal notions of Western religion that minimized their social influence even further, because doctrine dictated that they should be seen and not heard (Rodney, p. 227). This sentiment can be extended to contemporary educational campaigns from the Global North, where girls are perceived to be stifled by 'backward' African traditions, when in fact colonialism did more to stifle the educational advancement of women than did traditional African societies (pp. 228, 251).

As a result of the individualism perpetuated by neoliberalism, women and other African non-elites have had to rely on acquiring social capital and gaining proximity to an elite circle in some form (Fine, 1999). This self-interested form of relation has affected trust within communities, leading to cynicism about development projects and to the regulation of both familial and platonic relationships as they increasingly rely on individualism over community needs (Rodney, 1972). This cultivation of an elite network has led to social stratification where the second and third generation of African elites are again the ruling class (Basse, 2011; Kilson, 1963). As a result, there is an "asymmetrical structure of the middle class as a social class" (Kilson, 1963, p. 437; Rodney, 1972). Even though traditional norms may govern these types of relationships, wealthy people may not cater to their entire social unit (for example, an elderly parent) because neoliberal conditions do not account for an extended family unit. For instance, Esi, the protagonist from *Changes*,⁹ opined that her relationship with *her* mother would never be as potent as her mother's relationship with her mother because neo-colonization had created a different set of social allegiances through the loss of language and culture (Aidoo, 1991; Kilson, 1963). However, due to Esi's perceived social capital (she is a 'career woman'), an element of trickle-down economics seems to be working because the cultural responsibility of the African bourgeoisie translates to the idea that neoliberal society is ultimately beneficial for all people (Kilson, 1963; Rodney, 1972; Babatola, 2013). In contemporary and material terms, folks in the diaspora or children who have managed to attain middle-class status send members of their families the limited remittances they can afford. This shines light on the fact that neoliberalism does not serve the overall social good. In addition to numerous political and social consequences, there are economic repercussions which solidify Africa's position as the global hub of neoliberalism.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

It is apparently common knowledge that Africa is a 'poor' continent. But to what extent is that assertion true? Walter Rodney opines that there are "complicated links between the changes in the economic base in the rest of the superstructure of the

⁹ *Changes: A Love Story* (1991) is a popular novel by Ghanaian feminist author Ama Ata Aidoo. The story addresses the generational effects of colonialism in relation to language and religion.

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society—including the sphere of ideology and social beliefs” (p. 6). Rodney’s assertion is an accurate assessment of what economic structures can do to the entire spirit of African sovereign nations and their people. The process of uneven development, where African nations were simultaneously being underdeveloped while European nations were being developed, is a phenomenon that many European economists have disputed. This is despite clear evidence to the contrary from the scholars whom Darity termed the “Caribbean School,” consisting of Eric Williams, C.L.R. James, and Walter Rodney (Rodney, p. 11; Darity, 1972). They argue that societies of different sorts coming into contact for a prolonged period of time will lead to shifts in both ideology and social beliefs. But whether those results are positive or negative depends on the nature of the relationship between the two (Rodney, 1972, p. 11; Darity, 1992). The wealth disparity and income inequality between the Global North and the Global South that reaches back to the Atlantic slave trade is massive. For instance, a former British colony, Ghana, had a per capita income in 1999 of \$2,000, while Britain’s per capita income was \$20,000, and this pattern is consistent many years after, even though overt colonialism has ended (Darity, 2005; Konadu-Agyemang, 2000). This wealth gap is explained by the long-term effects of the Atlantic slave trade—in effect, the pillaging and plundering of the African continent was the foundation of Western industrialisation.

Two sets of nations from the Global North engaged in what can be described as the imperialistic plunder of Africa. The first group comprised the European countries who engaged in the ‘original sin’ of exploitation-colonialism in the Global South, while the second was made up of countries such as Canada, USA, Australia, and New Zealand where Europeans engaged in settler-colonialism (Rodney, 1972; Darity, 1992). I will focus only on exploitation-colonialism¹⁰ here, and will do so through the lens of mercantilism. In the 17th century, mercantilist¹¹ ideology was prioritized by the British in the Gold Coast’s¹² national policy. In effect, this meant that the colonial endeavour was a zero-sum game¹³ (Rodney, 1972; Darity, 1992).

Africa lost 400 years of economic development because of the enslavement of its people. The economic effects are still apparent in the form of neoliberal individualism. Within this framework, Africa is responsible for recovering from her historical and contemporary economic disenfranchisement on her own (Rodney,

¹⁰ Exploitation-colonialism is the process of exploiting the population and/or resources of a country without settling there (as opposed to settler colonialism). Exploitation-colonialism is also referred to as franchise colonialism, but the latter term does not convey the same gravity I am for in this paper.

¹¹ An ideology that holds that military power and economic wealth are best for a country’s growth.

¹² Gold Coast is the colonial name of Ghana.

¹³ This means that all nations are fundamentally in conflict, so that one country’s economic gain means the other’s economic loss.

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1972; Darity, 2005). This is not just a macroeconomic problem; it extends to the microeconomic arena where Black people are frequently told that any disadvantage was based on their individual shortcomings as opposed to structural, labour-market segmentation (Wingfield, 2009; Williams, 2013). Unfortunately, the perceived inferiority of Black people has “outlived slavery,” and this has made Africa ground zero for neoliberal exploitation (Darity, 1992). This is because neoliberalism favours the individual and Black folks were not and are not deemed to be worthy individuals, yet are still supposed to compete through ‘bootstrap’ ideology.

Instead of reparations to compensate for the effects of centuries of colonialism, the economic ‘help’ came in the 1970s and 1980s in the form of both ‘aid’ and ‘management,’ where conditional loans and managerial control of local African companies were used to bolster Western interests (Rodney, 1972, p. 23). Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs)¹⁴ do more to exacerbate development problems than to fix them. Born of international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, SAPs are ostensibly intended to deliver on the Bretton-Woods promise of developmental aid. However, the reality throughout the Global South has been that the World Bank and the IMF diagnose the economic situation of formerly colonized nations and prescribe the neoliberal treatment: open markets, foreign investment, lower social expenditures, favourable legal regimes for transnational capital. This leads to even more detrimental policies later, because the source of the problem—economic exploitation by the Global North—is not tackled (Konadu-Agyemang, 2000; Dooley et al, 2003). There are short-term benefits to the flow of loaned capital: for example, increased currency valuation. The long-term results for the national economies, however, are consistently egregious. As quoted in Konadu-Agyemang’s case study on Ghana, “the effective devaluation of the Ghanaian cedi, from 2.75=US\$1 in 1983 to 2300 = US\$1 in 1998 (approximately 80,000% devaluation)” is just one example of the disastrous implications of economic interference and contributes to Africa being a neoliberal utopia (2000). There is a coercive and uneven sort of development with this form of economic imposition by the Global North, which leads to increased political and economic vulnerability for Global South countries (Brett, 1985).

In the neoliberal era, corporations have, to a large extent, replaced many of the functions of the nation-state. The logic of foreign ‘investment’ promotes the use of Africa as a place of resource extraction and African labour as a means to increase the Global North’s wealth, and frame it as a benevolent endeavour (Brett, p. 23). For instance, there are numerous non-performing loans given to sub-Saharan African countries, which generate little to no income but almost always have exorbitant interest rates (Fofack, 2005; Olawoye, 2018). Accordingly, “these [were] analyzed

¹⁴ Much rigorous scholarly work has been done on the detrimental effects of Structural Adjustment Programs. See, for example, Fonjong (2014) and Sylla (2018).

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with respect to an improvement in quality of life pre- and post-adoption of these funds” (Olawoye, 2018, p. 113). The lack of income generation is generally a precursor to loan non-repayment or default, and the resolution of these problems tends to be resolved by a foreign entity coming in to manage the crisis with the justification of averting future or more severe financial crises (Fofack, 2005).

It is no secret that the economic exploitation of Africa has largely been perpetuated by the capitalist countries of the Global North. Walter Rodney vehemently supports this assertion and states that there is a distinction between capitalist and socialist countries, concluding that (as of the 1970s) socialist countries were uninvolved in the “robbery of Africa” (1972, p. 23). At the time of his writing (1972), this statement was correct; however, in recent times, China has begun to engage in the use of Africa as an extractive economy as well (Lee, 2008; Aning, p. 145).

CONCLUSION

The ‘original sin’ of the European colonization of Africa slowly yet surely laid the groundwork for the conditions of neo-colonialism today. This neo-colonialism has been fundamentally neoliberal in nature, and has continued to perpetuate power and economic imbalances between the Global South and the Global North. Africa is the paradigmatic ‘neoliberal utopia’ because of a long history of underdevelopment and structural adjustment, and still seeks release from the clutches of foreign investment capital coming from nations across the Global North and from emerging powers such as China, in search of valuable mining resources, oil and gas, agricultural commodities, and more. This article has demonstrated that the path from original sin to neoliberal utopia is covered in blood, slavery, injustice, and the continued struggle for economic and political sovereignty. It has explored the ways in which the consequences of a fundamentally individualist and profit-seeking ideology are manifested in the political, economic, and social realms of African society.

But this neoliberal utopia and its colonial history do not weigh upon socio-economic themes alone. There are resonances from this struggle throughout the world, as Black people suffer anti-Black racism fueled by ideas which have their roots in this atrocity. For example, C.L. Williams’ examination of Adrienne Rich’s concept of “white solipsism”¹⁵ is a painful reminder that these neoliberal ideologies are very much present in the Global North’s domestic sphere as well (Rich, 1979, as cited in Williams, 2013, p. 613). The neoliberal ideals that manifest in academic research and in the academy as a whole create a hierarchy whereby the ‘universal’ subject, as defined by the Global North, does not account for complex and overlapping identities and material realities, but insists upon a ‘one size fits all approach’ that ultimately excludes Black-centred research and lines of inquiry

¹⁵ The sentiment that the white experience is universal.

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(Wingfield, 2009; Badgett & Williams, 1994). This is detrimental to continental Africans because it is ahistorical and negates the very histories which, as I have shown throughout this paper, form the conditions of neo-colonialism and inequality today. Overall, the neoliberal ideal of individual self-interest contributes to the white, cis-hetero-capitalist patriarchy (hooks, 2000). As I have argued, the ‘race to the baton’ phenomenon prevails and, as a result, poor Black women in the Global South are the central point of neoliberal exploitation. This exploitation relies upon fundamentally racist, sexist, and exclusionary values that are commonly eclipsed by the purported neutrality of neoliberal individualism—which sees not the systemic problem, but the individual instance. Or as stated previously, ‘the bad apple.’ Until systemic understandings of the relationship between Africa and the Global North are widespread and have a meaningful influence on African economic policies, the continued plunder and exploitation that characterizes this neoliberal utopia is unlikely to come to an end.

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Priming Caution Does Not Decrease Receptivity to Fake News

Fake news is fabricated news content that is presented as factual for the purpose of ideological and financial gain. Much of the existing research seeks to find ways to reduce people's susceptibility to fake news. The first aim of this study was to replicate findings that suggest higher scores on the Cognitive Reflection Test (CRT) are linked with lower receptivity to fake news. The second aim was to test whether this relationship would be affected by priming cautions, either General or Specific, about the possibility that the information in question may be fake. It was predicted that exposure to a General caution would reduce the receptivity to fake reports, and that a Specific caution would lead to a further decrease in susceptibility. A total of 55 males and 56 females first completed the CRT, then evaluated a series of three true and three fake news articles through a set of four questions via an online survey. The results showed that indeed higher CRT scores were correlated with lower receptivity to fake news; however, using priming cautions did not have an effect on reducing susceptibility to fake news. It was concluded that analytical ability is the most important predictor for being able to recognize false media content. Implementing workshops or developing apps to improve critical thinking skills might help to improve the analytical abilities of individuals, thus making them less vulnerable to fake news.

Keywords: Cognitive Reflection Test, cognitive style, fake news, priming, social media

INTRODUCTION

Digital social networks have facilitated the way people process and share information (Hara & Sanfilippo, 2016). A recent Pew survey indicated that 62% of Americans obtain their news from social media websites (Pew Research Center, 2016a). However, relying on online news sources for updates about current events has become problematic because of the increase and spread of misleading information (Tambuscio et al., 2015). While the circulation of inaccurate information on social media is not a new phenomenon, this problem has attracted more attention



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from both the public and academic community as a result of the 2016 US Presidential election during which fake news circulated widely on social media to the apparent advantage of one candidate over another (Tambuscio et al., 2015).

Fake news has been defined as fabricated information resembling news content in presentation and format, circulated on social media (Lazer et al., 2017). The two main motives behind the propagation of fake news are ideological influence and financial gain (Tandoc et al., 2017). As the 2016 United States presidential election approached, the stakes rose significantly. One study reported that in the months preceding the election, fake news articles on Facebook were more popular than mainstream media reports (Silverman et al., 2016). It has been speculated that the spread of online disinformation may have played a role in the outcome of the election (Parkinson, 2016). The ease with which information proliferates on social media allows fake news and other forms of misinformation to spread quickly because this type of news is rarely verified by consumers, making it challenging to correct (Lazer et al., 2017). Consequently, fake news reports create confusion about basic facts and events (Pew Research Center, 2016b), thus posing a threat to democratic institutions and norms (Knight Foundation, 2018).

The reception of global health news, climate change reports, and other pressing issues are also influenced by the circulation of fake news. Its potential influence on health literacy and the spread of medical conspiracy theories is of special concern. Indeed, the findings from one study indicated that large numbers of Americans believe false claims about the relationship between autism and vaccination, as well as the supposed negative effects of genetically modified products (Jolley & Douglas, 2014). Social media networks provide a media environment where it is difficult to assess the credibility of information. This is especially of concern regarding university students because they are such frequent online users. Research involving 6,000 university students found that 89% relied heavily on social media for news updates (Head et al., 2018). Moreover, the results of another study found that more than 60% of students had shared inaccurate information online, indicating that young adults may contribute to the spread of fake news (Chen et al., 2015).

Analytic Thinking Dispositions

According to dual processing theory, cognition consists of two different thinking systems. System 1 is fast, automatic, and intuitive, while System 2 involves deliberate and analytic thinking. System 1 creates “first impressions” and is often the cause of our impulsive judgments. System 2 is responsible for a more controlled process of reasoning, such as problem-solving, analysis, and reflection. We spend most of our time engaging in System 1 thinking, which constantly produces suggestions for System 2 (Kahneman, 2011). In most instances, System 2 passively accepts the proposed ideas from System 1 without contributing any further analysis; however, when System 1 processing is insufficient to deal with the situation, System 2 is

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activated to assist with more detailed processing that may help to resolve the problem (Kahneman, 2011).

One measure of the effects of these processes is the Cognitive Reflection Test (CRT) (Frederick, 2015). It consists of three mathematical problems that elicit fast, intuitive, but incorrect responses (Pennycook et al., 2016). To recognize that the intuitive response is wrong, the individual must engage in analytic thinking. Thus, low scores on this test indicate that intuitive responses dominate reasoning, while high scores indicate the opposite (Frederick, 2015).

Pennycook and Rand (2019a) examined the link between cognitive dispositions and susceptibility to fake news. Participants were asked to complete the CRT and then read five true and five false news headlines and answer questions about the veracity of each. Participants with higher scores on the CRT were better at distinguishing between true and false news (Pennycook & Rand, 2019a). This finding was replicated in a second similar study where participants were shown 15 news headlines containing true content and 15 news headlines that were false (Pennycook & Rand, 2019b). Individuals were asked to judge the perceived accuracy of the headlines and to complete the CRT. Results again indicated that participants with lower scores on the CRT were more likely to perceive fabricated news stories as real reports (Pennycook & Rand, 2019b).

Priming caution

It has become clear that exposing individuals to particular cues can subtly influence, or prime, their responses even outside their awareness (Molden, 2014). Priming research has demonstrated that information processing involves the development of the “activation tags” that are the basis for connection between concepts (Collins & Loftus, 1975). According to Tversky and Kahneman (1982), these activation tags are easy to access and impact the way subsequent information is processed. Priming involves employing accessible representations to encode and evaluate subsequent information (Chawarski, 1996). The process of priming has been investigated from a variety of angles; however, little research has been conducted to examine the effect of priming on the perception of fake news.

It has been noted that detecting inaccurate information is difficult (Flynn et al., 2017). One stream of research into fake news has investigated approaches that may help reduce one’s susceptibility to fake news. In an attempt to lessen the degree to which an individual might be inclined to view fake news as accurate, Pennycook et al. (2019b) presented one group of participants with fake news headlines that were labelled “disputed.” A second group was exposed to the same headlines but without warning labels. Findings from this study suggested that the presence of the “disputed” tag moderately reduced the susceptibility of participants to fake news.

The continued influence effect (CIE) refers to the perception of false information as true even after retraction (Seifert, 2014). One study by Ecker et al. (2010) focused

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on techniques to reduce the CIE of misinformation. The investigators presented participants with either a general or a specific warning before asking them to read 14 sentences about a minibus accident. The general warning condition involved a message stating that the information presented had not been verified before its publication, while the specific warning condition provided a detailed explanation of the CIE along with examples of the phenomenon. It was concluded that general warnings may have less impact on reducing the perception of false sources compared to specific warnings; however, neither of the two warning types were found to be completely effective (Ecker et al, 2010). Similarly, Clayton et al. (2019) evaluated the effectiveness of attaching general (“disputed”) and specific (“rated false”) tags to news headlines, as well as providing participants with general and specific warning instructions on the perceived accuracy of fake news stories. The results of this study indicated that while both general and specific tags reduced susceptibility to false information, specific tags were overall more effective at reducing susceptibility to false information (Clayton et al., 2019); however, the influence of warning instructions in both cases on the susceptibility of participants to false headlines was small. Furthermore, general warnings appear to eliminate the perception of real news headlines to be declared as real.

The implications of these studies show that participants are more likely to evaluate whether a tag such as “disputed” was accurate, rather than encouraging critical thinking about the information provided in each item.

Current Study

The present research examines whether a caution, either General or Specific, would prime participants to be broadly critical of both true and false news items. This approach is more challenging for participants and is much more relevant to real-life situations where the goal is to deliver a caution to encourage critical thinking without first having to inform readers about which items might be in dispute.

Given that analytic thinking is linked with lower receptivity to fake news (Pennycook & Rand, 2019a), the first goal of this study was to replicate these findings to see if this effect generalizes to situations in which there is no specific tagging of each of the items (e.g., not explicitly stating tags such as “disputed” or “rated false”), offering instead only a General or Specific caution about some of the items. Based on previous results by Pennycook and Rand (2019a), it was predicted that the performance on the CRT would be positively associated with the ability to differentiate between true and false news stories. The second aim of the research was to examine the relative effectiveness of General and Specific cautions in reducing susceptibility to fake news. It was predicted that exposure to a General caution about misleading news reports would lead to a decrease in the acceptance of false items compared to the control condition of no caution provided, while the Specific caution would lead to a further decrease in the acceptance of false news items.

METHOD

Design

Raw data were gathered online using SurveyMonkey, an online survey development service. Participants were randomly assigned to either a control condition or one of two experimental conditions. Each participant first completed the CRT, then they were asked to rate the credibility of six randomly presented news articles where half of the articles were true, and the other half false. In the first experimental condition, participants were given a General caution about the accuracy of the presented information. In the second experimental condition, participants received a Specific caution indicating that some of the news items may not be true. After reading each article, participants then rated their confidence in whether what they read was essentially true using a 0-100 visual analog scale, where 0 represents not at all confident, and 100 represents absolutely confident, which provided a credibility score. The average credibility score of the three true and three false articles was then taken. The dependent variable was the Differential Credibility Index (DCI), defined as the difference between a participant's average credibility score on the three true items minus their average credibility score on the three false items. A higher, positive score indicated a better ability to differentiate between real and fake content. For the first aim of the study, the relationship between the cognitive style and the DCI was assessed by computing a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. For the second aim, a 1 x 3 (No Caution, General Caution, Specific Caution) between-subjects Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the effect of priming caution instructions on the receptivity to fake news.

Participants

A total of 111 undergraduate students from York University (55 males $M = 22.0$ y, $SD = 2.9$; 56 females $M = 22.8$ y, $SD = 2.5$) volunteered to participate in this study, with $n = 37$ students assigned to each of the three experimental conditions. The recruitment letter was posted on the Glendon Participant Pool (Glendon College, York University) and potential student participants contacted the primary investigator by email.

Materials

Recruitment letter

This form asked potential participants to take part in the research project and provided instructions as well as the contact information of the primary investigator.

Consent form

This document informed the participant that they were under no obligation to participate, could decline to answer any questions, and could withdraw at any time. It also indicated that collected research data would remain anonymous and

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confidential, and that participation in the study would not involve any risk or direct benefit to the participants.

Demographic questionnaire

This form contained questions about participant background information including age, gender, degree program, and year of study.

Cognitive Reflection Test (CRT)

The purpose of this measure was to determine an individual's propensity to use intuitive rather than analytical thinking by asking participants to complete problems that evoke quick but ultimately erroneous responses. In order to arrive at correct answers, this hasty form of response would have to be abandoned in favour of more careful analysis. The current study employed a version of the CRT consisting of seven items (see [Appendix A](#)): three mathematical problems from the original CRT developed by Frederick (2005), and four non-numeric items from CRT-2 from Thomson and Oppenheimer (2016). Scores on the CRT indicate the number of correct responses given by the participants. Higher scores on this test reflect a more analytic cognitive style.

News articles

Six news articles were selected from the independent fact-checking website Snopes.com. This website sorts articles into three categories based on veracity: true, false, and disputed or partially true. For the purpose of this investigation, the articles came from either the "true" or "false" category, with three of the items chosen to represent true content, and the other three selected to represent false content. The items were of approximately equal length (250-350 words each) and were designed to resemble newspaper reports.

Debriefing statement

This document provided participants with background information and revealed the true aims of the study. It also provided suggestions in the form of additional resources, including websites, on how to identify fake news. Finally, the form furnished participants with researcher contact information along with the note of appreciation.

Procedure

The recruitment letter was posted on the Glendon Participant Pool. The primary investigator contacted potential student participants by email. Participants then received a link to the survey grounded in one of the three experimental conditions (No caution, General caution, or Specific caution). On the first page, students were given the consent form to read and sign. The following page asked participants to fill in their demographic information and to complete the CRT. Afterwards, students were presented with a randomized series of six news articles that were only viewable one at a time.

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Instructions and caution manipulations

In the control condition, participants were given these instructions: “Please read the news articles below and progress to the next article at your own pace.” In the General caution condition, participants were asked the following: “Please read the news articles below and progress to the next article at your own pace. Beware that in their desire to sensationalize, the media sometimes does not check facts before publishing information that turns out to be inaccurate. It is therefore important to read the following news articles carefully.” In the Specific caution condition, participants were presented with the following message: “Please read the news articles below and progress to the next article at your own pace. Although some of the news articles may be true, others may be misleading. It is important to engage in critical thinking while reading this news and to think carefully about whether the story could be true in order to help stop the spreading of misleading articles.” These cautions were adapted from Clayton et al. (2019).

Once participants finished reading the six news reports, they were provided with a brief reminder statement of the content of each news piece and asked to respond to four questions associated with each article (see [Appendix B](#)). After the final task, participants were presented with a debriefing statement asking if they still wanted their data to be included in the research analysis.

A pilot study was initiated to ensure the validity of the six news articles and to provide a time estimate of the experiment. Furthermore, the news articles that were selected by the primary investigator based on their level of interest to a general audience were verified to be suitable for the rest of the investigation. A sample of convenience $N = 10$ (5 males, 5 females) was recruited from York University for this pilot, and these participants underwent the same testing procedure as those in the actual experiment.

RESULTS

The first aim of the study was to test the hypothesis that cognitive analytic style is positively correlated with an ability to identify fake news, independent of Caution condition. It was predicted that the DCI, calculated by subtracting each participant’s acceptance of the three false items as genuine from their acceptance of the three true items as genuine, will be positively correlated with the number of correct answers on the Cognitive Reflection Test (CRT).

For this analysis, the three caution conditions were combined and the main results were summarized in Figure 1. A positive correlation between the DCI and CRT was found ($r(109) = 0.32, p < .01$) supporting the hypothesis that greater analytic ability is associated with an increased ability to distinguish true from false news reports (Figure 1). The effect size was determined to be medium.

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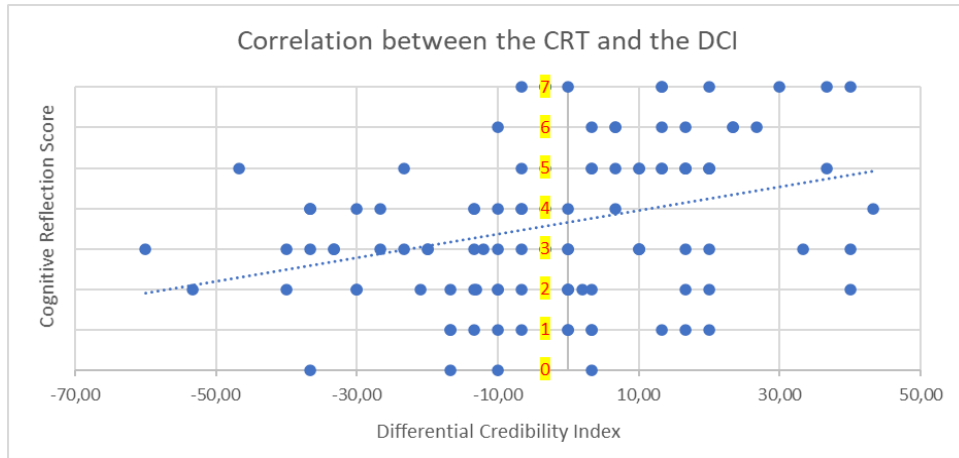


Figure 1: The relationship between the score on the Cognitive Reflection Test (CRT) and the Differential Credibility Index (DCI). The score of the CRT is represented by the central vertical axis ranging from 0-7. Pearson's r value of 0.32 was significant at $p < .0$

The second aim of the study was to assess the influence of three priming caution instructions on the susceptibility to fake content. The ANOVA showed that no statistically significant differences were found when comparing each of the conditions ($F(2,108) = 1.08, p = .34$), indicating that susceptibility to fake content was not affected by priming cautions (Figure 2).

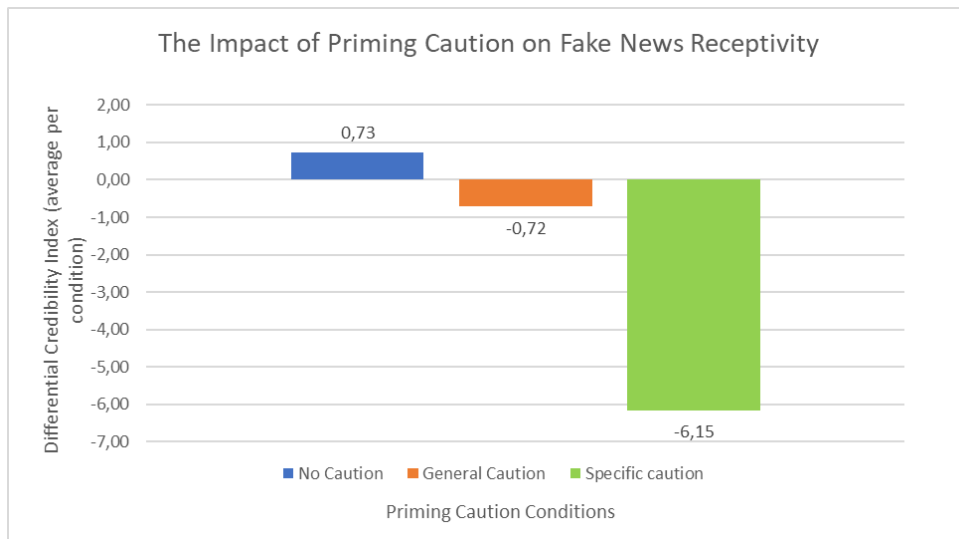


Figure 2: The influence of No, General, and Specific caution conditions on the Differential Credibility Index. No statistically significant differences were found, with $p = .34$.

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Subsequent inspection of the data suggested an influence of the covariate (CRT) on the dependent measure. The mean values of No and General caution did not vary significantly. Interestingly, the Specific caution that was anticipated to show the largest positive DCI score, indicative of a reduction to the susceptibility to fake news, showed the lowest DCI average, suggesting that participants in this condition underperformed recognizing fake content. In order to explore this further, a one-way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was carried out to examine possible differences between No, General, and Specific caution conditions on the DCI when controlling for the cognitive style. No significant difference was found $F(2,107) = 0.69, p = .50$, suggesting that the instruction type had no impact on the ability of participants to identify fake news even after controlling for cognitive reflection.

DISCUSSION

The current study explored the relationship between cognitive style and susceptibility to fake news. The findings suggested that participants with a higher cognitive reflection ability were more likely to distinguish between true and fake news stories. These results were consistent with previous research concerning the factors involved in fake news believability (Pennycock et al., 2019a; Pennycock et al., 2019b). This paper thus provided additional support for the importance of analytic reflection in the ability to recognize false information.

The present experiment also investigated the effect of No, General, and Specific priming instructions on the perception of false content. Based on the findings of previous studies, participants in the General and Specific caution conditions were expected to show less receptivity to fake news stories. It was reasoned that priming participants with messages containing General and Specific cautions should mobilize their existing critical thinking skills, which in turn would make them less susceptible to false content. This did not occur. Instead, students receiving the General and Specific priming instructions did not perform differently from those in the control condition. This suggested that providing readers with a caution did not have a significant impact on the way they process the information. On the contrary, the observed association between cognitive reflection style and fake news receptivity underscores the important role that the propensity to think analytically plays in differentiating between true and false content. Due to the correlational nature of the analysis, no causal link can be attributed to the analytic reflection and the tendency to credit fake news. However, given that the present results estimated a relationship between the CRT and DCI, the importance of cognitive style must be considered in future studies.

After analyzing the main data, it was suspected that cognitive style acted as a covariate on one's ability to identify fake news stories as false. However, the post-hoc test did not confirm this trend, suggesting a need for further investigation with the appropriate research design.

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Though the results of this study contribute to the theoretical framework relating analytic thinking to the receptivity of fake news, there are several limitations that should be highlighted. Foremost, the present study employed only six news articles—half true and half false. This amounted to only a very limited sampling of the broad range of fake news items that circulate in the larger world and thus did not capture the variety of techniques employed to deceive readers. Nevertheless, a larger sample size of news articles would result in far greater demands on participants' time and thereby could result in recruitment problems.

In addition, the present research was conducted over the Internet. It was challenging for the researcher to ensure the validity of the participants' responses because there was no opportunity to observe them during the task. For instance, it was uncertain whether the participants used extra sources or aids to complete the CRT math questions. However, the program that was used for this study reported the completion time for each of the participants. On average, it took participants about 14-20 minutes to respond to all the questions. These time limits are consistent with estimates from the pilot session and thereby suggest that participants did not take the time to consult outside sources.

Given that participants in this study were all university undergraduates, the conclusion that greater cognitive reflection ability is associated with decreased susceptibility to fake news cannot be generalized beyond that population. However, that does not diminish the importance of this finding since members of this demographic are most likely to engage with social media platforms on a regular basis and therefore most likely to encounter fake news reports (Head et al., 2018).

CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The most significant finding of this research is that participants with higher cognitive reflection ability are less likely to fall for fake stories. This result is correlational in nature and further research is required to explore whether there is a causal connection. Thus, subsequent studies might seek to determine if the skills associated with cognitive reflection directly lead to better analysis, better recognition, and firmer rejection of deliberately misleading news reports. Future studies might also employ a larger sample size of news items and gather participation data in a laboratory setting in order to eliminate problems associated with Internet research.

Despite its limitations, the present study points to the importance of fostering cognitive reflection ability amongst the public in general, and university students in particular. Workshops or classroom instruction promoting these abilities, while focusing attention on the detection of fake news, could provide students with an aptitude for avoiding deception when reading news reports. In addition, in this age of phone apps, it would be beneficial to develop an app that encourages improvement of critical thinking skills as well as offering recommendations on how to spot fake information online.

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APPENDIX A

Cognitive Reflection Test (CRT) from Frederick (2015):

1. A bat and a ball cost \$1.10 in total. The bat costs \$1.00 more than the ball. How much does the ball cost? _____ cents.
- 2.
3. If it takes 5 machines 5 min to make 5 widgets, how long would it take 100 machines to make 100 widgets? _____ min
- 4.
5. In a lake, there is a patch of lily pads. Every day, the patch doubles in size. If it takes 48 days for the patch to cover the entire lake, how long would it take for the patch to cover half of the lake? _____ days

Cognitive Reflection Test -2 (CRT-2) from Thomson and Oppenheimer (2016):

1. If you're running a race and you pass the person in second place, what place are you in? _____
- 2.
3. A farmer had 15 sheep and all but 8 died. How many are left? _____
- 4.
5. Emily's father has three daughters. The first two are named April and May. What is the third daughter's name? _____
- 6.
7. How many cubic feet of dirt are there in a hole that is 3' deep x 3' wide x 3' long? _____

APPENDIX B

DIRECTIONS: Please recall the article you have just read about the presence of cocaine in the freshwater shrimp and answer the questions below. Please be honest. There is no right or wrong answer.

1. Have you seen or heard about this story before? Yes____ No____
Unsure____

2. How confident are you that the report you have read is essentially correct?



3. How interesting do you find the news article above?



4. How likely it is that you would share this story online (for example, through Facebook or Twitter)?



Abstracts

The following abstracts accompanied posters presented at the eighth annual multidisciplinary Undergraduate Research Fair held at York University (Toronto, Canada) in March 2020. The poster images can be viewed by clicking on the abstract titles in the “Abstracts & Posters” section on the Revue YOUR Review website:

<https://yourreview.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/yourreview/issue/view/2214>

Investigating Scapular Muscle Coactivation During Static Yoga Postures to Help Restore Muscle Balance

Shoulder pain is very common, particularly among older adults. Subacromial impingement syndrome (SAIS) is the predominant cause of shoulder pain. SAIS is defined as a mechanical compression of tissues in the subacromial space due to a narrowing of this space. Patients with SAIS show scapular muscle imbalance. There is extensive research on shoulder muscle coactivation using traditional strengthening exercises. However, very little is known about the effectiveness of yoga on shoulder rehabilitation. The purpose of this study was to investigate scapular muscle coactivation in yoga postures and determine which poses may be useful in shoulder rehabilitation. We examined fifteen yoga postures and collected shoulder muscle activity using surface electromyography from twenty healthy women. We identified that patients with upper trapezius hyperactivity may benefit from specific yoga exercises, including the plank, reverse tabletop, side angle, locust arms back, and upward dog. Patients with deltoid hyperactivity or supraspinatus weakness may use either the dancer's pose right or dancer's pose left, depending on the sympathetic side, while downward dog may be used bilaterally. This information may be beneficial in developing rehabilitation programs and yoga guidelines to help restore muscle balance in patients with shoulder dysfunction.

Are There Subtypes of Gamers, More at Risk of Developing Pathologies?

Video gaming is a common hobby among people of all ages. However, when enjoyed in excess, it can lead to disordered behaviours. Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) is a disorder characterized by pathological gaming habits that last for at least twelve months (WHO, 2018; DSM-5, 2013). Little research distinguishes high- from low-risk gamers regarding the development of other disordered behaviours or comorbidity with mental health issues. The current study, an exploratory data analysis, assesses the risk of gamers' developing other pathological behaviours and comorbidity with mental health issues such as social anxiety, depression, ADHD, problematic gambling, or substance dependence. The study is a secondary analysis of an existing data set. We identified three different subtypes of gamers, with only one group showing significant emotionality, gaming habits, and addictive behaviours. The other two subtypes were a normative class and a class of gamers with high levels of pathological emotionality but no addictive behaviours other than the diagnosis of IGD.

Under Her Headscarf

Exploring the work–life balance of Hijab–wearing post–graduate students

This research project explores how the amount of education a Hijab-wearing woman has affects the extent to which she conforms to traditional gendered responsibilities within her domestic life. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two female doctoral students, during which they were asked about their personal experiences with the Hijab, and whether they felt any pressure to adhere to traditional gendered responsibilities. The interview transcripts were then coded and analyzed, and it was found that most positive associations were made when participants spoke about the supportiveness of their families in terms of their careers. Conclusions suggest that Hijab-wearing post-graduate students are not pushed to conform to traditional gendered responsibilities by their families but may face criticism from friends and community members.

AMANDA ANGILLETTA

Sprinkles and Ellie

An investigation of girlhood experience and memory

In this research study, I analyze a cultural object from a childhood experience in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The research participant chose significant objects from her childhood: two plush toy elephants she'd named Sprinkles and Ellie, gifts received during periods of hospitalization. The purpose of the study is to explore an adult-memory, using photographs of the participant as a child with her toys, in order to understand what the toys represent. The ethnographic study uses visual research methods and textual analysis to investigate the memory of a childhood experience. The adult's memory of her relationship to the toys reveals the tension she felt between vulnerability and agency. Sprinkles and Ellie assume the role of transitional objects between the safety of home away-from-home and remain as keepsakes in the adult's current life.

Performing Indigenous Nationhood

The use of embodied knowledge in resistance and resurgence

In a settler colonial dominated society, Indigenous people's embodied potential for resistance to erasure and the resurgence (revitalization) of their nations lie in their world views. It is imperative to understand that (1) Indigeneity is a way of life that is active, lived, and relational, endlessly signified through Indigenous place-based ecological philosophies, (2) these worldviews are incompatible with a Eurocentric capitalist worldview, and (3) as such, these worldviews have been disparagingly portrayed as primitive and targeted for erasure. This essay centralizes the Indigenous body as a source of agency (capacity to act) and argues that gestural vocabulary, as embodied archives of Indigenous Knowledge, are political tools of resistance and resurgence as they counter colonial portrayals of Indigenous peoples, repatriate ancestral Indigenous Knowledge to the present, and (re)assert relationality to place. The first part of this exploration establishes the centrality of embodiment to Indigenous worldviews and provides examples to demonstrate how performance is used as a method of teaching and of realizing spiritual, social, legal, and political obligations. The second part focuses on the imperative of recentering ancestral knowledges in one's Indigenous being in order to be politically resistant and resurgent. Finally, through Martineau and Ritskes' use of "decolonial aesthetics," three examples of contemporary Indigenous performers—Sam Mitchell, Neil Morris, a.k.a DRMNGNOW, and sister duo Piqsiq—are analyzed to illustrate how performance is used as a way to re-ancestralize the present, assert Indigenous political difference, and envision possibilities of Indigenous futurities outside the confines of the settler state.

Religious Responses to Cultural Issues

Sikhism & its response to Indo-Canadian gang violence in the lower mainland, British Columbia, Canada

This article looks at gang prevention initiatives geared to second-generation Punjabi male youth in Surrey, British Columbia. Using a semi-structured interview method, I interview a community activist and co-chair of a community coalition to better understand social work responses to gang violence. I conduct a literature review of scholarly articles to critique the advocacy response and reveal sites of contradiction between generations of Punjabi Sikhs. The community coalition understands gang violence as male youths' alienation from Sikh religious institutions such as the Gurdwara (Sikh Temple). Using secondary sources, I uncover contradictions between first-generation and second-generation Punjabi immigrants about the use of religious responses to solve gang violence. On one hand, first-generation Punjabi immigrants believe Gurdwaras are the central hub of the community and must be included in a gang prevention response. On the other hand, second-generation Punjabi immigrants understand Gurdwaras as rigid spaces that lack strong leadership. I investigate a specific advocacy response by the community coalition held in collaboration with second-generation Punjabi youth, Sikh leaders, police agencies, and a collaborative community-university project. During a two-day residential summit, a collaborative gang-prevention action plan is created, with a recommendation to create an accessible resource booklet titled "Understanding Youth in Gangs," made available to Punjabi youth and families. However, I critique the funding process of this resource booklet, which is embedded in racist and political discourses dismissing Punjabi ways of family life and reinforcing Eurocentric ideologies of family and call on second-generation Punjabi male youth to exert their voices and power to build gang prevention strategies that support their visions and imaginings.

GUNJAN BHARDWAJ

If You Could Help Thousands, Would You?

Every year, thousands are incarcerated for non-violent drug crimes. Rehabilitation can break the cycle of recidivism. This paper examines the benefits of rehabilitation as compared to traditional jail sentences for non-violent drug offenders. Current research on the injustice faced by non-violent drug offenders in the criminal justice system is limited. A literature review comprising research articles, case studies, meta-analyses, and reports shows that rehabilitation centres help integrate non-violent drug offenders back into society, and rehabilitative programs are both cheaper and more effective than prisons. The author considers counterarguments (e.g., a prison sentence is just), but ultimately finds that prison systems are significantly less apt to reduce drug crime recidivism than rehabilitation centres and may even increase the likelihood that a non-violent felon would reoffend. Experimental research on recidivism rates, rehabilitation centres and prisons is called for.

Digital Technologies to Fill Gaps in HIV Management in Low-Resource Settings

HIV is one of leading causes of death in the developing world and continues to be a global health concern. The HIV epidemic affects the most vulnerable and marginalized populations around the world and is fueled by a broad range of environmental, political, cultural, and social contexts. The purpose of this research project is to explore ways in which digital technology can fill gaps in HIV management, with a focus on low-resource countries. Over half of the world's population is now online; text messaging and social networking sites offer an opportunity to improve the reach of health information and services to diverse and remote populations. A literature review was conducted to examine interventions involving digital technology to improve health outcomes, health behaviour, and delivery of health-care services for HIV positive patients. In low-resource settings, the use of mobile technology can be used for the delivery of HIV management and care. Going digital for health is no longer an option—it is the default.

Autism and Metacognition

This paper explores the link between metacognition—thinking about thinking, or the awareness of one’s own mental states—and mindreading—the ability to interpret the mental states of others—in people with an autism spectrum disorder. The purpose of this research is to understand how well autistic children can understand their own minds, as well as the minds of others. Findings from numerous experiments suggest that people on the autism spectrum have difficulty interpreting others, but metacognitive abilities are intact. Although mindreading is a challenge, theory of mind is unimpaired; they can understand their own mental life, judge accurately, and use feedback to correct mistakes. The finding that theory of mind remains unimpaired in people with autism is significant. Understanding the way autistic-like traits interfere with metacognition and mindreading abilities broadens therapy alternatives for people with autism.

WHO's Ready for the Next Flu Pandemic?

Global governance of influenza pandemic preparedness

In an increasingly interconnected world, viruses can spread faster and farther than ever before. Sometimes the spread of disease reaches pandemic levels, as has occurred with influenza. Pandemic preparedness is the means through which nations prepare for the population-level threat of infectious disease. National preparedness is not enough to counter a rapidly evolving virus like influenza; global coordination is needed. The World Health Organization's (WHO) role has been to lead this coordinated effort. How has the WHO used governance to address global influenza pandemic preparedness? This paper first explores the regulations and recommendations the WHO has developed for global influenza pandemic preparedness, the International Health Regulations (IHR) and Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework. Next, the 2009 H1N1 pandemic is used as a case study. Occurring chronologically in between the adoption of the IHR and PIP Framework, H1N1 revealed the shortcomings of the former and need for the latter. The governance challenges of influenza pandemic preparedness are discussed, including the limitations of the WHO's approach. It was found that the pre-H1N1 approach was not well-suited for low-income countries, where health systems could not easily meet the IHR obligations established by the WHO. The more recent PIP Framework is non-binding, which risks stakeholders not following through with commitments should another influenza pandemic occur. Recommendations are made to improve the strategy of the WHO, including changes to governance, scope, funding, and enforcement. Pandemic influenza is an ongoing challenge for global health governance and the WHO has made progress in addressing this threat.

Comparing Psychology and Non-Psychology Student Attitudes Toward Care Seeking

Despite evidence that counselling and other forms of psychotherapy are critical to mental health recovery (Corrigan, 2014), fewer than one third of people living with mental illness seek treatment (Maranzan, 2014). Stigma surrounding mental health deters people from seeking help. Our 2018 study found that York University (Toronto, Canada) students implicitly associate care-seeking activities with negative personal attributes. Exposure, in the form of contact and education about psychological support, reduces stigma and negative biases (O'Brien et al., 2010; Rudman et al., 2001). We hypothesize that students studying psychology should have fewer negative associations toward seeking treatment. Using the implicit associations task (IAT), we assessed whether this is the case. Twenty-nine psychology students and 29 non-psychology students from York University completed the IAT. First, participants classified different activities (e.g., counselling) as being related to care seeking or daily living, and different personality traits (e.g., antisocial) as being positive or negative. Second, they classified these activities and traits into paired categories of either congruent (care-seeking/ negative and daily living/positive) or non-congruent (care-seeking/positive and daily living/negative) stereotyped associations. The reaction times to classify each item into the congruent and incongruent categories were evaluated. While all students were faster in the congruent associations, the results showed an interaction between areas of study and association pairs. Being exposed to incongruent pairs—i.e., care seeking and positive personality traits—slows down non-psychology more than psychology students. These results suggest that exposure to psychology courses does contribute to reducing negative biases against mental health care.

Psychological Myth Buster

Do we really only use 10% of our brain?

The origins of the 10% myth are elusive. There are many early scientists (e.g., Albert Einstein, Pierre Flourens), philosophers (e.g., William James), writers (e.g., Dale Carnegie) and psychologists (e.g., Karl Lashley) who inadvertently contributed to the evolution and popularization of this myth. The 10% myth is attractive to us for many reasons; it opens up a world of unknown possibilities that are both mysterious and exciting and gives us hope for improving our quality of life. In fact, if any part of the brain was removed or inactive, there would be noticeable and lasting behavioural and cognitive effects. Our brains are complex machines that require all parts to be in working order for typical healthy functioning.

MITRI ELIAS

The Effects of Naphthalene on the Environment

Naphthalene is a type 2 carcinogen that metabolizes in the body through oxidative transformation. It can be found in the atmosphere and in water and soil as well as in day-to-day products such as insecticides, deodorizers, toys, antiseptics, mothballs, and tobacco smoke. It enters the body mainly through a gaseous form, but it can also be ingested or absorbed dermally.

Eat Dementia Away!

Nutrition has only recently been studied for its protective role in cognition. In order to find which nutrients are the key players for maintaining optimal mental health, a thorough bibliographic review of recent literature was conducted. Water, some fats (n-3 PUFAs), vitamins, minerals, and polyphenols were shown to play an essential role, mainly due to their role in brain development, their participation in neural mechanisms, and their antioxidant properties. The Mediterranean Diet is rich in these elements and is better for the brain than diets with high sugar and saturated fat.

Are We Doing Enough to Protect Black-Tailed Prairie Dogs?

According to the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, the black-tailed prairie dog is a profoundly threatened species with a drastically declining population, leaving only a small Canadian group remaining in southern Saskatchewan. This scoping review identifies their ecological role, high-impact threats, proposed management plans, and gaps in the effectiveness of these plans. Prairie dogs are keystone species that play a large ecological role in their communities, from maintaining nutrient and moisture-rich soil for plant species to serving as important prey for several rare and endangered species, and more. The two main threats of a significant population drop with low likelihood of recovery are the sylvatic plague and droughts. As part of a management plan, these species are held within the range of Grassland National Park. Although this initiative is useful for preventing human-induced threats (e.g., hunting or intentional poisoning by landowners), the high concentration in such a small area makes the threat of a plague outbreak among these highly social creatures more devastating and likely irreversible. Through our analyses, we argue that the existing management plan is not sufficient to protect these species, given the projected increase of extreme climate events. As the impacts of climate change become more severe, the frequency of droughts will rise, which will simultaneously weaken the animals' defenses against the plague. This will ultimately leave the black-tailed dog population vulnerable and there is bound to be a cascading population collapse within species in their community.

ADAM GARISTO

Ford Fest

Community barbeque or ethical nightmare?

Ford Fest is an annual barbeque organized by one of Ontario's most powerful families: the Fords. The main concern is that Doug Ford, the Premier of Ontario, uses the event to make voters beholden to the Progressive Conservative Party; therefore, the ethics of Ford Fest must be examined. First, it must be determined that Ford Fest is misleading the public. The event operates under the guise of a community barbeque; however, closer examination reveals its true nature as a political rally. Second, Ford Fest provides free food and entertainment for its guests; is this bribery? It seems that these perks are intended to make voters beholden to the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada and Premier Ford.; is this ethical? News media and the Party's and the Premier's social media about the event were analyzed using two competing theories: utilitarianism and deontology to determine the ethics of this event. The author concludes that political parties should not be able to bribe voters for support. Political parties should be expected to appeal to voters through messaging and policy, not barbeques and perks.

Reconsidering Citizenship

Canada's policy approach to migrants with disabilities

Under the Live-In Caregiver Program, Karen Talosig, a Filipino caregiver, applied for permanent residency in Canada for herself and her daughter. Her daughter was initially unable to join her because the daughter was deemed “medically inadmissible” due to her profound deafness. The purpose of examining Talosig’s case is to illustrate how Canada’s medical inadmissibility clause unfairly targets migrants with disabilities in what is supposed to be a diverse and inclusive society. I investigate how Canadian domestic law contradicts its international legal obligations and how the economic interests of a state can be used to justify closed borders. Canada has an obligation to migrants with disabilities and should consider the economic contribution temporary foreign workers have made to the country. Although Talosig lacked formal citizenship, she carved a space for herself in Canada and constructed an informal sense of belonging as she worked as a caregiver and took on three additional jobs over seven years. Understanding Canada’s obligations to migrants with disabilities and temporary foreign workers is assessed through economic, legal, and social justifications. The goal of this study is to provide various recommendations for the Canadian government on how it can alter current policies in order to uphold multiculturalism, diversity, and inclusion in the country.

Looking on the Bright Side

Comparing long-distance relationships and geographically close relationships

Long-distance relationships (LDRs) are increasingly popular (McCoy, Hjelmstad, & Stinson, 2013). Approximately 35–40% of college students and 1 million American adults report being in a long-distance relationship at any given time (Belus, Pentel, Cohen, Fischer, & Baucom, 2018; Du Bois et al., 2015; Lee & Pistole, 2012). As relationship and sexual satisfaction is an important aspect of personal well-being and a common reason for seeking therapy, counsellors and college counsellors need to know how to deal with LDRs (Kelmer, Rhoades, Stanley, & Marman, 2013; Lee & Pistole, 2012). Previous research on relationship satisfaction in LDRs compared to geographically close relationships is examined and found to be contradictory. This paper explores the challenges and benefits of LDRs and reviews current theoretical literature and potential therapeutic applications. The paper identifies gaps in current literature and proposes a study analyzing sexual frequency and satisfaction in long-distance relationships compared to geographically close relationships. Understanding more about sexuality in LDRs could help couples cope with and prepare for the unique challenges presented by this type of relationship (Dargie et al., 2015).

Why Labour Migrants Should Have the Same Rights as Citizens Throughout Member States in the European Union

This research paper argues that migrant workers should be granted the same rights as citizens in the European Union. To accomplish this, scholarly texts and documents produced by European Commission (EU) were examined. Since the Treaty of Paris and the European Coal and Steel Commission, the integration of migrant labour into Europe has increased, an increase which brings many benefits to EU member states. Permitting migration and free movement to countries also brings various social benefits. Along with multiculturalism, migrant workers introduce new ideas into a country and generate jobs in several sectors. In particular, temporary migrant workers fill employment needs. Yet some people view migrant workers negatively because labour rights grant migrant workers the opportunity to access state welfare programs. EU member states have different rules outlining how temporary and permanent workers can function in their countries, and the possibility of becoming a citizen or resident of a country can, in turn, grant people EU status. The treatment of migrant workers affects their living and working conditions, factors that are affected by treaties and policies. With persisting anti-immigrant sentiment occurring throughout the EU, this topic is crucial.

Climate Change Solutions

Electric mobility at York University

Our intention is to ensure that York University transitions to 100% renewable energy sources over the course of the next few years in light of Canada's climate emergency declaration. We aim to mitigate carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions on campus through innovative transportation methods, infrastructure, culture, and art. To enhance this research, we reviewed scholarly literature and used geographic information system (GIS) mapping and Helioscope to calculate the possibility of photovoltaic energy. We conclude that the transition to renewable energy sources is not only possible, but entirely feasible, and will move the university toward carbon-free status. Suitable means of transport include electric bicycles, electric mobility charging stations, and micro grid solutions. Based on simulation results, we design a pilot plan and locate the most efficient places on campus for locating renewable facilities. Current research suggests that humanity has approximately ten years to mitigate and reverse the effects of climate change to ensure the future of our planet, its biodiversity, and the human species.

The Role of Lipids in Neuronal Plasticity

A link to autism spectrum disorders

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder defined by deficits in social communication and by restricted and repetitive behaviours. ASD impacts 1 in 66 children and is four times more likely to appear in males. Recent research provides evidence for the link between abnormal lipid (or fats) signalling in the brain and ASD. Lipids are critical for healthy brain development, including synaptic plasticity. Synaptic (or neuronal) plasticity involves the dynamic changes of connections formed in the brain between neurons (or brain cells). Previous studies demonstrated abnormal levels of prostaglandin E2 (PGE2), the major bioactive lipid in the brain, which can be influenced in pregnancy by environmental factors such as air pollution, aspirin, or inflammation and lead to ASD. Our lab investigates how molecular mechanisms of abnormal prenatal levels of PGE2 affect brain pathology and lead to ASD. The goal of this study is to determine if changes in the level of PGE2 can influence neuronal plasticity. We tested this in vivo in the mouse cerebellum through analysis of neuronal morphology and in vitro detection of nitric oxide (NO) production, an indicator of synaptic plasticity. We used Golgi-cox staining, confocal microscopy, and open-source software to analyze stage and sex differences of aspects of neuronal morphology. Additionally, the influence of PGE2 in regulating nitric oxide production in differentiating neurons was investigated, using time-lapse fluorescence microscopy. Our novel findings show that healthy brain development is influenced by sex and neurodevelopmental stage. Furthermore, we provide evidence that exposure to PGE2 leads to increased production of nitric oxide in differentiating neurons in vitro. Our study provides insight into the importance of PGE2 signalling in neuronal plasticity; abnormal levels may influence brain development and can lead to neurodevelopmental disorders such as ASD.

Life Microinsurance as a Risk–Coping Mechanism for Canadian Households

Every household encounters some unexpected costly event at some point in time. The death of a family member seriously affects the household's finances. Not only are funerals expensive but also, if the deceased individual contributed to the family's total income, the family needs to reallocate its resources to deal with that shock. Many times, even when family members use all their savings, it is not enough to cover the full cost and they must look elsewhere. Having insurance could be an enormous help to families and would not put them in a situation where they use all their savings. Unfortunately, even with an established insurance culture, not everyone is able to afford insurance. Life microinsurance has been used in many developing countries to help low-income individuals deal with such unexpected events. However, there is little knowledge of whether and how microinsurance can be used in the context of a developed country like Canada. To address this knowledge gap, the Risk and Insurance Studies Centre (RISC) at York University collected data to assess the risks faced by low-income individuals in Canada and their risk management strategies. These data would help identify the potential market for microinsurance and help design an insurance product to meet the needs of Canadians. This paper looks at how life microinsurance can be used as a risk-coping mechanism for Canadian households. Life microinsurance has the potential to be successful in Canada. As long as Canadians are willing to pay the proposed premiums for the product and do not have negative attitudes toward insurance, it would be profitable. Due to the fact that life microinsurance is relatively easy to provide, it could be an opportunity to transfer any successful approaches to other lines of business.

CHRISTINA MARTON, ISRAT ERA, GORDON HAWKS,
SYED HUSSAIN, & ROSALYN KISH

Pingo Formation

The word pingo is gleaned from the Inuit word pinga. It describes the ice-cored conical hills of the Mackenzie Delta in Canada. Pingos form in high-latitude periglacial regions of permafrost in areas where thermokarst lakes exist. These lakes initially form due to the freeze/thaw action of the active layer. Due to their requirement of large amounts of water, pingos tend to grow in regions with a steady supply of groundwater or in areas where there is an accumulation of outwash material. Pingos form under the ground surface and grow upward from a depression of accumulated water. The freezing water is pushed toward the surface and forms an ice structure that appears as a lens. If properly insulated around the edges, a mini, human-made pingo can be used to demonstrate and study pingo genesis.

Progressive Conservative Ratification of Ontario Health

The ratification of Bill 74, titled “The People’s Health Care Act,” centralizes provincial responsibility for healthcare into a consolidated Ontario Health agency (Ontario Health), which contains a multitude of regional and provincial services. The objective of this essay is to elucidate how the consolidation of Ontario’s regional and provincial health services hinders positive progression. The centralization of health services fails to ameliorate the province’s complex and interconnected healthcare system. The current Progressive Conservative administration, under Premier Doug Ford, is critically analyzed according to dominant ideologies, theories, and methods. The essay seeks to contextualize and explain the decisions of the elected party with respect to apparent health reforms. Previous attempts to consolidate health care within Canada are also discussed, including an in-depth analysis of Ontario’s Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs). Consequentially, the formation of the Ontario Health agency fails to advance the province in a meaningful and efficient way toward an interconnected healthcare system. The research for this essay was based on academic papers and on media sources. While acknowledging the need for reforms to Ontario’s healthcare system, the author opposes the ratification of Bill 74.

MICHAEL MONTELEONE

The Effect of Temperature on Active, Inactive, and Stereotypical Behaviours in Captive Polar Bears (*Ursus Maritimus*)

*Rising temperatures are the main threat to the survival of polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*). Studying how temperature affects their main behaviours can help determine the best way to assist their adaptation to the changing climate. The purpose of this study is to compare the behavioural profiles of five captive polar bears at the Toronto Zoo across a range of temperatures. Scan sampling was used to collect data; every fifteen minutes, the bears' locations and activities were recorded, while temperature and weather were recorded hourly. The results show that, as the temperature rises, the bears find different ways to cope. One of the five bears significantly increased stereotypical behaviours as the temperature rose. This is important because it shows that, even within a small temperature range, an increase in temperature can result in an increase in stereotypical behaviours and a decrease in animal welfare.*

Addressing the Gender Gap in Canadian Health Research Funding

Much research has been published on the inequities faced by women in research. In Canada, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) is the national investment agency for health research, providing a billion dollars annually to researchers through various grants and awards. In 2019, an article entitled “Are gender gaps due to evaluations of the applicant or the science? A natural experiment at a national funding agency” (Witteman, Hendricks, Straus & Tannenbaum) drew attention to the gender gaps present in CIHR funding. Through a comparison of three CIHR grant programs, the authors concluded that these gender gaps arose from grant reviewers evaluating women less favourably than men, rather than from differences in research proposal quality. Our project proposes that the CIHR modify their “Equity Strategy” to implement an “Equal Representation Policy” over ten years. Based on women’s representation within the general Canadian population, this will ensure that 50.9% of grant funding is given to women. Implementation of this proposal will involve reaching out to four key stakeholder groups. Once established, data collection, milestone setting, and compliance enforcement methods are suggested for evaluation and sustainability. Research is foundational to the practice standards, legislation, best-practice guidelines, and evidence-based practice that guide nursing and medical practice, all of which directly impact the health of Canadians. Until changes to society’s current gender biases and gender norms occur, we believe adopting a target-based policy to minimize gender biases in research funding is the most effective solution.

Smart Drugs?

Cognitive enhancing drugs and the consequences on healthy populations

Cognitive enhancing drugs (CEDs) are prescription medicines that facilitate cognitive performance. CEDs commonly refer to the pharmaceutical treatments for deficits and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) through the prescription of Adderall (amphetamine), Ritalin (methylphenidate), or Modafinil. These drugs strengthen levels of alertness, allocation of attention, formation of working memory and long-term memory, and operation of executive functioning such as problem-solving and decision-making. In 2018, the Global Drug Survey revealed both the prevalence of and significant increase in the use of pharmacological cognitive enhancement since 2011. Cognitive enhancement refers to the misuse of prescribed CEDs for non-medical performance enhancement. Some scholars argue that neuroenhancement is beneficial for the general population by improving personal achievement and life quality. Others contend that the non-medical use of CEDs poses significant risks to the cognition (brain development) and behaviour (addiction, poor self-monitoring) of users. This paper reviews the literature on the practice of cognitive enhancement and argues that its usage should not be permitted in the healthy population as it causes detrimental neural effects on consumers and legal and ethical issues for society.

Time Flies When You're Having Fun

A fruit fly study on aging

Drosophila melanogaster is a species of flies that has been used as a model organism for over a century. *Drosophila* has a fully sequenced genome that contains genes equivalent to at least 75% of the genes found in humans. This makes it a great model organism to study biological questions pertaining to human health, including aging. Aging has long been attributed to the cellular and molecular changes inside a cell, but little is known about the genes which play a role in the process of aging. Although studies have attempted to elucidate the function of these genes, often ignored is the accessibility of these genes to DNA-reading molecular machinery, which likely influences their expression and contributes to the processes of aging. Studies have noted that females often survive longer than males, and this is true across multiple species, including *Homo sapiens* (humans) and *Drosophila melanogaster* (common fruit fly). It has been suggested that the highly condensed, or heterochromatic, male Y chromosome, which is inaccessible to the cell's DNA-reading molecular machinery, causes shorter survival rates. This study explores the relationship between heterochromatin and aging. Research methodology included laboratory experimentation, including a genetic experiment, to compare the gene expression profiles for flies with normal, modified, and partially absent heterochromatin, and a literature search on the biochemical function of these genes. The study determines that six key genes are strongly implicated in aging and that these genes remove the toxic by-products created by cells when they produce energy. It concludes that organisms containing a greater amount of heterochromatin have a reduced ability to produce these key anti-aging genes.

JOANNE ONG

Does Being Confident Matter Equally for Women and Men?

Being confident matters, but does it matter equally for women and men? Extending research on the gender gap in confidence, we consider whether the economic return of being self-confident is gendered. Analyzing data from Statistics Canada's 2016 General Social Survey (N= 19,294), we find that not only are women less self-assured than men but the earning power of being confident is also less strong among women than men. In other words, gender moderates the impact of confidence on personal income. The economic return for being self-confident is lower among women than men, while compensation for men is higher than what should be observed in a non-discriminatory world. The fact that being confident is rewarded unequally between genders suggests that social bias against women is one major source for women's lack of confidence. If left unaddressed, the unequal economic return of self-confidence will continue to obstruct the movement toward equal pay for equal work and lead women to accept that their underestimation is a normalized aspect of personal and community life.

SHADAE ROCHELLE ROACH

The Trial of the Death of Cindy Gladue

#CinduGladue: Degradation, representation, and competing ideologies

Each year, women and girls from Aboriginal and Indigenous communities are missing or murdered, with no justice served. The trial of the death of Cindy Gladue (2015) was one that could set precedent for women who are Indigenous and for women who are sex workers. I reviewed and analyzed the trial and media trends and found three common themes: degradation ceremonies, representation of women, and ideological contestations. This review focused on the denunciation of Cindy Gladue, on consent and sex workers, and on the ideologies of indigenous communities and sex workers. The paper concludes that the Canadian criminal justice system continues to fail women of colour and Indigenous communities; however, the growth of social media channels has increased public knowledge and increased awareness about the rights and protection of individuals.

The Psychological Effects of Bullying on Students

Bullying is a significant problem because of its prevalent and its serious psychological effects on victims (Hertz et al., 2013). Bullying is an action of repetitive, unwanted, aggressive behaviour that includes physical actions such as hitting, kicking, or spitting, and verbal actions such as threatening, name-calling, teasing, or spreading rumors (Gan et al., 2014). This paper focuses on traditional bullying rather than on cyberbullying. Because bullying is common among school-age children and has serious effects, it is a public health concern and needs the attention of educators, policy makers, and health care providers (Bradley, 2013). Annually, 20–56% of young people are involved in bullying either as a victim, a perpetrator, or both (Hertz et al., 2013). A World Health Organization study places Canada sixth out of 38 countries for high rates of bullying, while the Canadian Institutes of Health Research report that one in three adolescents is bullied (Bradley, 2013). This paper concludes that victims of traditional bullying in schools are more likely to experience psychological issues such as social anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, and suicidal ideation than those who are not bullied.

The Cessation of Coal-Fired Power Plants in Ontario

Costs, benefits, and alternatives

During the 1960s, the desire to provide cheap electricity for industrialization in Southern Ontario, when the economy was booming from post-war development, led Ontario to build six coal-fired power plants; however, as the economy changed and Ontario began to deindustrialize in the 1980s, the province was producing an excess of electricity, thus leading to a fall in electricity prices. This drop led to the financial collapse and privatization of Ontario Hydro. In 2001, former Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty proposed an ambitious plan to close all six coal-fired power plants in Ontario, and completely shift Ontario's electricity industry toward zero-carbon generation. This study explores in depth whether the closure of all coal-fired power plants in Ontario meets the definition of energy sustainability proposed by Mark Jaccard, and how the Government of Ontario was successful in closing all coal-fired plants. It explores the costs and benefits of closing these plants by analyzing future health-care costs caused by pollution, and environmental costs such as smog days in summer; furthermore, this paper discusses how the Government of Ontario replaced the electricity produced by coal-fired power plants by investing in nuclear energy, increasing capacity of hydroelectricity, and increasing investment in renewable energy such as wind. Finally, the author weighs the negative upstream and downstream effects of electricity generation from alternatives in Ontario, such as nuclear and hydropower, to discern whether closing coal-fired plants was financially and environmentally feasible. After analysis, the author concludes that closing all coal-fired power plants in Ontario led to energy sustainability, saved the Government of Ontario billions in health-care costs, and aided Ontario in mitigating climate change.

Healthcare Organization Employees and Influenza Vaccination

Through ethical reasoning, this paper will demonstrate several ways in which a mandatory requirement for all health-care staff to obtain the annual influenza vaccination, unless medically or religiously unable, can improve patient and health-system outcomes. The influenza virus vaccination is provided to protect individuals from obtaining various strains of the influenza virus. Health care workers staffed in organizations aimed at providing optimal person-centred care are vulnerable to viral infection. The results of an extensive literature review showed that, when health-care staff are protected against influenza, patients are better able to trust their care providers, thanks to staff commitment to duty of care. In addition, when health-care staff in an organization receive the influenza vaccination, patients have better health outcomes. Lastly, results show that, when staff are protected against influenza, there is less absenteeism and the financial costs of care are reduced. The paper concludes that, when health-care staff are protected against influenza with the influenza vaccination, individuals are able to receive optimal, patient-centred care.

Sticks and Stones

The psychological effects of corporal punishment on children

Society's approach to corporal punishment varies dramatically. Some people firmly believe that physically disciplining children leads to damaging results later in life: detrimental effects on mental health, cognitive development, aggression, reclusiveness, and anti-social behaviours. Others view physical punishment as an effective deterrent for undesirable behaviour. This project explores the psychological impact of corporal punishment on children. The author conducted an in-depth literature review of previous research and found both short-term and long-term detrimental effects on young children and on adolescents. The author concludes that corporal punishment is psychologically damaging for children and adolescents, a result that has implications for parenting practices.

Constructing Canadian National Identity

Confronting multiculturalism, whiteness, and the internal Muslim “other”

In this paper, I seek to understand the current terrain of the politics of multiculturalism. To do this, I look at how and why multiculturalism emerged historically. To answer the question, “Is our national identity socially constructed to manage diversity?” I look at the self-endowed power of the state in influencing how the masses perceive themselves in relation to one another, non-nationals, and the outside world. I do not intend to assess whether multiculturalism in Canada has succeeded or failed; rather, I want to explore the ways in which it permeates the perceptions Canadians of different backgrounds have of themselves. To that extent, I use the experience of Canadian Muslims whose ontological positionality within the global sphere is hotly contested, thus affecting their position within the Canadian imaginary. Specifically, I look at the current political landscape to explore how multiculturalism has been shaped by the state to subordinate Muslim Canadians to white Canadians. Overall, I argue that a master narrative of Canadian nationhood has been constructed that uses multiculturalism to sustain a racial hierarchy and erase certain parts of its history, while also concealing the power of whiteness in favour of national unity. I theorize this to have been deployed in stages of homogenization of the population. Furthermore, I argue that the adverse treatment of racial minorities today is due to the deep-rooted dichotomy of the self/other.

RIDA SHAH

The Dimensions of Sex Work and Human Trafficking

This research explores how Canadian legislation, societal norms, and the criminalization of sex work are all factors resulting in unequal treatment and safety risks of sex workers in Canada. Sex workers became more vulnerable under Bill C-36, which became law in 2014 and prohibits the purchase of sexual services; it also prevents sex workers from practicing in a safe environment and without the prejudice from powerful institutions such as the police and the law. Sex work and human trafficking are seen as interchangeable, and the bias associated with sex work has left many negative effects on women sex workers. Sex workers experience discrimination, abuse, harassment, and life-threatening situations. By means of a literature review and analysis of a court case, a bill, and a parliamentary debate, I explore how Canadian legislation poorly interprets sex work by criminalizing it and risking the safety of sex workers by isolating them legally and socially.

MANMINDER SINGH

An Urban, Ecological Site Analysis of Earl Bales Park

*This paper is part fieldwork, part storytelling, and part research and application of urban ecology theory in an actual physical space. The textbook *Urban Ecology* (2014), by Richard T.T. Forman, provides the backbone of urban ecological theory for this research. I expanded on Forman's concepts by synthesizing environmental history work, local historical texts and maps, policy documents, contemporary news, and development documents. I've attempted to tell a story that merges local history, natural science, social science, and urban ecology as a whole, through my research and my own photographs from my field visits. I've outlined where and when the park lies in space and time, creating a geological and hydrological context. Using this, I hoped to create a timeline and ultimately better understanding of what and why the park is the way it is today—a conglomeration of multiple uses for Toronto's citizens. I narrowed in on an important concept in the field of urban ecology—balancing human urban development and managing ecological sustainability with regard to land use. My research and field work note a future development encroaching on the park lands, which will be a possible point of future research. This development could offer data points for a study of the effect of human densification in nearby urban park ecosystems. I also looked at the strengthening of a popular urban ecology element—wildlife corridors—and concluded that this park is a prime candidate for their implementation.*

Security Sector Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The limitations of “Europeanization”

Security sector reforms (SSR) generally refer to a process in Western-based international development and democratization to make changes to the security sector of a state toward good governance and its principles, such as freedom of information and the rule of law. SSR has become a vital part of the European Union’s (EU) efforts to transform the Western Balkans from a conflict-ridden area into a stable and democratic region of Europe. This paper focuses on SSR in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter, Bosnia) as a case study of the multidimensional and complex Europeanization policies employed by the EU in the region. The research examines the changes in two sectors of Bosnia’s security system with the aim of providing an understanding of the EU’s impact on the domestic conditions of candidate states. The main argument is that the EU used police and intelligence reforms in Bosnia (both of which were part of the SSR efforts in the country) as state-building tools. However, due to Bosnia’s lack of domestic competence and the inexperience of the EU to properly and effectively implement SSR, the reforms have had very little success and reveal the limitations of the state’s Europeanization.

BREANNA SYNE

The Rebranding of Georgetown, Guyana

Urbanization is a global phenomenon that currently affects many developing nations striving for economic and political freedom from oppressors by developing their markets and economies. In South America, Guyana is on the verge of launching its new oil industry, predicted to help boost the economy and generate wealth. Whether or not this new industry will benefit the people of Guyana and how it will affect the country's future are major questions. This paper explores the potential risks and future implications of Guyana's new oil industry through a literature review and a comparative analysis of other developing nations that have undergone similar developments of their energy sectors. The author explores the implications of rebranding Guyana's capital city, Georgetown, and concludes that deals made with international oil corporations do not guarantee immediate benefits to the people of Guyana.

Indigenous Conservation in Canada

How Indigenous-led conservation is an alternative model for Canada

This literature-based paper will examine the state of Indigenous-led conservation in the context of conservation in Canada, historically and presently, and how Indigenous-led conservation philosophies differ from Canada's conservation philosophies. The results demonstrate that Indigenous-led conservation is a healthier and more sustainable conservation model than Canada's, which privileges scientific methodologies and ideologies. In particular, Indigenous-led conservation models focus more centrally on the interconnected systems of land and water, as well as nature and people. Still, the model is not solely a holistic model that excludes scientific methods. Further, Indigenous-led conservation models ultimately support and build reconciliation between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Peoples. I will close by exploring three successful examples that will illustrate the feasibility and efficacy of Indigenous-led conservation.

Deeper or Wider?

Future of the ever-closer union

Over time, the European Union has progressively evolved into what aspires to be an 'ever-closer union' among the peoples of Europe. In fifty years, the European Union has managed to grow from six members to twenty-seven, and two leading schools of thought have often been mentioned when speaking about the future development of the European Union: either deepening or widening. However, since the European sovereign debt crisis of 2009 and the European migrant crisis beginning in 2015, public opinion surrounding the two schools of thought has shifted. Through the use of Eurobarometer and Eurostat data, I analyze citizens' opinions and support for deepening or for widening. This project explores whether a member state's date of joining, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, and citizen education levels throughout the country have an effect on citizens' opinions and support for further deepening and/or widening of the European Union. The findings may assist in better understanding the future of the European Union.

Instructions for Authors

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Submissions should be in MS Word or RTF format (double-spaced and in 12-point font) and are accepted in English or in French. Articles should not exceed 3500 words (up to 15 pages double-spaced) and must use APA style (7th edition) for layout, in-text citations, and bibliography, along with the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* for spelling. Photographs or other images must be labelled and require permission from the creator or must be in the public domain. In addition to the paper itself, submissions should include: a title page with author name(s) and a permanent email address and/or telephone number, an abstract of 150-200 words (double-spaced), a list of key terms, a bibliography in APA style, and the date of presentation at York University's Undergraduate Research Fair as well as the date of submission for consideration for publication in this e-journal.

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