Introductory Notes on Engaging with Communities for Justice

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Since the 2016 U.S. Presidential election, the rise in hate around the country has increased dramatically. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), in the days immediately following the election of President Trump, a wave of hate crimes and lesser hate incidents swept the country- 1,094 bias incidents in the first 34 days (Potok, 2017). More than a third of these incidents directly referenced Trump, his "Make America Great Again" slogan, or his infamous misogynistic, racist, xenophobic or other demeaning remarks.

New and energetic hate and white supremacy groups have appeared that are almost entirely focused on Trump and seemingly live off his election and continued defamatory rhetoric. Some of these more recent groups have included: Identity Evropa, (newly re-branded as the American Identity Movement (AIM) whose membership includes Washington's own James Allsup); The Right Stuff, an alt-right group based in New York; and Vanguard American, a group that has grown out of the previous existence of American Vanguard, following a split between its members (Hatewatch, 2017).

In addition to the rise in hate groups, the use of social media for recruitment and publication of white supremacy dogma has also been utilized. For instance, The Daily Stormer, the website whose chief came up with the term "Our Glorious Leader" for Trump, expanded into real-world activism by starting 31 "clubs" (Potoc, 2017). According to the SPLC in July 2017, The Daily Stormer became the most visited hate site on the Internet, surpassing longtime hate leader Stormfront (Hankes, 2017).

Other forms of social media have also sky-rocketed in use, perhaps directly related to Trump's habit of exploiting Twitter for his own agenda. Koerner (2019) reaffirms this with her article in response to President Trump's July 14, 2019 tweet, "Trump's Racism Hit a New Level as He Told Four Congresswomen to 'Go Back' to Their 'Broken' Countries." Even though three of the four congress women were born in the U.S., and all four are American citizens, Trump's rhetoric continues to create division and hostility around the nation. As an example of the confrontation, Speaker Nancy Pelosi responded, "When @realDonaldTrump tells four

American Congresswomen to go back to their countries, he reaffirms his plan to 'Make America Great Again' has always been about making America white again" while a Trump supporter wrote, "I LOVE how Trump can trigger all the liberals with one tweet and send Democrats into a tizzy, while he gets important things done behind their backs. Trump is BRILLIANT" (Koerner, 2019, para. 21-22).

While the numbers of hate groups operating in the country remained at near-historic highs, the election of Donald Trump, and related developments in Europe and elsewhere around the globe, represent the culmination of a series of long-developing trends. As the world has become more interconnected, the increasingly globalized economy, global warming, and resource challenges have fomented massive migrant flows and severe shocks to the industrial sectors of most developed countries. These challenges are becoming more and more complicated as resource scarcity and perception of otherness, and as a result hatred, intensify.

In the past few years, not only has the SPLC been intensively monitoring hate groups across the U.S., but it has also been scrutinizing the Internet and the increasingly important role it plays in recruitment and dissemination of propaganda for hate groups (Potok, 2000). As Potok (2000) reflects, "We have seen how this technology has been adopted wholesale by such groups, and the remarkable and unprecedented access this has afforded these groups to teenagers and other potential recruits, both in the United States and in Europe" (para. 4). Although American extremists previously experimented with crude computer bulletin boards during the late 1980s and early 1990s - mainly as a means of internal communication for various group members, it was not until March 1995 that the first World Wide Web hate site *Stormfront* went up. Unlike more traditional forms of debating ideas such as public forums, classrooms or even over the family dinner table, the talk on the Internet is often limited to those who already agree with one another. There is no real exchange of ideas on *Stormfront, whitepower.com.* or other alt-right sites. For example, *Telegram*, a messaging app in which channel moderators urge their followers to "destabilize the US," "kill the cops," "shoot lawmakers," and attack synagogues, mosques and other houses of worship, has multiple channels devoted to a so-called "terrorwave" (Hayden, 2019). This alt-right rhetoric refers to internet-based propaganda that glorifies political violence through the use of heavily stylized, cyberpunk aesthetics (Hayden, 2019). One of the more prolific content creators in the alt-right is Joseph Jordan who contributed almost 700 posts to the neo-Nazi website the Daily Stormer between the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2018 (Hayden, 2019). Since 2016, Jordan has appeared on hundreds of hours of alt-right podcasts across dozens of different shows (Hayden, 2019). Few alt-right performers of the Trump era have produced

as much propaganda in terms of raw megabytes as Jordan has under his Striker moniker.

With the rise in hate groups, and their creative use of modern technology to forward their ideology of hate, the need for community engagement, especially around justice and counter movements is profound. One means to counter this increase in hate groups, at the local, national, international and on-line forums is through community engagement. According to Gutierrez and Alvarez (1996), Pilisuk, McAllister, and Rothman (1996) and Staples (2004), grassroots organizing is conceptualized through actions such as community development, social action, and empowerment. As Staples (2004) writes, "Community development involves participants in constructive activities and processes to produce improvements, opportunities, structures, goods, and services that increase the quality of life, build individual and collective capacities, and enhance social solidarity" (p. 7). Furthermore, social action is aimed at organizing people who are oppressed or disadvantaged, or who are encountering groups with ideologies vastly different than the community, and/or encouraging them to take action on their own behalf. Through these actions, individuals and local groups are able to enhance the competencies and enthusiasm, thereby leading to "capacity building" (Pilisuk et al., 1996). Consequently, capacity building is a strong component of organizing in that it empowers people to believe in their abilities to create change. Community may also serve as a crucial context for developing resilience, specifically in countering hate ideologies. Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker (2000) suggest, community development is "a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity" (p. 543). Furthermore, Miller's (2012) psychosocial capacity building model identifies social cohesion and collective efficacy as essential components for developing community resilience because "the well-being of the individual is intricately and recursively connected with the well-being of families and communities" (p. 134). As Kawachi and Berkman (2000) observe, social cohesion refers to connectedness and solidarity among groups. Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997) continue by noting that collective efficacy denotes shared trust and willingness to collaborate for the common good. As Kang (2015) discusses, perceived and experienced discrimination by people of color and other marginalized groups, especially youth, (including xenophobia, sexism, anti-Semitism, gay and transgender phobia etc.) is correlated with numerous negative consequences. Some of these damages include lower levels of psychological functioning, decreased psychological resilience, and increased psychological distress (also see Huynh & Fuligni, 2010; Prelow, Danoff-Burg, Swenson, & Pugiano, 2004). Humans are healthier when they are part of a healthy community and are

exposed to healthy possibilities for living that relate to the realities of their lived experiences (Kang, 2015).

Residents of urban neighborhoods seemingly share a number of similar interests (Rich, 1980). Neighbors experience the same quality of municipal services, use many of the same public facilities and are "intimately affected by each other's actions in regard to such matters as environmental quality, property values and public safety" (p. 570). Therefore, it would make sense that neighborhoods and local communities would have much to gain by coordinating their efforts to solve social problems and realize potential benefits.

Speer and Hughey (1995) found that personal outcomes of community organizing can include empowerment, which encompasses an individual's knowledge about power and his or her subsequent participation within an organization. Empowerment relates to other outcomes as well; for example, Mediratta et al. (2008) and Warren (2001) found an increased parental involvement in schools. Mediratta et al. (2008) also mentioned increased motivation for secondary students who participated in education-focused community organizing.

Swarts' (2008) work discussed broader organizational outcomes that included; (a) building an organization's strength, (b) involving ordinary Americans in civic engagement, and (c) building organizational coalitions across race and class. Although Speer and Hughey (1995) discuss empowerment as a personal outcome, research has also shown it can also have a communal and organizational aspect. This includes defining topics for public debate, shifting the terms of such debate and shaping community views (Oakes & Rogers, 2006; Speer & Hughey, 1995).

As Rappaport (1994) proposes, society, community, and individual perspectives are embodied in three narrative typologies; dominant cultural narratives, community narratives, and personal stories. Dominant cultural narratives are described as "stories about persons, places, or things that have consistent storylines and thematic content across individuals and settings" (p. 570), and are transmitted through the media and in conversation. Dominant cultural narratives are tend to reflect societal views about particular people, places, or things (Rappaport, 1994). Last, community narratives are "descriptive and historical accounts of life in a particular community," and are accessible to community members (Rappaport, 1994, p. 570). These narratives are identified through consistent themes present in the personal stories expressed by individual community members. As such, the presence of community narratives tends to be indicative of shared experiences and shared community identity.

In this volume of the *Journal of Hate Studies* we present a collection of 11 articles, organized in three sections, that reflect one or more of the

issues we outlined above. The lead article in the volume provides a critical lens through which the white nationalist, alt right movements can be viewed. The first part of the volume includes four articles that focus on communities that are often construed as "other" and their experiences of hate in public spaces. The topics presented here include the LGBTQ+ community, Muslim community, and examination of the racial bias and impact of "Stand Your Ground" laws on communities of color. As noted earlier, the online environment has been claimed as a special public space by those interested in inciting and promoting hate. To that effect, we selected three articles that provide perspectives on the use of these virtual spaces and communities for either hate propaganda or human rights education. The last section contains three articles that develop the theme of institutions as the holders of public trust – the first one presents a case from the US that focuses on the church as one such institution, and the other two, one from Nigeria and the other from the UK, calling for a more ethical media.

In the beginning of the volume, Joan Braune presents a compelling analysis and critique of the contemporary alt-right and neo-fascist movements in the United States. Her analysis is based on the work of two twentieth-century philosophers of Jewish descent, Erich Fromm and Simone Weil, and specifically their ideas around "the void." Braune considers both economic and psychological factors that contribute to the rise of fascist movements. In "Void and Idol," Braune explores what she calls "successful paths through the void," based on a unique [blending of] Weil and Fromm's ideas that the way through the void should not only be motivated by love and compassion, but should be done in community, rather than in isolation. Finally, we hope Braune's work offers some insights and inspiration for both individuals and communities on what would be some foundational elements in sustaining movements that resist hate.

The next section of the current volume begins with a critical look of the hate crime theory and research. Although Pickles focuses on two cases of hate crimes in England and Wales, his analysis and recommendations for a queer agenda in hate research are applicable in other global settings. Pickles first examines how the LGBT identity is framed in criminology and hate research and argues that it is steeped in colonial and heteronormative assumptions. Incorporating a fluid identity politics, or recognizing fluid, non-conforming, and unstable identities, Pickles argues, is therefore what hate research is lacking and what is needed in order to disrupt the current binary and oppressive state of the field of hate research.

Following Pickles' call for queering hate crime research, is an article by Rorholm and Gambrell who offer a case that illustrates how memorials not only create collective memory, but may serve as "interruptive symbols." The authors use historical insights, firsthand memorial observation, and

interviews to analyze the Pink Triangle as a tool for inward and outward messaging. Rorholm and Gambrell draw several insights from their case study and conclude that interruptive symbols like the triangle can ultimately give society hope that we will not only remember the atrocities of the past, but more importantly, will want to work toward healing and preventing acts of hate, marginalization, and oppression in the future.

In the next article, Grimes explores the intersection of hate crimes and "Stand Your Ground" laws; the author establishes that there is a clear racial bias in the application of SYG laws, requiring further research. Grimes uses Critical Race Theory to analyze four homicide cases resulting from an interpersonal conflict in a public space. The author focuses on both the social and legal implications of potentially using a "stand your ground" defense to protect offenders from prosecution for bias-motivated violent crimes. Grimes concludes with four recommendations on how these laws could be modified and an appeal to states to collect and disseminate data about the frequency of the use of the SYG defense for hate crimes.

In the next chapter, Elfenbein continues the theme of how fear and hate play out in public spaces. The author details his experience through Mapping Islamophobia to illustrate how anti-Muslim hostility affects the participation of American Muslims in public life. Elfenbein provides the readers with vignettes with incidents dating from 2012 to 2018, that capture a variety of ways anti-Muslim hostility manifests in public life. The expectation of harm that results in cultural trauma, the author argues, leads to a distinct choice in how American Muslim individuals and communities engage in public life – through activities that humanize them for others, or convince them that they are not a threat. In conclusion, Elfenbein offers that the same conditions that contribute to cultural trauma can be seen as opportunity for social change, where people outside the Muslim community and those not directly affected by anti-Muslim hate, can become allies and share the burden of alleviating others' fears.

The next article presents a sort of shift – instead of looking at social movements or examples of initiatives that combat hate, Dentice provides a scrutiny of Stormfront, an online favorite of the white nationalist movement. Through analysis of seven Stormfront discussion forums, Dentice concludes that the "more mature and seasoned white racialists" act as mentors for younger generation. The author suggests that those "who have the stomach for it" can gain important information about the demographics, as well as monitor attitudes and key developments in the white supremacist movement.

Hawdon, Costello, Barrett-Fox, and Bernatzky also focus on how online hate is perpetuated. Through the lens of four major criminological theories, their analysis identifies several factors associated with joining an

ongoing online attack. Thus, low levels of self-control and online strain were found to positively correlate with joining an online attack, as was close engagement with online friends and groups. Gender was also found to be a factor, with men being more likely than women to engage in hate behavior online; however age was not found to be a significant correlate. The authors assert their findings have implications for addressing online hate and preventing harm from being done both online and in the real world. Hawdon, Costello, Barrett-Fox, and Bernatzky conclude with several strategies that could mitigate and prevent the spread of online hate, including more robust and timely moderation by social networking sites, and increased transparency regarding the sites' user base, and recommendations for suture research.

The third article in the series about online spaces considers online gaming. Cunningham and Crandall analyze twenty-one human rights video games and their potential to promote prosocial goals. The authors focus on the educational strategies the games employ in teaching players how to participate in social change processes. Cunningham and Crandall concluded that the games increase cognition through decision-making and problem solving, increase empathy through perspective-taking, impart affective responses to human rights issues. While the authors acknowledge the potential for integrating these and similar games in the classroom, they also recommend future research include audience analysis and interviewing teachers who use the games in their classrooms.

Moving from a focus of on-line articles, Atchison's work presents a study of the role of the church in police/community relations as an authoritative third party that can broker peace in communities affected by violence and poverty. The author uses Greensboro, NC as a case to analyze such partnerships, pointing out that understanding of changing demographics and their impact on the issues of race, ethnicity, poverty and crime, is key in designing and sustaining the partnerships. Atchison describes the many successes of the FaithAction ID initiative, as well as the challenges that recent changes in federal policy with regard to immigration present to the partnerships. However, the author also acknowledges that when it comes to partnering with the African American community, there is a repetition of the dominant narrative, that of tension and distrust, where, in the author's words, "[Greensboro] police and black community leaders generally work along separate tracks." In conclusion Atchison invites the faith community to consider several recommendations in order to heal the distrust and truly become the peace brokers and stewards of sustained relationships within their communities.

In the next chapter Ogwezzy-Ndisika, Faustino, and Amakoh take the reader to a perhaps less familiar context of Nigeria, but to the familiar

issues of Presidential elections, media, and hate speech. The authors review secondary data available through media sources, and explore the use of hate speech in the presidential election campaign of 2015. The reader is introduced to the history of the use of hate speech in electioneering in Nigeria and background on both media involvement and regulatory mechanisms. Ogwezzy-Ndisika, Faustino, and Amakoh advocate for a more ethical journalism and specific strategies like professional checks of campaign materials and refusal by the media to accept material that does not meet an acceptable standard. In conclusion, the authors reiterate the importance of the media in curbing hate, and its potential to also promote peace and unity.

The volume concludes with a perspective on a similar topic from the United Kingdom. McGuire examines the role of media in promoting xenophobia and racism in the years leading to the 2016 European Union membership referendum (Brexit). The author analyzes the reporting of (im)migration issues, which many believe influenced the vote, by the press pointing out the use of inflammatory and alarmist rhetoric. McGuire further discusses the difficulties in determining liability for inciting hate even when comments are made in the public press, and indicates a number of ways the media could address these issues in the future. The article concludes with a call for more ethical journalism, where academics, practitioners, and the public share the responsibility to raise awareness and challenge racism and other forms of hate.

It is through these chapters of community engagement that we hope the narrative of shared experiences of hate move from those of challenge, struggle and division to those of strength, empowerment and unity. Within this volume eleven articles ranging from local to global, symbols to internet are found. All discuss, on some level, the need for deeper reflection and unity of self and other, to diminish the divisiveness of hate and alt-right ideology. For as the Dalai Lama has been quoted as saying" "To remain indifferent to the challenges we face is indefensible. If the goal is noble, whether or not it is realized within our lifetime is largely irrelevant. What we must do therefore is to strive and persevere and never give up" (https://addicted2success.com/quotes/100-dalai-lama-quotes-that-will-change-your-life/)

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