# Progressing Backwards:

# Millsian Motives and the Extraordinarily Ordinary Racist

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## ABSTRACT

This project aims to identify and fill a gap in the current literature on conversational manifestations of discrimination, bias, and racism. Utilizing C. Wright Mills's concept of vocabulary of motive bolstered by the postcolonial concept of catachresis, the paper examines utterances by which individuals in society navigate talk surrounding exclusionism, discrimination, and racism. Other researchers have identified this hole in the literature, but their work focuses more on narratives driven by media and political figures. Subjects here are citizens of Iga Ueno, Japan, as they discuss anti-foreign discrimination in their town and American netizens commenting on the Colin Kaepernick controversy.

Iga Ueno typifies Mills's folk society. There is an expectation that local vocabularies will be operative. They help maintain a climate of discrimination but there is evidence that newer, better motives could prevail. America's netizens have evolved (or devolved, perhaps) past the individuated society into something new. Rather than favoring the fittest vocabularies, the climate makes for an endless battle of motives. Oddly, the result is the same as in folk societies: Members of the dominant racial group utilize rhetorical tactics to reinforce the existing ethnic equilibrium and "accidentally on purpose" stifle anti-discrimination efforts. Mills posits that the number of participants and competing narratives in a modern, diverse society will naturally select motive phrases. What we observe is crucially different.

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I would also like to thank my wife for giving me time where possible to work. Helping a loved one fulfill life objectives sounds like an easy decision, but in truth it is hard to decide and harder to execute. Grandmas deserve some space here too. Thank you both for your time and energy.

Finally, I would like to thank my beautiful daughters and apologize. Thank you for giving me so many wonderful distractions when I was stressed out. I am sorry you had to put up with so much "not right now." You can play with my keyboard and mouse now. I do not even care if they break.

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## PROLOGUE

"There is no country where discrimination does not exist. What is truly terrifying is the person who believes they are incapable of discrimination." — Anonymous TikTok commenter, 2020.

In some ways, this paper could not come at a better time. It is not a particularly good time, however. While the events we will discuss here came well after this paper's origination, they neatly represent the overall spirit in many ways. Given the timing and the extreme gravity of the situation, it is fitting to include some discussion. The shift in public consciousness during this period also fits very nicely with this project's overall goals.

Amid a worldwide pandemic triggered by the novel SARS-CoV-2 strain of coronavirus, the murder of a black man named George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers sparked demonstrations worldwide. Even as experts warned that large crowds were breeding grounds for viral infection, people across the United States, Europe, and even superficially unrelated places like Japan, braved the danger and took to the streets behind the banner of Black Lives Matter (Smith, 2020). Previously largely ignored and even scorned by the American public, the Marxist progressive movement that began seven years earlier in response to a similar unjust killing suddenly grew new teeth. Sociologists will likely produce much literature about how much the coronavirus pandemic, Trumpian authoritarianism, and lockdowns drove this explosion of public demonstrations, but the effect was a welcome boost in awareness of racism and institutional inequality.

One critical outcome of these events was an increased interest in the idea that racism is not one specific type of behavior reserved for bad people and icky bigots.

Institutions themselves do not necessarily perpetuate institutional racism. Rather, individuals, even those removed from said institutions, do so via day-to-day interactions, behaviors, and speech acts. The idea should be simple but still confounds many, even in academia. A similar concept seemed to be gaining footing during the 'Me Too' movement. City University of New York professor Jan Simpson suggested looking to South Africa's post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission for guidance in solving social issues (unfortunately, the website on which she made this suggestion is no longer available and does not appear to be available on Wayback Machine).

The TRC was a legal body for restorative justice that allowed perpetrators to recognize individual roles in a racist system and expose hidden truths that perpetuated a system of state violence. The TRC was covered extensively in American media at the time, and several papers compare its restorative justice to the more traditional style of punitive justice (like that of the Nuremberg Trials). It is odd that the concept of identifying human cogs in a racist machine and using their motive accounts to indict the system itself has not been established as a major theme in racism studies. As the era of Trump draws to a close with the election of Joe Biden, an American Truth and Reconciliation Commission for a post-Trump world has been suggested by prominent economist and former Secretary of Labor, Robert Reich. CNN commentators responded that such a system could allow for participants in systemic racism to recognize their responsibility while understanding they are not at fault (Reich, 2020).[1]

Since inception, this project has been trying to advance an examination of everyday casual and conversational racism.[2] This includes speech acts that attempt to excuse, justify, or steer discourse away from the problem of discrimination. In academia, everyday racism, and particularly that which pertains to utterances, remains largely under-theorized (Combs, 2018. 39). Further, when a discussion does occur, there is a

tendency to associate apologia and other such discriminatory linguistic behaviors with thought leaders and politicians (viz. McNeal 2017; Friman, 1996; Drakulich, 2015; Goode, 1994). Should this assumption be false, it would mean we are missing a significant driver of racist behavior, but it is taken for granted. That is especially true in studies related to communications—more on that particular issue in the sections below.

The focus of this research is mainly methodology. It is a criticism of modern anti-racism research. Given the depth and breadth of modern racism studies, establishing a theory will be the primary goal, with the smaller bite-sized task of challenging framing and related theories. Tackling an entire field cannot be done in a project of this scope, so we shall concentrate on two case studies with some supporting material. One task is demonstrate that motive behaviors identified by Mills 80 years ago are still operating in society, but with the internet as a turbocharger that makes solutions all the more difficult. Questioning assumptions that build the existing paradigm is a necessary part of the critical process and may lead to new thinking in anti-racist activism and Butlerian ideas of responsibility.

In the era of the Internet, where an individual could potentially reach billions, and new words and ideas grow organically on dozens of diverse platforms, it is quite surprising that more attention is not focused on individual behavior and talk beyond the evergreen topic of hate speech. While not always explicitly stated, there seems to be a presumption that social phenomena are driven in a top-down manner by authority figures. A common focus of speech acts is hate speech, which is treated as a criminal concern and, especially in the case of Donald Trump, presented as behavior that appears when thought leaders give permission. "If only Donald Trump would just stop vilifying Mexican people, maybe there wouldn't be so many racists running around."

The media and academia's current hyper-vigilance concerning Donald Trump and hate speech is perhaps understandable. The man and his followers are magnets for eyeballs, clicks, and advertising dollars. Add to that his pathological lying, and the result is roughly 9,000 scholarly publications in 4 years (Source: Author, advanced search JSTOR, Google Scholar, Directory of Open Access Journals. Duplicates eliminated via spreadsheet). This number is not much fewer than Barack Obama, who sparked an incredible flurry of research in his first two years in office. However, it may be time to reevaluate how we conceptualize racist behavior and institutional inequity with a renewed focus on the personal. An ethnomethodological approach may be an excellent tool.

The tendency to try to put a face on racism is understandable, if regrettable. The concept of racism as it exists amongst the general public tends to conjure concrete imagery, perhaps by design in some cases. One might picture white supremacists marching with Home Depot tiki torches, the KKK, Nazis heiling and goose-stepping, or overweight rednecks waving Confederate flags. In Japan, the *Zaitokukai*, bespectacled *net-uyo* frantically tapping out anti-Korean messages on TikTok, and demonstrators threatening *Zainichi* Koreans at Tsuruhashi Station are emblematic of ethnic exclusionism. Sometimes the symbol of hate is much more precise: Trump, Bolsonaro, Modi, and Orbán are famous examples of world leaders who seem to embody chauvinistic ideals. We naturally try to make sense of phenomena around them, but, in this case at least, it could be detrimental to solving the problem. While racially divisive leaders are significant sources of violence, a potentially more significant driving force behind racism as it exists in developed nations is the people who believe themselves removed from the problem and (by obstinance or ignorance) cannot accept their responsibility in moving the machinery of institutional inequality.

While there is still a long way to go until this idea is more widely accepted, it is clear that public perception is beginning to shift in that direction, if subconsciously. Many activists appear to understand on some level and are attempting to act. One particularly digestible example is that of the hashtag #ACAB, "All Cops Are Bastards" (in some cases, an abbreviation of "all cops are bad"). The initialism has appeared in various places since the 1970s, and the hashtag concisely highlights police corruption across the law enforcement system. The movement has received much criticism for its supposed divisiveness and was heavily criticized in conservative media (Smith, 2020). However, it is a far more effective attack in pursuit of systemic change than only targeting police directly responsible for criminal behavior. When "good cops" do not stop their misbehaving comrades, they are offering encouragement and cover. When members of the public then offer apologia, the behavior is etched in stone.

Energy needs to be focused on those who perpetuate a system of state violence. Active participation, cover, and silence are all forms of collaboration. If an officer kills an unarmed suspect and those around him turn their heads, they are ensuring that the same crime will occur in the future. By attacking the problem in a seemingly less targeted way, we may paradoxically address the cause more directly. Whether they have actively engaged in brutalizing a suspect or not, every police officer in the United States is complicit in a system under which black people are nearly four times more likely to experience violence. This shotgun approach also allows for the sticky conundrum of POC police participation in state-sanctioned violence, a widespread criticism from commentators on the right, to be addressed. Admittedly, such rhetoric may be too succinct to allow for nuanced discussion, but it cuts through to the heart of the issue and avoids apologia. The police are so deadly to black people in America that it is statistically as dangerous to commute to work by motorcycle as it is just to be a man

with black skin (Edwards, 2019. Online). Doctors refer to motorcycles as 'donorcycles' because they produce a steady stream of brain-dead organ donors for emergency rooms. Yet most white Americans would be shocked to learn this comparison. That there is so much resistance to acknowledging and addressing police brutality speaks volumes about the aversive racism baked into American culture.

In the wake of the killing of George Floyd, #ACAB and related tags appeared nearly two million times on Instagram (Andrew, 2020. Online). This family of hashtags and the thinking that typify them allow for necessary intellectual processes to take place. Given the prevalence of state violence, we may ask if the system even can be fixed. Statistics show that despite the seeming progress of anti-racist movements and a growing awareness of police brutality, fatal encounters between police and suspects have risen slowly since 2016. Police report that fatal encounters have been decreasing since 2013, but total countrywide incidents remain unchanged over the same period indicating an increase in suburban and rural police violence (Sinyagwe, 2020. Online).

Given that crime rates have been dropping during the same time frame, this increase is difficult to understand. Some common explanations include increased reporting (which would indicate the problem was worse than previously thought).[3] In any case, #ACAB and its disestablishmentarian bent is an appropriate response. After decades of inaction on the part of authorities, a significant enough portion of the population became so disillusioned that once heterodox, dissident thinking pushed its way into mainstream consciousness. Americans were overwhelmingly against Black Lives Matter as late as 2018. Support slowly grew over time, but the George Floyd killing finally pushed sentiment high enough that a majority rather than a plurality supported the movement (Unspecified author, Civiqs, 2017. Online).

The killing of George Floyd was extremely polarizing in terms of support for anti-racist movements. Civiqs, an analytics firm based in Oakland, California, tracks polling results for various issues amongst registered voters. According to their data, respondents who had previously responded neutrally in polls on BLM jumped to one side or the other following the killing of George Floyd. Neutral responses dropped from 25% to around 10%. Positive responses increased significantly with negative responses following behind.

Shortly after the incident and the initial surge in anti-racism activism, movements to defund the police began to appear across social media. Their goals ranged broadly from diverting funds away from bloated departments toward needy communities to abolishing the police entirely for a more community-focused system. Others advocated utilizing the funds for social programs. Regardless of the aim, these movements represent a vital cognition of racism that has for too long existed outside of mainstream discourse and racism studies. Under Millsian theory, some of the interactions most important to understanding social difficulties occur at the point where motive speech fails (Mills, 1940. 910, 911). In this era of plague, political corruption, and authoritarian violence, we witness these moments of motive failure on a grand scale.

Protests and demonstrations continued for several months. During this time, the hashtags #WhiteSilenceIsViolence and #WhiteSilence began to trend on Twitter. Very simply, this hashtag activism posits that white America's failure to address social issues is on par with and a direct cause of violence. This flurry of social media activity launched Robin DiAngelo's 2018 book on white American refusal to examine racism (and the defensive rhetoric utilized when people confront racism), 'White Fragility,' to number one on Amazon's bestselling books list. While the framing is slightly different from this research, the thesis is very much similar: Members of the dominant racial

group in a society utilize rhetorical tactics that reinforce the existing racial or ethnic equilibrium and stifle efforts to combat discrimination.

We posit here that this occurs at a more granular level than the current anti-racism corpus would suggest, and DiAngelo makes a similar argument. The fragility angle is an imputation that might constitute motive mongering, however. Further, DiAngelo utilizes some anecdotes that make her seem guilty of psychological projection. There are several sections of the book that include presumptuous or stereotypical depictions of black people. Several critics have accused the work of actually promoting the subtle form of racism that it purports to fight. Despite these issues, it is noteworthy that an analysis of everyday behavior and utterances made such significant inroads into popular culture. Sales figures sit at roughly 900,000 as of this writing, with almost half a million in May and June of 2020 alone (McEvoy, 2020. Online).

This spirit appeared in other forms in popular media. Several celebrities, including "The Good Place" lead Kristen Bell and "Breaking Bad" actor Aaron Paul, released a video titled "ITR," or "I Take Responsibility," where they confessed their culpability in race-based inequality and state-perpetrated violence. They acknowledged that they were aware of the problem but failed to speak up about or excused it. As the "responsibility" they accepted did not extend beyond words, the public widely panned the video. It was 'ratioed' on Twitter[4] indicating an adverse reaction. The article also gained much attention on alternative right-wing media outlets, such as The Daily Wire. The controversial conservative outlet released three long-form videos (with separate clips for increased ad revenue) mocking stunt in the days following. Despite this failure, the video shows further evidence of the public beginning to explore ideas to be discussed in this paper.

An example better received by critics would be rapper Anderson .Paak's song "Downtown," which discusses George Floyd protests and the Black Lives Matter movement against the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic. In the first verse following the hook, Anderson says the following:

> "Said, "it's civil unrest," but you sleep so sound / Like you don't hear the screams when catchin' beatdowns / Stayin' quiet when they killin' n*****, but you speak loud / When we riot, got opinions comin' from a place of privilege" (Source: Apple Music lyrics, "Downtown - Anderson .Paak").

The privileged in a society with institutional racism save their opinions for the rare situations in which they are affected. Anderson continues to comment that while white Americans say things like "it's not about race" when police brutality makes headlines, there is suddenly much concern when areas of big cities with whiter populations are affected by demonstrations. Anderson encourages listeners to challenge corporate entities and demonstrate in wealthy areas. Again, this is a subtly different viewpoint from this project, but it demonstrates a growing understanding of our thesis—namely, the importance of excuse- and evasion-free conversation when institutional racism is discussed.

Some robust evidence for our schema is data that emerged in the days following the killing of George Floyd. A few days after the initial incident, hashtags relating to Black Lives Matter reached all-time highs. In one record day, the tag was used 8.8 million times (Anderson, 2020. Online). As protests raged and even turned into riots, the public generally did not waver in at least vocalizing their support for the movement. However, as is often the case with racial issues in modern America, a pattern of

justifying language and apologia emerged. The media ecstatically reported the public's (seeming) enthusiasm for BLM. However, a deeper dive into the data and a broader viewpoint show far more resistance than one might gather from headlines alone.

For example, a poll from Monmouth University was widely broadcast across various platforms but omitted necessary details. For example, CNN used this misreported information in at least two articles (Sparks, 2020; Andrew, 2020. Online). The poll's overall result would seem to be quite positive; 78% of Americans believed that anger in black communities in response to the killing of George Floyd was at least partially justified. Insider, an online news outlet published by the research firm Insider Intelligence, reported that "A majority of Americans say the anger that led to protests against the police killing of George Floyd is 'fully justified.'" NBC News reported on the poll under the headline "New poll: Majority believe anger that led to George Floyd protests justified." The New York Times, widely regarded as one of the world's finest corporate news organizations, used the poll as the fundamental basis for their article "Why Most Americans Support the Protests."

Unfortunately, a closer look at the data shows this is inaccurate at best and utterly useless at worst. The study was based on data from a landline poll. Further, it was conducted during daytime hours with a ±3.5% margin of error. 45% of white people in the same poll said that Black Lives Matter protestors and demonstrators' actions were not at all justified. That 78% of white respondents also said the anger was justified could indicate a conflation on some level between rioters and protesters. Other potentially telling results appear in the section on race relations. 75% of blacks said that race relations had worsened during the Trump presidency, while only 45% of whites held the same sentiment. Moreover, 63% of whites said in a similar poll in 2016 that race relations had worsened under President Obama. While this disconnect alone is not proof

of racism or discriminatory intent, it is consistent with dismissive Millsian tactics. One can seemingly empathize with BLM protests while at the same time dismissing them.

An analysis of YouTube comment sections following the initial Colin Kaepernick controversy of 2016 demonstrated that self-identified white posters mostly expressed some empathy with black anti-racist movements.[5] However, commenters overwhelmingly negated that sentiment with qualifying language about the nature of protests. In many cases, those comments contained vitriolic language directed at demonstrators or prominent movement figures (Gibson, 2019. 10, 11).

What the Monmouth poll means precisely is difficult to parse, but given the results of forum analysis we will discuss later, an image of how apologia for systemic racism slips into mainstream consciousness begins to develop. Members of the dominant group are aware of issues that minorities face, but while they can acknowledge the problem, there is a barrier, perhaps psychological or cultural, that prevents a critical mass of people who can speak on the issue and be of help from being reached. The wishy-washy results from white respondents on protest methods and anger over racial issues are especially concerning. While it could merely indicate an admixture of protest and riot by observers, it is consistent with motive vocabularies observed across traditional media and Internet comment sections that dismiss anti-racist movements by attacking the grounds or methods.

Another important goal of this paper, then, is to convey the necessity of reevaluating everyday racism and specifically the linguistic behaviors that average folks use to undergird it. The methodological tools presented herein may not outlive this paper. However, they represent an essential criticism of modern racism studies that have allowed for right-wing populism and race-based nationalism to surge in America, Europe, and elsewhere despite increased awareness of oppression and discrimination.

Even as civil rights and anti-racist movements have seemingly made strides, we see a socially rightward push in popular politics.

One need look no further than this last presidential race to see that America has gone backwards or sideways since at least the Bush administration. Trump, the most openly racist modern president, ran as an incumbent against Joe Biden, a lifetime politician whom progressive media has described as a "backlash right-wing democrat" (Dore, 2020. Online). During an economy-destroying pandemic with historical upward transfers of wealth (Ramirez, 2020. Online), America's 'left' pinned their hopes on a candidate who started his career breaking with working-class Democrats and McGovernite progressives.[6] Well, at least he isn't a Nazi.

## INTRODUCTION

Very few stones are left uncovered in modern racism studies. Systematic oppression and individual biases are far from being solved, and yet producing unique research in this field is more complicated than ever. One specific issue we can broach in this format is 'everyday racism,' which is thought to be under-theorized (Combs, 2018. 39). Given persisting inequities in the United States, it is understandable that many modern frameworks take a broad view. This paper will make the case for a bottom-up approach that examines everyday racism, specifically utterances.

Issues such as state-perpetrated violence, income inequality, employment discrimination, hyper-incarceration, and food deserts would seem to require a perspective pulled-back from the ground level of society. However, verbal behaviors amongst the demographic majority that undergird these situations are worthy of explanation. The primary tool we will employ for this is C.W. Mills's 'vocabulary of motive.' It is an older framework, and hopefully one with less political and sociological baggage than currently popular methods. Since this project's inception in 2013, some in the public sphere, downstream from academia, have leveled the prevailing literature as a weapon against political foes. There is much research on the language of discrimination and the rise of colorblind racism. However, there is a shortage of analyses on individual rhetoric and too much focus on group identity and political figures.

Explicit, implicit, and colorblind racism are popular topics. The bulk of the corpus addresses these problems more broadly, analyzing collective action framing, speech patterns of political and media figures, or the labor market (e.g., Goode, 1994; Saul, 2017; Drakulich, 2015). Frameworks that were long known to sociologists, such as Patricia Bidol's "prejudice + power" model or Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality, have trickled down to mainstream culture to arguably negative effect.

The latter, once associated mostly with feminism, has become a dominating theory in the popular understanding of racism studies.

These sometimes unwieldy concepts may make it difficult to see how bias and systemic racism manifest at an intimate level among members of the public. If these personal interactions are overlooked, an element crucial to understanding how racism is perpetuated is missed. There is even criticism that such broad, group-based understandings may be actively contributing to intergroup divisions (Whitehead, 2019) and the many episodes of white backlash that have occurred in the United States and Europe since the 1980s (cf. Nayak, 1999). Contributing to this may be an under-explored area of aversive racism whereby problems are exacerbated when individual members of majority groups refuse to engage or deny responsibility.

An approach so narrowly focused might seem to ignore institutional and cultural realities that support systemic racism.[7] However, this paper will argue that there is a fundamental difficulty with broader approaches that may inhibit their prescriptive power. Ultimately, the success of academic works hinges upon their eventual application in policy and society. The current resurgence in right-wing ideologies in developed nations represents a rejection of anti-racist efforts by a broad segment of the public that researchers have recognized since the late '90s or earlier.

This paper will make its case in four chapters, followed by a concluding section. First is an outline of the framework and an examination of why it is a useful addition to racism studies despite its age. Second is a literature review that examines close relatives of this approach, looks at past examples of motive research relevant to our application, and explores situations in which this method bests existing literature. The third and fourth are practical applications. The former is an interview-based study of motive speech in Iga, Japan, a rural town with a history of racial tension. This chapter serves as

a practical application of Mills's work and demonstrates the process of testing and exhausting motives in a rural locality. The former examines internet comments during the Colin Kaepernick NFL "anthem protests." This section demonstrates that in a new communication era, that essential process of motive exhaustion can be destroyed. Finally, the paper will conclude with some discussion of the results and thoughts on what should be done moving forward.

Initially, this project's goal was to develop a theory to challenge modern racism studies frameworks utilizing older, politically cleaner methods than sociologists and communications researchers currently employ. The scope has narrowed considerably in search of a more refined target, but the initial goal of criticizing racism studies and focusing on individual speech acts rather than broad systemic issues remains. A somewhat similar approach exists in communications, but it shares some flaws with the sociological understanding of racism that our framework can hopefully address. Utilizing C.W. Mills's vocabulary of motive and some supplemental theory from postcolonial studies, we will examine motive talk that appears when racism is the topic of conversation. In doing so, we can hopefully identify some features of language that encourage racism in society.

In 2013 when this project began, research with a similar premise was sparse, but some has begun to appear more in recent years. For instance, Jennifer Saul from the University of Sheffield developed a theory of 'figleaves,' rhetorical flourishes that she says are used by famous figures to add plausible deniability to what would otherwise be considered racist speech. However, this approach still misses the same angle of everyday racism as previous literature. Drakulich (2015) and Combs (2018) recognize the same linguistic phenomena and address them via various interpretations of Goffman's framing

theory. This development offers us a more precise research goal than "fix racism studies."

While a focus on utterances beyond hate speech is refreshing to see, Saul, Drakulich, and Combs emphasize speech acts of political figures and thought leaders. Understandably, a communications approach might examine the broader discourse, but there is an underlying assumption here that plagues the whole racism studies field: A top-down relationship in society that furthers and allows racism to continue. This assumption may be correct, but it should not be taken for granted. The idea is not likely explicitly stated in any literature, but focusing on particular groups, figures, and institutional inequities demonstrates the point. This flaw is glaringly apparent in media coverage of and recent research into racism in the United States. Donald Trump features so prominently that one might believe racism and fascism first appeared in the United States on January 20, 2017. Articles with headlines like "After the Damage of the Trump Era, Can America Avoid Disaster?"[8] show we are not taking away the lesson we likely should.

The assumption that rhetorical frames mostly come from above could be dangerous. In a new age where people can share ideas faster than ever before, what constitutes a prominent figure is changing rapidly, and information need not pass through the same carefully controlled nodes as before.[9] More than eight times as many people see the average Zach King magic video on TikTok than watched CNN during an entire day at the highest point in its ratings history. Challenging the assumption of top-down racism is one of our research goals. A careful analysis of motive talk in various venues for everyday speech should do well.

The prevailing wisdom regarding this phenomenon is that elites introduce rhetoric and tactics of evasion surrounding racial issues to society in a stratified manner

(Drakulich, 2015. 395). The presumption, which appears quite often throughout the literature (e.g., Coombs, 2019; Goode, 1999), is that politicians and prominent figures are the driving force behind conversational framing amongst the general public. While video of Republican strategists proves that politicians do indeed consider citing offensive language and increasing racial disparity while attempting to frame it otherwise (Perlstein, 2018. Online), the level of uptake amongst citizens is unknown.[10]

Political rhetoric and the meme culture of the modern right and alt-right in America indicate that the relationship is more two-ways than these papers suggest. Even the few researchers directly addressing everyday racism from the perspective of linguistic behavior appear to miss this. As this paper will demonstrate, there is evidence that while the public is aware of traditional frames and framing tactics, conversations, and motive vocabularies flow organically. In the case of particular right wing figures such as Michael Malice,[11] there may be cases where grassroots movements are spurred by popular figures in a bottom-up, self-reinforcing loop. This more natural flow of ideas seems to hold even when conversations appear on an outlet that utilizes such media frames, such as the comment section below a news site or at a Q&A session flowing a speaking engagement. The presumption that leaders essentially program people below them is also undermined by the slow and painful progression of racism studies and a return to right-wing populism across the West.[12]

While the utterances of individuals may not at first seem a proper target for a globetrotting examination of racism,[13] speech acts are a basic unit of empirical data to be examined (Mills, 1940. 909). Mills's paper, 'Situated Actions and Vocabularies of Motive' (1940), offers an understanding of motive speech that shows a more profound connection between our two practical applications than is readily apparent. There are indeed conflicts between the two areas of focus (America and rural Japan), and we shall

discuss the cultural moment of each to account for that. Still, the critical connecting tissue is the concept of motive exhaustion.

Rural Japan fits Mills's description of a 'folk society,' in which a small setting and shared culture means motives and the problematic behavior they protect remain unquestioned (Ibid. 911). As we will demonstrate, confronting those motives in person can produce more 'honest' motivational talk.[14] America should fit Mills's theory of an 'individuated society' in which diverse motives challenge and outcompete those of 'old style' vocabularies. However, it appears to suffer from a run-away 'questioning' process as motives ricochet about the internet. More simply, despite having the characteristics of an individuated society, modern American culture and the internet allow vocabularies of motive to grow to a near-infinite size and forever protect a problem from the 'question' (ref. Mills, 1940. 905, 911, 912 for the above-quoted terminology in context).

Whether this speaks to the nature of American ethnic equilibrium, the nature of the internet, or both is unclear. What is clear is that for a general audience there appears to be no point where a kind of terminal motive exhaustion (meaning a "truer" motivation) is reached.[15] The result is a strange catachresis whereby important political topics are subsumed under extraneous topics.

Let us now identify some objectives. First, we shall catalog some of the modes and methods by which individual members of a dominant group in society subtly reinforce the prevailing racial and ethnic equilibrium by identifying some Millsian typal vocabularies that appear when people talk about discrimination or racism. Again, one can make a case for a more exact area of analysis, but this framework's focus on speech acts (and their operativity, specifically) means that it should be applicable more broadly but with a narrower focus for evidence gathering.

A secondary objective will be to examine how linguistic behaviors reflect the society in which they take place. That point may seem unimportant at first blush,[16] but the operative motive speech in a particular society gives us insight into how particular detrimental behaviors persist even as they are challenged. Since this question is broad and difficult to address directly, we will think from the perspective of challenging framing theory (viz. Drakulich and Saul) rather than attacking the whole of racism studies. Motive speech in everyday settings may be cognizant of the narratives put forth by political and thought leaders, but whether this is a hard rule that governs communication (or even a given at all) should be challenged.

Finally, we shall explore the relationship between folk society and individuated society and try to find an explanation for the behavior we observe in online discourse. Once more, in a simpler question format:

1) What typal vocabularies emerge in everyday conversation about racial or ethnic tension?

2) Are these typal vocabularies meaningfully different from frames one might see in research dealing with the theory of frames?[17]

3) How do observed vocabularies differ between folk society and individuated society? Why might we observe a similar lack of terminal motive exhaustion between the two?

As something of a null hypothesis for our questions, let us assume that observed vocabularies are not consistent with Millsian theory, but rather that they fit with the protest paradigm or collective action frames.

Given our first practical application's (Chapter 3) overly focused nature, one more point should be stressed. The government of Iga and the people bill the area as unique, even amongst the Japanese. Therefore, it is natural that we might assume vocabularies employed there when people are confronted with issues of racism would be inconsistent with those appearing in greater Japanese society or America (perhaps vastly so). Even if they are not, it does not necessarily damage our overall thesis, but it potentially makes the comparison between a local folk society and an individuated society less meaningful.

With these more streamlined goals, we can enter the concluding chapter with a better understanding of two issues (or at least posit more questions). First, how much of the motive vocabulary we identify is top-down, and how much potentially racist rhetoric is missed because it presents as an organic method of preserving the status quo?[18] Second, if the correlation between institutional and everyday racism does run reverse to the popular understanding and there is a new, run-away Millsian effect occurring, how can that realization help conceive better anti-racism efforts?

## CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### I. Introduction

The central pillar of this project is CW Mills's theory of 'vocabulary of motive.'[19] Before exploring the theoretical framework, it is first necessary to touch on some of the more confusing and contentious aspects of motive theory. Frankly, this analysis is dull. Nevertheless, it is necessary to grasp this paper's framework, why it has been overlooked in the field thus far, why it is necessary moving forward, and how the proper application could offer prescriptive anti-racism tools in the future.

The concept of motive, "a complex of subjective meaning which seems to the actor himself or to the observer an adequate ground for the content in question," (Weber translation from Mills, 1940) is a crucial and under-appreciated pillar in Weberian sociology (Campbell, 1996. 101). The concept as used in the past does not appear in sociology as much as we might expect, given how often modern researchers reference Weberian Marxism and sociological theory as influences (Campbell, 2006. 209). In much of modern sociology, Weber's concept of motiv, and indeed the common-sense idea of "a motive," is neither representative of an internal state nor deemed worthy of study (Marshall, 1981). Campbell (1996. 90) assigns responsibility to Mills, asserting that the abandoning of Weberian motives began as early as 1940. In his innovative paper, Situated Actions and Vocabularies of Motive, Mills states:

> "Rather than fixed elements "in" an individual, motives are the terms with which interpretation of conduct by social actors proceeds. This imputation and avowal of motives by actors are social phenomena to be explained. The differing reasons men give for their actions are not themselves without reasons" (Mills, 1940. 904).

Put simply, motives are an externally generated account for an action, distinct but not entirely separated from the exact psychological reason. Campbell (2006) posits that this understanding represents a rejection of the Weberian motiv. Indeed, the fact that these concepts appear together so infrequently (Sharp, 1978 is a great exception) would seem to support his assertion. There is much debate surrounding the conflict between Weber's motives and Mills's more empirical understanding. In the mid-1980s, the topic was the subject of heated debate amongst British sociologists, with a skirmish erupting in The British Journal of Sociology. Four competing papers appeared in a four-year span that discussed the merits and conception of motives. 1983's 'Rescuing Motives' was countered by 'What's the Point of Rescuing Motives?' in 1984. That was followed by 'Rescuing Motives Rescued' in 1985. The conflict ended in something of a ceasefire with the 1987 paper, 'Re-Locating Motives.'

The confusion appears to arise from Weber's focus, which is trained on the subjective meaning of motive and motive talk. However, this understanding (if this author were very arrogant) comes from an incomplete reading of the relevant literature. Weber is quite cautious to point out that subjective meanings must be placed in the context of an action being explained and also the broader social context. This is almost precisely what Mills says but in thousands fewer words. As Sharp (1978. 91) points out, the subjectivity, in this case, is only with the actor and their conception of some act. In a given context, the meaning "for" an actor is different from the meaning "of" an action to observers (Weber, 1964. 95). The former is open to various interpretations, but the latter is empirical. Mills (1953) also states that his theories do not reject locating motive with the actor. Instead, he is supplementing psychological or subjective (or as some researchers say 'psychic') interpretations with the idea that people exist within a society

and that behavior and motive talk cannot be separated from environment. That is likely a response to critics and a clarification of the opening of his 1940 essay:

> "It is the purpose of this paper to outline an analytic model for the explanation of motives which is based on a sociological theory of language and a sociological psychology. As over against the inferential conception of motives as subjective 'springs' of action, motives may be considered as typical vocabularies having ascertainable functions in delimited societal situations" (Mills, 1940. 904).

This (apparently) confusing passage is where we find common ground that allows us to square various motive theories. Sharp (1978) contends that objective and subjective motive is unclear in Weber's work as well, but a look at some examples in the context of Weberian "ideal-typical meaning" may help clarify things.

Take the wood-chopping man in the Theory of Social and Economic Organization, for example. He may say that he is chopping wood because it is enjoyable. Weber offers several motives in this example, including Arbeit, exercise, or recreation, but we can ascribe a 'typical meaning' unless he never uses it for anything else. Maybe he burns it for firewood or builds a doghouse. In this case, we have empirical information about the man, and perhaps the society that he lives in, regardless of whether the explanation for his action "makes sense" (Ibid. 71)

Where Mills's decidedly negative interpretation of motive comes in is when impropriety occurs. Perhaps the man throws a log through his neighbor's window. We can assume that he proffered enjoyment as the "reason" for chopping because he could not offer the real reason he wanted an easily-thrown cut of wood. Other researchers, such as Schutz (1962. 71), have attempted to clarify Weber's theories further by utilizing

terms such as "objective interpretation" and "subjective interpretation" where the meaning of a motive is determined by an observer or the actor respectively. Sharp goes into extensive detail on the psychological study of motives and suggests that much of the hand-wringing over how the concepts should be used results from conflicting goals between sociologists and psychologists. The sociological understanding of acts is concerned with the typical meaning and causality (Sharp, 1978. 77). That particular point is important to understand both why this framework is useful to racism studies and why it never became popular.

Weber's focus on interpretive sociology rather than empirical sociology may also be a factor. Mills uses rather harsh language to explain how his method can be used empirically. He says, "When we ask for the […] "real motive" rather than the "rationalization," […] there is no way to plumb behind verbalization into an individual and directly check our motive-mongering" (Mills, 1940. 910). This passage appears to be quite a scathing rejection of Weber's ideas, but a look to the original texts and later works reveals more than enough overlap. Talk will not definitely give us the link between conduct and causation that we seek, but we have information about the society, the actors, and the situation with which to work. This concept is very similar to Weber's idea of motive as a construct of societally determined ideal types.

Campbell (1996. 102) says academia arrived at this strange, contentious point through "a quite extraordinary series of substitutions and conceptual slippages." Campbell is very critical of Mills but assesses that motives are still very much valid today despite their lack of popularity (though he seems to prefer a Weberian interpretation). This researcher would tend to agree with the former assessment. However, his belief that the Millsian perspective of vocabulary of motive is a repudiation of Weber's work is difficult to understand. Rather, vocabulary of motive

represents an expansion of the concept and a merging of the psychological and sociological understandings of motivation and their explanatory utterances to make a qualitative approach more empirical.

It would appear that Mills's wordy and often clumsy attempt to push motives forward resulted in the concept breaking for those who read his works. That is speculation to be taken with a healthy dose of salt, but the contention is a fact, as is the literature gap where researchers abandoned motives. Campbell has published several papers extolling the virtues of motive, but it is this researcher's opinion that he still clings to some of the misunderstandings of other research that followed Mills (for example, he still picks a side in Weber versus Mills). A thorough reading of both authors should remove much of the contrast and reveal different applications of one concept.

The fields of sociology and psychology had more or less converged on motive as a feature of language use and its resulting influence on social action around the time that Weber, Mills, Ted Sarbin, and Vic Allen were writing on the subject (Sharp, 1978. 49). This passage from Mills is illuminating: "The motives actually used in justifying or criticizing an act definitely link it to situations, integrate one man's action with another's, and line up conduct with norms. The societally sustained motive-surrogates of situations are both constraints and inducements" (Mills, 1940. 908). In other words, motive talk is a two-way street. Behavior is explained with specific motive phrases, but the vocabularies available to an individual—and the vocabularies that will operate with a given audience—profoundly affect behavior. Accounts appear to displace the motive. Instead, they are entangled. This relationship opens the concept up to more possibilities when we explore social phenomena.

Here, a distinction between the focus of this approach and that of linguistics or communications becomes clear. While we are concerned with vocabularies, talk, and

utterances, the vocabulary of motive perspective is less concerned with the actual utterances than the social situations that produce them and the return-effect they then exert. This focus on how people move, react, and talk their way through society is closer to an ethnomethodological approach (or semiotics, phenomenology, or reflexive sociology if one wants to get lost in the weeds). This background is necessary because this project, while utilizing a seemingly outdated concept, offers an approach to anti-racism research severely lacking. The vocabulary of motive approach is old, dry, confusing, and contentious, but it addresses a gap in racism studies literature that the public has, remarkably, recognized before academia.

Other researchers are aware of this gap but have slightly differing approaches. There is convergent evolution toward this point in communications as well. Jennifer Saul's "Racial Figleaves, the Shifting Boundaries of the Permissible, and the Rise of Donald Trump," for example, explores the rhetoric of Donald Trump and some of his more infamous campaign quotes (2017). While her concept of a 'racial figleaf,' an utterance designed to ever so thinly veil a racist statement, is similar to the vocabularies of motive that we will explore in this project.

The problem is that a focus on prominent figures puts it in the same category as much of the existing research. Even if Donald Trump were to disappear tomorrow spontaneously, problems like the mistreatment of undocumented immigrants, police brutality, or housing discrimination would be no closer to being solved. These issues existed long before Trump and will, unfortunately, exist long after. But the focus on what prominent figures have to say leaves the issues unaddressed until a loud-mouthed authoritarian in Republican clothing comes to power.[20] Addressing talk at a lower level of society is a fresher take, keeps focus trained on the issues, and could be more prescriptive.

## II. Vocabulary of Motive

With some background out of the way, let us discuss and refine motive vocabulary a bit more. Motives and the vocabulary of motive are relatively simple concepts, but the implications are many. Very simply, individuals avow motives and impute them onto others. There is debate about how linked motive talk and actual motivation are. However, there is agreement across the literature that motives are socially situated.[21] Weber examined more of the psychological aspects, whereas Burke or Mills were concerned with how motives manifest in conversation and the role of talk in society. Let us examine specifics.

Motive talk under the pessimistic Millsian paradigm is defined as a series of statements that allow individuals to engage in questionable conduct. The motive helps them deny responsibility, make a justification, or otherwise reconcile their behavior with social norms. Motives imputed upon others can be just as important as those avowed by individuals. Crucially, Mills makes the (rather heroic) assumption that individuals often have motive vocabulary operativity in mind when they act: "If I did this, what could I say? What would they say?" (Mills, 1940. 907). Critics often seem to miss this aspect of the theory. Vocabularies of motive also account for (or attempt to account for) behavior that has yet to be questioned. This aspect of the theory is not well-liked, but it is critical if the concepts are to be applied to racism studies.

Behaviors are justified with specific motive phrases, but the vocabularies available to an individual also profoundly affect the thought process that precedes an action. In some way, the account displaces the motive. Scott and Lyman (1968) distill Mills down to the broad but effective categories of 'excuse' and 'justification.' Other various interpretations of these two terms are close, but the mechanisms at work vary.

For example, Sykes and Matza (1957) utilize the concept of 'techniques of neutralization.' In an analysis of juvenile delinquency, various types of excuses and justifications are discussed as an expansion of Mills.

To oversimplify all of these works, individuals will justify their conduct with social values or otherwise attempt to avoid responsibility and consequence. Sykes and Matza argue that actors offer motives to appease their conscience and attune their actions with societal expectations. Mills might call this motive mongering, but the theories are compatible nonetheless. Sykes even goes as far as to say that most crimes committed by juveniles are based entirely on justifications but that the legal system and society at large do not recognize the reasoning. Weber makes a similar but less naive argument in The Theory of Social and Economic Organization. He uses thieves as an example. They are aware of norms in the society in which they live, but they have their own justifications. In other cases, they may not believe that society's morals are valid.

Sykes's and Matza's interpretation may be overly optimistic, but the theory is interesting. 'Techniques of neutralization' make small appearances in a number of papers as a more accessible version of Mills' theory. Unfortunately, they rarely feature as the primary tool of analysis. According to Google Scholar, the paper has thousands of citations, but the bulk of what is available on databases seems only to mention the theory in passing. One paper even had 'techniques of neutralization' in the title and cited the original work but did not utilize the concept. For those new to motives, Sykes and Matza (or Scott and Lyman) is arguably a much better starting point than Mills.

For reference, let us examine the various techniques of neutralization. 'Denial of responsibility' is a more precise idea of excuse that allows an individual to dodge the natural urge to acquiesce to disapproval. 'Denial of injury' allows a deviant to rationalize their behavior by equating a lack of harm to acceptability. 'Denial of the victim' is a

classic trope in racism and very relevant to our interests. Via this technique, perpetrators of an act maintain that the victim himself was responsible for his own victimization (this vocabulary is so prevalent in instances of racism and sexism that it has spawned the colloquial term 'victim-blaming'). 'Condemning the condemners' lets offenders repress or distract from their behavior's wrongfulness by placing themselves above accusers. They paint their prosecutors as corrupt, hypocritical, or themselves susceptible to criminal temptations. Finally, 'appeal to a higher loyalty' is exactly what it sounds like (Sykes, 1957. 667-669). The vocabularies defined here differ from Mills in that they highlight the strategy speaker's employ rather than the topic of talk. For example, Mills says a priest invoking God is a 'religious vocabulary.' He does not go into great detail about specific tactics utilized within.

A toothsome case from "Techniques of Neutralization" is that of a juvenile delinquent who attempts to deflect blame from themselves and neutralize their guilt by redirecting a line of attack toward authority figures in their life. "Teachers always show favoritism and parents always 'take it out' on their kids." Further, "police […] are corrupt, stupid, and brutal" (Ibid. 668). Sykes and Matza are surprised to find that young people, even those who routinely engaged in criminal behavior, tended to espouse relatively normal views of society and moral conduct. Subjects even exhibited guilt, which would indicate some level of commitment to normative values. However, they commonly used rhetorical tricks to square behavior with belief. Alvarez (1997. 151, 154) points out that while techniques of neutralization are enough for the individual to perform some untoward act, the fact that they still exhibited guilt in many cases shows that the individuals still held normative beliefs. It would be easy to write this off as a natural byproduct of cognitive dissonance, but the process by which it happens is worthy of examination. The same kind of behavior was documented in a paper that examined

youth offenders in the New Jersey State prison system a few years earlier (Unfortunately, the paper appears to have been removed from its original URL. A copy is unavailable on Wayback Machine. Whether there was a retraction or it was simply taken offline is unclear). Techniques of neutralization also appear in several cases to be examined in later sections.

Campbell (1996) takes a similar approach to Sykes and Matza, though he openly rejects many of Mills's premises. He asserts that motive talk serves to harmonize competing roles within an individual. Another critical point of difference in Campbell is that the internal conflicts he hypothesizes cannot necessarily be resolved with societal norms and thus do not fit with Mills's theories (Ibid. 111). People explore various reasons for the decisions they make in their lives and then attune their motivations with society. The justification is as much for one's own benefit as others. The concept seems close to Mills's, but there is a psychological element that vocabulary of motive avoids.

At the risk of sounding quite arrogant, this subtle difference seems to come from a misunderstanding of Mills's approach. A vocabulary of motive approach can be applied in several of Campbell's examples precisely because it is unconcerned with the psychological aspects. Motives may serve to square internal roles for the actors themselves, but to an outside observer, the proper focus is placed upon how society shapes the language used to justify, rationalize, or otherwise explain behavior (and how that language then shapes). Campbell makes a further distinction based on the definition of motive vocabulary as an explanation for behavior once questioned. However, the common purpose is to render an act non-delinquent (Sharp, 1957. 90). Saying that Mills's approach is invalid because it misses a psychological element is much like saying one should stop washing because lathering the armpits does nothing to prevent halitosis.

Another vital aspect of Mills's perspective that many researchers seem to miss is the idea that diverse urban societies, or individuated societies, lend themselves more to skepticism of vocabularies than do more homogenous rural societies, or 'folk societies.' Mills explains that the socially situated nature of explanations means that non-urban or non-secular societies (not necessarily the same as rural or religious societies) tend to have stable vocabularies of motive. He further posits that vocabularies are "associated only with their sector" (Mills, 1940. 911). The reason for this, he explains, is that vocabularies to guide behavior are more limited than in urban or secular areas. As populations grow and individuals join a community from outside, the operativity of existing vocabularies will change.

In a more cognate society, the situations in which motive talk will be 'operative' are well understood, and people can generally expect a specific reaction from another party in a given interaction. In urban societies, however, there may be less context to demarcate the situations in which a motive is appropriate or operative. Furthermore, diverse vocabularies compete with one another, inviting misinterpretation or suspicion of previously unquestioned motives (Ibid. 912). As discussed briefly above, conflicts between vocabularies can result from multiple, competing roles within one individual (cf. Campbell, 1996; Sykes, 1957).

When vocabularies of motive conflict or are rendered inoperative by some social situation, there can be an 'exhaustion of motive.' Mills touches briefly on the finite nature of vocabularies of motive, but the ramifications of this remain mostly unexplored in his 1940 paper. As vocabularies are predetermined and socially limited, absorbed and reinterpreted by actors to suit themselves, the audience, the context, or a questioned behavior, there is a point at which one can no longer make an explanation. There does not appear to be much theory about this beyond Mills, Sykes and Matza, or Weber, and

there is very little research with real-world examples (though it seems a beautiful research project should the proper target be selected).

Margolin (1990) explores the vocabularies of motive used by suspected perpetrators of child abuse when questioned by police. The social situation in which an account giver finds themselves or the nature of the violation can affect a motive's operativity (Ibid. 384). As an extreme (and ridiculous) example, sunny skies would be an excuse more suited for a baseball player missing a routine fly ball than for a bank robbery. In a situation such as this, perpetrators avoid avowing a motive and instead choose to apologize, express sorrow, self-flagellate, deny, conceal, or misrepresent (Ibid. 374).[22]

The paper is an excellent examination of motive exhaustion. Most testimony was taken from fathers or other caretakers convicted of various degrees of murder and manslaughter for fatal child abuse. In most cases, reasonably standard motives appeared at first but broke down as social workers pressed for answers. Few perpetrators stuck to their original story—those who did garnered a surprising amount of support despite the nature of their crimes. As justifications for killing a child are quite challenging to come up with (although a study of cultural justifications utilized in court found some; ref. Chiu, 2006), most fell under the 'excuse' umbrella. For example, one woman claimed a life of sadness and abuse drove her to a bout of temporary insanity during which she put her baby son in the freezer. Scott and Lyman (1968) found that this technique of 'defeasibility' was shared across a wide variety of crimes and improprieties. The feature of this talk whereby guilt is admitted but then neutralized by 'a lack of informed decision' puts it near an 'excuse.'

Only one of the 41 people examined utilized a true-to-definition justification. A mother accused of neonatal infanticide said that it was not a good time in her life and

that her income would not allow her to care for the child by herself, thus placing a burden on others. Unsurprisingly, this was one of the least effective strategies. Forms of 'stigma negotiation' (Sykes, 1957; Margolin, 1990) seemed to be the most effective in shielding the accused from criticism and reducing sentencing. Four mothers who had openly admitted to battery were charged only with neglect—one of those portrayed herself as a victim of her husband. On the opposite end of the spectrum, many caretakers who were initially believed to have committed neglect were shown little sympathy and ultimately found guilty of abuse if their motive was not well received. Margolin seemed surprised by the success of stigma negotiation, noting that motives had massive sway in the outcome of social worker interviews and criminal proceedings. However, she notes that "any forgiveness caretakers received was conditional, ambiguous, and revokable." Where motives were exhausted, perpetrators tended to confess (Margolin, 1990. 384).

One final aspect (and one of the more important points for our purposes) of motive that is important to Mills's conception of the framework is that as empirical pieces of data, motive utterances are just as valuable when they are imputed as when they are avowed. Both accounts are socially situated, adjusted for context, and offer information. While amendments may be made to these vocabularies to suit the individual or the immediate situation, an established vocabulary can be used to infer broader behaviors and attitudes within a group (Mills, 1940. 909; Sharp, 1978. 107). One of the more interesting examples of this is that offered by Mills himself. A priest gives money to a beautiful but poor woman on the street. When questioned, he offers "the glory of God" as a reason. Presumably, a society in which religious figures are highly respected and worship is a widespread practice, this reasoning would be accepted. In a modern, more secular society, a listener would more than likely impute a sexual motive (Ibid. 910).

Hopper (1993), influenced by Colin Campbell's 1991 examination of Mills's theory, argues that much of the vocabulary of motive perspective requires further testing before it can be used for empirical research. If one rejects the idea that Millsian and Weberian motives are mutually exclusive, this is somewhat unnecessary. However, one interesting point that Hopper makes is that while several sociologists and ethnomethodologists have released various versions of Mills's (Hopper would say Burke's) theory in the following two decades, they take for granted too many of his concepts. Empirical research of utterances utilizing the framework tends to do the same, and this very project has received similar criticism. He asserts that while a common sense understanding of motive is problematic, research into motives has either taken for granted or failed to prove that motive phrases are more socially situated than internal or more tailored to an audience than genuine. His paper, The Rhetoric of Motives in Divorce, vindicates Burke and Mills quite beautifully, but one could yet argue that his paper is necessary.

Applied research that examines motives imputed to others (as opposed to motives described by individuals) is relatively limited, so findings that support Mills's (and Kenneth Burke's) suppositions are interesting. Hopper examines the rhetoric used by divorcees. In interviews, speakers presented motives that were inconsistent even with their own prior accounts of events (Hopper, 1993. 801). Instead, almost irrespective of the information that came before, interviewees presented typal vocabularies that created 'initiator' and 'non-initiator' identities. The researcher takes this result and, perhaps in an attempt to redeem the initial hypothesis, forms a more positive interpretation of Mills (specifically motives as a deflection, redirection, or evasion of blame). He concludes that the paper's results "should not be misinterpreted as arguing that motives are merely

fabrications used cynically by social manipulators, or that motives are merely rationalizations used unwittingly by social dupes."[23] It is a fascinating result.

He continues to say that motives are indeed 'true,' but in a different sense than a common-sense understanding of the term might indicate. To wit, a motive can be true without actually directly influencing behavior. They are 'true' in the sense that "social actors derive them from actual prior events even though they rhetorically constitute and use them afterward" (Hopper, 1993. 810). Again, with a view like Sharp's that does not interpret Weberian and Millsian motives as mutually exclusive, this argument is avoidable, but having some empirical support for more contested parts of Mills's theory is helpful.

The foci of this paper are two very different situations wherein one can observe very similar motive talk. First is the rural Japanese town of Iga, where locals avow and impute motives for incidents of discrimination that do not fit traditional understandings of Japanese exclusionism or even simple logic. The nature of these motives seems to fit Mills's idea of a 'folk society.' Similarly, stupid reasons and evasions can be observed in online communities as posters discuss the controversy surrounding Colin Kaepernick, the former NFL quarterback who knelt during the national anthem to protest police brutality. The motives that appear here represent a run-away chain reaction of competing motives and exhaustions thereof. With these cases and the broader state of motive research in mind, let us visit Mills's conception one more time.

## III. Application

A Millsian perspective finds value in a person ascribing a motive, be it first- or third-person. While many researchers after Mills disagree, he asserts that imputations are as important as motive avowals. Both accounts are adjusted for social context and

offer information about the social systems in which individuals participate. Motive accounts may be considered (by Mills) unreliable for psychoanalysis, but they are still valuable pieces of information. Distilled further, societies determine the reasons people give and the priorities they assign to reasons, what Mills referred to as "socially limited vocabularies." On its face, the theory is dull.[24] Critics of Mills have even accused him of being clumsy (ref. Colin Campbell's various reviews of Mills) However, the implications of vocabulary of motive make it very useful. It rivals some modern conceptual lenses, and at this point in time has less political baggage.

Motive talk allows a researcher to make inferences about society at various levels. Unless one is Shakespeare, vocabularies exist before their absorption by an individual. It is safe to assume that they are endemic to some section of that person's social experience. A researcher can thus infer broader behaviors and attitudes within a group (Sharp, 1973. 90). A fantastic example that should have been expanded upon and published (with the title *Bread, God, and Booze*). appears in the University of Minnesota's 'Society Pages.' The author examines panhandlers in three countries and attempts to infer social values and attitudes regarding homelessness given the vocabularies they utilize.

In Germany, it was common to ask for beer money. The vocabulary was more successful than others, and transactions were treated as very serious affairs. This result is revealing about societal attitudes toward alcohol consumption. Beer is seen as a necessity, and not necessarily a vice or luxury which should be denied to the financially unfortunate. In the less alcohol-friendly United States, panhandlers often used cardboard signs, appealed to their homelessness, and invoked God. Alcohol is viewed as a luxury to be denied the poverty-stricken. In Turkey, the researcher found it exceedingly rare for panhandlers to admit homelessness, perhaps indicating an associated stigma that differs

from the United States. Instead, panhandlers approached passers-by with requests for bread money (Harrington, 2010. Online).

The various vocabularies employed across societies are an under-explored aspect of vocabulary of motive. Many papers use 'vocabulary' and 'motive' somewhat interchangeably (this researcher is at times guilty of the same). Other papers introduce various categories such as 'excuse,' 'justification,' 'appeal to a higher loyalty,' or 'denial of injury' that are more consistent with legal concepts. However, vocabulary should be a broader category of different motives with similar characteristics in a culture that exists as "lingual segments of social action" that are "typical and relatively unquestioned" (Mills, 1940. 908). In his original paper, Mills introduces a handful of example vocabularies. They include 'religious,' 'pragmatic,' 'individualistic,' 'sexual,' 'hedonistic,' and 'pecuniary.' The latter four, he claims, are "the dominant vocabularies in urban America."

Mills suggests a course of study that identifies typal vocabularies and explores their various uses: "It is worthy and capable of test that typal vocabularies […] are significant determinants of conduct" (Ibid. 908). However, papers that do so are so rare as to be non-existent (Campbell, 1996. 101). While Mills is more explicit about the determinative nature of motive talk, the idea of socially limited vocabularies that direct action is another point of agreement between Weber and Mills. Weber takes a more Marxist approach, positing that vocabularies change based on class or social strata. He uses the example of a worker who suddenly finds himself in a management position. The worker will soon begin adapting his reasoning and motive talk to fit his new environment (Weber translation in Mills, 1940. 911). Weber gives more credit to the individual's actual motivations, but the recognition that motives are socially limited is

missed in much of the literature (e.g., Campbell, 1991; Hopper, 1993; Bruce and Wallis, 1983; Bruce and Wallis, 1985).

Interpretations of this phenomenon vary. Sykes (1957) utilizes the term 'techniques of neutralization' to expand upon vocabularies used to avoid consequence or mitigate guilt after an impropriety has occurred. Individuals attempt to sway a listener and appease their own conscience. An invocation of shared social values performs this double-action (Sykes, 1957. 669). Thus, an inference can be made about their shared social systems. Campbell has a similar internal interpretation whereby motive talk is an attempt by actors to harmonize competing roles within themselves and then attune their motivations with society (Campbell, 1996. 109). These interpretations are more in line with the original Weberian sense of motive. Mills felt that digging too deeply into one's inner urges was 'motive mongering.' The only inference Mills makes about individual thought is that they are attempting to square their behavior, evidenced by the fact that they give a reason. The common purpose is to render an act non-delinquent or soften the consequences, but what each researcher gleans from utterances is different (Sharp, 1973).

An example Campbell gives to illustrate a flaw in Mills's understanding is that of middle-class women in 18th century England. They are at the same time daughters with filial obligations and romantic lovers with wants and needs. These two roles' vocabularies compete as the women attempt to choose between a father-approved wealthy man in his thirties and a handsome young lover. Campbell argues that the social framework will not allow actors to resolve the conflict, and thus Mills's concept is flawed (Campbell, 1991. 92, 93). The dense, but instructive magic phrase from above rebuts this criticism: "The societally sustained motive-surrogates of situations are both

constraints and inducements." People will act per society, but they will also do as they feel given they can avoid punishment.

The dual nature of utterances controlling and being controlled by behavior has another implication when examining vocabulary of motive across different cultures. As discussed above, Mills posits that countries with greater diversity and fewer shared customs will have a broader range of motives that operate in fewer circumstances (Mills, 1940). The United States is more modern, individualistic, diverse, and has less cultural context from which to draw motive talk and guide behavior. Societies like that of Japan, on the other hand, are more traditional, collectivistic, and have more cultural context upon which individuals can draw to form their perceptions. This rich cultural tapestry counterintuitively results in less diversity of motive vocabulary. The more collective cultural experience limits vocabularies, which in turn limit behavior. Back in America, there is less shared context to demarcate operative motives. Moreover, cultural mixes invite misinterpretation and skepticism (Mills, 1940. 912).

Up to this point, a common criticism of this research has been that it eschews modern understandings of race and racism, such as intersectionality, and misses theories and empirical research into utterances that came after Mills, Burke, or Sykes and Matza. An intersectional or critical theory analysis would actually annihilate the phenomenon we wish to examine. As discussed above, a more modern interpretation of motive talk and utterance misses some fundamental components of Mills's conception of motive. If Millsian ideas are considered, they are often mistakenly pitted against those of Weber. Vocabulary of motive is an older theory, but given the cases we will explore, it may offer more explanatory power than more modern frameworks. In Iga, a small Japanese city, limited rural vocabularies appear to be indirect determinants of discriminatory and microaggressive behavior. What is weird and compelling in this case is that typal

vocabularies are not the subject of the account for behavior they guide. Typal vocabularies were not in any way explicitly racist, nationalist, or classist, but nevertheless contribute to an environment of social inequality, fear, and distrust.

In the second case we observe, former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick, the subject is too broad and the figures too prominent to lend itself well to, for example, an intersectional analysis. Zakiyyah Ali, an equity researcher at NYU Steinhardt, uses an intersectional perspective to argue that Kaepernick's treatment at the hands of the NFL is an example of the exclusionary discipline of which black men and boys are often victims (Ali, 2017. Online). There is criticism, however, that broad system-level understandings of racism are prone to misuse by populists and not relatable or understandable enough to offer solutions outside of academia (Robertson, 2017. Online). Some might deem this concern trolling.

Ultimately, this method ignores economic and sociocultural aspects of the incident that are surely driving factors. An enterprising intersectional scholar might insert a capitalist intersection into the equation. However, an identity-based understanding of this problem is too removed from the source. While NFL viewers and customers might be responding to racial factors, the big business element is simply attempting to move with customers. That ruins the fit of a class-based analysis unless, like this paper, one focuses on individual consumers. Granted, NFL owners are textbook crony capitalists. They would object to this characterization, to be sure, but it is impossible to deny that it is a business model that relies on natural monopoly and government subsidy while privatizing profits and socializing losses. The cultural background of racism in the United States arguably allowed for the situation in the first place, but the reverse formulation (and the distinction is essential), that economic and social factors allowed the NFL and fans to contribute to institutional racism, is

compelling and worthy of exploration. A further observation that can be made in the spirit of Mills is that an ostensibly neutral corporation responds to a social movement as a threat to profit to be squashed.

A less polarized issue with specific examples of motive talk may help further elucidate the point at hand. The type of linguistic behavior that this project will focus upon is present in many areas of society. In a pilot study of motive talk originally intended as a supporting resource for the section on Iga, Japanese mothers in Yokkaichi City, Mie Prefecture, answered questionnaires about *eikaiwa* (English conversation classes). With the framework we have established, their attitudes toward the subject make much sense. Namely, seemingly nonsensical responses lend insights into Japanese society and show the idea of eikaiwa is much more than the unfortunate reality. Japanese culture places a tremendous amount of focus on extracurricular activities. The average number of *narai-goto* (extracurricular classes or activities not including sports) for respondents was just under three for elementary school students and two for kindergarten students.

Less than a third of respondents said they understood the importance of ESL education. However, eight in ten said that the skill would be necessary for the future as "global society" deepens. One in ten mothers said they wanted their kids to enjoy conversing with foreigners. While Mie has nearly double the average foreign population of Japan, only a small minority come from English-speaking or non-native English-speaking countries (Unspecified author, Mie Prefectural Government, 2018. Online). Almost a quarter of respondents made some mention of the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. The number of foreign tourists in Japan is expected to increase by ten million in 2020 (Irvine, 2019. Online), but Mie Prefecture, and Yokkaichi City in particular, will likely see very little influx. It is not easy to imagine a foreign visitor asking a child for

directions or help with a train station ticket machine, a scenario those advocating for eikaiwa typically use as an example of why it is necessary.

There are myriad reasons that a parent may want to enroll their child in this type of class, but the vocabularies by which they construct their reasoning are essential. It is possible that every single mother honestly thought, "I don't give a crap about English, but there's an English section on high school and college entrance exams, so we have no choice but to dish out ¥7,000 a month for our kid to take these silly classes." However, there is something to be gleaned from motive surrogates and their link to systems of action. Several papers should result from the research that went into this project. Hopefully, the framework is compelling enough to convince others that a reevaluation of our current understanding of racism and other friction at the border of cultures, particularly in communications, is in order.

In another pilot study cut from this paper, Japanese Trump supporters explained their love of US president Donald Trump in a series of life histories. Speakers utilized terms that fit perfectly with Sykes and Matza's techniques of neutralization or Campbell's competing internal roles. Unfortunately, the content was too difficult[25] to condense into a form compatible with our other two subjects. Subjects openly utilized racist terms or ideas, meaning motive accounts did not appear enough for a meaningful analysis based on our framework. Rather than disprove the hypothesis, these interviews offered insufficient information to make a determination. Perhaps the interviewees were just unabashedly discriminatory.

Speakers utilized some terms that fit with Sykes and Matza's techniques of neutralization or Campbell's competing internal roles. Ultimately, it was decided that a comparison between a very focused locality with naturally constrained vocabularies and a larger, more diverse society did a better job displaying the power of this method. What

can be taken away from these examples is that there is an exhaustion of vocabulary similar to our studies in Iga and America. For eikaiwa mothers, there was an odd point where they were forced to concede that they enrolled their children because it's something people do. Previous avowals and imputations for a given behavior are wholly inadequate, but given the context, the cultural background, and the complexity of the issue, they are operative. It is only when these premises are probed that individuals are forced to confront their thinking. It is here that we require an additional lens to clarify focus, and where Spivak makes an appearance.

**IV. Catachresis**

To further bolster motives and allow us to (without resorting to the use of frames) capture the phenomenon whereby vocabularies of motive spiral out of control and allow for the hijacking of societal narratives, a concept from Spivakian postcolonial criticism is helpful. Catachresis may also allow for more straightforward application of vocabulary of motive at a societal level once motives in use at a more granular level have been identified. Despite this researcher's shameless Western capitalist leanings, various authors' efforts in Marxist literary criticism have contributed significantly to this paper's framework. Postcolonialists, deconstructionists, and critical theorists can be forceful in their use of jargon, but the popularity of academics like Bhabha or Spivak is well deserved. A piece by Terry Eagleton from 1999 compares Spivak's A Critique of Postcolonial Reason (which is actually a remonstration of her postcolonial colleagues) to a "gaudy, all-licensed supermarket" where "any idea can apparently be permutated with any other" (Eagleton, 1999. Online). That statement is correct in a way he did not intend. There is a refreshing feeling to prose that mixes and matches theories and bucks academic conventions.

Postcolonial criticism requires much of the reader. However, despite the overly complicated language, the genre allows for exploring concepts that other narrowly-focused methods miss. In the letters section of the London Review of Books, Judith Butler said that "[Spivak's] work is fresh air when read against the truisms which, now fully commodified as 'radical theory,' pass as critical thinking." She refers to stodgy literary criticism and Euro-liberal class politics, but the sentiment rings true for much of modern racism studies and political psychology. Despite the difficulty, Spivak's esoteric style in effect makes her work more approachable than technical writings "with introductory primers and recycled material" (Ibid). Given how bloated and monomaniacal sociological understandings of racism have become, the middle finger her heavy-handed prose holds up to academia is understandable. That is not to compare this research to one of academia's most admired and highly-paid authors. But the message that Spivak sends the academic community is another necessary stepping block to understanding this paper.

The concept of 'catachresis' was adopted from literary criticism by postcolonial studies. Derrida called it a "violent and forced abusive inscription of a sign, the imposition of a sign upon a meaning which did not yet have its own proper sign in language" (translation quoted in Hawthorne, 2013). Catachresis can be incidental, a vague concept that results from our feeble human attempts to easily explain complex structures, like 'genius' or 'woman.' It can also be more purposeful and pernicious, as the concept of 'whiteness' in Western culture or *nihonjin* (The Japanese) in Japan. Postcolonial Marxist critics like Bhabha and Spivak utilize this concept as a central pillar of postcolonial studies. Very basically, the theory supposes that modern knowledge and the creation thereof is based on a particular conceptualization of the world that is contingent upon certain societal conditions. 'Progress' in the Western sense is based on a

mechanical universalism that necessitates reexamination in a modern era with more diversity in power structures. Further, it holds that Western conceptuality exists mainly as a mechanism by which the West exerts influence and maintains the status quo.[26]

This author would suggest that the real issue is not necessarily the 'universalism' of Western thinking that postcolonial critics seem to focus upon, but the assumption of normativity. Further, authors like Hawthorne impute a "parochial prophetic mission" to the West. European colonialism and concepts like 'the white man's burden' are certainly consistent with that thinking, but a broad application to the West undermines the idea of 'abusive inscriptions' as a form of violence. Derrida supposes that this leaves ideas and meanings that rest with 'othered' groups homeless, deprived of a proper signifier in language, and displaced by a secondary sense (Kearney, 1995. 158). Derrida even goes so far as to call this process a type of violence.[27]

Calling catachresis Spivakian is slightly unfair as it was initially conceived as a tool of deconstruction by Derrida. Spivak's version of the theory is a helpful tool for explaining the phenomena this project attempts to document. Similarly to Mills's thoughts on motive, we presuppose existing conditions of forming and transmitting ideas, including the necessary institutions, laws, and societal roles, and recognize that people comprehend this and work within or perform the required context for their ideas to land. A catachresis, then, is a 'mutation' that emerges as members of a society work through tradition, changing the surrounding context (Ibid. 162). Utterances require a mutual backstop for comprehensibility, but catachreses, which Derrida refers to as 'monsters,' change their environment and create the protocol necessary to validate their existence, often at the expense of an 'other' and for the benefit of a majority (Ibid. 162).

A similar use to ours appears in Judith Butler's *Excitable Speech*, though the specific topic of catachresis is addressed only briefly. Butler discusses, much as we

have, the issue with current racism studies being a game of whack-a-mole for racist terms, hate speech, or hateful acts, often to the exclusion of necessary discussions on institutionalized discrimination. She points out the paradox that hate speech laws mean 'a censor' must utilize the terms they seek to ban, with the "rhetoric that is deplored [being] invariably proliferated within the context of legal speech" (Butler, 1997. 14). Her assertion that censorship constitutes a "restaging" of hate speech is moot.[28] However, the point that hate speech law and the act of censorship create a catachresis whereby the issue becomes a struggle between sovereignties is well-conceived.

Butler argues that hate speech law, in effect, elevates speech acts to a level on par with actions and imbued with similar performative power to the language of the state. In effect, she suggests, the state produces hate speech. To wit, the language of the state (and specifically the judiciary), such as "I sentence you" or "I pronounce you," has a type of performative power. The words are at once both speech and sovereign acts: they perform the action that they state. Similarly, one who uses hate speech affects subordination when "unacceptable" hate speech acts are codified into law. Paradoxically, through state recognition and regulation, an utterance becomes a performative with power on par with the state. By breaking the law, one is effectively imbued with the power of the law. An act of hate speech becomes a sovereign speech act (Butler, 1997. 48).

One further issue is highlighted in Butler. When racism, or specifically' hate speech,' is presented as an issue of free expression, the perpetrators of hate speech or hateful acts are cast as the injured victim that the supreme court must protect from the state (Mari Matsuda and Charles Lawrence quoted in Butler, 1997. 60). Butler does not call this a catachresis, but it represents a similar conceptual displacement. There is common ground. An idea without importance to the majority in society is disrupted and

labeled with a signifier. This signifier neither represents the original concept nor the new. Spivak or her colleagues[29] might further the discussion to 'colonial boundaries,' but there is something worthwhile in investigating the process by which participants in a discourse define the terms and dictate meaning.

Regardless of the direction one heads when catachresis is identified, the concept is useful. It will allow us to capture the displacement of societal narratives without resorting to communications theory and makes our focus on individual speech acts easier to apply to society.[30] We will also return to Butler and the thought experiment she conducts throughout *Excitable Speech*. When a catachresis appears, there's a question of responsibility that arises. Butler's thoughts are perhaps extreme, but to tackle an internet-driven phenomena some unusual thinking may be required.

**V. Summation**

The motive surrogates by which people attempt to explain their actions are important pieces of empirical data that racism studies has neglected to this point. Some researchers attribute this problem to conceptual inflation. Another issue is that there was much, probably unnecessary, contention surrounding the various interpretations of 'motive' between sociologists and psychologists. As newer theories debuted, motives lost favor. Another issue discussed in Chapter 4 is that study design may have been complicated due to the theory's focus on utterances. The result is a confusing and easily overlooked family tree of theories. If one goes back and looks at the original approaches (or once-removed approaches such as Lyman or Sykes), they will find a useful tool for understanding discriminatory behavior.

Mills's focus on utterances as empirical pieces of data means we can make inferences about broader society when we have motive phrases to examine. The essential

feature that much of the literature overlooks[31] is that motives imputed to others are equally as valid as those avowed by individuals. We should once again stress that the psychological interpretations of motive are not unimportant, but we ignore them here. While there are some assumptions involved when sifting through vocabularies, Mills felt that probing too far beyond the utterances themselves made the method less scientific.

Utterances have a two-way causal relationship with action. There are, as Weber states, a number of socially determined typal vocabularies. As such, behaviors are often tailored to the potential audience for an explanation, and vocabularies determine what behaviors people are willing to tolerate. An example of how this is useful is visible in the vocabularies utilized to excuse police violence. While Americans debate about state violence and racism, they miss that America's deeply embedded gun culture allows for the racial disparity in police brutality to go unquestioned with specific audiences. It is taken for granted that someone might have a gun, and trigger-happy police are seen as a natural consequence.[32]

In rural Japan, the immense pride and focus locals place on their town give birth to an esoteric excuse and justification system. Again, victims are seen to be at fault for their victimization, or the problem is deemed to be beyond remedy. Any conversation that attempts to draw focus to the issue is immediately hijacked. While we see similar victim-blaming and cultural appeals throughout racism studies, we have a new perspective.

The result is a displacement of issues. In our examples economic discrimination is considered a quirk of local culture, and police brutality is viewed through the lens of gun culture or criminal justice. Economic factors and racism are ignored, and the victim is made responsible for his own victimization. It is here that we borrow a concept from post-colonial studies. Catachresis is the phenomenon by which ideas are overwritten by

others, with the initial word, concept, or event taking on a new meaning. This ties everything back to our original research goals.

Racism studies is suffering from concept bloat and an extremely polarized environment surrounding the concepts in popular culture. Microaggressions, intersectionality, and critical theory have all hit mainstream discourse with explosive result. First-world countries have moved slowly rightward despite seeming gains in civil rights and greater acceptance of leftist concepts in media (at least in the United States where there has historically been more resistance to Marxist, democratic socialist, and other leftist ideas).

Rather than attempt to support and then address that mess, this paper will focus on a more bite-sized goal. In communications and sociology, frames and framing concepts are used to understand how the media and influential figures drive discourse and push public opinion. Utilizing our conceptual toolset, we will challenge that paradigm's suitability when it comes to the subject of racism. Rather than a top-down push from authoritarian figures on an unwitting public, racism is a more organic and personal process. The catachresis that results in both instances are consistent with Mills's original concept of 'vocabulary of motive,' and may necessitate a rethinking of responsibility theory.

The next section discusses issues with current literature and explores existing applications of Mills's theory and how it can be utilized here.

# CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

## I. Introduction

Everyday racism at the level of conversation is mostly under-theorized (Combs, 2018. 39). More specifically, defensive and dismissive rhetoric utilized when discrimination becomes the topic of conversation has been, until recently, primarily neglected by academia. In communications, many theories address similar social behaviors, but they, as do other areas of racism studies, tend to focus on broader phenomena or individuals at higher tiers of society. It is undeniable that thought leaders and media personalities wield influence over individuals in society, but the extent and nature of that correlation are rarely questioned.

An example of research into that rhetoric is the theory of 'racial figleaves' proposed by Jennifer Saul from the University of Sheffield. Saul focuses on Donald Trump and small rhetorical tricks he uses to couch racist sentiments in more acceptable speech. She argues that years of this tactic by right-wing politicians are slowly eroding the Norm of Racial equality as proposed by Mendelberg and that we are nearing an era wherein openly white supremacist rhetoric can once again carry a political candidate. In contrast, it was once easy to demonstrate that such behavior would repel white voters in America (Saul, 2017. 102). Saul builds her arguments on Mendelberg, who carefully documented political messaging and identified implicit and explicit racial appeals. He noted how beneficial or detrimental each political speech act would be to a campaign at a given time. The idea of implicit racial appeals is similar to the modern concept of 'dog-whistles.' The term is quite popular on Internet forums.

These concepts come together to describe a process by which American politics has become more racist over the last 12 years, culminating in the election of an Obama birtherist reality TV host who used populist appeals to snatch disaffected and racially

resentful whites away from the Democratic Party. As anti-racist ideals began to take hold after the civil rights movement, prominent figures had to resort to implicit appeals to racial resentment (Hurwitz, 2005). These implicit appeals "activate" racism latent in the individual, allowing them to respond to messages without triggering a self-policing instinct that a more explicit racist display might (Saul, 2019. 2).

As time moves forward, the distinction between explicit and implicit racial appeals weakens, giving way to unambiguously racist media content and political messaging that is nevertheless permitted in society because there is still a layer of obfuscation (cf. Valentino, 2018; Lapinsky, 2008). After the election of Barack Obama, it is theorized that white America somewhat abandoned the Norm of Racial Equality as the election of a black man to the nation's highest office allowed for their racial guilt to be absolved (Valentino, 2018. 3). Indeed, Obama's presidency is often employed as a defense in Internet forums conversations when the idea of institutional racism appears.

As Donald Trump arrives on the political scene, implicit appeals to racial resentment are replaced with explicit appeals slightly concealed by Saul's 'figleaves.' Saul defines figleaves as utterances that provide some small amount of cover for an openly racist sentiment, the expression of which would otherwise be unacceptable in public (Saul, 2019. 9). Perhaps the best example Saul offers is Trump's call to ban Muslims "from 7 countries that have tremendous terror" or "until our country's representatives can figure out what's going on" (Saul, 2017. 116). The overlap with the theory we put forth here comes when Saul discusses the issue of operativity. A figleaf' may or may not be accepted by an audience, and certain groups may not fall for a figleaf in a particular circumstance, if ever.[33] Indeed, many Trump supporters reject the idea that he is racist, if only in public. Interpretations of his various infamous quotes vary wildly.

Crucially, Saul acknowledges that the issuer of a figleaf may not be aware of the nature of their rhetoric. A psychological element, driven by self-perception or outside attention, pushes individuals to justify their speech and behavior. Saul concludes with the premise of this project: It is necessary to study further the utterances that justify, hide, or otherwise make racism acceptable. Saul posits that these utterances, when utilized by the powerful, shift the public's mood so that racist attitudes, previously deemed unacceptable, are once again allowed by polite society. This framework is similar to Overton's window of discourse or Chomsky's spectrum of acceptable opinions (ref. Chomsky, 1998). An arguably important facet that these approaches miss is that individuals practice these 'figleaves' and range-limiting debate tactics at a more refined level.[34]

**II. Motives and Framing in Racism Studies**

The concept of vocabulary of motive is mentioned in passing in an uncountable number of papers, but research that utilizes the concept as a primary tool for empirical study is rare. Despite its seeming usefulness, Mills's prescribed course of study did not allow for easily designed experiments. Thus there is some reluctance to utilize the formula as more than a backstop for more convenient methods. Campbell (1996. 101) asserts that at the time of publication, vocabularies of motive had never actually been used as described in the original text. Part of this could be the confusion discussed above regarding the various interpretations of the theory. Modern understandings seem to be based more on Weber's work, but the idea that Weber and Mills's motives are mutually exclusive opposites to be used separately is limiting at best and utterly mistaken at worst. With the advent of the Internet, large swaths of the population

communicate such that a permanent record exists. There is more data than ever to exercise and test the theories of motive without designing interviews or experiments.

The following will be utilized to examine some papers relevant to this study. They are relevant not only in that they utilize vocabulary of motive theory prominently but also in that they have features that allow for applications similar to ours.

Benford (1993) utilizes vocabulary of motive as prescribed in "Situated Actions and Vocabulary of Motive."[35] With Kenneth Burke's concept of 'dramatism' as a springboard, Benford discusses how the story of "the Hundredth Monkey" provided a 'representative anecdote' for nuclear disarmament activists. "The Hundredth Monkey" is an allegory that stipulates that once awareness of a concept reaches a certain critical mass, it spontaneously grows to become common knowledge. This story informed the vocabularies they used to spur collective action. The 'severity' vocabulary, for instance, was used as a way to convince listeners that a particular group was offering education necessary to solve an existential crisis.

Benford's methods were painstaking, highlighting the difficulty of utilizing Mills's course before the Internet. For four years, he produced nearly 1,000 pages of field notes and participated in hundreds of hours of social movement activities. The result is one of the more extensive empirical studies on vocabulary of motive available. The framework is as close to Mills's suggested methods as anything else in the literature. When members of an anti-nuclear movement are confronted with a lack of activity, the need to convince a prospective member, or attempt to justify their participation in a movement, the vocabularies of 'severity,' 'urgency,' 'efficacy,' and 'propriety' made an appearance. Again, this almost anthropological or ethnomethodological approach is similar to that of collective action frames but at a more focused level.

The work is vital because it effectively demonstrates that participation in social movements may be influenced by participants' vocabularies of motive and also be contingent upon them. Benford's results support Mills's theory of a two-way causal relationship between action and motive talk. Adherents to a particular ideology spend an incredible amount of time and energy constructing narratives.[36] Via these narratives, active members of a movement recruit new people. Benford also concludes that this process helps solve the 'free-rider dilemma' (which is similar to the concept in economics), and get people to act who are interested but not motivated and allow others to participate for them (Ibid. 197). For example, in the 'severity' vocabulary, there existed 'doomsday framings.' Even in the 1980s, when Americans were terrified of (and in genuine danger of) a nuclear war, Benford found that anti-nuclear movements purposely attempted to exaggerate the dangers, even referring to some of their own more outrageous materials as "apocoporn." Participants were also aware that people have a limited amount of time to participate in social movements, so they utilized scare tactics to convince others and themselves that their particular cause trumped all others (Ibid. 202).

Benford and Snow (1988) had found previously that in specific movements, overstating the severity of a problem decreased participation because it made the issue seem insurmountable. In anti-nuclear movements, an 'efficacy' vocabulary appeared to combat this. Benefit found that movements that were more successful at recruiting had utilized all four of the vocabularies above.[37]

Other talk of note belonged to the 'propriety' and 'urgency' vocabularies. These are interesting because they are similar to motives that appeared in Iga. For example, one common tactic for canvassers dealing with an open admission of 'free-riding' (i.e., I'm too old to participate, so I'm letting young people take charge) was to create a sense

of moral responsibility for protecting others (i.e., Think of your grandchildren). This motive talk is similar to the framing of some Japanese people in Iga. When pressed on exclusionist incidents against migrants in town, interviewees expressed a desire to protect their fellow Igans. Their unique, isolated culture is at once blamed for outsiders being excluded while it is employed as justification for the further exclusion of outsiders who might seek to change it. This vocabulary is one of the few Igan vocabularies consistent with the more traditional notion of Japanese racism.

There is overlap with the 'urgency' vocabulary here, too, in that several interviewees in Iga expressed a sense of being overwhelmed or overrun by a massive influx of foreigners (the foreign population never exceeded 5%, even at the peak of economic activity, so this apparent "huge influx" is relative to Japan as a whole). While no interviewee followed that line of reasoning to its conclusion and outright stated that foreigners should be stopped from coming in or expelled, it was offered as an explanation for why exclusion could occur and, in online forums, why it should occur.

One final intriguing aspect of Benford is that his particular process allows for real-time analysis of how group identity is constructed via narratives and motives. As groups explore their identity and the surrounding vocabularies, Benford believes a researcher could mark when the various characteristics of group identity form and analyze how they are verbalized. Typically we can only examine motives after a group identity has formed. Indeed the original theory, as presented by Mills, states that vocabularies are not only situational but positively related to the culture and thus genetic. That is especially true in the case of older societies (Mills, 1940. 911).[38]

Literature that addresses the issue of racism will often mention the concept of vocabulary of motive in passing, particularly analyses of radical right-wing organizations (i.e., Stuart Hall's famous article on Thatcherism, "The toad in the

garden"). However, few are built on the framework. Alvarez (1997) does not perfectly fit the niche we are targeting, but it is tangentially related and very compelling. Utilizing Sykes and Matza's enhanced Millsian framework, 'techniques of neutralization,' Alvarez makes a case for the addition of genocide to criminological literature. One particularly genius aspect of the paper is that it demonstrates how individuals assuage their conscience when swept up in widespread criminal behavior. The phenomenon of conformity to the government, even when engaged in genocide or other atrocities, is well documented. However, the question that is usually asked is "why didn't more people resist"? Alvarez answers an interesting companion to that question: "How did the participants define their actions so as to resolve their normative conflicts and enable them to comply?"

Similarly to this paper, Alvarez suggests that an old theory can offer fresh insights even when researchers attempt to explain newer phenomena. The paper examines Nazi testimony in the Nuremberg Trials to test how criminological theory could apply to the "new crime" of genocide. He suggests that because researchers had until that point understood the problem as a political phenomenon, they were unknowingly neglecting many intellectual tools that had already been developed to explain criminal acts and actors. Given that genocide is state-sanctioned, and thus not strictly illegal despite its heinousness, it is perhaps easy to understand this oversight.

Alvarez begins by positing that given the principles of the enlightenment and German art, music, and jurisprudence, German people had an existing set of societal norms that ran counter to the Nazis' activities (Ibid. 142). This societal state is similar to the modern Norm of Equality. He cites several examples of German citizens exercising moral agency, protesting killings, and otherwise reacting negatively to Nazi leadership even as others or they themselves complied. Prior understandings of the holocaust relied

on many psychological mechanisms such as distancing or dehumanization. This falls in line with the Weberian understanding of Bureaucracy, wherein compartmentalization, buck-passing, and bureaucratic jargon allow people to separate themselves from their work and make any task rote and inhuman (Weber, 1997). However, Alvarez makes a very compelling argument that previous studies overlook an internal process of negotiation.

Numerous first-hand accounts of Germans who were antisemitic but nevertheless voiced opposition when killing or relocation began shows a normative barrier some Germans had to overcome. One might argue the importance of examining the process by which participants overcame ideological barriers. However, it applies to white American apologia for the deteriorating economic circumstances of black people in America and institutional racism, as evidenced by the judiciary system. There is a large body of research into 'the war on poverty,' 'the war on drugs,' and crime bills that have an outsized effect on people of color. This researcher could not find any paper that closely examined everyday racism or vocabularies contributing to this situation. Even papers that deal with aversive racism tend to have a broader point of view. A novel aspect similar to that of Alvarez is deserving of further exploration in those contexts.

A techniques of neutralization method also sorts out some flaws in other influential holocaust research. Namely, the idea that German society had a unique and particularly vicious form of antisemitism. Alvarez addresses the works of Daniel Goldhagen and offers some sharp criticisms. First, an understanding of genocidal behavior in the holocaust with a foundation in eliminationist antisemitism does not account for the treatment of other "undesirables" in German society. While they were not made the target of widespread propaganda campaigns as were Jews, they were still stigmatized and eventually subject to systematic killings. Second, German

antisemitism's uniqueness is questionable given the widespread participation of non-Germans in genocide and the history of antisemitism throughout Europe. Third, Alvarez demonstrates that the broad boogeyman view of Jews did not necessarily offer individuals the motivation necessary to overcome the natural inclination to see individuals as human beings. Goldhagen does concede that the construction of Nazi antisemitism was "very abstract," and testimony analyzed by Alvarez shows that many Germans saw Jewish people around them as human even as they maintained a bigoted image of "the Jew" (Alvarez, 1997. 148).

Alvarez's approach also helps dispense with the myth that Nazis were horrible monsters or sociopaths. It is an incredibly important message. If genocide is elevated too far above ordinary people's heads, it is difficult for one to imagine how they might react if presented with the same political pressures, social pressures, and power differentials.[39]

This work is relevant in our case because it identifies a similar issue to that with Japanese and American (and other developed nations with a history of racism or colonialism) understandings of discrimination. While hatred for particular groups is emphasized, an approach that examines how individuals square their self-image with systems that benefit them at the expense of minority groups may offer new methods by which society can confront discrimination. In more extreme cases, such as the genocides currently occurring in Yemen, Sudan, or China, an approach that recognizes ordinary individuals' roles is vital. Understanding how people convince themselves to do terrible things despite their beliefs helps fulfill historiography's most important goal: preventing past mistakes from being repeated.

To expand this research to utilize our particular take on the Millsian framework (though challenging), one might consider how observers convince themselves that nothing needs to be done. Again, this a glaring omission in the current literature. Saul

(2017, 2019) notes the same phenomenon via a slightly different framing. When considering anti-racist norms, individuals will set the bar for racism slightly above their behavior or a behavior in question. We are interested in the linguistic tools that make that process possible.

One more critical process for understanding and skillfully utilizing the concept of motives is analyzing motive talk as it pertains to actions that are not necessarily transgressions. Racism is indeed a transgression, but tangible harm is not easily identified. A similarly ambiguous target of analysis might be gambling. Depending upon the jurisdiction, it is legal and presumably harmless when done responsibly. However, there are adverse outcomes in society, many of which may not be readily understood.

Research into gambling appears in economics, psychology, and psychiatry, but few studies directly analyze the motive phrases that gamblers use. Researchers in the 1950s and 1970s posited that masochism and guilt were primary drivers of gambling behavior (Smith, 1984. 325). However, more recent research, especially corporate research into the addictive effects of gambling-like devices used in games and social media platforms, has found that fundamental mechanisms of human brain chemistry reward risky behavior and small rewards meted out over time (King, 2018. 1967). This finding explains the real reason grannies blow hundreds of dollars in nickels at a slot machine or why little Johnny plays Fortnite for seven hours straight. However, the reasons given reveal information about the individual or their social situation.

Smith (1984) is an older paper, but it delves into the mindset of gamblers. From their accounts, the paper attempts to conclude how people who gamble neutralize their behavior when questioned. Perhaps an unsurprising result was that of those polled for the study, a far smaller percentage of people than expected from a random sample reported losing money. Of those whom researchers pressed on the issue, many said they

"did not lose enough" for it to count as an "actual" loss. Others said they were not gambling for money, but rather fun, so a loss was expected and counted as an entertainment expense rather than a deadweight financial loss. Researchers suspected that respondents might have been employing some techniques of neutralization. They found support for this hypothesis when gamblers were asked to impute a motive to others who gambled. In those cases, answers could be wildly different.

This study is one of the few examinations of motive of its type[40] wherein the function of motive vocabulary as a defense mechanism is definitively supported. It should be emphasized that the value of motive talk as empirical evidence is not undermined without this link. However, it is a common criticism of research that adopts the theory of vocabularies of motive. By directly comparing imputed and avowed motives and highlighting the differences, Smith offers something of a blueprint for those wishing to utilize this motive viewpoint to analyze less overt forms of racism. For example, an analysis of vocabularies pertaining to micro-aggressions or dog-whistles might alleviate some of the concerns that the theory is too subjective to be particularly useful. In the cases to be examined in this research, a profound difference between avowed and imputed motives was not observed, but an enterprising researcher could track down individuals who had utilized dog-whistles or racism apologia. Utilizing Smith's method, one could examine how those people react when confronted with examples from others exhibiting similar behavior.

The phenomenon we are attempting to capture and explain here is typically understood from a communications perspective or within racism studies frameworks. However, there has not been a big push to combine the two until very recently. Research that tackles utterances or tries to improve upon racism studies tends to be from the perspective of fighting conceptual inflation or pushing back against specific concepts

that find their way into mainstream culture. Blum (2016), for instance, argues that rather than examine white privilege and injustice from a personal perspective, researchers should use a new linguistic tool kit that allows for a more detailed discussion of exclusionist phenomena. Where that approach differs from this paper is in the application. Rather than try to move beyond the concept of categorizing racism and focusing on speech events themselves, Blum suggests some new categorizations.

Arguably, the market for that topic is saturated. Blum suggests two terms to help "remove obstacles to interracial dialogue" and prevent dilution of the concept of racism: 'antipathy racism' and 'inferiorizing racism.' It interesting to consider how these tools might advance the lexical toolset beyond existing concepts. Current frameworks such as aversive racism and implicit bias have gained popularity without a great revolution in how we communicate about race. Perhaps focusing on rhetoric that occurs at the borders of these discussions is more pragmatic.

Our focus here is related to the behavior to which Blum speaks. For example, he acknowledges the well-known "I'm not a racist, but" motive phrase, but ultimately fails to realize that the preemptive attempt to deflect a claim of racism may indeed be a symptom of aversive racism. To wit, such disclaimers can allow discriminatory statements to be couched and accepted by a listener where they would generally be challenged (Saul, 2019. 18).[41] The speaker may genuinely believe they are free from discriminatory intent, but the disclaimer's existence proves they are aware of potential offense and still choose to push through. Despite this apparent connection between communication and passive discriminatory behaviors, literature dealing with the subject, especially at the everyday level, is few and far between. At a broader level, such as media communication or political messaging, there is a body of knowledge from which to draw some insights and enter our analysis.

A popular concept in the burgeoning field of Colin Kaepernick studies is that of framing. As proposed by Erving Goffman, the original concept of frames was an ethnomethodological tool to understand individuals' experiences and process how various social contexts produce different interpretations of the same event. The concept was influenced by Chomsky (1988) and Entman (1993), who examine propaganda by United States corporate news outlets. It has since evolved from describing how events are massaged by the media to change public perception to a process by which the media select frames within which they can constrain public conversation (Coombs, 2019. 5, 10). Entman defined the process as "[selecting] some aspect of a perceived reality and [making it] more salient in a communicating text." He asserts that the purpose of this is to advance a particular interpretation of a problem, a solution to said problem, or even pass moral judgments. According to Gitlin (1980), the primary purpose of media framing is to preserve the status quo or protect hegemonic structures. The purpose of these frames then is to ensure that people perceive any threat to power as an effort to destabilize legitimate authority and social order. People then ignore aspects of a social movement or news event and stunt social progress as a result (Ibid. 271). This phenomenon is well documented, but there seems to be little consciousness of how the relationship between framing and public perception of events may operate both ways.

The frames that appear around social movements are a good area of overlap for us to explore, particularly given current events at the time of this writing. Specific frames so dominate the coverage of protests that researchers have identified a 'protest paradigm' of social movements (Goffman, 1963). Journalists socialized into this paradigm essentially commentate on events rather than report. McLeod (2007) attempted to demonstrate that derogatory framing presents an obstacle for demonstrators attempting to gain footing in the political arena. The study made variable the

information offered to poll participants before answering questions. It found that depending on how pollsters conducted briefings, they could persuade participants to identify with police over protestors. This finding held even after blatant violations of the latter's civil rights.

The events to be discussed here also match well with later research that found outlets report on events in a manner consistent with their political leanings or with the perceived attitudes of a target audience. This finding is more consistent with common-sense understandings of bias. Outlets tended to present Black Lives Matter events, for instance, in a positive light, even when they had apparently been co-opted by agitators, rioters, or violent black bloc anarcho-communists. This bias is dismaying, but it does thankfully contradict the findings of McLeod, McCarthy, Augustyn, and others who found the media to portray any social protest movement primarily in a negative light. That finding could hint at a missing element in the theory for which we search. It is also possible that it marks a shift in the status quo of elites since the original studies debuted in the late nineties and early aughts. Everyday racism, however, seems to have changed little for a very long time. Barbara Harris Combs's famous 1960 paper on everyday racism, for example, contains anecdotes that would not be out of place in 2020 America.

A framework that lies somewhere between what we attempt to build here and communications is collective action framing. These 'frames' are again mostly applied to political actors and public figures and explain how individuals seek to control language to garner support for initiatives they prefer (Benford and Snow, 2000. 200). These figures that appear in the media must find a way to make their pet issues agree with the public's existing interests (Surette, 2010). What these figures can get away with and how much they can influence the public is also dependent upon timing (Tsuda, 1999. 292). As with communications frames, a significant area in which this perspective differs is

the scale. It is difficult to find research that examines individuals' utterances outside the public spotlight. This seeming problem could be a simple logistical issue. Until quite recently, it would have been difficult and impractical to analyze everyday speech in a natural setting and compare it to the messaging of political groups or media outlets.

With new internet-based tools, it is quite possible to analyze public speech on a granular level. Deindividuation effects and other internet phenomena mean there must be some caveats to "every day," but the tools are potentially powerful. Frames, which studies to this point posit are set by media figures or politicians, may not always align with the public's perspectives. It appears that much research in the field of collective action framing is also dependent upon a group position perspective. This idea clashes somewhat with an intimate research focus as it takes for granted that racial and ethnic groups have within them shared common goals (Brubaker, 2009. 167). That assumption is already questionable and becomes more so at a personal level.

One particular aspect that this research hopes to capture is a different picture of those that do not hold openly racist views. One may hold discriminatory views and keep it secret, or they may unwittingly participate in systems that advantage certain groups over others. Research into implicit bias has increased in recent years, particularly in psychology. Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald pioneered the theory as the 'implicit stereotype' in the late '90s, and later researchers came up with various other ways to measure or test implicit bias. Subconscious bias education has been present on college campuses since the late 1990s (Erwin, 2007. Online). Downstream in culture, implicit bias education, and anti-bias training are appearing in workplaces (Ahmad, 2017. Online). Some Washington state courts are pioneering the use of this concept in *voir dire* (Unspecified author, ACLU Washington, 2018. Online). Hillary Clinton even invoked the concept in her first presidential debate against Donald Trump in 2016.

The idea that bias and racism would be affected by subconscious factors just as any other behavior is widely accepted, but the methods for testing and controlling implicit racism are controversial. One commonly cited study is the famous Emily and Greg versus Lakisha and Jamal experiment conducted by Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan. Prospective employers were sent resumes with very white- or very African-American-sounding names. The content of the resume is otherwise identical. They found that resumes with names that would lead employers to believe the applicant was black received fewer callbacks (Bertrand, 2004. 10). The effect is plain, but how society should deal with it is an important question. Large companies, for example, have implemented mandatory bias training to little positive effect. For example, Google has seen almost no change in its workforce's race and gender makeup despite mandatory bias training and extensive media coverage of the initiative (Lien, 2017. Online).

Research shows that even when individuals ostensibly identify their implicit biases, training leads to very little behavioral change. Further, relapse following the conclusion of classes was common. Forscher (2019) conducted the first large scale meta-analysis of studies on implicit measures. They found that implicit attitudes could be changed, but that the effect was mild and temporary. Most changes were "entirely wiped out" upon reintroduction to a typical social environment (Ibid. 542). Perhaps more crucially, they could not find any link between a change in implicit attitude and a change in explicit behavior. One finding that could perhaps be useful was a change in explicit behavior if an implicit association was new to the subject (for example, a policy made-up by researchers and attributed to known politicians with a specific real-world party affiliation). Given how deeply rooted stereotypes and other racial biases are in culture, it would be hard to leverage this effect against racism, but it is perhaps worthy of further exploration. Consistent with other research (e.g., Nayak, 1999), they found

that implicit measures that induced fear, anxiety, or attempted to elicit particular emotions in white people were the least effective (Ibid. 528). Claremont McKenna professor Frederick R. Lynch suggests that implicit bias training programs fail because they create fear amongst intended audiences. As the primary target of bias training, white people believe they will be held personally responsible for structural inequality. Perhaps Lynch's most important point is something of a throwaway. He suggests that companies implement diversity or implicit bias training principally to avoid liability in potential future discrimination lawsuits. Thus, rather than focus on effectiveness, training instead hits only the bullet points necessary to look favorable in a courtroom in a setting (Lien, 2017. Online).

In addition to the mounting evidence that implicit bias training is not working, there is also research[42] that suggests that explicit messages of discrimination have begun to influence voters as much as implicit messages. Valentino (2018) reached a particularly interesting finding. Researchers long believed that overt mentions of race or racist language would, counter-intuitively, reduce the effect of racial resentment involved in support of political candidates (cf. Saul, 2017; Henry, 2002 for more on racial resentment politics and erosion of anti-racist norms). This 'racial priming theory' stipulates that subtler racial cues are more effective than overt racism, as voters living with the 'Norm of Racial Equality' will reject very obvious displays of prejudice. Valentino found that this theory may no longer hold.

Alternatively, there may be (for lack of a better concept) an 'inception effect' taking place with anti-racism efforts. It would represent something a mirror image of racial priming theory. 'Inception' is a popular concept in American culture from the 2012 film of the same name. In the film, industrial spies use brain hacking technology to enter a business magnate's mind and convince him to break up the monopolistic trading

company he inherited from his father. As the main character explains it, the problem is that to successfully 'incept' an idea, the process must be subtle and natural: "I say to you 'don't think about elephants. What are you thinking about?'"

Individuals are resistant to ideas that do not jive with the image they hold of themselves. This cognitive dissonance or denial means implicit bias is a controversial subject amongst psychologists. There is also question as to retest reliability of the IAT, for example. As we established above, there is reason to believe that implicit measures do not work. Research that aims to examine resistance to bias training empirically, however, is rare. In an e-mail interview with Psychology Today, implicit bias pioneer Dr. Mahzarin Banaji intimated that researchers are aware of the potential for resistance. She said that 'training' is the wrong term to use and that those teaching corporate classes about racism should avoid implicit bias concepts without a deep understanding of the literature. She also notes that psychological and sociological data show that voluntary training may be more effective due to backlash against mandatory training programs (Jussim, 2017. Online).

Having reviewed some similar phenomena and theories to that we use in this paper, there may be some questions about what exactly is to be measured here. The answer is, as the popular meme goes, "yes." The utterances we observe in later sections are more easily explained without the framework-related baggage of newer methods. While popular concepts such as implicit bias or intersectionality are useful ideas in their own right, they are not easy to use when addressing broader social phenomena. That is particularly true when it is abstracted from the initial problem. Paradoxically, a more individually focused approach may offer insight into broader behaviors in society. A method like implicit bias could explain the underlying psychology but offers little explanatory power for how that manifests in behavior and (more importantly) how it

could be remedied. There is a fear of resistance from subjects and little evidence to support a change in behavior following implicit measures. Several studies that are pertinent to our framework follow.

Research into the use of coded racist language, or 'dog whistles,' becomes common in the late '90s (e.g., Saul, 2017; Saul, 2019; Drakulich, 2015). 'Urban violence,' 'states' rights,' 'forced busing,' and 'welfare queens' are perhaps more famous examples.[43] In 1981, a Republican strategist infamous for his brutality named Lee Atwater gave an interview on exploiting racial resentment amongst voters. He mentions these exact terms as purposeful abstractions of racial slurs. Waters allegedly asked the interviewers to cut his comments, but the original recording is now available online in its entirety (Perlstein, 2018. Hotlink to YouTube). He attempts to frame these abstracted slurs as a type of solution to racism. He argues that for bigoted concepts to go away, we must sweep them under the rug and let them disappear on their own. Even if we can accept this motive avowal at face value, the admission that certain political concepts are stand-ins for explicit racism signifies that politicians were aware of and exploiting the phenomena in the 1960s and perhaps earlier.

This issue of framing societal problems is discussed in much of the literature. In any society, and American society in particular, there is an element of racial or ethnic bias that tinges understanding. There is some disagreement as to how these biases manifest in discourse. Using Mendelberg as a stepping block, Jennifer Saul argues that Trump and those surrounding him are slowly eroding the Norm of Racial Equality with poisonous discourse. Previous researchers have said that the rhetoric of Donald Trump, the Alt-Right, and right-wing populists in Europe signal a return to open white supremacy and pre-Civil Rights discourse. She agrees but argues, as is discussed, above

that this behavior is covered slightly with small phrases that give plausible deniability to racial appeals.

Drakulich (2015) notes similarly coded phrases and tries to tease a relationship between attitudes and utterances out of survey data. His regressions suggest less correlation between party and attitudes than might be expected given Saul's hypothesis (the values all move in the expected direction, but for Republicans, the effect was minimal or not statistically significant for motivational appeals). However, if her suspicion that racial figleaf utterances are increasing is correct, Drakulich may have had different results just one year later.[44] Either possibility points to room for an ethnomethodological examination of talk in the realm of racism studies.

Goode and Ben-Yahuda (1994) suggest Saul may indeed be right that anti-racist norms are eroding. Previous research (and other pieces of evidence such as the interview with Lee Atwater) shows that since the Civil Rights movement, the public has been less susceptible to overtly racist messages. However, Goode suggests that there is a process by which the public can be persuaded via extensive media coverage to follow along, provided messages meet some of their preconceived notions. Research into Japanese television depictions of ethnic minorities showed similar results. Television producers found that viewers responded well to images of foreigners that conformed to pre-existing stereotypes (Tsuda, 2003. 297).[45]

Bedford (2000) posits that the media use a series of techniques to align social frames and define the thinking about a particular social problem. Once political actors have identified a problem and cause, they seek to push the public into action. This frame-based framework of frames explains much of current politics. Indeed, the conduct of conservative news outlets in 2016 makes sense in this context. As we will demonstrate, in the case of the Colin Kaepernick controversy, there is a plurality of

people that this theory misses. It seems many fail to (or perhaps refuse to) take up narratives dropped from above by the media and politicians. However, these people still utilize rhetorical strategies similar to others who do follow media narratives closely. Again, this is not enough to conclusively prove our hypothesis but demonstrates this approach's potential value. A heavy focus on media and political figures would also miss other evasive linguistic behavior, such as that observed in rural areas of Japan where individuals make motive appeals to local culture (Gibson, 2017. 5).

The majority in a given society will structure ideologies and narratives such that their needs are met above those of the minority. Muha (1984) notes that dominant groups search for a neutral-seeming basis for rejecting inequality claims and protecting the status quo. They suggest that acceptance of social inequality is a driving factor. Targeting a tolerance level for intolerance could nullify the narratives used to rebuff group demands for social action. They use the example of widespread academic issues in specific communities being attributed to personal failings rather than inertial racism.[46] They argue that values like qualification and individualism are highly advanced attacks on non-dominant peoples. In other words, they believe that advanced formal education (counter-intuitively) increases 'inter-group negativism' by adding a layer of sophistication to behaviors that preserve the status quo (Ibid. 751). With a framework like ours, the focus would land on the linguistic behavior that abets academic discrimination.

A rash of white racist violence, particularly against Asian communities, in the United Kingdom in the late '90s sparked a wave of research into bias and working-class racism that lasted throughout the aughts. There is not much analysis of this research available under the current paradigm of bias, but it is easy to imagine that the findings would not be well received. For example, Anoop Nayak of Newcastle University found

that white children in United Kingdom schools felt excluded in newer education programs that emphasized cultural pride for ethnic minorities and multiculturalism. In predominantly white cultures, white experiences are the default norm or a 'blank canvas.' Modern scholars agree up to this point, but they would likely recoil at his criticism that anti-racist discourses have failed to engage whiteness properly (Nayak, 1999. 178). It may not be necessary to "engage whiteness," but a paradigm that allows for an examination of utterances that stem therefrom appears necessary.

Rhodes (2010) utilizes a framework similar to ours that examines British National Party supporters and their justifications for backing the controversial organization. With 'white backlash' or 'whitelash' in the '80s and '90s United Kingdom as a backdrop, the paper examines 'discourses of unfairness.' Politicians began using these discourses under Margaret Thatcher to attack the liberal left and create a narrative of white Britain under fire. Interviews with BNP supporters show that for a segment of the population these narratives are compelling. More recently, politicians use similar rhetoric in the context of decreased sovereignty in the European Union and boogeymen, such as Islamic asylum-seekers and terrorists (Ibid. 79). The 'discursive shift' Rhodes notes in white racism seems especially foresighted now amid 'Brexit' and increased public participation in nationalist parties such as UKIP and Boris Johnson's Unionists. Rhodes concludes as Nayak that some level of engagement with white racism discourses is necessary.[47] Where politicians and pundits can spread a message of white marginalization, voters exhibit more confidence in voting for right-wing populist parties such as the BNP (Ibid. 77).

**III. Conflict with Modern Racism Studies**

The examples above clash with currently popular identity-based methods of racism studies.[48] Nayak and Rhodes's cases are good points of comparison, given the cultural environment. The papers consider relational aspects, though amongst groups that might not be the target of modern identity-based inquiry. With a broad social phenomenon such as 'whitelash' (or pushback against social movements and immigrants as with this paper) as the foci, these studies do well to focus on systems as a whole rather than looking at groups to find overly-specific types of oppression to which individuals may be subject. In short, they do not (and we do not) necessarily conflict with modern concepts but instead show where those theories fail. The studies are particularly damning for intersectional frameworks.[49]

Another dispute with the current practice of racism studies we can raise here is that it defines problems based on overly specific oppression types. An excellent example of this is the 'wheel of oppression' in Simpson's "Everyone Belongs: A Toolkit for Applying Intersectionality." Many other papers also feature the diagram, but the massive number of privileges and identities that bog down identity-based studies seems to originate here. Crenshaw often refers to this as a "misguided effort to map oppression.

Capitalism is a good example of one of those categories. It is considered a 'master frame' that shapes social relations (Larson, 2009. 966), and it is taken for granted as a form of oppression without analysis in a vast swath of the literature. The problem with such overly-broad categories of oppression is that they are neither universal, exclusive, nor disprovable and are subject to circular reasoning. Capitalism specifically is allegedly problematic because it 'differentially organizes class, race, sex, sexuality, and gender' (Adamson, 2017. Online). That is not necessarily a claim that capitalism causes oppression, and it is not disprovable. In popular culture, we can see the effects of

the misguided application of identity-based frameworks. The implication is that our economic system shapes oppression. That is likely true, but understanding the nature of the process is important.

If types of oppression are to be the focus in literature, they require a much more rigorous definition. In more extreme cases, researchers note that the elevation of experiences over objectivity makes a coherent definition, and perhaps more importantly, a claim of oppression difficult (Cooke, 2015. Online). As many conservative commentators have pointed out, legal equality and outcome equity are two very different things. Legal equality does not guarantee outcome equity. Outcome equity is not an inherent good, nor is legal equality if it allows for vast inequities to persist or worsen. If the 'master frame' of this theory is indeed capitalism, these concepts should be explicitly harmonized with or separated from concepts like modes of production.

Further, frameworks being based on economic modes of oppression makes for difficulty in dispassionate testing. Many prominent intersectional researchers identify as socialists or Marxists. American capitalism is perhaps opposite to social Marxism, but as political scientists (and Scandinavian countries) have shown, traditional capitalism and this presumed opposite, socialism, are not mutually exclusive nor do they mesh with American crony capitalism.[50] That is particularly true if redistributive measures are introduced to a society with fractional reserve banking and well-enforced private property rights. There are indeed some economists who believe that lens of 'markets' is holding back economic thought and locking it into a series of false dichotomies (Blyth, 2017. Lecture). It is ironic (or perhaps appropriate) that literature equating capitalism with oppression should fall victim to capitalistic modes of thought.[51]

The role that identity has taken as the primary lens through which racism is viewed may be problematic.[52] Let us examine some studies that do utilize modern

frameworks but might have benefitted from our Millsian method. Doing so should put that criticism to bed while also strengthening our case in general. A critical point of note is that identity-based racism studies are concerned with oppression or the outcome of racist beliefs and behavior. Our linguistic framework examines not necessarily outcomes but explanations and verbalizations preceding oppressive behavior.

Hankivsky (2014) explores intersectionality as a tool to study health outcomes in various minority groups. It concludes that group identity is valuable for studying concrete outcomes (Ibid. 1717. cf. Larson, 2016, for an intersectional examination of health and educational outcomes). At least two other studies agree with this assessment, but they would perhaps have been better served with an ethnomethodological framework. Mburu et al. (2014) examined the stigmas surrounding HIV-positive men in Uganda. Men avoided support groups for fear of HIV stigma and emasculation. However, the groups they avoided focused on eliminating stigma and reshaping the HIV-positive male identity. It is a vicious cycle. An exploration of the verbalizations of these men may have helped to illuminate better the reason this occurs.

One concluding note in the paper illustrates our point quite well. Men tended to 'compete' in therapy groups with female participants (particularly during fundraising activities). The researchers conclude that this allowed HIV-positive men to wear the proverbial pants in that interaction and reclaim their masculinity. This interpretation is based on some of the men's testimonies, but the focus on identity means we must essentially motive monger in this case. It is not unreasonable to think that a framework similar to that of this paper would have allowed the motive to be better understood.

Lockhart (2010) suffers a similar issue. The paper made recommendations for social workers to reconsider identity when counseling domestic violence victims utilizing an intersectional approach. The tendency for increased police presence in black

communities means law enforcement responds more to domestic incidents than others. However, fearing double arrests or violence from officers, researchers found black women reticent about contacting police for anything beyond stopping a violent episode in progress. Many social services focus on the violence itself, leading to a culturally blank viewpoint that fails to address circumstances that lead to violence or motivate women to seek help. The result is a loss of trust and a negative perception of service effectiveness (Ibid. 27). Some black women also objected to terms like 'victim' and 'battered woman.' The researchers conclude that domestic violence services should involve black women in forming program philosophy and components.

Identity is a perfectly cromulent framework with which to examine the subject of police responses to domestic violence, but it creates a rather large problem. An examination of the motive phrases by which members of over-policed communities made their decisions, or perhaps a study that focused on the verbalizations of officers who participated in over-policing, would likely reveal more about racism in criminal justice than the study as is. To wit, a simple summation of the findings is that black women were reluctant to call the police or utilize social services. It is perhaps too easy to armchair quarterback another's research, but the result of this focus is, oddly, that domestic incidents and police violence are accepted as given with the end goal being better access to aftercare.

Lisa Bowleg's "Black + Lesbian + Woman ≠ Black Lesbian Woman" (2008) examines methodology. It identifies some of the same problems as we do and makes a good case for the framework established here. It is an intricate narrative based on the conflict between quantitative and qualitative approaches. The paper assesses two studies with vastly different styles and attempts to make a comparison. Ultimately, the paper is unable to answer its initial questions on the seeming conflict between intersectional

methodologies.[53] Quantitative approaches that aim to 'measure oppression' are likely a response to criticisms of the subjective nature of experienced oppression. This response to criticism is an additional point of critique for some (Scott, 2016). Bowleg shows the unwieldiness of modern frameworks and makes an excellent case for qualitative studies based on interviews and utterances. An ethnomethodological or Millsian approach might more thoroughly account for some of the issues Bowleg finds with personal interpretations of interdependent, additive, and intersectional identities.

Christiansen (2012) is illustrative of the issues Bowleg raises with qualitative research in the current paradigm. The research performs a detailed analysis of life-stories taken from two female Somali ex-pats living in Denmark but attempts to 'measure' their intersectionality. The stories make for very engrossing reading. However, they conclude that individuals who are similar on paper may have some family- or money-related differences that push them onto different life paths and change their respective experiences. A researcher using simple ethnomethodological methods[54] would focus on those who fall through the cracks as a springboard to addressing the broader system that failed them. Here we must raise an important question. If an analytical toolset reaches conclusions that are already baked into other methods, is it suitable? Without the overly complicated power-privilege hierarchy, the researcher may have been free to ask essential questions rather than testing what amounts to qualitative goodness of fit.[55]

Crenshaw has publicly expressed skepticism regarding efforts to adapt identity-based approaches to areas of study outside of feminism. Research that attempts to 'measure identity' or 'map intersections' would seem to be a confusion of the framework. In a WOW lecture at the Southbank Center in 2016, Crenshaw said:

> "A lot of people, especially those who haven't followed demarginalizing from its initial iteration often mistakenly think that intersectionality is only about multiple identities... I've got three, you've got six... the identity question goes on and on. Last count, there were like 17 [identities] or something; there's an attempt to map them all. That's not... at least my articulation of intersectionality. Intersectionality is not primarily about identity. It's about how structures make certain identities the consequence of the vehicle for vulnerability" (Crenshaw, 2017).

A theory's originator does not necessarily have the final say on what a theoretical approach means after it travels academia for decades. However, Crenshaw's rendition of racism studies is more focused and less vulnerable to the criticisms discussed above. Put charitably, identity has moved in a different direction from the initial point at which academic feminism and racism studies first commingled. Less so, it is grossly misinterpreted on a broad scale.

Davis (2008) expresses concern that confusion regarding the related (and extremely popular) framework of 'critical theory' and intense focus on identity amongst academics has lead to widespread misapplication. Mary Matsuda validates this concern quite beautifully. She says, "When I see something that looks racist, I ask, 'Where is the patriarchy in this?' When I see something sexist, I ask 'Where is the heterosexism in this?' When I see something that looks homophobic, I ask 'Where are the class interests in this?'" (quoted in Vertovec, 2015). Dhawan (2016) notes the ease with which one can identify and expose abusive hierarchies in systems of power but warns that it is too complicated analyze easily (Ibid. 43). This criticism disguised as a warning could be applied to a vast swath of the corpus. The analytical process is complex, and knowing

when to stop especially so. It also leads to overconfidence in assessing partiality. Butler notes this problem. Researchers insert an 'embarrassed clause,' an apology for their whiteness, conforming sexuality, or class (quoted in Lutz, 2015. 40) and proceed to analyze an issue with identity-based frameworks.

In short, older sociology and ethnomethodology techniques may remedy the weaknesses of critical theory, intersectionality, and identity politics. It must be understood that the purposes of the current zeitgeist are not necessary and sufficient for the values being espoused. Given the political climate on many university campuses, it would seem that that is a common assumption.

Let us tie up this analysis with a criminology paper that illustrates our point quite well, albeit in a different field. Alvarez (1997) says that as the field expanded, researchers adopted feminist and Marxist frames, perhaps unnecessarily, to explore new types of crime. Instead of following this trend, he utilizes Sykes's and Matza's methods in order to make an argument for including genocide in criminology literature (Ibid. 140). Despite being defined as a crime against international law by the United Nations, studies largely ignored criminological and sociological explanations of genocide when the paper was published. Alvarez suggests that this is due to the nature of genocide. As state-sponsored violence, the perpetrator makes the laws. It is difficult to call their behavior illegal, and no one is held accountable in far too many cases. However, with a framework of utterances, Alvarez demonstrates significant similarities between the linguistic behavior of individuals involved in genocide and criminals committing offenses more traditionally associated with criminology.

The approach seems obvious when one considers that group conformity and pressure from the state drive participation in large-scale killing. Individuals find a way to rationalize their compliance to themselves and others. That would seem to be well

suited to an identity-based or intersectional framework, but the primary finding would be destroyed entirely under that paradigm. A priori justifications made by perpetrators ironically allow for atrocities that conflict with the actors' beliefs to be justified with those very same beliefs.

Alvarez's research is very relevant to this study. Techniques of neutralization utilized by holocaust perpetrators are similar to those used by criminals and those that will appear later in this study. Namely, the motive phrases are similar to those used by Igans discussing discrimination in their town and Internet commenters discussing anti-racist protests.[56]

## CHAPTER 3: IGA UENO AND MOTIVES IN FOLK SOCIETY

### I. Introduction

Iga Ueno is a rural Japanese city of roughly 94,000[57] in the Iga Basin of Mie Prefecture, Japan. Iga is perhaps most famous for the *Igaryu* (Iga style) brand of *ninja* and the role those famous assassins played in Japan's feudal era. The city's marketing efforts focus heavily on this history and depicts the area as a quaint, pastoral tourist location. However, Iga's economic woes and demographics mean it is host to some very contemporary issues.

There is a palpable social tension between the native Japanese population and the relatively high number of foreigners in the area.[58] Foreign interviewees reported experiencing a number of difficulties, having been turned away from shops, followed in expensive stores, and called names by locals. One individual was refused service at more than four restaurants and drinking establishments in just one evening. Another was called a 'stinky Brazilian' and accused of complicity in car stereo theft. Where this hostility and the stereotype of foreign crime comes from is unclear. Iga's foreign population has hovered around 5% for over a decade. This figure is more than double the national average but low by developed nation standards.

The town has developed a reputation for dangerous, drunken foreigners that is not substantiated by police statistics. The MachiBBS internet forum for Iga Ueno has a large number of discriminatory posts, and bars and restaurants in the area frequently refuse service to foreigners, often on the grounds that they will cause a disturbance of some kind. While the (false) idea of foreigner crime rates being high exists throughout Japan, the specificity in Iga is strange.

Interviews were initially conducted with subjects who had experienced some form of discrimination in Iga. A number of them sat down for extended life histories, but

the content that resulted was not particularly revelatory or engaging given the material already available on the subject. With such an extensive body of literature on the experiences of *Nikkei* (lit. 'Japanese line,' referring to foreigners to Japan of Japanese descent) and other foreign laborers in Japan already on shelves, a different approach became necessary. Rather than interview victims of racial bias incidents, interviews were to be conducted with everyday people, individuals who observed Japanese backlash against Nikkei return migrants and other foreign laborers, or perhaps even those who participated. These interviews were conducted over roughly 18 months.

Several alarming stories came to light as this second round of interviews began, but the most interesting thing in the preliminary investigation was a pattern of motive talk that emerged. Interviewees had a strange tendency to rapidly change the subject and talk about Iga when it made no sense. When the topic of discrimination came up in conversation, responses were odd at best and complete non-sequiturs at worst. Most people talked about ninja or mentioned that Iga was a *bonchi* (this word just means basin, but appeared as a popular motive phrase). One man at the city office proudly presented tobacco consumption data. The figures were indeed impressive, but they had nothing whatsoever to do with the topic in question. Another woman at a cafe bought the interviewer quiche and talked at length about how Iga's water makes for good food and healthy people. The behavior was actually quite charming if one does not consider that it represents a behavior pattern that reinforces racism.

This anti-Nikkei and anti-foreign discrimination in Iga Ueno is the seed for the methodological choices made in this project. Iga Ueno sits at the northwest corner of Mie Prefecture nestled in the mountains. Locals are very proud of the culture there, and it has become something of a selling point as the local government struggles with economic issues that stem back to the US Housing Crisis of 2008 (Gibson, 2017. 2).

The city is blanketed in ninja imagery. As one comes into town on Route 422 from the south, they are greeted by ninja figures standing atop a sign that reads (roughly) "Welcome to Iga, the Ninja Village." Ninja mannequins are placed all about downtown Ueno in various humorous poses; waiting for a target on the luggage rack of a train car, getting out of the heat near the Kintetsu bus stop, and even breaking into city hall. The city as it currently exists formed in 2004 when Ueno City, Iga Town, and four smaller municipalities merged. Previously a more blue-collar town, the city tried to leverage its mythical past and become a tourist destination in Mie Prefecture and the more populous prefectures of Aichi and Osaka. Official figures, unfortunately, show that local hot springs and the famous all-you-can-eat buffet at Moku Moku Farm are bigger tourism draws than anything related to Iga's storied past (Unspecified, Mie Prefectural Government, 2018. Online), but locals leaned into the marketing heavily. If the city's tourism efforts are related to the locals' almost chauvinist pride in their town is unclear.[59]

Natives and outsiders alike proclaim that Iga is just different. Several interviewees said that this mentality is a byproduct of the *sakoku* and *sengoku* eras (the Tokugawa isolationist era and the age of warring states). The phenomenon by which an area can be very culturally different from that of another just a few miles away is well known in Japan. Perhaps many Americans have not thought about it at a scale so small. Anyone who has been to Denver and then Boulder, San Francisco and then Oakland, or Philadelphia and then Harrisburg can attest that geographical proximity does not guarantee cultural proximity (nor proximity of the electorate). However, the use of this difference as a justification for discriminatory behavior is peculiar. The "we don't take kindly to folks like that around here" trope has existed for years and exists for a reason, but as will be discussed in a later section, this small town mentality and the associated

techniques of neutralization clash with the current understanding of ethnic exclusionism in Japan.[60]

The current understanding of racism in Japan revolves around Japan's position amongst developed nations and ethnic nationalism used to motivate the Japanese during imperial expansion in the early 20th century. Much like its WWII ally, Germany, Japan developed later than other western Nations. Scholars who analyze Japan's social phenomena in the context of economics posit that Japan utilized a western-like narrative of ethnic homogeneity to rally groups that were actually quite diverse to common developmental goals (WEAI, 2020. Online). This understanding of the problem ignores historical conflicts between the *Yamato* people and indigenous populations and more modern structures that marginalize *burakumin* (Japan's 'untouchables' in the traditional social hierarchy) It also whitewashes a legacy of anti-black racism that has existed at least since the arrival of Europeans in the 16th century (Thelwell, 2020. Online). This author would argue that Japanese racism is a kindred spirit to the white supremacy that defines American and European racism. However, the current consensus[61] would appear to be that they are indeed separate phenomena. Let us take this for granted moving forward and utilize our Millsian framework to challenge this popular viewpoint as a tertiary objective.

A perception of uniqueness, and a uniqueness of that uniqueness, informs a phenomenon that can be observed in Iga Ueno: appeals to local culture and history quickly deflect any discussion about racist incidents against the large number of Nikkei, Brazilian, and Peruvian immigrants in the area. The filter through which locals force conversation is reminiscent of Sykes and Matza's 'Techniques of Neutralization' (1957). This peculiarity offered a fresh twist on the study of migrants to Japan and racism in general.

The issues facing Brazilians and Nikkei Brazilians in Japan are well studied. University of Hokkaido Professor Toru Onai and others have conducted extensive research into various immigrant groups in Japan utilizing broad surveys and large data sets on unemployment, school attendance, and attitudes amongst the Japanese population. As primers, these are excellent books. However, the perspective and scope do not allow for a profound understanding of day-to-day issues. It also fails to explain a significant lack of social and economic progress for Nikkei foreigners in Japan despite government efforts to improve education.[62] In short, there is not much in the current body of scholarship that would indicate a difference to the problems of third- to first-world migration worldwide.

There are a few exceptions in the literature. Nikkei Brazilian Sedentarization and Local Society, for instance, asks how native Japanese exposure to migrant culture influences attitudes regarding Nikkei return migrants. The method would be promising in terms of prescriptive results, but the scope is too broad. If we were to apply an unofficial null hypothesis retroactively, Onai accidentally proves it. In the various localities examined, effects were wildly different, indicating no particular direction for any correlation between exposure and attitude (Onai, 2001. 177). A more in-depth examination of a smaller number of localities makes more sense, particularly given the structure and communalist nature of Japanese neighborhoods and *jichikai* (resident organizations). Even a very high percentage of migrants may not guarantee interaction or cultural exposure.

Tsuda (2003) demonstrates that Japanese people, while broadly aware of Nikkei immigrants, have little personal interaction with them. Television portrayals heavily influence Japanese opinions of return migrants. In a strange feedback loop, media producers attempt to cater programming to consumers' preconceived notions, and

viewers then take television programs as proof of their beliefs (Ibid. 301). This effect could represent a microcosm of the aversive racism we attempt to capture in this project. An earlier Tsuda paper, "The Motivation to Migrate," supports this result in a roundabout way, finding that sociocultural factors are secondary to economics when people decide when to migrate and how to relate with the host culture. While Japanese ties and a familiarity with the host society sustains migration flow from Brazil to Japan, both sides ground their relationship in business (Tsuda, 1999. 22). Though more exploration and analysis is required, these findings offer some remote support for our hypothesis that addressing behaviors and utterances that excuse systemic inequity might be more effective than the current paradigm of understanding and interracial dialogue.

To avoid too much similarity with previous research and dodge the potential flaws discussed above, this study evolved to take a more intimate look at the situation in Iga Ueno. This decision was conscious, but the target and framework were decided purely by circumstance. Several exploratory investigations were conducted with seven or eight trips to Iga Ueno in 2014. The English-Spanish and English-Portuguese language gaps prevented interviews with many Nikkei or other South American individuals. Only those with proficiency in either English or Japanese could easily be questioned. Responses were mostly in line with the work of Onai: Language barriers causing issues with neighbors and coworkers, difficulty fitting in, and truancy among youths with low Japanese proficiency (Onai, 2003. 20). Japan-only problems were consistent with those previously documented by other researchers, such as difficulty with the esoteric *chintai* (apartment rental) system, resentment for noncompliance with *gomi bunbetsu* (trash sorting), and conflicts over jichikai participation (Onai, 2001).

Let us look at those cases that fit with previous works before diving into the phenomenon Iga helped uncover. The following interviewee anecdotes were omitted from previous work on this subject. Space, scope, and time were all limitations, but the deciding factor was that many were second-hand accounts that ultimately could not be corroborated with data or news stories. There is ample room to explore these stories here and establish an atmosphere for our locality.

Once again, it is necessary to make the disclaimer that these anecdotes are not meant to prove actual events. However, some conclusions can be drawn with a Millsian viewpoint even without the benefit of direct evidence to support the stories in question. First, there is a strong perception of anti-foreign discrimination among both locals and immigrants. Second, there is a mutual sense of fear between Japanese and immigrant groups. At least superficially, this resembles somewhat racial resentment in the UK and US. Much like the United States and anti-black racism that has persisted for centuries there, this atmosphere is sustained by a public unwillingness to acknowledge and confront the problem.

Violent incidents are fortunately uncommon in interviewee anecdotes. One incident interviewees mentioned was a case where a group of bikers had allegedly beaten a Brazilian man (non-Nikkei) in purported retaliation for a car break-in. The man's involvement was not clear, but many Japanese and Brazilian mentioned car thefts in their testimony. Two separate and unrelated people mentioned this likely incident of *shogaizai* (equivalent to the American legal concept of aggravated battery). Law enforcement could not corroborate, but the police proved to be more of an obstacle than any kind of help. In 2012, when this project's pilot study was conducted, there were posters in Iga Ueno warning of a rash of crimes involving foreigners. Machi BBS, an internet forum dedicated to local issues, has some posts on the subject from prior years

(Tokai Machi, 2013. Online). However, an officer at the Iga Police Station admitted that demographic statistics for that type of crime do not actually exist. Looking at publicly available statistics, it appears that a theft such as that would fall under the broader category of *settohan* (similar to theft in the US) along with other property crimes and robbery (Unspecified, Iga Ueno City Office, 2015. Online). It is unclear whether the posters were purposeful disinformation, rumor-based, or the work of a small number of overzealous officers. To give some (perhaps undeserved) benefit of the doubt, the phenomenon Tsuda notes whereby prominent figures tailor their message to existing preconceptions may have been at play.

Another testimony showed a perception of danger and an element similar to human trafficking in the economic relationship between Nikkei and Japanese people. The interviewee is a prominent Japanese orthodontist in central Mie. He claimed that when the number of immigrants started to increase in the early '90s, recruiting companies would resort to mafia-like tactics to attract and keep inexpensive South American labor. Supposedly, a large number of foreign workers with fake dental braces began to appear in legitimate orthodontist offices.

Unscrupulous recruiting companies had apparently taken advantage of Japan's *kenko shindan* (company mandated health check) system to invent a new type of dental indentured servitude. Employers told workers that they needed a corrective device for their teeth, or they would be ineligible for work. These workers were allegedly tricked or coerced into borrowing money or having their wages garnished to pay for the procedure. Terrifyingly, the orthodontist, braces, and adhesive were entirely fake. Only the loan payments and tooth damage were real. This story could not be corroborated with foreign interviewees or other secondary sources. Given the time frame

(and a wave of Nikkei immigrants who left Japan), the exact situation may never be known without some heroic investigative journalism.

A group of younger boys who spoke Japanese did corroborate recruiting companies' use of dirty tricks. Their fathers or grandfathers had apparently come to Japan after having been promised very high wages.[63] In reality, they received nothing during 'training' and much less than promised when their official jobs began. All had heard stories of companies holding on to worker passports to keep them from leaving, though none claimed to know of any victims. A recent report by the BBC on Japan's foreign worker training and internship programs is consistent with this testimony (Hagarty, 2019. Online).

Japan has protections to assure that foreign workers receive fair wages, but labor and immigration law can work together to form unintended consequences that allow for exploitation. Companies leverage applicants' ignorance of the law to get them working for free or severely reduced pay without a proper visa. The 'mutually assured destruction' that would result if they went to authorities keeps the arrangement secret (Unspecified author, General Union, 2018. Online).

Another (perhaps less important) issue that Japanese and foreign individuals alike mentioned is that of *monzenbarai* (denial of service) at drinking establishments and in the sex industry. Several snacks (shops that do not offer sexual services but charge male customers for the privilege of interacting with female staff) in and around the Marunouchi and Ebisu areas had unwritten no-foreigner policies. One members-only snack proprietor said there was no policy against foreigners. When asked about membership requirements, she admitted that only Japanese people were allowed to make member's cards. The proprietor of a drinking establishment that did admit foreign customers spoke of how scary and dangerous South Americans were. "They come in in

big groups and they drink all the beer in this here cooler," he explained, gesturing to a drink cooler with glass doors. He was upset not that they drank all the beer and did not pay, but that they drank all the beer. After further probing, he revealed that they did not disrupt business, they left soon after finishing their drinks, and none drove.[64]

It is here that the sociological concept of motive makes an appearance. Consistent across discussions with business owners was a strategy by which owners justified their policies and views on a bad encounter with some non-Japanese person or persons. This tactic is quite common in racism apologia. Almost every story was some variation of the same theme. A foreigner got too drunk and caused a problem with another customer. A foreigner got too drunk and was noisy. A foreigner got drunk and broke some glassware. This kind of justification is outlined in the works of Weber, Mills, and Sykes. Saul (2017) posits that rhetorical tricks like this are barriers to social progress yet unrecognized to sociologists.

Proprietors and workers in *fuzoku* (sex industry) shops declined interviews. However, conversations with customers (or prospective customers who were turned away) and a deep-dive of internet forums and blogs found a perception among sex workers that foreigners are violent or have sexually transmitted infections. One woman detailed an encounter where a Chinese customer sexually assaulted her, pretending not to understand Japanese when she tried to protest. She thankfully escaped the encounter without being raped, but she resolved to reject foreign customers from that point forward. The sentiment is perhaps understandable given her trauma, but the blanket 'foreigner' ban is rooted in an understanding of ethnicity tied to national identity (Howell, 1996. 103). She grouses that while most fuzoku shops have "no foreigners" signs or at least a no foreigner policy, her's does not (Unspecified author, To Aru Fuzoku no Guchi, 2005. Online).[65]

The motive accounts that informed this framework began to appear as natives were interviewed. Initially, it was baffling. For instance, a man at the city office proffered tobacco consumption data for Iga when asked about the various issues with Nikkei Brazilians in town. He asserted that the problem was 'pride,' and the cartoonishly high tobacco consumption numbers were proof. By itself, this episode means little. Perhaps he was trying to get an obnoxious interviewer out of his hair. However, as conversations progressed, the phenomenon began to appear more. One woman said that the local dialect gives Igans pause when interacting with foreigners, though a non-Japanese person without a full grasp of the Japanese language might not know the difference. Another woman at the library said that exclusionism was inevitable because Iga is geographically isolated. When pressed, she claimed to be concerned about her privacy if the interview was published and declined to participate further.

The motive accounts that reference locality will be referred to as an 'appeal to Iga' vocabulary. It is a strange form of in-group favoritism that resembles ethnic or cultural nationalism, but at a much more micro level than one might typically expect. The interesting feature is that it differs from the generally accepted understanding of Japanese ethnic exclusionism and presents with very odd utterances. For instance, one interviewee said he wanted Nikkei to leave because they made him uncomfortable in the toilet. When pressed, he attempted to change the subject.

Interviewees spoke of rice porridge, ninja, the importance of barley, toilets, Iga's 'unique' dialect, the Buddhist deity *fudo myoo* (Achala) whom locals call fudo-chan (note the diminutive suffix, *chan*, used to express cuteness or affinity), the geography, the climate, and Iga's place in Japan. Several interviewees intimated that the people of Iga have a responsibility to one another to preserve their unique culture, even if it meant isolating themselves from other Japanese and foreign people. This particular motive is a

point of similarity between the Igan form of exclusionism and typical understandings of ethnic nationalism and racism. It is also similar to the 'urgency' vocabularies used in nuclear disarmament movements in the 1980s United States. One point of difference is that those who mentioned a sense of propriety often did so in reference to the ninja of old, so the justification for whatever behavior was in question became previous generations instead of later generations. This justification is notably similar to that used by Japan's infamous *net uyoku* (online right-wingers similar to America's alt-right) despite representing a slightly different form of chauvinism. These cultural appeals were mainly used to excuse problems or deflect the conversation.

The 'appeal to Iga' came into focus when an interviewee, a worker at the city office, said that any investigation in Iga would fail "without understanding the heart of Igans first." This woman offered a book entitled *Igacho-no-Minzoku* (The Folkways of Iga Town). The book resulted from a research program conducted by the Iga Town School Board in the 1970s in conjunction with the Iga Town Cultural Asset Committee. It focuses mainly on the Iga Town area, which had a population of approximately 10,000 when the book was published in 1973. All aspects of Iga Town's history as a part of *Iga-no-kuni* (Iga Province or Country), from clothing to economic information, are discussed in great detail. Save for Ninja-related accounts, the background for nearly every motive account utilized by interviewees is represented in the book (ref. Appendix A).

The 'appeal to Iga' is a very convenient rhetorical tool. It can explain all manner of behavior, and despite (or perhaps because of) its esoteric nature, speakers appear to employ it more often when the listener is not a member of the in-group. Typically, there is a risk associated with the use of highly situated motives, where they may be rendered inoperative by a listener (Mills, 1940. 910, 911). However, there is no attempt at justification within a cultural context. Instead, culture is an excuse.

This finding alone is interesting given the literature available in cultural motives (ref. Chiu 2006 and the referenced law literature on culture-based motives therein). The motive account, the motive for the motive account, and the operativity of the motive account all hinge upon the assumption that Iga is a unique place with a unique culture. There is something of a performative element to this. While these motive accounts do not necessarily provide direct evidence for sincere chauvinism, they could suggest an expectation of participation in the idea of Igan exclusivity amongst the people of Iga. Most importantly, they represent a folk society vocabulary that produces motives that are soon exhausted by outsiders but accepted willingly in their locality.

Cultural justifications and excuses are often discussed in the study of law in the context of legal defenses. That adaptation of the theory is applicable here. Culture as an excuse allows for moral issues to be entirely sidestepped, where a justification would require a moral problem to be confronted and then explained with some degree of mutual understanding (Chiu, 2006). Theoretically, an appeal to Iga can hand-wave almost any in-group versus out-group behavior. Indeed, interviews bear this out. The vocabulary is so compelling that it is even employed to explain behavior that would otherwise violate the norms of broader Japanese society.

The initial investigation and the second round of interviews resulted in a handful of papers that somewhat fill the literature gap discussed above. However, the framework and analysis were met with some resistance. One criticism was that an analysis such as this unfairly placed the burden for racism on individuals merely going about their lives. Whether this is 'unfair' is a matter of debate. This critique somehow misses the point while also grasping it. How individuals address systemic discrimination is not necessarily entirely individual. As theorized by Mills and others after him, behaviors and modes of speech are socially determined and socially situated. If an everyday angle

of these issues is neglected, the onus for improvement falls entirely on the system that perpetuates the problem. There is room for debate on the method by which this should happen. Indeed that is the point of this project. However, as discussed in the introductory sections above, there is a growing awareness amongst ordinary people that a viewpoint such as this is necessary.

**II. Cultural Moment**

The foreign population in Iga Ueno consists mostly of Nikkei individuals from Brazil and Peru. Immigration policies crafted in the late 1980s allow Nikkei foreigners up to the third generation (and in some cases the fourth) a special Japanese ancestry visa with fewer work restrictions than other designations (Unspecified author, Japan Ministry of Justice, 2020. Online). This legislation helped alleviate labor shortages at the tail end of Japan's Bubble Period, but there was an unexpected (at least from the Japanese government's perspective) lack of assimilation (Onishi, 2014. Online). The Nikkei Brazilian population continued to increase even as Japan entered the Lost Decade and Lost Score, clustering in areas with many factories.

Ultimately, the policy did not produce the intended results, and many Nikkei laborers were forced to leave Japan following the United States housing crisis (referred to as the 'Lehman Shock' in Japan). The cultural backlash these immigrants faced in Japan is not unlike that Asian immigrants faced in Europe throughout the 1990s. While not as intense and violent[66] as that 'whitelash,' and particularly that observed in the United Kingdom, there are many similarities in how it is discussed by the public and handled in the media.

The Nikkei population in Iga follows the timeline of Japan's economic deflation very closely.[67] Today, around 2,400 Brazilian and Peruvian people live in Iga, most of

whom work at the many assembly plants in the area (Ueno City, 2016). This is a significant decrease from the peak number in 2007, but the proportion of foreigners in Iga is still more than double the national average. During the peak of immigration, several NPOs emerged to help with translations, offer mediation between Japanese and foreign parties, and "promote multicultural understanding" (Unspecified, Iga no Tsutamaru, 2016. Online).

The method by which these organizations operate seems to be based on assumptions regarding Japanese and non-Japanese interactions. The same assumptions (or stereotypes) are recognized in the works of Tsuda and Onai. Of the three organizations this author visited, two focused primarily on hosting events to promote cultural interaction such as barbecues and parties (aside from revenue-generating activities such as translation services and interpretation). Onai's findings in Nikkei Brazilian Sedentarization and Local Society show that increased interaction with foreign people does not meaningfully influence Japanese people's attitudes and may be harmful in some cases. There is also the manifest problem that those inclined to aversive racism would be unlikely to attend a voluntary international barbecue. The third NPO seemed to adopt the cities efforts to promote Iga as a tourist destination, but with Igans as a target rather than prospective visitors.

There is a large body of literature for one looking to study the issues Nikkei Brazilians face in Japan. Perhaps the most prominent researcher in this area is Professor Toru Onai of the University of Hokkaido. He has published a handful of books with wide-ranging topics important to comprehend the condition of Nikkei Brazilians in Japan fully. Some of his works focus on specific locales, but there is a heavy reliance on large-scale surveys and econometric analysis with little variation in method across each

study. When the focus shifts to discrimination, a concept intimate to language and behavior, an approach like this is too detached.

On the other end of the spectrum is racism studies, which have stagnated of late. At a presentation of this research, a Doshisha professor once called it "I found some discrimination over here, you guys" sociology. There is a tendency to focus on victim and aggressor, on oppressed and oppressor, on who should be helped and who should be punished (Lee, 2012. 257). This dynamic led a roundtable of four researchers featured in the book 'Racism Studies' to surmise that many policy decisions addressing racism in Japan are based on foreign policies which themselves are based on faulty premises. The researchers discuss hate speech laws in the UK specifically and conclude that racism studies in Japan, and perhaps throughout the world, may no longer be making progress (Lee, 2012. 207).

More recent theories such as the prejudice plus power model of racism or the concept of micro-aggressions attempt to push the conversation toward the center. However, there still exists a dichotomy here that neglects the dynamic established by Mendelberg and discussed by Saul of individuals within the system navigating their viewpoints and behavior within the Norm of Racial Equality. Outside academia, outrageous associations result when the issue is so black and white: Shinzo Abe is Hitler, Zaitokukai is the Japanese KKK, LDP members are war crime deniers. This is melodramatic, but, arguably, the public is picking up on a set of behaviors missed by academics and political commentators until quite recently.

Despite being on the right track, such associations are more harmful than is immediately apparent. The effect on the debate is undoubtedly toxic, but more importantly, it grants license for people not at the poles to distance themselves from the problem. The average person can honestly say, "that is not me." Nevertheless, those who

can so deftly sidestep the issue and continue about their day-to-day lives are, in fact, a cog in the machine of systemic racism. This paper will attempt to address that specific problem—ironically, by looking at the whole picture in a more roundabout way.

To head off a potential point of contention, we might posit that the content of the social friction and discriminatory behavior, as mentioned above, is unimportant for our purposes. The aim is not what form discrimination takes or whether or not it exists. Instead, we will take it for granted and attempt to answer a question that has not been satisfactorily addressed previously: What does it mean to talk about discrimination? How is it expressed, or much more importantly, not expressed in local folk society? Once we have identified some vocabularies, we can note some connections therein to America's observed phenomena and answer our other questions: Is a more holistic, public discourse level examination rather than a top-down approach necessary to address racism properly in the modern era?

**III. Design**

Interviews were conducted in a variety of ways, but most interviewees were randomly selected on the street. Others, such as people working in shops or sitting and eating, were selected because they were less likely to avoid conversation (or would be unable to excuse themselves from a conversation). Due to the subject's sensitive nature, some interviewees spoke only briefly, refused to be recorded, refused to offer personal details or even became angry. While this interview style may seem aggressive, the objective was not only to identify typal vocabularies utilized by the people of Iga, but also to identify failure points where motives are exhausted. Once these failure points are identified, we can see what sort of motive behavior (if any) follows.

Long-form interviews are unpredictable, but most were conducted by introducing the topic of discrimination and continuing casually. As stated above, the focus under Mills's theory is not wholly the content but how the participants shape the conversation and the vocabulary of motive they employ. As such, the term 'interview' is perhaps inadequate. An interview suggests that one side is trying to gain some factual information from the other. However, the number of interviews conducted, the length, how often a particular response was given, and other data are mostly irrelevant for our purposes. It may be better to think of the interviews here as dialogues or exchanges. The word 'interview' is used for lack of a better term. Further, the information being sought by the interviewer is a type of metadata for answers the interviewee offers.

Ethnomethodology offers an excellent toolset for just this type of investigation. Created by professor Harold Garfinkel in 1967 as part of a broader movement to distance sociology from the hard sciences (Sharp, 1978. 1, 49), ethnomethodology proposes to view social order through the lens of an individual's everyday consciousness rather than general terms. During this movement, Mills's ideas were rediscovered, but with a renewed focus on the mundane and less emphasis on inappropriate or questionable behavior. Ethnomethodology offers a view of social order at a very intimate level. When analyzing conversation at the level we attempt here, the toolset offered by this branch of sociology is handy.

Ethnomethodologists, like Mills before them, believe that perception and the way in which people then describe their perception greatly influence behavior. This is a vital area of overlap between our various theories, so a careful comparison between motives across interviews is prudent. In a rural location, a 'folk society,' where limiting vocabularies are presumably influencing people's behavior and perceptions, an alternative vocabulary that offers a conflicting explanation of behavior may become

very important. It may even be simple to introduce such a vocabulary if the predominant theories of social action framing hold. Social scientists and policymakers who target discriminatory language might see better results from initiatives that target everyday explanatory language rather than offensive speech.

Relevant sections of interviews are transcribed as faithfully as possible, and the situation around an interview is described in detail. Very minute details of the conversation, such as small pauses, stutters, or the situation are included where necessary. These details are superficially arbitrary, but in ethnomethodology these facets are worthy of attention. Details such as an interviewee's outward emotional state or an unsure answer that might otherwise be lost are marked to be examined. All interviews were conducted in Japanese, so translations attempt to reflect an utterance's nuance and tone.

## IV. Results

### The Global Society Vocabulary

This was the very first interview conducted after the preliminary investigation for this study. It is the account of an executive at NPO, Iga no Tsutamaru. Iga no Tsutamaru is an organization that specializes in translation services founded in the Spring of 1999 when there was a massive year-over-year increase in the number of Nikkei immigrants. Materials from the NPOs website state that the organization was founded to create "a town where residents can live comfortably and overcome the language barrier." The interviewee, a vice-director in the organization, is an Iga native. Ms. Wa gladly agreed to an interview without an appointment but declined to be recorded after discrimination was revealed as the topic of research.

The interview began with an account of the interviewer's and some interviewees' personal experiences. Ms. W. was then asked about any trouble she may have encountered. She was visibly uncomfortable and chose this time to remind the interviewer that an appointment really should have been made before conducting an interview. Her tone was not overly contentious, but she was very obviously displeased. After speaking a bit more, Ms. Wa loosened up and even offered some stories of her own that corroborated others' experiences.

It is very common, Ms. Wa stated, for *Igajin* (people of Iga, translated as Igans from this point forward) to start conversations with strangers on the street by suddenly asking very personal questions without so much as a greeting. A new face is presumed to be an outsider, and these questions are apparently meant to convey that suspicion. It was here that the "Igan" vocabulary first appeared (this is characterized by appeals to or justifications based on the presumed typal Igan person). She blamed this rather aggressive behavior on the fact that Iga is a basin. Ms. Wa's interpretation was that the town and its ninja history made people distrustful of outsiders. Despite a large international population, two highways connecting the city to Osaka and Nagoya, some nationwide brand recognition, and the city's efforts to educate residents on multicultural issues, the rather common excuse of rural ignorance is still employed.

This provides strong support for the reach of this vocabulary. Ms. Wa encountered this behavior so much throughout her childhood that she grew to hate Iga and deliberately chose a University as far from Mie Prefecture as possible. After going to college, studying abroad, and seeing the world outside of Iga, Ms. Wa says she decided to return and try to help bridge the divide between Iga's shielded citizenry and the foreign population. Despite her seeming enlightenment on the issue of exclusionist behavior, she still imputed the same exact motives as everyone else.

Another interesting vocabulary came up in her interview. That is the 'international city' or global vocabulary. It was not used in any way to explain behavior, but the phrases 'international' and 'global' appeared numerous times in the conversation. On several occasions, she remarked that as Iga became more global, there was a higher need for action against exclusionary behavior. This vocabulary would prove to compete with the Iga vocabulary in other instances. It was used in several interviews to condemn discrimination (and oddly enough, to make a disclaimer before an offensive statement).

**Culture as Justification**

This was a longer interview conducted in the bus terminal in the same building as the information center. The interviewee gave her permission to record, but the room's ambient noise made the recording unusable as a source for transcription. Ms. Is (78) and her friend (80) were in the waiting area at the bus terminal. The interviewer approached, talked for a bit without revealing the topic of research, and requested permission to record an interview. The friend declined, but Ms. Is accepted.

She began by sharing some information about her family. She spoke of how her son was a poor student in school but was inspired by his pride as an Igan to do better once he reached university. He had enrolled in a small liberal arts program in Nagoya and was performing poorly in his poetry class when the teacher began a unit on Matsuo Basho. Ms. Is said her son was so proud to be an Igan like Mr. Basho that he found the energy to do better and pass. Ms. Is seemed quite proud as she told the story. She continued to talk of Matsuo Basho for around seven minutes.

Once she was finished talking about the various sightseeing spots relating to Basho, she was briefed on issues other interviewees had mentioned and told of a legal battle between Brazilian laborers and an Iga transmission manufacturer who had been

accused of discriminatory hiring practices. She was asked a few questions about her knowledge of discrimination and foreigners in Iga in general. She said that when she was very young, perhaps in her teens, she had made friends with a young man who had come to visit from abroad. When the interviewer remarked that that was quite interesting, she said, "Yes. Igans usually don't like foreigners. I know it's a global town now, so this is bad to say, but we don't like them looking down their prominent noses at us."

This particular utterance is loaded. She starts with an excuse, adds a disclaimer, inserts an insult, and finishes by condemning the condemners. Behavior such as this is described in Sykes and Matza. Their interpretation is that stacked motive talk is an attempt to quell or 'neutralize' cognitive dissonance when an actor does something 'illegitimate.' Mills might call an analysis such as this 'motive-mongering,' but we can draw some conclusions from this quote.

First is the interaction between the global and Iga vocabularies. The global vocabulary appeared in several other interviews, but it typically conflicted with the Iga vocabulary. For instance, a young man who consented to an interview outside of the AEON Mall in Ueno was a senior in high school who had many foreign classmates growing up. He spoke of occasionally going out with the foreign students from his school and used the global vocabulary as a tool to criticize discriminatory behavior. He said, "Iga is becoming very international, so I don't have any issue with foreign people. I don't understand it." Here it makes an appearance between conflicting viewpoints.

**Culture as an Excuse**

This pair of interviews is representative of the most common motives in the Iga vocabulary. Ms. Ya is an employee of the information counter in the Haitopia Iga

building near Uenoshi station. She actually flagged down the interviewer and asked what would draw a foreigner to Iga. The topic of research was explained to her. She was given a brief overview of discrimination in Iga, and she agreed to do a recorded interview.

[Interviewer:]

"I'm writing a paper on the issue of discrimination against Brazilians. There are a large number of Brazilian laborers here…and there were some issues with layoffs, and I had some issues…as I think I mentioned before. Can you talk about that at all?"

[Ms. Ya:]

"The people of Iga, hmm…It's a mountain basin, so I think there's something *haitateki* [exclusionary]…hmm. They don't step out of their comfort zone…Well, I think there's something un-Iga about myself, but generally speaking the people of Iga are relatively… I don't know…they stay within their own bubble. Yeah. They stay within their own bubble."

[Interviewer:]

"OK…That's something I heard a lot. That Igans are 'exclusionary.'"

[Ms. Ya:]

"Yeah. Uh huh."

This 'basin' vocabulary and appeal to the 'exclusionary' character of Igans appeared in a majority of the interviews. There are several words for the concept of

exclusionism or indifference to outsiders in Japanese. That nearly every interviewee who expressed this idea used the word 'haitateki' specifically (as opposed to similar words like *heisateki* and *haigaiteki* or stronger words like *henken* or *sabetsu*) is interesting. It implies a genetically determined vocabulary, a motive that exists in society rather than something generated ad hoc by a person being questioned. Issues of discrimination are attributed to shyness or insularity, which is assumed to be an innate quality of the people of Iga.

[Interviewer:]

"A woman from the the city office actually gave me a book. I was telling her about the topic of my project and she just…handed me a book called 'Folkways of Igatown.' Another guy gave me tobacco consumption data…sort of proudly ((laughing))…What do you think that was about?"

[Ms. Ya:]

"[Omitted] I think…one's nature is maybe born from that place. So knowing that history or that culture, I think that's the first priority. [omitted] And the cigarettes? Yeah, that seems like strange behavior to me. I don't see much of a connection there ((laughing))."

[Interviewer:]

"Actually, I interviewed a woman in the bus terminal over there once and she mentioned Matsuo Basho quite a bit. I thought that made less sense than the book or…I guess none of it really connects with discrimination, but…"

[Ms. Ya:] ((cutting me off))

"Let me see…Well, I think there's a sense of congeniality there. And, we say Basho-san, people from Iga. Not Matsuo Basho, but Bashooo-SAN! Like a friend, you see. Basho-san, with a feeling of friendship and closeness. When you say Basho-san…I think other people would be like, 'I don't know if -san is really appropriate…'" ((trails off laughing)) […] "In sharing the same culture, I wonder if there isn't some sense of pride there."

[Interviewer:]
"Do you have anything to add before I leave? Again, my project is about discrimination against Brazilian laborers."

[Ms. Ya:]
"Hmmm… Let me think. You know, I just thought this just now, but people from Iga are a bit sore about dialect… Iga dialect? Iga language? ((laughing)) I think there's a possibility that Iga dialect is a bit of a bottleneck when talking to people from other places. Recently dialects like Osaka dialect, things like that, they're really, um… something else. People speak of them with pride almost, right? Right? Like, "let's take dialects and use them to revitalize [interest in] an area" kind of stuff… But a long time ago, like when I was young, um…What can I say? For example, if a pretentious young man ((pointing to the interviewer)) came along, we'd say, "Ah! Let's hide!" I think there was a bit of a barrier there. I think things like that are common in Igans. I think that, perhaps, it stems from too much pride."

Let us look at one more quote that appeared in an interview a week later. Ms. Sh is a librarian at the Ueno library, which is close to the information center. Ms. Sh spoke at length, but her most interesting quote appeared immediately after the situation

surrounding Nikkei Brazilians in Iga was explained and the topic of discrimination was introduced.

[Ms. Sh:]

"Iga is a basin. I've never left Iga. I was born in Iga, I was raised in Iga, well…um, I've always done this same job in Iga. This place called 'Iga' is…well, I've never left, so I can't really comment, but it is said we're exclusionary. Uh, for me it's a comfortable place, however."

This kind of talk was what sparked this project in the first place. Before a framework was established, this answer would have made very little sense. The talk that appears here is extremely similar to that predicted by social identity theory, but it differs in a subtle and crucial way. To reiterate from the interview above, interviewees identify themselves as part of an in-group and compare themselves to an out-group. However, rather than offer a justification for exclusionary behavior, interviewees excuse it. To offer an example for further clarification, a white supremacist might try to make the case that exclusionism is warranted, whereas the people in these interviews are attributing it to a factor beyond the actor's control. This slight difference is important.

**Pride**

After a period of unsuccessfully approaching interviewees, the interviewer entered a cafe where Ms. Ha & Ms. Ue were having an employee meeting. After a period of conversation, the women agreed to be recorded. Despite having explained the various difficulties foreign interviewees had expressed about living in Iga and the issues

of discrimination involving Brazilian workers, Ms. Ha tried very hard to avoid the topic once the interview started in earnest. The discussion failed to produce a conventional Millsian motive for discrimination at first, but as the conversation wore on and the Iga motive continued to fail, it is finally employed as an excuse. Let us take a look at the conversation.

[Interviewer:]

"I would like to ask you a few questions about Iga and the people in it, if that's alright."

[Ms. Ha:]

"I suppose I'll answer what I can. I'm a researcher. She is too ((gesturing to Ms. Ue)). She's studied a great many things."

[Interviewer:]

"OK…Well as we discussed when I first came in, I'm doing a project about the considerable Brazilian population in the city. I myself had bad experiences and…"

[Ms. Ha:] ((slightly annoyed))

"Well, do you want to know about the people, or the geography, or what?"

[Interviewer:]

"The society [as I mentioned earlier], I suppose. I hear a lot about 'Igans' in my conversations, but I don't know what that means…"

[Ms. Ha:]

"We get a lot of graduate students from Mie University and such who want to write about things things like ninja or the old unlanded samurai. I've talked to a few. But using the word "Igan," that's interesting. Nothing like that until now. Yeah. Yeah. We talk about Iga kishitsu [Iga spirit or Igan nature], right? How deep that Igan nature runs is something I've been thinking about about for a long time."

[Interviewer:]

"Well, what is an Igan?"

[Ms. Ha:]

"A person from Iga is…((gesturing to self)) just like this. Just like this. There's a difference among people born and raised in Iga based on how many generations they've lived here…Let me ask you something. Is that OK? Why did you…um…is it a short stay kind of thing?"

The conversation here is almost immediately derailed. The word Iga *kishitsu* (spirit or soul) would appear in many of the interviews conducted with Japanese individuals. Others used similar phrases, including Iga *katagi*. It is written with the same Chinese characters and carries a similar meaning. This is another excuse (distinct from justification) in the Iga vocabulary. While it is not applied directly to racism here, it is used for evasion. The similarity again implies a genetic vocabulary.

[Interviewer:]

"I'm sorry can we return to the original discussion of Iga and the issues with foreign laborers?"

[Ms. Ha:]

"OK, please do. I just wanted to investigate you a bit beforehand…They call that Iga nin…igaryu. They call that igaryu. [People] in Iga have to…know the other person intimately before they can be trusted. I wonder if that isn't why they were able to become ninjas."

Here, Ms. the interviewee accidentally mentions *ninjutsu*, but corrects herself and says igaryu, or Iga style. This slip could betray the frequency with which she uses these phrases. She excuses changing the subject by attributing suspicion of strangers to Igans. The fascinating[68] feature of this vocabulary is that it is so very specific to the locale. When discussing exclusionism, it is not uncommon to hear it waved away as rural people not knowing better. In fact, one interviewee did end a conversation by exclaiming, "people in Iga are just racist bumpkins." Nevertheless, the nuance is slightly different here.

[Interviewer:]

"I see ((laughing)). Well I had a lot of difficulty getting to know people in Iga. Sometimes they were very unfriendly."

[Ms. Ha:]

"Igans just seem guarded. Like they are hiding what's inside them. But in truth it's plain to see……There's just nothing in there. There's nothing inside. That's why they show… people seem to think that we're hoity-toity, but really there's nothing to us. We are what we are. I think when something is shown so plainly, people tend to imagine that there's

something deeper…um…it's not an issue of not talking much, or not talking at all, or talking, or whatever, there's just nothing there. Truthfully. And that's because it was all burned to the ground in the Tensho Iga War. Everything was burned. That is to say, the people also disappeared…You can think of it that way. Not one person remained and so, you know…it was like Iga was killed. When you think about it that way, you think "where did we come from?" I mean, there were a handful of people remaining and they mingled with the newcomers. It's exactly like American history, if you think about it. However, if you want to go back in history…there's a habit of wanting to do so. And you look back and think, 'if history had gone this way, maybe…' Because there's nothing there. Because it all disappeared, we look back and want to find it. That's why we always bring up mythology… We seek our roots in that kind of story. It's interesting, right? We go back to mythology."

[Interviewer:]

"Where do you think that comes from? Why-"

[Ms. Ha:]

"People want to know, so they can talk about it. There's a lot of people who like to talk about how their family has been here the longest. Whether or not they actually are an old family is another thing…((laughing))…they're here, at any rate, the families that really put an emphasis on history. And so there's a thing called *keizu*…your roots, your family roots, your family tree…There are a lot of houses that just make up a family tree. And it's like, you go back to the beginning, and who is it? It's the emperor! ((laughing)) That's something the people of Iga……well, when you go to other provinces, you don't see that. [I guess] the word "province" is a little bit [strange]…If you go outside of Iga

Province, it's not like that. People don't put the emperor on there. But when you come to Iga, the ancestors are the emperor. Like it's no big deal. ((laughing)) Pretty funny, right?"

Talk of Iga completely dominates the conversation at this point. Ms. Ha avoids the initial topic as much as possible but does touch on it briefly from time to time. This indicates that she is still aware of what is being asked of her, but she is unwilling or incapable of directly addressing it. Much time has passed, and she has spoken much, but the conversation has not really moved from the initial question. Finally, she returns to the unfriendly behavior from before and excuses it as an unchangeable attribute of the culture in Iga. After a brief break, a new line of questioning began. Ms. Ha interrupted once more.

[Ms. Ha:]
"In the country of Japan, if you ask who the people of Iga are most like, the answer is Kochi…Round faces. Slightly dark in color with round faces. Yep. That's the special trait of Igans."

With this excuse and evasion, the interviewer politely concluded the interview. After another small break, talks began again with Ms. Ue. She had stopped to listen to the initial interview several times as she busied herself about the shop. The opening question attacked Ms. Ha's evasiveness.

[Interviewer:]
"Why do you think [Ms. Ha] was so hesitant to talk to me about discrimination?"

[Ms. Ue:]

"Well as for me, um…they used to say *suppa* [ninja spying] in old Iga…that's espionage……There's gathering, but suppa involves speaking as well. So they gather a bunch of information, both true and untrue, yeah? The people of Iga have that quality. I think I'm a typical specimen of an Igan. Because I've never left." ((smiling))

Again, the interviewee dodges the topic and uses the Iga vocabulary as a shield of sorts. Ms. Ha's reluctance to speak is hand-waved as an unavoidable attribute of her people. She puts herself in the same category.

[Interviewer:] ((with a forced laugh))

"OK……Can you tell me about something? Anything. It doesn't have to be about Brazilians or foreigners."

[Ms. Ue:]

"I'm working on a talk now about Matsushita…um…National. Do you know National? The company called National, or Matsushita Electronics. The National logo. ((gesturing)) National. The person who decided upon that design, the person who drew it was apparently a person from Iga. I'm giving a presentation on it next time. People didn't know about that until recently. But if you go and look for it, that person is there…"

[Interviewer:]

"Wow…"

[Ms. Ue:]

"Other people are really surprised about it, too."

The strange dodging here makes the conversation difficult to explain, but this type of talk does bear some similarity to common explanations for discrimination. Social identity theory would tell us that members of an in-group find pride in their identity, which leads to the exclusion of an out-group. We find a conflicting interpretation as she seems to be using the vocabularies available to her rather than making a case for exceptionalism. The characteristics of Igans to which Ms. Ha refers, faking a family tree and being empty inside, are not particularly good or amazing. This is an encouraging finding.

**Aversive and Everyday Racism**

This interview is important in that more traditional explanations for exclusionary behavior make an appearance as the interviewee seems to run into a motive failure. This interview was conducted at the small AEON shopping center in Ueno City. A woman and her daughter were sitting and having lunch. As pairs are often difficult to stop on the street, this seemed to be a wonderful opportunity. This interview was one of the last conducted, and the method of questioning was experimental. To this point, it had proven difficult to draw out the 'Iga' vocabulary without first introducing discrimination as a topic. The interviewer first talked about himself, vaguely explained the topic of the paper (including no specifics on discrimination), and began the interview.

[Interviewer:]

"I just wanted to ask you a handful of questions about Iga."

[Ms. Mi:]

"I don't think we can help… We don't know anything."

[Interviewer:]

"That's OK, I just want to know what you think about Iga……. For example, I've heard a lot of elderly individuals talk about what kind of place it is, or talk about how brave Igans are, or talk about how much porridge everyone used to eat, or… I've heard a lot of different things."

[Ms. Mi:]

"……Well, it's a basin… Recently it's really cold in the morning and warm in the afternoon. A really harsh difference in temperature. Just a big basin. I thought recently when the typhoon came that because Iga is a basin, we were safe. There wasn't a lot of damage. We're surrounded by mountains…It's…"

[Interviewer:]

"Protected?"

[Ms. Mi:]

"I was going to say backwater……"

Note that the 'basin' and rural vocabularies appear here as well. Though not necessarily as motive talk. It is here that the topic of foreigners living in Iga is served to see how the interviewee returns. Another important point to note is that Ms. Mi initially says she doesn't know anything. When the topic of discrimination is introduced to the conversation, this would be an acceptable answer. Instead, excuses or techniques of neutralization are utilized throughout the interview. Ms. Mi will later use motive talk associated with more familiar forms of blatant racism.

[Interviewer:]

"OK… Well, there are a lot of foreign people in this town, especially South Americans. Do you ever interact with them in your everyday life? Do you ever speak?"

[Ms. Mi:]

"At school, maybe there are a few in her ((pointing to Daughter)) class."

[Interviewer:] ((to Daughter))

"What's your impression?"

[Daughter:] ((shaking head))

"I dunno…"

[Interviewer:]

"Maybe you don't think anything in particular?"

[Daughter:]

"They're…just…kids my age."

[Interviewer:]

"OK. Because from the interviews I've done thus far, I get the impression-"

[Ms. Mi:]

"-that people don't think very positively about them."

[Interviewer:] ((nodding in the direction of the daughter))

"What do you think?"

[Daughter:]

"I don't really know…"

[Ms. Mi:]

"I think kids don't think ill of them. But when you get to adult society…how should I put this? In school or in [supervising the kids]… Do you understand what I'm saying? They say, "Oh, we don't understand the language, so we're not going to do anything," or when it comes to Japan's unique customs, they say "We don't know." So, in those areas, we have a bad impression. "Oh, we don't understand the language" or "We come from a different country, so…" Yeah… ((fading out somewhat awkwardly))

[Interviewer:] ((conveying skepticism))

"It sounds like an excuse [to you]?"

[Ms. Mi:]

"They just do whatever they want. That's the image I have. It's a different culture. They get together and take off their shirts…and barbecue… And they're loud and numerous… So, as you would expect, when she ((nodding toward Daughter)) is walking alone or on her way home, it's scary. And maybe that's prejudice, but…because they don't give a good impression… Yeah."

[Interviewer:] ((conveying disappointment))

"I see."

This justification contrasts sharply with the appeal to Iga method of excuse. Ms. Mi employs something akin to a technique of neutralization, preemptively condemning the group in question. This interview was also one of the few encounters where an appeal to the nation was employed rather than to the locality. This shows that it does compete with Iga vocabulary for some individuals. Given the age of most of the subjects up to that point it would not be unreasonable to believe that younger people are less attached to folk vocabularies.

This kind of talk is not uncommon in any country, but let us focus on the point at which the woman's motive fails. Whether she is conscious of this is unclear, but the interview became rather awkward at that point. While the interviewer is not a member of the group being discussed, Ms. Mi seems to realize that her explanations are unacceptable. The clumsy pauses imply that she felt she had gone too far. Many of the previous interviews took an awkward or slightly confrontational tone, but this was positively frigid. Perhaps realizing her appeal to culture had failed, she employs different but no less common excuse for discrimination.

[Ms. Mi:] ((sheepish))

"Yeah…… Is that… Is that OK?"

[Interviewer:]

"Yes, you can talk about anything you want. Is there something else?"

[Ms. Mi:]

"Well…I think what Iga has that it can really boast to the world are the ninja. There's that… If I said Basho you wouldn't understand, right? Foreigners don't understand. But from a young age we're taught that we are the birthplace of Basho… ((looking to daughter)) Haiku was our homework."

[Daughter:] ((laughing))

"Huh."

[Interviewer:]

"You have to read Basho haiku? Or write your own?"

[Ms. Mi:]

"We had to write our own and submit them!"

[Interviewer:]

"We write haiku in American schools as well."

[Ms. Mi:]

"Haiku?!"

[Interviewer:]

"Well, the syllables in English are different, so the poems actually become pretty long… I guess it kind of defeats the purpose…"

[Daughter:] ((laughing))

"Yeah."

[Ms. Mi:]

"But they do have Basho's poems in English. I've heard that. I hear they're really spreading…… Iga is a great place. We're right in between Nagoya and Osaka. If you go by train or by car, it's about 90 minutes to each. From that perspective… Well, it is rural…but it's a convenient place. Is that OK?"

[Interviewer:]

"Yes, that's enough. Thank you very much."

When vocabularies appealing to culture and to safety concerns fail, Ms. Mi defaults to a conversation about Iga. The tone is almost defensive: "foreigners don't understand." Again, we cannot know whether this is a subtle attack made consciously, a defense mechanism, or simply an attempt to keep a dying conversation from becoming too awkward. What began with an elicitation of the Iga vocabulary ended with slightly different methods of justification. These were more consistent with traditional

understandings of racism. However, when those alternative explanations failed, Ms. Mi allowed that topic to die and floated back toward the Iga vocabulary. The available vocabularies do appear to affect how she accounts for behavior.

Another interesting aspect of this account is that Ms. Mi's conversation is peppered with inconsistencies. Foreigners do not understand Basho, and yet his haiku are spreading. Iga is a backwater, but with excellent access to the urban cities of Osaka and Nagoya. Ms. Mi appears to be aware (however, it would be motive mongering to assume she is) that her motive talk is failing but continues to push forward or search for alternatives.

**V. Discussion**

Iga talk that was confusing during the initial investigation takes on more meaning when viewed through our theoretical framework. The point at which vocabularies collide or explanations fail represents an inability (or worse, an unwillingness) to address the subject of ethnic exclusionism. Further, the behavior that tries to hold the topic in the background is, in its own way, a form of racism. Trying to avoid the issue or making an excuse for it is a problem in and of itself. Whether this is subconscious is immaterial. In a folk society such as Iga, it would appear that the populace's linguistic behavior is indeed contributing to a continuing atmosphere of discrimination and hostility to outsiders.

Discrimination is but background radiation for the majority. The process we have identified here wherein a conversation fails when an otherwise hidden social issue is brought to the fore is precisely the moment in which the discussion becomes meaningful and emotional for someone normally detached from the situation. As long as this particular phenomenon remains undiscussed, it is difficult to imagine any meaningful

change in the status quo. It is this opening in which phrases such as 'global' or 'equality' should make an appearance.

Distilled to an elementary level, the conversations here are volleys in which a question is delivered and returned as something new. Concepts that appear in everyday life are entirely repurposed. Tobacco consumption data becomes a broom with which to sweep an inconvenient line of questioning under the rug. The Igan spirit becomes a convenient scapegoat for unfriendly behavior. The mountains that ring the city become a wall that outsiders have breached. These catachreses represent barriers to progress.

The process we have outlined using Mills's framework could be very beneficial to racism studies. The same approach will be applied to the controversy surrounding San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick in the following section. It could also be applied to religious American southerners who love Donald Trump, white American acceptance of economic inequality along racial lines, or the quiet tolerance Japanese people have for the Zaitokukai (an anti-Korean hate group). Perceptions and actions are filtered through culture, and excuses are no exception. Being able to recognize motive talk and understanding the linguistic tools with which individuals work can offer a new toolset to combat racism at a societal level.

This chapter's objective was to reinforce our reframing of discrimination by analyzing everyday speech as filtered through local culture. In contrast to top-down methods in communications or sociology, we focused more closely on the behavior and language of individuals. Motive utterances and the acts they describe and influence may prove important to better understanding discrimination on a local (or even a national) scale.

The essential vocabulary witnessed here was the 'appeal to Iga.' It does indeed appear to be an 'established' form of motive talk or a 'typal vocabulary.' It will arise in

discussions between a foreigner and a person from Iga or, as evidenced by the MachiBBS forum, in a discussion between two Igans.[69] Accounts of behavior that employed this vocabulary were rarely operative in the conversations in which a foreign interviewer was involved. When the vocabulary failed, more traditional appeals to culture or pragmatism, techniques of neutralization, evasions, and other motive techniques were witnessed as predicted.

As these conversations are well distanced from actual instances of exclusionism, it might be interesting to see what accounts or strategies appear in actual cases of discrimination. A barkeep turning away a foreigner at the door to his shop would most certainly find an appeal to ninjutsu inoperative.[70] By understanding all the typal vocabularies used to explain discrimination, we may have found some way to connect our framework to future positive development.

The appeal to Iga is a broad category that is used to explain all manner of behavior, some untoward, some acceptable. If other vocabularies are to compete with this, they need to be strong or relatable. Under the Norm of Equality, individuals in society know that discrimination is wrong. We need to be tolerant, but appeals to tolerance do not resonate with those on the receiving end. It triggers cognitive dissonance, the central conflict of which is readily squared via simple motive explanations native to one's vernacular. If everyday Germans during WWII could watch their neighbors be systematically murdered and reconcile the horror with their religious beliefs and enlightenment principles, it is impossible to expect a blue-collar worker in a rural Japanese town who has never spoken to a foreigner to feel his counterpart's plight and accept his role in it.

The results are mixed for our research questions. Question number 1 was answered quickly here. The typal vocabulary is Iga, and almost every motive within

appeared across multiple interviews. Number 2, however, is not a good result for this paper's framework. We have failed to support the idea that frames are an inadequate explanation of societal understandings of behavior. Some of the policies being implemented by the city of Ueno are quite good at fighting discrimination, if inadvertently, and have made their way into the vocabulary of motive for individuals of various ages. If our interviewees are at all representative of the general population in Iga, the idea of multiculturalism and Iga as an 'international city' has penetrated their lexicon.

The city's tourism and marketing efforts also seemed to appear in many conversations. In this case, there is a 'chicken or the egg' dilemma that arises. Are the city's marketing efforts successful because they are effective in their own right, or are people's existing vocabularies suited to a marketing effort that appeals to Igan uniqueness? Pamphlets, flyers, and posters that praise Iga for its acceptance and diverse makeup (for a Japanese city) offer positive reinforcement that could combat the tendency to justify anti-foreign attitudes with Iga's uniqueness. Language that promotes sharing of Iga's unique aspects is something that the average citizen can easily apply to their own experiences. We cannot know whether these efforts are working for that reason or because they have the city's authority behind them. The results do not definitively support our hypothesis.

On a more optimistic note, this offers the necessary data to answer our third question in the next section. It also offers some hope for Iga. The culture seems to have the necessary impulse to evolve. Perhaps Iga, which is, in a way, a microcosm of Japan moving forward, can become a case study in overcoming exclusionism. By turning their cultural sense outward, perhaps natives in a folk society can identify with a foreign presence by which they would otherwise feel threatened. This repurposing of Iga's

strange vocabularies could translate into new and more effective tools for anti-racism efforts.

## CHAPTER 4: COLIN KAEPERNICK AND MOTIVES IN NET SOCIETY

### I. Introduction

The bulk of this research was conducted at the beginnings of the 2017, 2018, and 2019 NFL regular seasons. Since 2016 the discussion surrounding politics in football heats up every year around that time. In 2019 when the resulting paper finally made publication, former San Francisco 49ers star quarterback Colin Kaepernick had not taken an NFL snap for more than 30 months. He is still unsigned. Despite this absence, the effects of Kaepernick's pregame protests against racial injustice were still being felt across the league and in related industries.

The Atlantic, a center-left political publication, has referred to Kaepernick as a shadow looming over the league. The NFL settled their collusion case with Kaepernick in February of 2019. After several failed attempts to have the case dismissed by arbitrators, the league reluctantly opened its pocketbook and gave Kaepernick an undisclosed sum (Draper, 2019. Online). The terms of the settlement remain secret. There was speculation that league officials were deeply concerned about discovery. Kaepernick reportedly had some embarrassing information, but a reputable source was unavailable at the time of this writing. There is a steady trickle of information about the actions of team owners during the initial controversy. It has become rather difficult to argue that Kaepernick's inability to find a team during the 2017 season was not being orchestrated behind the scenes.

Unfortunately, the case's sudden settlement in February of last year means we will likely never know precisely what happened. The terms remain undisclosed, but tapes provided to the New York Times by an anonymous source show that players agreed he should be on a roster. In a meeting between owners and prominent players in October of 2017, owners reportedly sounded panicked when confronted with the idea

that they were blackballing Kaepernick. When Philadelphia DL Chris Long brought up the idea of signing Kaepernick and introducing some positivity into the conversation, owners were noncommittal. Terry Pegula, the owner of the Buffalo Bills, acknowledged the divisiveness of Trump's rhetoric, but said, "All of us now, we need to put a Band-Aid on what's going on in the country" (Belson, 2018. Online). At the time of this writing, the coronavirus outbreak threatens the 2020 season, but despite this backdrop, the situation remains mostly unchanged since last year. Kaepernick still occasionally appears in headlines and was even added to rosters in the latest Madden football video game as a form of protest by Electronic Arts developers. Damage to "The Shield" will likely last for a long time.

This movement started as a small gesture of protest. In August of 2016, Kaepernick, then the quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, remained seated during a pregame performance of the national anthem. This quiet act went mostly unnoticed, and Kaepernick, who would later be relentlessly accused of self-promotion, did not publicize it. The protest did not see headlines until the third game of the preseason when an NFL.com reporter, who had noticed Kaepernick's head and shoulders at Gatorade table height in a pregame photo, asked why he had not stood. Kaepernick responded:

"I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color. To me, this is bigger than football and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder."

Kaepernick is referring to the issue of police brutality against people of color in the United States and the idea that courts rarely convict officers with a crime. Empirical

research supports this perception. Stinson finds that as many as eight percent of all police officers are arrested for crimes in the first four years of their careers, highlighting a significant cultural issue inside police departments. He is quoted in a 2019 NBC report saying, "An officer gets on the stand and says 'I feared for my life,' and that's usually all she wrote. No conviction, more often than that, no charges at all" (Stinson, 2017).

Though the media was mostly on the quarterback's side, his comments caused an internet firestorm. Kaepernick, who set several quarterback rushing records and even appeared in a Super Bowl, had never and has not since trended more on the web or in the news. The most prominent narrative was that the demonstration was disrespectful to American soldiers. This through-line in resistance to the protest would seem related to the NFL's decades-long flirtation with conservative jingoism and deep financial ties to the United States military. Historian Jesse Berrett argues that the NFL is such a powerful force in American society that it remade the political landscape. He outlines the NFL's sticky relationship with the military in a Washington Post perspective (Berrett, 2019. Online). Anton (2016. 31) suggests that the NFL wields this power in a precise way. When owners identify 'organizational crises,' they push protective frames onto the discourse; in this case, that Kaepernick's stance was disrespectful to America's brave freedom-fighters that NFL loves so much. Kaepernick issued a statement a few days following the initial brouhaha firmly denying the league's premise but reaffirming his commitment to the cause:

"I realize that men and women of the military go out and sacrifice their lives and put themselves in harm's way for my freedom of speech and my freedoms in this country and my freedom to take a seat or take a knee, so I have the utmost respect for them" (Berenson, 2016. Online).

At least outside of the mainstream media, the theme of freedom of speech would become a sticking point for many. During the preliminary phase of this research, it became clear that online forums, even those moderated against 'threadjacking,' almost immediately descended into chaos. Most commonly, posters would impute some motive upon Kaepernick, and the ensuing argument would magnetize most other posters. Free speech was but one of many themes the public explored following the initial controversy (though mainstream outlets tended to focus on the military aspect). Research that has come out since this research was first presented corroborates this premise. These studies use a journalism or communications approach that places the onus upon news outlets and media figures, but they found that people were generally wildly off topic when discussing Kaepernick and the movement he sparked. This is supportive of our hypothesis.

Throughout September and October, Kaepernick attracted more football players to his cause. Initially, the 49ers had the most players demonstrating, but players from other clubs joined and put their own twist on the protest. In a somewhat depressing display of racial division, the Oakland Raiders had the most protesting players while the New England Patriots had the fewest (Kay, 2017. Online). Some athletes stood with one fist raised. Others locked arms with like-minded teammates. They included some relatively high profile players such as Seahawks Legion of Boom defensive tackle, Michael Bennett, the Denver Broncos' Brandon Marshall, and Arian Foster of the Miami Dolphins. We can speculate that the different methods by which players chose to protest was a response to public backlash. Around this time, Kaepernick says he consulted with a former US military member on the best way to conduct the protest respectfully, ultimately arriving upon taking a knee (Willingham, 2017. Online). Despite many

accusations to the contrary, Kaepernick has continued to insist that he want the focus to be placed squarely on social issues:

"We were talking to [a veteran] about how we can get the message back on track and not take away from the military, not take away from pride in our country but keep the focus where the issues really are" (Ibid).

Athletes outside of football soon joined. Outspoken US Women's soccer player, Megan Rapinoe, also knelt during the national anthem. In a postgame interview in Chicago, she told reporters her gesture was "a nod to Kaepernick" and acknowledged social and political issues facing black people in America. Perhaps the most intriguing case in terms of league response (besides Kaepernick himself) was Oakland Athletics catcher, Bruce Maxwell. Maxwell was the first Major League Baseball player to perform a Kaepernick-style pregame protest, and it may have done irreparable damage to his career (Unspecified author, Perez Owens, 2018). Interestingly, prior assault charges, weapons charges, and a .182 batting average had never been enough for minor league demotion.

Another noteworthy aspect of the protest[71] was how well it highlighted commercial capture in American media. Despite the expected content manipulation to drive clicks or protect ad revenue, one also notices a commercial bias in coverage. Coombs (2019) notes this bias in Kaepernick coverage as well. This tendency to put clicks above even narratives was especially apparent in the case of the WNBA. Despite being extremely active in protests against police brutality and in favor of Black Lives Matter, women's basketball players appeared little in the discourse. Entire teams knelt during the anthem. In stark contrast to the NFL, the league was supportive of the

players, or at least not unsupportive, after the initial pushback against uniform violations (Cauterucci, 2016. Online). These facts are not well known.

What is more interesting (and perhaps even more unknown) is that the WNBA had widespread protests against police brutality before Kaepernick initially sat for the anthem. The Minnesota Lynx, a perennial contender for the WNBA title, held a press conference following the killing of Philando Castile (Tsuji, 2016. Online). The obscurity of these events speaks to American media's plutocratic nature, American attitudes towards women and women of color, or perhaps both and more. The WNBA has teams in 12 major cities, and despite having reporters assigned to local teams, these protests never had enough steam to gain national attention. One similarity in both cases was that despite the players' insistence that social issues be the focus, coverage was beside the point.

In the four years since Kaepernick's initial discreet demonstration, the issue has branched in many different directions. Millions of words have been written about police brutality and systematic oppression, the NFL's relationship with black players, free speech and democracy, the rise of European-style leftism in the popular psyche, the military's relationship with the National Football League, respect for veterans, corporate responsibility, the national anthem, Kaepernick's abilities as a player, and even workers' rights in Southeast Asia. This diversionary conversation is perhaps natural, but also a major contributing component of systemic racism. The trend became obvious enough that Jim Brown, another socially-minded football player known for his participation in the civil rights movement, felt the need to weigh in during the initial stages: "He's within his rights and he's telling the truth as he sees it. I am with him 100 percent. People are talking about the methodology, but every young man is not a professor." This call to focus on the message rather than the method was rare even amongst Colin

Kaepernick supporters. According to the predominant theory, we would expect frames to be erected that focus on seemingly untoward behavior (Kaufman, 2008. 234). However, the imputation that naturally occurs when one questions another's methods in a protest is classic Millsian vocabulary.

Outside of media that is specifically targeted to black audiences,[72] the inability to stay on the topic was notable. A pilot analysis of headlines in 2016 and 2017, the years in which Kaepernick received the most coverage, revealed that most online articles focused on topics utterly extraneous to the content of protests against police brutality and for racial justice (Gibson, 2019). Expanding the analysis to 2018 offers fewer data points than when the story first broke in 2017, but Google Trends data shows that this tendency appears to continue (See Appendix C). As stated above, the primary foci of articles were patriotism and free speech. Trump features heavily in coverage early on, and coverage seems to shift slowly toward counter-protest movements with a big push after Nike's Kaepernick ad campaign and the #BoycottNike movement.

A content analysis of newspaper articles released in early 2018 found that content from national outlets tended to cover the protests positively, but noted the same tendency to go off-topic we examine here (Hunter, 2018). As with Coombs, we should note an assumed causal relationship between media narratives and public discourse. The paper attributes this to the 'protest paradigm' concept of communications, but we are more interested in how the public handled this topic.

Current theory would stipulate (and the paper as mentioned above also posits the same) that significant events and news coverage drive the phenomenon of protest narratives being overwritten. An example oft-cited in the expanding literature on this topic is the moment that Donald Trump inserted himself into the conversation. Speaking in word salad at a rally at the beginning of the 2017 season, Trump said, "Wouldn't you

love to see one of these NFL owners, when somebody disrespects our flag, to say, 'Get that son of a bitch off the field right now! Out! He's fired!'" Despite much criticism in the media, Trump later doubled down on Twitter and called for an NFL boycott. That prompted entire NFL teams, including their right-leaning executives, to kneel in protest of Trump himself (Foxworth, 2017). "The Resistance" to Donald Trump resistance makes for strange bedfellows, but the peculiarity of this situation was not lost on keener observers. Denver Broncos Hall of Famer Champ Bailey said, "I feel like it's for show. I don't trust Jerry [Jones] or any of the owners on issues of social justice."

The rhetoric around the protest grew even more heated when Kaepernick's girlfriend, Nessa Diab, compared the Baltimore Ravens owner and their hall of fame Mike linebacker, Ray Lewis, to a plantation owner and his obsequious house slave from Quentin Tarantino's 2012 Western, Django Unchained. The tweet compares an image of Ray Lewis hugging Steve Bisciotti from behind with a still from the film where distraught house slave Stephen hugs his dead master from behind. As of this writing, the tweet was still available on her account. Lewis garnered further adverse reaction on social media when he claimed to have knelt only to "honor God in the midst of chaos" and clarified that he "absolutely was not protesting" (Payne, 2017).

Looking at this chain of events, one might be inclined to agree with the communications paradigm on the rhetoric of racism. It seems that Trump successfully hijacked the conversation, allowing racial injustice to be lost in the process. However, the tropes Trump invokes existed on the Internet well before he entered the conversation. We will argue that this catachresis process is not a bug in political rhetoric, but a feature of motive speech and racism in modern discourse. Trump may have steered the conversation, but it was already headed off course as the American public grappled with the difficult topic of systemic discrimination. Under our Millsian

paradigm, we would expect an individuated society like the United States to see the fittest motives win out. Rather, like in a folk society, explanations and discourses that should be nonsensical remain operative (or survive despite being inoperative). Let us analyze some examples.

A popular conversation in conservative media, forums, and otherwise neutral comment sections was Kaepernick's politics. After the quarterback appeared at a press conference wearing a shirt supportive of Fidel Castro, he was painted by right-leaning outlets as a far-left loon bent on destroying the country. Right-leaning outlets pounced, calling Kaepernick an "unrepentant hypocrite" or an "oblivious idiot." It is not entirely incorrect to point out the irony of supporting the one-party president-for-life of a planned economy at an anti-oppression press conference, but it is entirely beside the point at hand. The discussion further devolved into whether Kaepernick was intentionally trolling. There is a discussion to be had regarding Castro's legacy, and even US hegemony and the relative freedom of competing economic and political models. However, in this case, that conversation serves only to pull eyeballs and psychic resources away from a critical social problem.

That is not to say that unfair and unfocused media wholly derailed the movement. This author could find but one mainstream publication that disagreed with Kaepernick's actual message. A 2019 Quillette article entitled "Don't Blame Police Racism for America's Violence Epidemic" makes the case that police shootings are a symptom of America's deeper issues with gun violence. It is here that the communications frame that other researchers utilize shows its weakness. While media outlets tended to stray off-topic similarly to individuals, the tenor of their conversation makes a causal relationship difficult to establish. This glaring disconnect between the reaction of the public and

media coverage was a prevalent theme across many political issues (Center is Sexy, 2019).

The case of Brandon Marshall is an example of how much progress can be made when a conversation is allowed to take place without apologia. The Denver Broncos linebacker ended his pregame demonstrations when the Denver Police Department acknowledged a problem and agreed to review their use of force policies (Gibbs, 2016). Had more police departments reacted this way or had pundits and the public been able to stay focused, kneeling during the anthem may have been a non-issue. Nevertheless, the reaction, very little of which directly addressed the content of Kaepernick's demonstration (Jilani, 2019), was so dramatic that it sparked protests, counter-protests, boycotts, and burnings in effigy.[73]

This catachresis, the phenomenon by which the conversation is effectively intercepted and carried off in the wrong direction, is a point of interest in this tale. Narratives being written and rewritten, ultimately overdetermining the root subject, is not an unusual process in political discourse. The modern media environment certainly seems to accelerate that, and research into media framing demonstrates that it is a problem for social protest movements. However, the reaction in our case is strikingly similar to phenomena observed when individuals confronted with issues of race impress their understanding onto the problem. Consciously or unconsciously, they avow and impute motives that change the topic of conversation (Gibson, 2017). The result is something similar to the broader, media-level phenomenon; the process is thought-terminating. This everyday level of linguistic behavior is important to the questions which we will attempt to answer here. There exist a plethora of studies on bias in media protest coverage. However, without a deeper understanding of the phenomena involved, they appear to have very little prescriptive power (aside from perhaps a study by

McLeod and Hertog (1992), which suggested that socializing journalists differently may produce less biased reporting on issues that threaten power). The Millsian lens we utilize here may provide a solution.

The Kaepernick saga brings up questions about the nature of public protests and conversations surrounding race and racism issues in the United States. Kaepernick defined the meaning of his initial protest, but once images and words about the event enter the digital realm, all control over the narrative is lost. What do these conversations mean? Innumerable supporters and detractors have jumped into the discussion, wrestling it away from and back toward its initial focus. Since those initial comments on NFL.com, the issue has expanded well beyond what Kaepernick likely imagined. Even multi-billion-dollar corporations and Russian troll farms participated in the discussion (Herbert, 2018). What does their participation speak to in American culture? This phenomenon may tell us something about institutionalized and implicit behaviors that current racism studies frameworks cannot.

The utterances that appear in this intense colloquy are in themselves empirical data to be studied. As C. Wright Mills theorizes, they are "verbalized appendages of institutionalized behaviors" and socially situated (Mills, 1940). There seems to be a similarity between the macro-level reaction the United States as a nation had to these events and the documented motive talk of individuals confronting accusations of bigotry or other improprieties. Americans are painfully aware of how polarized our politics have become. What can conversations about this event tell us about the cultural environment?

We will examine media coverage of the event and examine how netizens handled various topics in a highly politicized media environment. Google Trends is useful here. In 2016, events that generated the most media coverage and search term traffic for 'Colin Kaepernick' were the initial protest, Trump saying Kaepernick "should find a

country that works better for him," Kaepernick comments on Hillary Clinton's alleged crimes, and Kaepernick wearing pig socks and a Fidel Castro t-shirt. In 2017, Trump calling the players "sons of bitches," players and owners protesting Trump, Trump explicitly mentioning the "respect for flag and country" narrative, Kaepernick filing a collusion grievance against the NFL, and Kaepernick being named GQ magazine's Citizen of the Year all generated headlines and searches. Significant events of 2018 were Nike's ad campaign featuring Kaepernick, the resulting protests and counter-protests, and Trump tweeting about respect for the flag (See Appendix C).

**II. Cultural Moment**

Systemic discrimination is a hot-button issue in the United States at the moment, but there appear to be few analyses that do not evolve around white supremacy and right wing populist figures.[74] There is a greater focus on identity politics, macro-level rhetoric, and, perhaps most worryingly, individual political figures. That is even more true in the current climate. The pandemic, growing wealth inequality from lopsided COVID stimulus packages, a rash of police violence, and the presidential election have created a perfect storm for civil unrest and perhaps change. It is not easy to imagine how one's dinner conversation could influence and be influenced by social and political institutions, but it may become more important than top-down approaches as social media interactions become more prevalent, and communication is further decentralized post-COVID. One silver lining of this crisis will hopefully be justification for the tight focus of this framework.

That is not to say that a focus on rhetoric or identity is necessarily wrong. However, one should recognize the fundamental disconnect between what everyday people talk about and do and how academia and policymakers handle racism and

discrimination. In a roundtable discussion in the 2012 edited volume Introduction to Racism Studies, four researchers in Japan conclude that racism studies have grown stale worldwide. They posit that modern efforts toward stamping out racism have been ineffective, driving lousy policy and, in no small, part prompting the rise in populism we see in Europe (Lee, 2012. 207, 257). This discussion would turn out to be quite prescient. Just four years later, the US followed the trend with the election of Donald Trump.

Saul (2017) argues that the rise of Donald Trump threatens 'The Norm of Racial Equality.' What commentators often miss in discussions on Trump and right-wing resurgence is that the process is organic. Even if Donald Trump, Boris Johnson, Shinzo Abe, Matteo Salvini, Sebastian Kurz, Jimmie Akesson, Geert Wilders, and Marine Le Pen all disappeared tomorrow, little would be solved. Right-wing populist politicians are a symptom of broader societal issues. Democratic socialist commentator and comedian Jimmy Dore, maligned by the neoliberal left as much as the right, summed much of the issue up quite nicely in a short clip on YouTube: "I understand why people are afraid of a Donald Trump presidency, but Trump is not the problem. He's a symptom of the problem" (Dore, 2019). This is incredibly important. Trump is not the problem. He is a symptom of the problem.

Rather than focus on prominent political and media figures as many analyses are wont to do (e.g., Saul, 2017; Wimmer, 2008; and Goode, 1994), an ethnomethodological process may reveal new methods to combat this growing racial and political unrest. In addition to Mills's theory discussed above, some postcolonial studies concepts will give us a method by which we can, if not necessarily extrapolate to broader society, guess how the examined phenomenon might manifest amongst the public.

Progressive populist candidates, like Bernie Sanders, may offer a different perspective of the problem that can help understand our thesis (even before delving into utterances). The phenomenon of 'Bernie Bros' is not just a cult of personality. It is rooted in a more profound denial of the issues that plague the United States. Indeed, nearly one in eight Sanders primary voters went on to vote for Donald Trump in the general election. In all three states that swung the election, there were more Trump votes from Sanders primary voters than the margin of victory (Kurtzleben, 2017. Online). Of those who switched, a vast majority were highly critical of President Obama, and nearly half disagreed that white people have advantages in American society (Schaffner, 2017. Online). Sanders has been heavily criticized for failing to address racial issues and ignoring identity when discussing policy (Golshan, 2019. Online). Critics of Sanders and Trump miss that candidates are not responsible for their supporters and supporters are not responsible for their candidates. There are societal and ethnomethodological factors that commentators and pundits ignore. It is easy and fun to blame the mess on racists, Russians, and Bernie Bros. The real problem is perhaps less sinister but much more widespread and thus severe.

Hillary Clinton had her finger on the pulse of this as she battled Donald Trump in 2016 but ended up with her foot (or perhaps both feet) in her mouth:

> "We are living in a volatile political environment. You know, to just be grossly generalistic, you could put half of Trump's supporters into what I call the basket of deplorables. Right? They're racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic, you name it. And unfortunately, there are people like that. And he has lifted them up. He has given voice to their websites that used to only have 11,000 people. [They] now have 11 million. He tweets and retweets their

> offensive hateful mean-spirited rhetoric. Now, some of those folks, they are irredeemable, but thankfully, they are not America.
>
> But the other basket […] — and I know because I look at this crowd I see friends from all over America here, I see friends from Florida and Georgia and South Carolina and Texas and, as well as, you know, New York and California — but that "other" basket of people are people who feel the government has let them down, the economy has let them down, nobody cares about them, nobody worries about what happens to their lives and their futures; and they're just desperate for change. It doesn't really even matter where it comes from. They don't buy everything he says, but he seems to hold out some hope that their lives will be different. They won't wake up and see their jobs disappear, lose a kid to heroin, feel like they're in a dead-end. Those are people we have to understand and empathize with as well."

Clinton recognizes that her infamous "basket of deplorables" comment gave Trump a "political gift" (Clinton, 2018. 494). An accusation of bigotry only stings if the target is either free from bigotry, guilty about it, or wishes to remain closeted. Clinton and others with a similar understanding fail to recognize that the former 'basket' identify with the latter, but the latter do not identify with the former. This criticism applies to implicit bias researchers as well. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's Racism Without Racists is an excellent example in that sociologists lauded it, but the public largely ignored it.

In a piece for the Atlantic, Thomas Chatterton Williams argued that a form of argumentum ad ignorantiam exists in the book.[75] It is dangerous to assume that racism is gone, but it is unproductive and potentially as damaging to assume it is always lurking unseen beneath the surface of society. Rather than go on a witch hunt, we should address

behaviors. The article ultimately focuses on class, but our examination of verbalizations is a potential solution to the problem which Silva identifies. At the individual level, we are incredibly skilled at dismissing facts that might become a barrier to our beliefs, desires, and actions.

Clinton comes tantalizingly close to this realization in the 2018 post-mortem of her campaign, What Happened? She hangs the election result around the necks of 63 million Americans, saying they "made a decision to elect a man who bragged about sexual assault, attacked a federal judge for being Mexican and grieving Gold Star parents who were Muslim, and has a long and well-documented history of racial discrimination in his businesses" (Clinton, 2018. 495). All of those things about Trump are absolutely true. However, her apprehension relies on several fallacious, stair-step assumptions. First is that voters have all the information. Second is that the consequences of said information are understood. The third and perhaps most significant assumption is that those consequences would (crucially different from 'should') outweigh each voter's desires. A different tact that addressed Trump supporter behavior in a manner that was harder to evade but easier to accept may have made a difference.

One common interpretation of the seeming move rightward in swing states and amongst very religious voters is that democrats, and Hillary Clinton specifically, were just too objectionable to conservatives. So much so that they were willing to elect a wealthy serial philanderer living lavishly in one of America's biggest liberal strongholds.[76] Simple numbers undermine this theory. Trump seems to have fared worse in the 2016 Republican primary than Mitt Romney did in 2012, but vote totals show something that researchers and pundits have yet to grasp fully. In the Republican primary, Trump won a giant plurality of the vote in a strong field (from a Republican perspective). His opponents were a Harvard-educated constitutional scholar in Cruz, a

squeaky-clean Roman Catholic virtually guaranteed to carry Florida in Rubio, and a former Fox News personality who would most certainly take Ohio in Kasich. Voters had other choices besides Clinton. In the end, America overwhelmingly elected the opposite of a "stable genius."[77] Discourse has since melted into an unrecognizable mess.

A popular narrative of redbaiting American media is that our cultural ills are the fault of a widespread Russian disinformation campaign. Indeed they were involved in the case of Colin Kaepernick, but it is proof of the problem and not the cause. Online network research firm, Graphika, found that Russian sockpuppet accounts were involved in the backlash against Nike after their "Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything." ad campaign featuring Kaepernick. Graphika CEO John Kelly is on record with the Daily Mail saying, "They were definitely participating in the Nike hashtag and in particularly driving it at the beginning." According to their research, more than 80,000 different Twitter accounts had posted messages with anti-Nike hashtags within less than a day of the campaign launch. They claim 'many' were linked to the IRA (Herbert, 2018. Online). This would seem to validate the narrative being pushed by the Rachael Maddows, but Senate testimony from researchers revealed that Russian information warfare operatives were aware of American racism and exploited it as a fracture point in our society (Senate IC Hearing, 2018).

Our failure to recognize the social factors involved, even as foreign adversaries succeed, requires willful ignorance of human behavior and leaps in logic. It is satisfying to shake one's fist and say, "damn that Donald Trump!" or "damn those Trump voters!" but it is arguably more critical to address the tools by which people dismissed Trump's flaws and still chose to elect him. The same goes for right-wing leaders with similar defects in other nations, like Japan's (now former) Prime Minister Abe.[78]

One might be inclined to think, and given existing literature on the subjects one might be forgiven, that racism in America, defined by white supremacy, slavery, and a colonialist history of power projection, is different from racism in Japan. With Japan's colonial ambitions during the Meiji Era, the prominence of 'racial science' in crafting a Japanese identity before and after World War II, ethnicity-based slavery, and institutional barriers to economic success for non-Japanese (Ryall, 2019. Online), it is easy to argue that they are quite similar. Further, there exists a very similar mentality of re-litigating wars and romanticizing the past between Japan's right-wing nationalists and southern whites in America.

Finally, there is room for an analysis of the rhetoric that peoples employ to square discrimination in their respective societies with the norm of racial equality, even if we assume that the two forms of racism are dissimilar. For example, a popular refrain on conservative outlets following the killing of George Floyd was that "everyone agrees that the killing was unjust, but..." Speakers would then continue to condemn rioting, protesting, and even simple silent demonstrations. A similar tactic is visible on the Iga forums where interviewees would condemn discrimination against foreigners and follow with something like, "but they shouldn't be so loud in the convenience store parking lot." As examples of Millsian diversionary tactics go, these are fitting enough to have appeared in the original 1940 essay. They also fit well with more traditional understandings of excusing racism.

We do not require this discussion of cultural moments because a link needs to be proven between our two subjects of focus. Instead, an understanding of historical and cultural elements will help establish our points of discussion. Crucially, understanding the cultural background can also help us identify typal vocabularies, determine whether

they offer anything beyond standard frames, and examine the runaway phenomenon we observe,

**III. Design**

Thanks to internet forums and comment sections, analyzing utterances has never been easier. While this erases some of the charms of ethnomethodology, such a rich source of information has significant advantages. Without conducting interviews or making life histories, one can access an immeasurable amount of talk about virtually any popular subject. The body of literature that examines internet forums is growing, and the practice is beginning to emerge in fields closer to the sciences, such as psychology (ref. Skitka, 2006). American anthropologist, Nancy Baym, and Estonian researchers, Peter Holtz and Wolfgang Wagner are some strong examples of academics working in this genre. The latter even published a guide for other researchers in 2009 having analyzed forums over a number of papers.

There are also dozens of fascinating articles that use internet forums in conjunction with grounded theory, but for this project, we will pay less attention to those. The methodology is complicated and, according to Grbich, requires the researcher be extraordinarily impartial and disconnected from existing theory. It would be quite easy to proffer a bad theory with the given subject matter (Grbich, 2013).

One significant advantage of utilizing internet forums that Holtz and team note is just sheer volume. Even smaller sites can have hundreds of members contributing thousands of posts. News aggregator fark.com, analyzed here, is not even a top 7,000 Alexa-ranked site, but it has over 5,000 active posters and 25,000 'lurkers' in the comment section. With more topic-focused forums, one can examine a narrow group but still have a lot of data. A study conducted at the nursing school at Emory University

even referred to internet forums with specific topics as "unmoderated focus groups" (Moloney, 2003. 274). Because the data sets are large, they can be examined more quantitatively. One can pore over conversations directly as would an ethnomethodologist, use software and grounded theory techniques to find trends, or both.

There is another advantage to forums in that data are potentially cleaner and friendlier to review than that which can be gathered personally. Users are entirely separated from the observer and can be examined in something of a natural environment (though it is important to note that conversations are not definitely natural). Issues such as survey bias, acquiescence, or order effects would be non-existent. Furthermore, the data is publicly available.

Without having to confront the consequences of their words directly or face pushback from an interrogator, individuals are more likely to discuss controversial topics. In long-form interviews or focus groups, there is always potential for interviewer effects or partiality. Techniques of conversation analysis can be employed to account for some slant. Researchers such as Mizukawa Yoshifumi, Maeda Hirofumi, and Gregory S. Poole have been producing quality scholarship here in Japan with these tools for years. The former released a guide to ethnomethodology wherein they describe a method that reproduces interviews in excruciating detail. This process may allow the reader to identify where the interviewer misinterpreted, missed, or ignored something important. The danger is still there, however.

For example, research into anti-Korean proto-alt-right groups by Makiko Shoji of Doshisha University used life histories to put a face on Japanese anti-foreign sentiment. While this research is unique and exciting, the process will have influenced the results. Shoji admits to being strangely attracted to interviewees and feeling guilty about

enjoying events and contact (Shoji, 2014). The close-up format may also give the impression that interview subjects are the target of condemnation rather than the cultural framework that girds their understanding.[79] Analyzing forums could accomplish a similar flavor, but with potentially fewer problems.

This impersonality carries disadvantages. As Holtz and team note, there is an ethical issue with making subjects of the unwitting. While internet forums are mostly public, there may be forum members who would object to being part of a study. Depending on how much data is attached to each username, it may be possible to reverse engineer personal information about the individual. When the topic is something sensitive, such as politics or race, privacy concerns are amplified. One must also account for 'deindividuation' effects.[80] In the case of an online study, it resembles a kind of new extreme responding. Posters will write obscene or radical things for seemingly no other reason than to offend, provoke, or 'flame.' The impulsivity and lack of conscience resembles antisocial personality disorder (Bishop, 2013. 31–33). Ecological validity is difficult to determine in a study of utterances, and deindividuation further complicates matters.

That performative element of online commenting is an obstacle. Participants compete for eyeballs, votes, and feedback; whether it be reddit.com karma, fark.com 'smart' and 'funny' votes, clicks on the 'like' button, or even just angry responses. Further, many individuals play characters or even operate multiple accounts, sometimes within one discussion. 'Trolls' post offensive or digressive comments so they can sit back with popcorn and watch the resulting carnage. There is also research that suggests individuals attempt to one-up each other with their offensive comments (Williams, 2002).

That is not to say trolling is entirely worthless with a Millsian approach. We know golden retrievers love tennis balls. In the same respect, the material with which trolls and 'sockpuppets' distract people can give us valuable information. In Senate testimony, Director of Research for New Knowledge Renée DiResta outlines how the Moscow-based Internet Research Agency used 'sockpuppet' accounts to disrupt forums and comment sections on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube before (and, quite oddly, well after) the 2016 presidential election. Russian agents recognized America's racial tension as a fracture point and attacked it specifically. They released divisive content targeted at African Americans and other people of color on issues vital to them, such as police brutality. The fact that a foreign power was able to exploit this weakness in American society while YouTube and government agencies claimed that "IRA content was not targeted to the US or to any particular sector of the US population" is a significant finding (Senate IC Hearing, 2018).

The Goldingesque lack of typical social structure should be accounted for when relying on this data. It is here that Holtz and company deserve some criticism. In their guide, they say there is evidence that posters are not offering the most extreme opinions possible, but their real opinions in the most extreme manner possible (Holtz, 2012. 5). The evidence is a single paper from 2002 by grounded theory pioneer, Jack Glaser, which examines white supremacist internet forums in America. Drawing any conclusions about the behavior of all online commenters based on white supremacists participating in a private bulletin is questionable. Care must be taken to accurately assess comment content without being influenced by the prospective treasure trove of material.

Papers that analyze web forums or comment sections to study ethnic exclusionism are not immune to the usual pitfalls of racism studies. Many works,

including those of Dr. Holtz, tend to point out that there is some racism somewhere. Others offer a list of the no good, very bad words that racists use. One analysis from the guide to analyzing internet forums examines Neo-Nazi message boards connected to the far-right National Democratic Party of Germany. The team looked at 5,000 posts from forums totaling nearly 2,000 users. They found that German white supremacists were concerned with black men procreating with white women, German identity, and Jewish power and influence. While the paper utilized an interesting methodology, it ultimately does not offer any new information. The results fall in line perfectly with established racist tropes, and the value of unmoderated discussion is lost.

Another report in the guide solves this issue somewhat. Researchers observed a handful of forums frequented by young Muslim men of Turkish descent living in Germany and identified 'typical discourses.' The distinct types of talk they identify here allowed for a correspondence analysis that identified very religious but not politically radical and very secular but also very politically radical groups. While it may not seem surprising that communities with various mixes of religiosity and political radicalization exist amongst Muslim immigrants to Western nations, it shows the necessity of a multi-dimensional approach when studying radicalization and reveals some motive vocabularies used in those communities. For example, very political young men were found to use the word *kuffar* (infidel) quite frequently on other expats. The value of unmoderated discussion is appreciable. Further, this research, while slightly different in focus from ours, shows the necessity of this style of approach. At least in western media, there exist very few nuanced public depictions of Muslim culture. They tend to be either very negative or very whitewashed (Sides, 2013. 583).

It is also common to analyze internet data via word counts. Researchers use software to count the number of times a particular word or phrase appears throughout a

conversation and run analyses using various statistics software suites. Given that quoting varies wildly from site to site, it means that a human must still check the data. Jokes, sarcastic use of terms, and context too require a human eye. If this human check is necessary, it makes sense to hand-tag or 'code' phrases in the first place.

The cost of this method is much time, but time alone, and the result is a large data-set. We require no panel discussions, no questionnaires, no interviews, and no life histories. With taboo topics such as white supremacy, religious extremism, or Nazism, this approach is easier and potentially more valuable than those methods. This design allows for public discourse to be better analyzed for trends and themes. As it pertains to the overarching thesis here, this method is valuable in that it allows for a comparison with media narratives. It should be noted that with interviews, a researcher may have the ability to gather more tailored information. One is entirely at the whims of a comment section, which is a flaw here that should be noted.

We will examine the comment sections of news aggregator fark.com and comment system Disqus. Initially, YouTube comments were also included in the analysis, but the amount of content that had to be coded as 'vitriolic' or 'trolling' was close to 60% for some videos. Fark discussions take place on fark.com itself and are attached to an outside article with a humorous title link. Disqus allows for conversation directly below a news article or separately on disqus.com. The sites are relatively diverse, and audiences are a majority American according to Alexa rankings. Fark targets mostly 25- to 40-year-old affluent individuals but is politically diverse. These sites were chosen for their relative neutrality. Faced with trolling and flaming, one in ten news and opinion sites have stopped allowing comments and nearly half with circulation above 50,000 daily have disallowed anonymous commenters (Santana. 2, 10).[81] So communities that discuss current events with no particular focus are the best for our

purposes. Studying how narratives evolve in targeted communities would be interesting, but is beyond the scope of this paper.

Threads are laid out cleanly and lend themselves well to coding, particularly on Fark. Both communities require an account for use. Disqus allows users to login with Facebook, Google, or Twitter credentials, potentially reducing deindividuation effects (Santana, 2014. 10, 11). Quoting and attribution is clear, decreasing the chance of counting the same post twice or using the same code many times on a single user. Moderators are relatively hands-off. They will remove obscene posts, comments that exhibit flaming behavior, or those that veer too far off-topic. Fark's feedback mechanisms are particularly useful. 'Smart' and 'funny' voting options give a bit more information about the intent of posts than typical sites. Coding sarcastic or humorous posts exposes the process to extra subjectivity, but with these vote counts one can defer to the crowd rather than determine the tenor of a post.[82] While not perfect, this medium level of moderation and security should give us a good idea of discourses.

Comments were classified into five different types before other codes were applied so a pattern of typical discourses could be established. The five types are: disagree, contrary, neutral, supportive, agree. Comments tagged as 'disagree' must contain some language where the poster explicitly expresses that Kaepernick is wrong in his protest or methods. Comments that fail to meet that requirement but argue against Kaepernick or supporters are 'contrary.' Similarly, 'supportive' comments are those that argue in favor of Kaepernick or supporters but do not contain an explicit endorsement. 'Agree' posts are those that contain explicit support. The two types on either side of neutral are coupled together into code groups called 'positive' and 'negative.'

Neutral posts are those related to the topic where there is no opinion stated, or a coder should not make a determination. For example, in a thread discussing his protest

and methods, a user posted an image of Kaepernick sitting on the bench listening to music captioned: "Colin during the anthem." The same image is again posted below captioned: "Colin after the anthem." The comment is decidedly negative, but the content is too open to interpretation. This post is coded as 'neutral.' Another example would be a post with no quotes for context that said: "Stand up for what is right, sit down for what is wrong?" This post appears to be a negative reaction to Kaepernick, but there is not enough information.

Posts are also coded based on how relevant they are to the topic of the article. If a significant number of different posters are talking about the same unrelated topic across threads, that topic receives a tag such as, 'football,' 'anthem,' or 'economic.' These codes belong to the group 'tangent' and represent the catachresis that we hypothesize above. If a discourse as tagged appears too infrequently or the fit of a particular comment is difficult to establish, it is omitted. Some additional codes that account for the tenor of a post include 'vitriolic,' 'on-topic," authoritarian,' 'straw man,' 'racist trope,' 'joke,' and 'sarcasm.' In total, the project has 72 codes, 32 of which met the threshold for a typical discourse, which is 50 instances.

ATLAS.ti performs correspondence analysis between codes. The software marks related codes with a percentage of explained variance and automatically identifies relationships of interest that a human may miss. The tests ATLAS.ti performs are similar to a chi-squared test, and it provides a Cohen's kappa for agreement. However, given that codes are researcher generated and data is typically from complex surveys, interviews, or other non-random data, no p-values or significance levels can be provided. The software warns users that its data visualizations are not enough to establish statistically significant relationships. Holtz and team graph their data and use a cosine distance method recommended by Michael J. Greenacre of Pompeu Fabra

University to test significance. For our purposes, we will avoid definitive statements. A permutation test or even a simple chi-squared test would not be wholly inappropriate given the independence of our variables and how we have structured the data, but a study of discourses does not require econometric bluster.

## IV. Results

The discourses below come from 3,839 coded posts over three years (2016-2018). With these tools, we can paint a picture of the conversations that people were having about this issue in online communities. The power of a particular motive or discourse is determined by comparing observed values to expected values. The 'expectation' is equal weighting for topics regardless of one's opinion on Civiqs. For example, we would hypothesize that extraneous football conversation is not correlated to one's stance on Kaepernick or police brutality. If an outsized number of commenters critical Kaepernick talk about football, we have support for an alternative hypothesis (for data on code count vs. expected outcomes, see Appendix B)

### "The Wrong Type of Protest"

As expected, a great many posters claimed to be offended by someone kneeling during the national anthem. Not standing for the anthem was deemed anti-American or disrespectful to those "who fought and died for this country." As mentioned above this argument was seen often in the media. In a particularly heated CNN Tonight segment in 2017, host Don Lemon challenged a guest on his use of this rhetoric. Lead guest Micheal Eric Dyson of Georgetown University likened it to an abusive husband complaining when his wife finally speaks up.

Of specific discourses, this was the one most highly associated with 'negative' posts. Some 'positive' posts also contained this language. Interestingly, ATLAS.ti marked a relationship between 'negative' commenters and comments that go out of their way to mention that the protest was acceptable. When those posts are analyzed directly, this would appear to be a technique of neutralization. Nearly half of such posts directed vitriolic language at Kaepernick, and all disagreed on other grounds.

Example: "He's free to protest however he feels. We're free to say that he's a [expletive] idiot, who doesn't understand what the [expletive] he's talking about. That's how freedom works."

**"He Sucks"**

A prevalent discourse that was especially common in 2016 threads was that Kaepernick was a just lousy quarterback. Nearly five times as many 'negative' comments contained some variation of this theme as 'positive.' The attitude was used as a bludgeon to attack the quarterback. While the idea that Kaepernick is unfit for the NFL was expressed in overwhelming numbers by 'negative' posters, the disparity between expected and actual opinions for 'neutral' posters (And indeed football statistics. Ref. Johnson, 2017) indicate that this is not the case.

Example: "He protests the anthem by sitting down, and he protests the [NFL] by playing like [expletive]."

**"Redbaiting"**

After Kaepernick appeared before the media wearing a shirt depicting Fidel Castro, many posters used political arguments to dismiss Kaepernick. It appeared in threads well after the initial event, but numbers were few. It does not appear to be common after 2016. A vast majority of people who used this discourse either self-identified as a conservative or negatively mentioned 'liberals,' 'Democrats,' or 'leftists.' Unexpectedly, this vocabulary did not meet our threshold for a typical discourse.

Example: "[The] Washington Times wrote about him [giving] to a charity that supports Cop Killer Assata who went to Cuba. So, Colin is not totally ignorant of the Castro brothers, Colin is an avowed leftist. Please read the Washington Times article."

**"He's Too Privileged"**

Another *ad hominem* style argument that came up often was that a wealthy football player should not be protesting, was not helping, or could not understand oppression and thus could not protest it. Comments used Kaepernick's white adoptive parents as an argument were also tagged with this code.

Example: "He thinks he's oppressed because he makes tons of money playing [expletive] football?  [expletive] him and the [expletive] pony he rides."

**Political Codes**

As we expected to see highly politicized speech mimicking highly politicized coverage, several codes were used to track commenters who self-identified on the American one-dimensional political spectrum, or who used blaming language while referencing an ideology or political party. Contrary to expectations, this type of

discourse was surprisingly rare, at least on one side. Conservatives, Republicans, and Trump supporters were generally against the protests as expected, but 'negative' codes were far less likely to be associated with those attacking left-leaning ideologies than the reverse. Liberals, Democrats, and Clinton supporters were generally in favor of the protests. 'Positive' and 'neutral' commenters were associated with posts attacking the right, Trump, and right-leaning ideologies. They were highly associated with straw man arguments and accusations of racism. There were surprisingly few Clinton supporters tagged as 'negative' after Kaepernick's controversial comments about her.

"But Democrats"

Example: "Crimes involving non-white people against their own race isn't talked about nearly enough, for whatever reason. You don't see a lot of 'black lives matter' yahoos and the scene of black-on-black crime, do you? Didn't think so. […] Your argument is slanted, biased, and happens to fit the 'over-hyped' liberal 'all whites are racists' agenda of the moment."

"But Republicans"

Example: "Why are most of the people who are upset about Kaepernick support a party whose main platform is 'Rich guy complains about America'?"

**Tangent Codes**

This category is perhaps our most important as it helps quantify the catachresis we noted. Tangent codes were applied to comments that participated in or started a continuing tangential conversation. One unexpected result was that strong attitudes toward the protest had little connection to whether or not one deviated from the topic.

Both 'positive' and 'negative' codes were less associated with tangential conversation than would be expected from their respective populations. Under the Millsian portion of our framework, we would expect to see 'negative' commenters following tangents as they explore ex post facto lingualizations. 'Neutral' was the only group to exceed expected values. This result makes sense in half our theoretical framework; those with less investment in the issue are more likely to follow socially situated topics. However, it does not support our alternative hypothesis[83] that these discussions are being utilized as a motive shield.

The most common tangential topics were football, the anthem, and the flag. Associations for anthem and flag discussion are so close to the expected values that if we could run a statistical test, it would not likely be meaningfully different from random. What the disparity between football and patriotic narratives says about the power of those narratives is unclear. Tangents that did not meet our threshold included economic, political, and free speech discussion. The last one is particularly surprising.

All Tangents (includes specific and blanket tangent tags)

Example: "I don't think Nike cares about losing redneck [expletive] customers. Brooks are better running shoes anyway. I made the switch several years ago. really the best."

"Football Tangent"

Example: "Romo hurt his back and going to miss half the regular season. The Prescott Era begins. Or Jerrah is on the phone with San Fran right now…"

"Anthem/Flag Tangent"

Example: "Not for nothing, but when Angry Guy X says, 'That bastard hates America! My grandpappy died for that flag!', I learn much more about Angry Guy X's wrong-headed idea of what America is or should be."

**"On-Topic"**

In contrast to various 'tangent' codes, the 'on-topic' code was associated with posts that continued a conversation about whether or not Kaepernick was correct to protest or discussed the content of the protest. Posters with 'positive' codes were associated with 'on-topic 'comments more often than other groups. This offers support for the theory of socially situated motive vocabularies blocking discourse. Those with 'negative' codes were less associated with both 'on-topic' comments and tangents. Possible explanations to that seeming contradiction are hit-and-run troll behavior or a large number of people writing a small number of comments. Less than 10% of posts were coded 'on-topic.' This is a concerning result.

Example: "One problem is perception. law enforcement seems to work to protect rather than punish the bad actors among them, fighting against accountability instead of for it and this is why so many people have a problem with them. If the "good" cops are actively or even passively staying complicit, well..."

**"Vitriol"**

This code is not a discourse, but the associations are particularly interesting. Those who outright disagreed with Kaepernick or argued against him were more associated with vitriolic language than other commenters. Even in heated exchanges, those who supported Kaepernick were associated less with hateful language or cursing.

Interestingly, even these relatively vitriolic Kaepernick dissenters were in line with or slightly better than the typical proportion of hateful comments on the internet at large (cf. Santana, 2014). This relative cleanliness could speak to the quality of chosen communities or at least their content moderation.

Example: "Kaperwhatshisface is an attention whore. 'Oooh. No one has noticed me for the last few weeks'. [expletive] him."

**"Racist Trope"**

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the use of racist tropes were much more likely to be associated with 'negative' attitudes.

Example: "You've done nothing for blacks buts sit down in protest and personify the 'Thug life.'"

**Millsian Code Groups**

The Millsian code group covered motive talk that we might expect given the subject matter. While some of the anti-Kaepernick rhetoric associated with negative posts falls in line with condemning the condemners, the requirements were strict for those codes. A commenter had to use condemning language defensively. Not one of the Millsian codes or groups met our typical discourse threshold. 'My black friend' was two comments shy of the requirement, while a group of victim-blaming codes fell short by one. 'My black friend' is exactly what it sounds like. The victim-blaming code group was a number of 'on-topic' posts that dealt with language attacking or blaming those

experiencing police violence. Codes included 'but black on black violence,' 'but criminals,' and 'racism everywhere.' They co-occurred with 'negative' codes often.

**"Meta"**

This final code group was fascinating. It was almost exclusively associated with 'positive' commenters. Posts that received this tag were cognizant of the idea that anti-Kaepernick commenters[84] were pushing the argument away from the essential themes (but not aware that more neutral individuals were also participating). These individuals were aware of many of the catachreses that we discussed above, including those that we expected to see but could not make any definitive statements about given the data. Another noteworthy aspect is that the 'meta' code appears to increase across the observed three year period.

Example: "anyone going to bother to dispute the validity of what he said or are you just going to 'lol shut up football man' for the rest of the afternoon"

**Miscellaneous Codes**

Other codes that met typical discourse requirements, but were close to expected values were 'joke,' 'sarcasm,' 'straw man,' 'but the media,' 'you're a troll,' 'no you,' 'but BLM,' 'All Lives Matter,' and 'Blue Lives Matter.' Given that the final two are typically considered counter-movements to Black Lives Matter, this is surprising. ATLAS.ti did mark correspondence between 'negative' attitudes toward Kaepernick and All Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter codes, but it was small. It would seem that despite the ideological lines that we would expect given media coverage, those threads simply turned into general All Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter discussions. For the most

part, participants did not appear to take political sides. Those threads were associated with an uptick in vitriolic language ("A lot of [expletive] bootlickers in this thread") and accusations of racism ("You lot think black lives don't matter.").

## V. Discussion

If we look back to our research questions and use them to apply something of a retroactive null hypothesis to the experiment, our results ultimately support the catachresis we initially observed. People did not follow current events and media coverage, nor did they adhere to substantive conversation. Instead, we observed an imposition of socially situated understandings over events. This result is a mark in the plus column for this framework, though support for Millsian motives was admittedly a bit weak. As news stories were used to resolve narratives, we should expect to see discourses that echo current event coverage in some way. While those discourses were present, they are confounded by football and patriotic narratives. That is not outwardly surprising, but the tangential conversation that results is. Once the initial topic is painted over, participants follow that line and lose the original.

Intense debates about America and free expression may be a tertiary effect of the political environment. Interestingly, even those people who support Kaepernick appeared to consider the issue from a free speech perspective.[85] That vocabulary is, as Mills supposes, genetically imputed. It would require further study, but we may expect less parenthetical discussion if the kickoff were more direct. Black Lives Matter would be a good example. That is not to blame Colin Kaepernick for the effects we observe. One might argue that tailoring a message to the majority puts the onus for change on the oppressed. However, in this case, a more direct message takes a rhetorical tool away

from one's opponent and could allow for a more productive (though likely even more heated) discourse.

Whether our results map to the broader population remains to be seen (we certainly bumped into the limits of this specific forum-mining method), but given the nature of these online communities, the observed gap between media frames and discussion amongst the public is striking. That seems to be especially true of individuals with less investment in the material. Football is the most popular and profitable spectator sport in the country, but it represents more than that here. Here it is a cultural obstacle and a catachresis that overwrites the critical issue of police brutality perpetrated against people of color. The ease with which football inserted itself into conversations makes a compelling argument for focusing more on rhetoric in anti-racism education. The precedent of Brandon Marshall and the Denver Police Department certainly supports that conclusion. Colin Kaepernick's protest had the potential for immediate change if the setting and participants were correct.

The protest has lost some of the public's attention, and its goals are far from fulfilled. While discrimination is the obvious and easy answer, the fine details of how the public negotiates that space merit exploration. That is where our Millsian framework comes in handy. Most Americans are not outwardly racist and most likely believe themselves to be entirely free of racism. It must be stressed that they are still participants in that system. Conversations that move valuable intellectual resources away from a solution, even inadvertently, are part of the problem. Some might dismiss this as a form of implicit or aversive racism. However, an ethnomethodological examination gives us a more intimate look at the mechanism.

# CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

## I. Results

Let us look back to our guiding questions and see if and how the results of chapters three and four match expectations outlined in the introduction.

1) What typal vocabularies emerge in everyday conversation about racial or ethnic tension?

In the case of Iga, our 'folk society,' the appeal to Iga matches what we would expect given Mills's original theory. The locals utilize vocabularies that "make sense" to them. What is most interesting about this vocabulary is how unbelievably specific it is and how perfectly it matches Mills's theory. A place like Iga where the operativity of motives works in this manner could be exceedingly rare in modern developed nations. The point of motive exhaustion was met in several conversations to mixed results. In many cases, the interviewee ran away. In the final example, motive failure brought forth "truer" explanations (or at the very least, explanations that fit with more conventional understandings of racism).

In the case of the American Internet, our 'individuated society,' a considerable number of vocabularies emerged to explain (or explain away) the Colin Kaepernick controversy. There are two critical points to reiterate here. The first is that explanations were highly cultural and not unlike those we would expect of folk culture. Some of the dominant frames revolved around very American ideas like pride in freedom of expression, jingoism and militarism, gun culture, and gridiron football. The second point is that motives introduced to a conversation dominate the original topic and subsume

pressing political issues. There is no hope to terminate this deluge of motives as near-infinite participants and opinions pop in and out of the discourse.

The data show that those who oppose the political goals in question will happily follow these new narratives down a rabbit hole. This is expected. But those with neutral (or undetermined) opinions on the topic join in, creating the initially observed catachresis phenomenon. Supportive participants are less susceptible to this inveigle but only just. Exhaustion of motive allowing for some meaningful "truth" to be reached never occurs. The situation is similar to a folk society where motives remain unquestioned, but the scale and stakes are much grander.

2) Are these typal vocabularies meaningfully different from frames one might see in research dealing with the theory of frames?

In the case of Iga, it could not be conclusively demonstrated that individuals utilized narratives significantly different from those of media and authority figures. In fact, the appearance of a "new" style of motive, Iga as an "international city," appeared to be an authority-driven frame that the public willingly adopted. While the success of this motive talk may simply be because it fits with established vocabularies and modes of thought, the result supports a null hypothesis that frames are an adequate explanation of how political concepts and thinking are introduced in society.

On the other hand, American netizens offered support for the idea that a bottom-up Millsian approach catches phenomena that the idea of frames misses. The media in the United States (aside from certain right-wing outlets) was overwhelmingly in favor of Colin Kaepernick's cause. Trump inserted himself into the conversation, and outlets were mostly critical of him. Large corporations like Nike supported Kaepernick, and

others like Home Depot, EA Games, H&M, and others followed with donations to Black Lives Matter. Despite this, our analysis demonstrates that the public did not follow 'frames' set by the media and stuck to more culturally relevant (though not politically relevant) topics. Even motives that served to move the discourse away from the topic of inequity in the justice system did not always mesh with those pushed by right-wing media outlets.

This result offers support for a Millsian view of discourse that looks at everyday conversation. What remains unclear is why. The disconnect between the public and the media could simply be a consequence of modern communication methods and not an indictment of frames as a theory. There is a possibility that framing needs to be rethought, but there is no way to know given these results. It may be safe to assume that the internet plays a large role in the motive phenomenon observed here.

3) How do observed vocabularies differ between folk society and individuated society? Why might we observe a similar lack of terminal motive exhaustion between the two?

This result is surprising. Typal vocabularies observed in Iga and on the American internet were more similar than expected. First, the vocabularies that met analysis requirements were very much linked to American culture and were not fit as motives for the behavior in question. That is similar to Iga and the theoretical folk society. Second, a satisfying motive exhaustion is never reached. Mills supposes that modern, diverse societies will see a competition of motives whereby the fittest win out. Instead, we see a situation similar to folk society whereby motives are, in a sense, accepted.

This could support the initial hypothesis of a net society whereby numerous typal vocabularies overwhelm the questioning process. There are several alternative

possibilities. One is that Mills overestimated the ease with which new motives could outcompete those of 'old style' vocabularies. That would certainly offer one explanation for the grinding difficulty of social progress in ethnically diverse nations. Another is that these vocabularies are indeed the fittest. This fitness is not necessarily in the sense that the typal vocabularies are the most sensical, logical, or productive available, but in a Darwinian sense where they are allowed to survive. Despite their weaknesses, they have traits that allow them to thrive in their environment.

Yet another explanation could be that our hypothesis was correct: modern communication makes it difficult or impossible for a healthy competition of motives to take place. Instead, the sheer number of participants and viewpoints in a discussion means that an out-of-control chain reaction of explanations occurs that makes internet communication counterproductive to solving societal issues.

**II. Discussion**

In this framework, culture and ethnicity exert a slightly different influence on behavior than is typically thought.[86] Rather than being the direct cause of some issue, it is one step removed, influencing explanatory language, the situations in which those explanations are viable, and individuals' perceptions of events. The issue of discrimination is rarely, if ever, examined from this perspective. The concepts of locally limited language and its effect on a person's reality, justification within the confines of narrow social norms, and varying accounts competing to explain and reconcile questionable behavior are all worthy of exploration when considering discrimination, exclusionism, or xenophobia. Rather than boil the issue down to black and white or right and wrong, as is often the case, we must take a more nuanced approach.

Social identity theory and other modern frameworks might contend that a sense of superiority, supremacy, or fear of the other is at the heart of this problem. However, the explanations offered by individuals who come into contact with or are aware of discrimination in their everyday lives in Iga demonstrated that the interpretations people make at their level of understanding are more important than the psychological or historical reality. The number of cigarettes smoked in a day, ninjutsu, rurality, or the mountains just over there are every bit as relevant to Igans as any other reason for exclusionism. Even if the "true" reason is different and the individual knows it, their explanation is offered within a socially situated vocabulary with the expectation that it will be accepted. An unfortunate side-effect is that this vocabulary upholds an oppressive reality for minority groups.

The fretwork created by these vocabularies must be broken for a productive conversation to take place. The interviews conducted in Iga show that this process may be difficult or painful. As with other anti-racism efforts such as implicit measures, our unwitting participants tended to disengage when they became uncomfortable. For this approach it appeared to be the point Mills theorized whereby motives become inoperative. Recognizing the role of people's accounts in reconciling behavior within society is a process that should be added to the intellectual toolset of anti-racism.

The idea that people shape their perceptions and their actions based on the words and accounts they use could be instrumental in attacking issues of discrimination. In the case of Colin Kaepernick, we found a potentially promising answer to our second research question and demonstrated that individuals, contrary to existing theories of communications and sociology, establish catachreses separate from frames established by the media and political figures. However, in the case of Iga, we could not make a determination. Vocabularies utilized by individuals fit very well with branding the city

of Iga established to promote tourism, including those that (seemingly) conflicted with the Igan identity.[87]

It would appear that vocabularies can be inserted into individuals' everyday experiences and compete as attractive alternatives to typal cultural, racial, or religious appeals. The 'international city' vocabulary that younger people were found to employ was particularly revelatory. The 'international city' offers a way for individuals in Iga to frame their words and actions that is congruent with their daily experiences and the other motive phrases that appear in their lives. In a society where perceptions are filtered through local culture, gaining the linguistic toolset necessary to see oneself as part of an evolving community could prove a far more effective way to reduce implicit bias than the usual slap on the wrist.

The problem moving forward lies in the individuated society where discussion takes place on the internet and outside the reach of thought leaders. How do we control an uncontrollable chain reaction of words and concepts? Robert Reich recently suggested a new American version of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Trump supporters and government employees under his administration. Ignoring his proposal's misplaced focus (again, it must be stressed that focus on polarizing figures is dangerously monomaniacal), this form of restorative justice is a good idea. Other researchers such as Butler and Derrida have been active in rethinking responsibility and justice in the context of speech for a long time now.

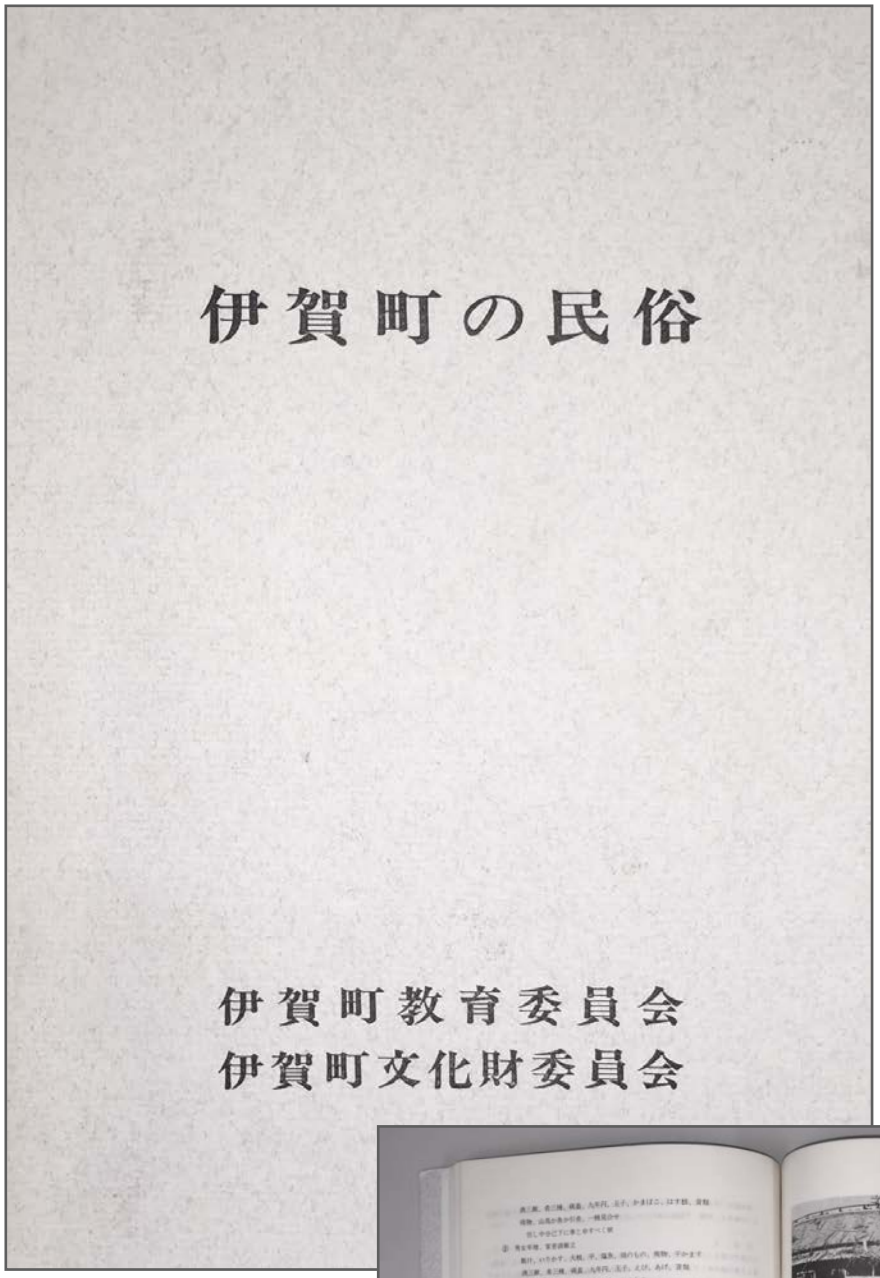
A bug inherent in the human communication systems identified by Mills 80 years ago is still at work today and getting more and more complex. With the advent of the internet (or perhaps before), the limits we would expect for acceptable vocabularies of motive are disappearing. It is a problem of Law and of Word. As Judith Butler notes in Excitable Speech, there is a dilemma that arises here whereby reliance upon the state

gives them too much authority over words. Simultaneously, efforts to stamp out hate speech miss the surrounding cultural support structures and make unacceptable concepts the formative principles for oppositional speech (Butler, 1997. 140). Ideally, a method would exist whereby free discussions could be held with neither apologia nor deindividuation. We are beyond the point where identifying hate speech, symbols of hate, or divisive figures are necessary and sufficient.

Moving forward, a reimagining of responsibility will be a necessary project for anti-racism activism.

## APPENDIX

### A) Folkways of Iga Town




**B) Colin Kaepernick Comment Codes**

**"The Wrong Type of Protest"**

Code counts (count/total posts): negative - 160/1,227, positive - 60/848, neutral - 78/1,914. Expected (count/total posts): negative- 92/1,227, positive - 63/848, neutral - 143/1,914.

**"He Sucks"**

Code counts: negative - 172/1,227, positive - 30/848, neutral - 85/1,914. Expected: negative - 88/1,227, positive - 61/848, neutral - 131/1,914.

**"He's Too Privileged"**

Code counts: negative - 147/1,227, positive - 15/848, neutral - 70/1,914. Expected: negative - 79/1,227, positive - 49/848, neutral - 111/1,914.

**"But Democrats"**

Code counts: negative - 31/1,227, positive - 1/848, neutral - 38/1,914. Expected: negative - 22/1,227, positive - 15/848, neutral - 35/1,914.

**"But Republicans"**

Code counts: negative - 7/1,227, positive - 119/848, neutral - 194/1,914. Expected: negative - 98/1,227, positive - 68/848, neutral - 154/1,914.

**All Tangents**

Code counts: negative - 176/1,227, positive - 128/848, neutral - 558/1,914. Expected: negative - 265/1,227, positive - 183/848, neutral - 414/1,914.

**"Football Tangent"**

Code counts: negative - 19/1,227, positive - 9/848, neutral - 115/1,914. Expected: negative - 44/1,227, positive - 30/848, neutral - 69/1,914.

**"Anthem/Flag Tangent"**

Code counts: negative - 54/1,227, positive - 58/848, neutral - 95/1,914. Expected: negative - 64/1,227, positive - 44/848, neutral - 99/1,914.

"On-Topic"

Code counts: negative - 75/1,227, positive - 181/848, neutral - 77/1,914. Expected: negative - 102/1,227, positive - 71/848, neutral - 160/1,914.

**"Vitriol"**

Code counts: negative - 211/1,227, positive - 44/848, neutral - 108/1,914. Expected: negative - 112/1,227, positive - 77/848, neutral - 174/1,914.

**"Racist Trope"**

Code counts: negative - 111/1,227, positive - 3/848, neutral - 43/1,914. Expected: negative - 48/1,227, positive - 33/848, neutral - 75/1,914.

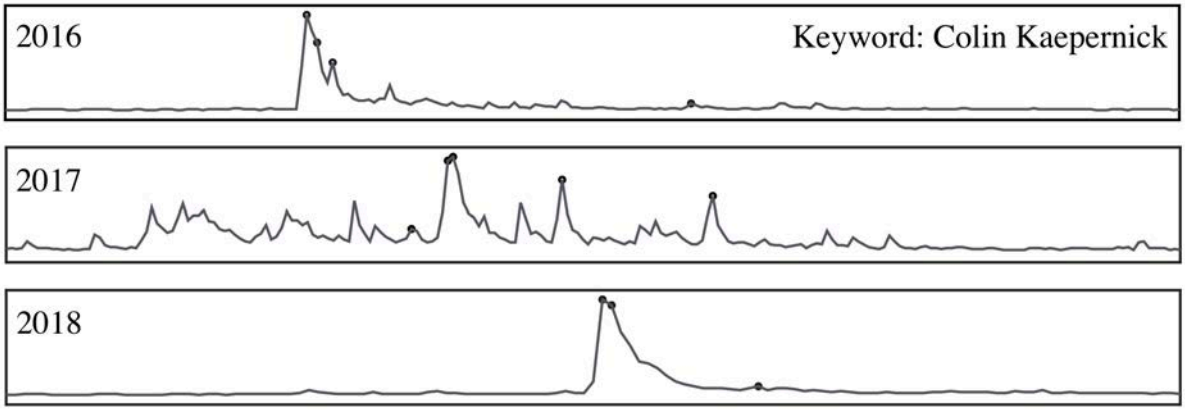
**"Meta"**

Code counts: negative - 3/1,227, positive - 128/848, neutral - 39/1,914.

Expected: negative - 52/1,227, positive - 36/848, neutral - 82/1,914.

**C) Google Trends Graphs vs. News Events**

Blips represent events mentioned above. Google Trends data is normalized to the highest number of searches in a given period. As such, data represent relative popularity and height differences may not be an indication of overall search popularity. Searches cannot be compared across graphs. Source: Author.




(Source: Author. Data from Google Trends)

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## ENDNOTES

[1] It should be noted that the focus on Trump and Trumpism does not fit with the theme of this paper. The point at hand here is that emphasis is placed too high in society, leaving those on the ground more or less free from responsibility in a system that disproportionately favors particular groups.

[2] With much pushback.

[3] Police militarization, and inadequate training. A discussion of police militarization and the role that America's foreign aggression played in this process is beyond this paper's scope, but a necessary discussion for another time.

[4] 'Ratioing' refers to a group behavior whereby people retweets some post more than they 'like' it. That indicates that a tweet is being shared not for its quality but for the purpose of mockery.

[5] YouTube comment sections appear to be affected by deindividuation phenomena more than other moderated forums, so this finding is interesting.

[6] President-elect Biden and the Western media demonstrated our wildly swinging tug left-right tug-of-war with the Overton window more brilliantly than this author ever could: As the campaign began to build their transition team, they were praised by numerous outlets for tapping women and transgender people to defense positions. America's blood-soaked $800B war machine finally had some diversity at the top.

[7] That was a popular refrain in conference Q&A sections following presentations of this research.

[8] The article was published on salon.com in late November, 2020. Last accessed Nov. 21, 2020.

[9] Indeed, this insight offers a simple but convincing explanation for the sudden awakening American citizens have had to the incestuous relationship between the government and the 'fourth estate.'

[10] Drakulich is careful to talk about white society as whole rather than explicitly blaming particular figures, but examples in the text are all in the context of Republican thought leaders. As we will discuss later, there may be an element of study design practicality at play here. It is easy to grab quotes from public figures and present them as evidence of discourse frames. However, it cannot be taken for granted that the same concepts will appear in conversations amongst the general public in a meaningful manner. There is no way to see how frames compete with organic grassroots public sentiment.

[11] Malice is a self-styled "anarchist without adjectives" that utilizes memes and guerrilla Tweet attacks on media figures to advance a seemingly right-wing agenda. Malice purports to be apolitical, but has an interest in right-wing authoritarianism, anti-progressive causes, and alt-right figures such as Jared Taylor and Richard Spencer.

[12] To be fair to Drakulich, he does note this process of anti-racism in popular culture being rejected by the public (2015. 392)

[13] And indeed this project has received much criticism for supposedly prosecuting cases of racist speech against bystanders.

[14] Though not in every instance.

[15] As we will discuss later, there are media outlets and even individuals posting in comment sections who are aware of the phenomenon we observe here. Despite their cognizance of the motive failure, those around them continue to produce motives. This is obviously far from the ideal outcome of a motive being rendered inoperative. For a discussion of what the ideal would be, see the literature review section on Margolin (1990).

[16] See the section on CW Mills for a more in depth discussion of this particular idea.

[17] Specifically, Goffman-inspired frames. Is there evidence that a bottom-up approach would be better than that popular concept? An examination of talk amongst the public is much more labor intensive. It is entirely possible that the observations in this paper were noted prior, but that researchers stuck with the prevailing concept of (more or less) top-down authority-driven narratives because a more in depth analysis of conversation was impractical (until recently).

[18] Credit to DiAngelo for initially positing this idea.

[19] At the beginning of the project, this author expected such a bold choice to elicit a reaction similar to that a brightly colored 1950's American car might receive driving down Shijo street. It did not. The background of this project and the content necessary to fully understand why Millsian motives make a good supplement (or alternative) to current frameworks is dry. In this author's opinion, readers who can endure will come away with a refreshed understanding of racism studies. Hopefully, the content in the middle and the reward at the end will be worth the work at the beginning.

[20] And given the attitude of the media since Joe Biden became President-elect, they are to be quickly forgotten the second a Democrat takes office despite zero social progress having been made.

[21] The extent to which social situation matters depends on the researcher. For Mills it was paramount.

[22] There is an exciting research paper somewhere in exploring motive exhaustion when outsiders probe the borders of tightly knit communities. The study into Iga further along in this paper shows that, as Mills suggests, actors "explore [various] *ex post facto* explanations" as they try to account for events. What happens at the cusp of two cultures where reasoning does not translate (even if there is a shared language) is an area that is deserving of further exploration. At a study session in 2014 discussing the preliminary investigation into Iga, one audience member suggested that a non-Japanese person make themselves a test subject a la Poole (2010) and purposely go to drinking establishments known to turn away foreigners. If refused service, the researcher would then attempt to talk their way in, probing explanations (gently) and trying to exhaust motive vocabularies available to the staff. Such an experiment would make for a unique and exciting ethnography.

[23] This particular wording is likely born of Mills's pessimism.

[24] This explanation is dull.

[25] This is a bit of a euphemism. Of the three interviewees, two openly expressed racist or otherwise discriminatory sentiments when questioned on Trump's behavior and how it might affect their support for him. The third interviewee's responses fit almost perfectly with the framework and hypothesis of this project with a lovely confrontation toward the end of the interview as the subject struggled to justify his behavior. Ultimately, it was too difficult to square the interviews with one another and this project without seeming biased.

[26] As we have seen recently, this concept can be abused to dangerous effect in academia. The movement to decolonize science and moral panics such as that at Evergreen State University show the potential for abuse that exists in this methodology. However, reexamining how the status quo is reinforced is a necessary intellectual process on the way to racial equality.

[27] Given the controversial nature of 'postcoloniality' and the near-infinite argumentation of its starting assumptions, we will avoid an in-depth discussion of that topic. Also, it should be noted that the irony of this researcher reappropriating a concept of postcolonialism is not lost here.

[28] Though, having sat through a high school English class discussing The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, one tends to detect the "excitement" Butler notes that is elicited by 'citational use' of racist language.

[29] Prakash or Radhakrishnan perhaps.

[30] This is not impossible with the current conception of frames, but in reading the literature there appears to be a tendency to assume the power behind a frame rests entirely in public figures. Even Drakulich (2015), which talks about frames as they appear amongst the white working class tends to focus on Republicans and other political and media figures.

[31] Including modern works utilizing 'techniques of neutralization.'

[32] There were a number of controversies recently regarding comments made about the shooting of Breonna Taylor, for instance. If you ignore the terrifying implications of no-knock warrants, everyone in that situation did what they were supposed to do from their American perspective under the modern American cultural paradigm. Kenneth Walker fired against intruders, police fired back, and an innocent woman lost her life. The catachresis that results as this vocabulary of guns supplants the underlying racial issues necessitates further analysis.

[33] Particularly those targeted by a racist utterance.

[34] For example, a police officer may be an unfortunate representative of institutional oppression. However, if his ultimate justification for mistreating a black suspect is that he has a black partner (romantic or police) and therefore cannot be racist, there is a 'grassroots figleaf' that is unrecognized by the theory.

[35] It is a unique and fascinating work. Given its wide availability on the Internet, it is worthy of a place in any digital library.

[36] Or "creating their reality" as Benford calls it.

[37] In the aforementioned pilot study of Japanese Trump supporters, interviewees exhibited similar vocabularies when explaining the deleterious effects on the Japanese stock market of Trump's trade policy with China. Economists seem to agree that retaliatory tariffs on Chinese products were chilling East Asian stock markets and did monetary damage to corporations integrated with the Chinese value chain (Zhang, 2019. Online). When confronted with the damage this had done to the Japanese economy, ardent Trump supporters utilized vocabularies of 'urgency' and 'severity.' Another similar to that of 'propriety' was also popular. For example, "China needs to be dealt with immediately," or "they need to adhere to the rules of the world community."

[38] Even Japanese Trump supporters, whom one would assume would need access to some new vocabularies to justify their participation, exhibited some relatively standard Japanese group identity talk.

[39] While the tide seems to be shifting, this research has been trying to address a similar paradigm since 2016.

[40] Those that do not deal with actual legally defined crimes.

[41] Actually, Saul goes further and suggests that successful figleaves actually change what individuals find racist. The change is so profound that utterances as obviously discriminatory as "Mexicans are rapists" will no longer require a figleaf. This is a good explanation for how societal boundaries might shift over time, but it is not demonstrated well in the text.

[42] As we established above, some of these findings may be questionable, but the number of researchers that are working on projects dealing with this issue is perhaps the smoke that will lead to a fire.

[43] Some of these are still used today, with the 'issue' of federally mandated busing sparking an argument between presidential candidates Joe Biden and Kamala Harris at a 2019 DNC debate.

[44] Many societal norms have been upended in this "Age of Trump," but whether he is the source of these problems as Saul suggests or a symptom of a deeper societal illness remains unknown. The latter seems far more likely.

[45] An investigation into the role that media coverage of Donald Trump played in expanding rather than exposing pernicious beliefs would be fascinating, if challenging to design. Hillary Clinton's "pied piper" strategy may have backfired in more ways than one.

[46] They lose track of this critical discovery amidst an aggressive indictment of academics reminiscent of modern decolonization movements at universities.

[47] Or in the case of Nayak including white youths and educators in the process of deconstructing white supremacist concepts.

[48] Intersectionality and identity politics are elephants in the room for racism studies. Despite this research's stated purpose being to find new methods to examine racism, this project received massive amounts of criticism for eschewing popular frameworks. Given this critique, it seems prudent to briefly touch on the subject.

[49] Though, one should note that these papers' and ours conflict with modern interpretations and not Kimberlé Crenshaw's original conception.

[50] There is a strong case to be made that American 'capitalism' (and specifically the elements of dirigism, cronyism, and militarism-for-profit) more closely resembles the economies of the fascist Axis powers during World War II than more traditionally capitalist nations such as Switzerland or Singapore. It would make a fascinating topic for a future project.

[51] In the end, lumping an economic system in with racism and scrapping it all for, for example, an entirely socialist mode of production is akin to swapping one's pooch for a tiger because one dislikes the smell of dog waste.

[52] Again, one of the main complaints about this project is that the framework is too old and eschews modern tools for understanding racism.

[53] The author instead lobs these questions at the reader… An understandable urge.

[54] Or even Crenshaw's approach whereby intersections are used to identify groups whose issues are overlooked by authority because they do not fit in just one specific category.

[55] Kimberlé Crenshaw herself has stated that focusing on internal differences can stymy efforts toward progress (Unspecified author, Perspectives Magazine, 2004. Online). Others say these minutiae cause infighting and make racism studies look like a competition of grievances (Lewis, 2014. Online).

[56] They are also quite similar to the utterances of Trump supporters in a pilot study who attempted to justify their participation in the MAGA movement. The subject matter is somewhat reminiscent of Weber's work as well, with elements of bureaucracy and the idea of "comforting euphemisms."

[57] This is the population the time this study was initially conducted. Due to economic trouble and an aging population, it is now closer to 81,000 less than seven years later.

[58] This tension is the genesis of this study. In the summer of 2012, this researcher lived in Iga and experienced or witnessed a number of discriminatory incidents.

[59] Though this point will be important when we consider Goffman's frames and the broader goals of this paper.

[60] And jive beautifully with Mills's understanding of motive talk in rural areas.

[61] Reinforced by feedback given on this project.

[62] And what visible "progress" there is can be attributed to cut-and-run government efforts to remove Nikkei peoples from the country at great expense to the taxpayer. See Gibson, 2017.

[63] The boys said something on the order of ¥400,000 or ¥500,000 per month, which is high even for entry-level natives. This could have been the offer, or these boys might have been offering numbers that seemed high to them.

[64] What exactly was scary and dangerous remains unclear. To give this man the benefit of the doubt, he could simply be the worst beer salesman of all time.

[65] This subject is a political minefield and beyond the scope of this project. However, these stories are necessary to establish the mood of Iga and understanding the roots of this research.

[66] Though this is likely a byproduct of Japanese orderliness and citizenship building. The country, despite having nationalism and racism like other former imperial powers, is less prone to violent racist episodes (Howell, 1996. 112).

[67] The population of foreign laborers also tracks very well with the Nikkei 225 and other stock market indices for that time period.

[68] Perhaps not so fascinating, given that it is predicted by Mills in an essay from the first half of the 20th century.

[69] A perspective that was, unfortunately, impossible in our initial study without the help of the Internet.

[70] Perhaps a future study could somehow address vocabularies that appear in the heat of the moment.

[71] Perhaps one worthy of further exploration in the future.

[72] Former Gawker family site, The Root is an excellent example. The unabashedly Black news blog was consistent in their coverage of the circus surrounding Kaepernick. The writers and editors of the site were very much conscious of the phenomenon we examine here throughout the Kaepernick saga.

[73] Comedian Dave Chappelle had perhaps the best take on America's insane reaction to Kaepernick. He joked that he could kill every white person in America by having OJ Simpson kneel on the 50-yard line during the Super Bowl. "That's a brittle spirit," he would say.

[74] At conferences and study sessions, some taste the *umami* of an ethnomethodological understanding of systemic discrimination. At a Global Studies presentation in 2018, this project received smiles and confused faces in equal measure. One professor suggested using more quantitive methods. Another said the project needed to be more qualitative. Another audience member suggested that interview subjects who admitted to racist motives (and even used slurs in their explanation) when making purchasing decisions may have been hiding their true intentions (?!). The number one criticism was that frameworks like intersectionality were eschewed for older methods. More recent research that deep-dives into how people talk, explain motives, and frame their world can be found in Japan and elsewhere (e.g., Shoji, 2014; Whitehead, 2019).

[75] It can be argued that the broader modern understanding of racism suffers from this problem as well. The author implies this is the case.

[76] This theory was presented at a Doshisha Global Studies conference in 2017, but the idea is much more complex and deserving of a deeper examination than "Democrats bad."

[77] A popular refrain amongst Clintonistas is that Hillary won the popular vote, while this is technically true it (perhaps purposely) hides an important aspect of her defeat. Hillary Clinton won the popular vote by just under 3 million ballots. However, she won New York and California by just over 6 million ballots.

[78] Or his successor, Yoshihide Suga, a bootstrappy people's champ style right-wing populist.

[79] A similar criticism was leveled at this research's pilot study of ethnic exclusionism in rural Japanese villages.

[80] These effects are familiar to anyone brave or stupid enough to read YouTube comments. Initially, this section of the paper utilized YouTube comments as a data source, they seemed to contain more vitriolic language than other sources, but the analysis software revealed that 50% (and often more) of every comment section was vitriol or trolling for political subjects. This data was deemed unworthy of use.

[81] We will demonstrate the import of this finding later.

[82] One issue that did arise is that commenters on Fark began using the 'funny' vote as a type of dislike button around 2016. This demonstrates the care a researcher must take to understand the communities they observe.

[83] Technically it does not weaken our hypothesis, either.

[84] As we have demonstrated, many who were neutral on the issue also helped drive the catachresis we observe. They are typically (and possibly deservedly) lumped in with negative commenters by those who utilized 'meta' language.

[85] We should be careful not to boil this effect down to "netizens do not understand the first amendment."

[86] It runs counter to critical theory, for instance.

[87] This is a bit difficult to think through. On the one hand, Iga as an international city is antithetical to the closed-off bonchi Igans self-describe. However, the vocabulary does appeal to the chauvinistic urge people seem to have in Iga.