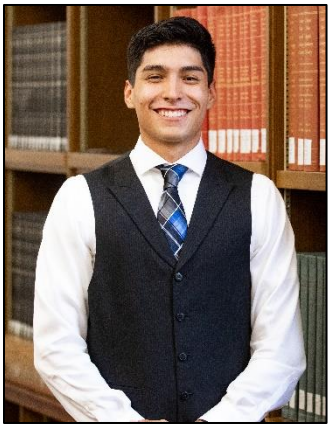

Empathy Engagement with Native Americans in the Context of Social Disparities and Historical Trauma

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Abstract

Although empathy is a beneficial process to our daily interactions, research indicates that people show a robust preference to avoid empathy because it can be cognitively taxing. This tendency to avoid empathizing with others may be more pronounced when targets are outgroup members depicted as suffering due to social disparities (Cho et al., 2019). This can be especially problematic for minorities trying to navigate society, such as Native Americans who have suffered immense social injustice in the past (historical trauma) and continue to be impacted by large-scale social inequalities. The present study uses the Empathy Selection Task (Cameron et al., 2019) to examine whether White individuals demonstrate empathy avoidance when asked to either empathize with or describe pictures of Native Americans portrayed as suffering under three different conditions (social disparity, historical trauma, or no context). Our goal is to understand the factors that lead to avoidance or engagement without group empathy.

Introduction

In a 2017 Ted Talk, Tara Houska explained the dehumanizing effects of inaccurate depictions of Native Americans in school textbooks and the accepted mainstream usage of racial slurs referring to Native Americans in sports (e.g., the Washington DC Football "Redskins"). According to Shear et al., 87% of American textbooks portray indigenous populations as existing only prior to 1900 and exclude any mention of modern genocides, social issues, and the struggles Native Americans continue to face today. Hoskie went on to connect how not being viewed as real people in these instances has made it a lot easier to "run over" Native Americans' rights. As one example of this, consider the Dakota Access pipeline which was built across Native American homelands despite strong opposition by the Native American community. At the end of her Talk, Houska pleads with her listeners and the people of the United States to "stand with us [Native Americans], *empathize*, learn, grow, change the conversation." (Houska, 2017) The following study is a direct answer to Houska's call by examining the willingness of White Americans to engage in empathy when faced with Native Americans presented in different contexts of suffering.

Empathy Defined

Empathy has many definitions and there are various models of empathy discussed across several psychological subfields (Zaki, 2014) encompassing different moral, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. They tend to converge on empathy as a process that allows a person to understand another person's situation, perspective, feelings and, even pain (Benbassat et al., 2004). According to Benbassat, empathy can be viewed as a multi-faceted virtue. Of the many models of empathy in existence today, most describe the components of empathy as being automatic, evolutionarily preserved survival mechanisms that allow social animals to communicate (Preston & de Waal's 2002; Bartal, Decety, & Mason, 2011). Some of these intrinsic components of empathy include emotion recognition, perspective-taking, and social mimicry (C. M. Cheng & Chartrand, 2003; Goff, Eberhardt, Williams, & Jackson, 2008). Neurologists attribute many of these innate and automatic responses to the existence of "mirror neurons," which are neurons that allow people to simulate feelings (including pain) through mental simulation (Gallese, 2005). All in all, these characteristics of empathy make it a major key to driving positive prosocial interactions, generosity, and compassion (Fowler & Christakis, 2010).

Although the facets of empathizing are automatic and important to prosocial interactions, multiple researchers have demonstrated how the contextual factors and situation can change how much people are willing to empathize with a person. Empathic motivation is based on both the evolutionary (Scott-Phillips, Dickins, & West, 2011) and social customs an individual is exposed to growing up. Zaki's (2014) Motivated Model examines the relationship between these approach and avoidance motives in people's tendencies to feel emotions and empathize with other individuals. These affective motives go beyond people's tendency to avoid pain and seek pleasure (Higgins, 2011), and further incorporate an individual's goals, relationships, and self-efficacy in choosing to empathize with other people or not. Zaki identifies ingroup identification, offspring care, and expertise as being the main motives that drive people to choose to empathize (or not) with others. The goal of the current study is to examine whether contexts that highlight social inequality or hardship might also impact empathic engagement with Native Americans as outgroup targets.

Empathy Avoidance

Cameron et al. (2019) evaluated the cognitive perspective-taking facets of empathy and found that empathy takes cognitive work, can be avoided, and tends to be avoided. Using the Empathy Selection Task (EST), Cameron showed participants a series of photographs of people's faces and the participants were given the choice to objectively describe the target (*describe*) or to empathize with the target and attempt to feel the target's emotions (*feel*) and share in their experiences. The task is designed to assess an individual's use of situation selection to regulate their emotional experience (Gross & Thompson, 2007) by allowing participants to choose whether or not to share in the target's emotional experience. Cameron found that individuals consistently opted to describe the targets over empathizing with them. He called this tendency *empathy avoidance* and suggested that individuals may set individual limits on how much they empathize with people based on how hard they want to work which makes them less likely to empathize with strangers (outside of their immediate family and friends) and outgroup members.

Similarly, other studies describe empathy as a motivated phenomenon (Zaki, 2014) and indicate that people tend to choose to avoid certain situations where they may have to be empathic with non-strangers or outgroup members. According to Mathur, Harada, Lipke, and Chiao (2010), an ingroup is a heterogeneous set of individuals who interact and work together towards common goals. Working together with an ingroup fulfills the fundamental psychological need of belonging (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), which promotes progressive behaviors such as cooperation and trust. Unfortunately, Zaki indicates that this ingroup preference also can be accompanied by the exclusion of individuals outside of your perceived ingroup. This phenomenon is known as outgroup exclusion, which is also an evolutionarily preserved mechanism meant to protect one's immediate ingroup by delineating boundaries against groups who do not share ingroup characteristics. Outgroup exclusion can also contribute to antisocial behaviors such as perceiving outgroups as homogenous (S. T. Fiske, 2000) and inferior (Tajfel, 1982). This social categorization of outgroups (Tarrant et al., 2009) is yet another factor that can affect people's decision to avoid empathy.

The tendency to avoid empathy, in general, and particularly with strangers, can be especially detrimental in multicultural interactions in diverse countries such as the United States. In diverse environments, individuals may be more likely to use observable characteristics such as the race, gender, or ethnicity of a person to socially categorize people (Sherif & Sherif, 1961). Therefore, interactions with underrepresented minorities of a different race are often driven by preconceptions and biases against that group (Wheeler, 2015). These biases may be at the root of acts of both implicit and explicit acts of prejudice (Devine, Forscher, Austin & Cox, 2012) such as being less willing to work with minorities and or care about issues important to their communities. These factors together might make empathizing with outgroups, including Native Americans, less likely.

People also tend to avoid empathizing more with multiple individuals suffering as opposed to a single identifiable victim of tragedy as demonstrated by Cameron and Payne (2011). They tested this hypothesis by conducting a survey in which they observed which charities people donated more money to, comparing how often people gave to charities that help single individuals vs. charities that help groups of people. They found that people donated more to charities that focused on helping single, identifiable victims versus those that helped large groups of people. They argue that people behaved this way, not because they were insensitive to mass suffering, but more likely because people have a functional limit as to how much emotion they can feel for others. We believe a similar process will unfold if we ask individuals to empathize or describe Native American targets that are portrayed in contexts that that highlight social disparities because disparities also implicate large-scale suffering.

Native American Disparities Contexts

Social Disparity

With 573 federally recognized tribes in the United States encompassing many different cultures and identifies, it is hard to generalize across the Native American population in the United States. However, according to the US Department of Health and Human Services (https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov). Native Americans still consistently report having the highest rates of alcoholism, lowest rates of education and lower-income levels than any other ethnic group in the United States.

Previous studies that incorporate the empathy selection task indicate that people tend to demonstrate greater empathy avoidance when given the choice to describe or empathize with target individuals presented in a disparity context. For example, a study by Cho et al., (2019) demonstrated that White and Asian participants were less likely to choose to empathize with African American targets relative to describing them objectively when the target was presented in a social disparities' context. Cho's within-subject design used a modified version of the Empathy Selection Task (EST) that included pictures of African American targets accompanied by disparities faced by the African American community as well as pictures of African American targets without any disparity information. Considering that White and Asian participants chose to empathize less with targets in a disparities context in Cho's study, we believe a similar process will unfold if we ask individuals to empathize or describe Native American targets that are portrayed in contexts that that highlight social disparities because disparities also implicate large-scale suffering.

Historical Trauma

In comparison with all other racial and ethnic groups in America, Native Americans were the last group to gain citizenship in 1924 and consistently demonstrate more suffering in social areas such as suicide, alcoholism, and pre-mature deaths (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2007). What many people often fail to recognize is that many of these social disparities Native Americans face today may have their roots in the "legacy of chronic trauma and unresolved grief across generations" which researchers suggest was enacted upon them by the dominant European culture (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998) known as *Historical Trauma*. According to Sotero, (2006) this historical trauma refers to the transfer of trauma to following generations through biological, environmental and social means resulting in cross-generational cycles of trauma. Researchers have also connected behaviors such as heavy alcohol consumption (Chartier & Caetano, 2010) to historical losses of land, people, and culture (Whitbeck et al., 2004). Consequently, we also present a similar context in which we examine the response to pictures of Native Americans presented along with accounts of historical traumas experienced by Native Americans. Despite being America's original inhabitants, Native Americans continue to be considered outgroups both socially, through limited integration in mainstream society, and systematically, through dehumanizing slurs in official policies and documents (e.g. the United States Constitution still refers to Native Americans as "merciless Indian savages"; Harjo, 1992).

Many of the historical injustices and misrepresentations referenced above are deep-rooted in America's society which makes changing the dehumanizing ways Native Americans are perceived an uphill battle in most cases. In fact, a 2018 survey indicated that 40% of Americans selected from a random sample do not believe Native Americans still exist (Shear, Knowles, Soden, & Castro, 2017). Aside from invisibility, Native Americans also face prejudice and discrimination from Americans who are unfamiliar with their existence. The isolation that many Native American populations face also contributes to negative stereotypes such as "the drunken Indian," a myth disproven in 1994 by Phillip Ortiz which suggests that Native Americans have a biological predisposition to alcohol. Other popular beliefs held by the American public assume that all Native Americans receive benefits from casinos and wrongfully receive full funding for college even though Native Americans are more likely to have to take out a student loan than their white counterparts (Adelman, Taylor, & Nelson, 2013).

All in all, the combination of obstacles such as general empathy avoidance, empathy collapse, and the general unfamiliarity of non-Native Americans could create a large disconnect which could push most individuals to avoid empathizing with Native American targets in a historical trauma context. At the same time, the tragic nature of the historical traumas may also allow individuals to better understand Native American targets as humans and individuals and less as dehumanized outgroups which might facilitate engagement of empathy in this context (Costello & Hodson, 2010). Therefore, we do not make a specific prediction as to whether a historical trauma context with lead to more or less empathy avoidance.

The Present Study

In our experiment, we manipulate the context of Native American suffering in order to further understand the factors that lead to empathy avoidance versus which factors may lead to greater empathy engagement. Specifically, we examine whether the tendency to avoid or engage in empathy with depictions of Native Americans who are suffering (control condition) is affected by the additional presence of information that implicates large-scale causes of that suffering (social disparity or historical trauma), or without any disparity contexts. We use a modified version of the empathy selection task designed by Cameron et al., (2019) and Cho et al., (2019) to identify whether contextual factors can increase or decrease empathy avoidance in response to depictions of Native Americans.

Our first hypothesis was that participants would avoid empathy more in the social disparity conditions than the control condition. We expect that this may occur because of the greater inefficacy we predict the social disparities context may create. Our second research question evaluates the participant's response to our historical trauma context relative to the control and social disparities context. The historical trauma context could either elicit more empathy engagement based on the grim nature of the historical statistics which could humanize Native Americans and create a desire to empathize with them, or this context could lead to more empathy avoidance because people may feel more inefficacious when confronted with another large scale suffering contexts (similar to the social disparities context), contributing to a greater disconnect from Native Americans.

Methods

Participants

A total of 259 Qualtrics Panelists served as the participants for this study, participants also had to give effortful responses (e.g. no random typing, exclaiming "I don't know," or expressing disdain for the survey) for their survey to be reported. Our control condition consisted of 91 participants with an average age of 51, our historical trauma condition consisted of 87 participants with an average age of 52.2, and our social disparities condition consisted of 81 participants with an average age of 37.7. The eligibility criteria for our study included being White or Caucasian, over 18, and being born in the United States. In order to ensure that Native Americans would be considered outgroup members to the participants, we instructed Qualtrics to recruit only White participants which could possibly be a group tied to the oppression of Native Americans. Those meeting the criteria were then invited to complete the experimental survey then paid $5.00 upon completion.

Measures

Empathy Selection Task Modified (EST). Our survey was modeled after the original empathy selection task developed by Dr. Daryl Cameron and Colleagues in 2017. The task aimed to evaluate empathy avoidance by asking participants to choose a card from two decks of cards label as "empathy" or "describe". Participants were then shown a photo of a person and had to follow the instructions on the back of their chosen card. If participants chose the empathy deck, they were asked to share in the target photo's feelings and to write a sentence about what they might be feeling. On the contrary, if participants chose the describe deck, they were asked to objectively focus on the external features of the person and write a sentence describing their age and gender.

For the purposes of the present study, the stimuli and trial structure of the EST was modified as follows. We used Native American stimuli because they are considered outgroup members to most United States citizens, making up 1% of the population (according to the US Census Bureau, 2017). The target pictures depicted were always of a Native American individual in distress with the words "the person in the photograph is struggling" presented immediately below the picture. In the control condition, no additional information was provided. In our disparities conditions, a sentence or two were added prior to the statement provided in the control condition. In the historical trauma condition, a traumatic event was described (e.g., the US Government forced 8,500 Navajos to walk 300 miles to a concentration camp in 1864) and in the social disparity condition a statistic depicting an inequality was provided (e.g., 20% of Native Americans/American Indians have not completed high school, compared with 8% of Whites). Next, participants were asked to choose whether to empathize with the target in the photograph or describe the target objectively. In each condition, participants saw 20 images.

Post-Task Question and NASA Task Load Index. After completing the EST, participants first were asked an open-ended question asking them to report what it was like to complete the survey. Participants then completed the NASA Task Load Index (NASA TLX) which measures the subjective mental workload associated with completing the EST trials. The NASA TLX ask about participants perception of the task across the following six dimensions: Mental Demand, Physical Demand, Temporal or Time Demand, Effort, Performance, and Frustration level. Answers are provided on a scale from 1-7. This scale was included to determine which dimensions are most important in completing the task.

Previous contact with Native Americans. The present study also incorporated a questionnaire designed to determine how familiar participants may or may not be with Native Americans. The scale contains 4 components that ask participants to rate on a scale of 1-3 (not at all to a great deal) on the extent to which they have interacted with Native Americas, are familiar with the statistics provided in the historical trauma or disparity conditions, and whether they feel like they would be competent in engaging with a Native American person in the future or not. The control condition excluded the question about how familiar the participant might be with the historical trauma and disparity information presented in the EST because this condition did not provide any information other than "the person in the photograph is struggling".

Additional Measures. Our task also incorporated additional measures that are not used in the current study. These measures included The Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) [empathetic concern (EC) and [personal distress (PD) subscales only] and the Identification with All Humanity Scale (IWAH).

Procedures

The study was completed online and was conducted wherever the participants chose to take it. Participants were then randomly assigned to one of our three conditions (the control condition, historical trauma condition, or social disparities condition). Participants first read and agreed to the consent form by indicating they were above the age of 18 and wished to participate in the study. Participants who indicated that they were not over the age of 18 and or did not wish to participate in the study after reading the consent form were then redirected out of the survey. Once consent was indicated, the survey began and consisted of two parts: first, participants completed the modified Empathy Selection Task and then they completed a demographic section along with additional measures. A debriefing was provided after the survey explaining the purpose of the study.

Figure 1. Sample Modified EST Stimuli

Sample picture used in the modified EST task along with the control condition description and example social disparities and historical trauma descriptions. Participants are presented with the option to Describe or Feel immediately after each photo and description.

The person in the photograph is struggling. **[Control Condition]**

Native American/American Indians die at a 189% higher rate than other Americans from diabetes. The person in the photograph is struggling. **[Social Disparities Condition]**

In 1863, a Sioux Indian Scalp was worth $25 US Dollars. The person in the photograph is struggling. **[Historical Trauma Condition]**

Describe: Objectively focus on the external features of this person. Write one sentence describing this person's age and gender.

Or

Feel: Share in the sufferings of this person. Write one sentence describing their feelings

Data Analytic Approach

Our primary comparisons of interest were between the two disparities contexts (historical trauma and social disparities) and the control group (no additional context provided). Our primary outcome of interest was *empathy choice score,* or the number of trials participants chose to empathize over describing the targets objectively. We tested whether the mean empathy choice score for each condition was significantly different from .50 to see if there was evidence of empathy avoidance in each condition, regardless of the differences between conditions. We then tested our empathy choice scores to the score from Cho et al., (2019). Testing against the .50 chance and the Cho et al., (2019) study meant using a one-sample *t*-test and to test the differences between the conditions we used a series of independent samples *t*-test.

Results

Preliminary Results

The primary outcome of interest in our study was the percentage of trials that the participants chose to empathize over describe (empathy choice). Overall, the results indicated that people tended to choose to empathize with the targets less than they chose to describe the targets objectively slightly, 48% vs 52%, respectively. A one-sample t-test revealed that this was not significantly different from the 50% expected by chance, $t(260) = -1.29$, $p = .2$ indicating that there was no empathy avoidance in our sample when collapsing across conditions. Our results also indicated that the mean empathy choice for our control condition (.49) did not differ from the 50% chance level, $t(92) = -.33$, $p = .75$. Our remaining conditions, though lower in empathy choice than the control condition, also failed to differ significantly from chance, showing no empathy avoidance: historical trauma (.47), $t(86) = -.78$, $p = .44$, and social disparities (.46), $t(80) = -1.14$, $p = .26$.

Empathy Choice in a Social Disparity Context

Our first hypothesis was that participants would show greater empathy avoidance in the social disparity condition relative to the control condition, consistent with the findings from Cho et al. (2019), which featured a similar design only with African American targets instead of Native American targets. An independent samples t-test revealed that the mean empathy choice in the social disparity condition (.46) was *not* significantly different than the control condition (.49), $t(172) = .61$, $p = .54$. However, the means of these two conditions were in the same direction as reported by Cho et al., (2019), with individuals in the social disparity condition showing relatively more avoidance. Interestingly, our results indicated a marginally higher tendency to empathize with Native Americans (.46) in a social disparities context than participants did with the African American targets in Cho's study (.41), $t(80) = 1.68$, $p = .10$.

Empathy Choice in a Historical Trauma Context

Our other research question involved examination of how the historical trauma condition would impact empathy avoidance, though we did not specify a hypothesis given that an argument could be made for historical trauma to *both* increase or decrease empathy avoidance. An independent samples t-test revealed that the mean empathy choice in the historical trauma (.47) condition was also not significantly different than the control condition (.49), $t(170.5) = .39$, $p = .7$, nor did it differ significantly from the social disparity condition (.46), $t(165.2) = .19$, $p = .85$. Despite not being significant, the results suggest that

participant's responses in historical trauma condition were closer to the pattern observed in the social disparities context than the control condition.

Exposure to and Contact with Native Americans

In addition to the percentage of trials people chose to empathize over describe, we were also interested in how familiar our participants were with Native Americans considering that Native Americans are often considered outgroups to most Americans (Shear, Knowles, Soden, & Castro, 2017). Descriptive statistics revealed that 44% of participants indicated had never interacted with Native Americans before and 44% were not previously aware of any of the social disparity statistics presented in the study. Anecdotally, many of the responses to our post-survey question asking what completing the study was like indicated that participants found the disparity statistics surprising and upsetting or difficult to learn about. In addition, the majority of the participants who encountered our social disparities (91%) and historical trauma (94%) contexts indicated that they would be at least moderately likely to want to learn more about Native Americans in the future. This is important because around half of our participants (44%-49%) in all three conditions claimed they had never interacted with a Native American.

Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to evaluate the effects of suffering contexts on empathy avoidance towards outgroups (more specifically Native Americans). Our two contexts portrayed Native American suffering as the result of two kinds of disparities: historical accounts of Native American maltreatment and traumas, and contemporary statistics describing the social disparities that Native American communities continue to face today. Our results indicated that people slightly preferred to empathize less in our disparity contexts compared to our control condition, although these patterns failed to reach statistical significance. Findings from the historical trauma condition closely mirrored those of our social disparity context. Although none of the results from our three conditions yielded statistically significant outcomes relative to each other, they demonstrated consistent patterns with previous studies that we modeled our study after (Cameron et al.,2017; Cho, 2019).

Social Disparities Context

The participants in our study showed a slight tendency to avoid empathy in the social disparities contexts than in our control condition, though this difference was not significant. This may be because people may feel somewhat inefficacious or unable to accurately empathize (Chismar, 1988) with the Native American targets when presented with these modern disparities experienced by outgroups that they already have little contact with. However, it is possible that the lack of pronounced differences between the disparity conditions and the control condition might have been explained by the grim nature of the statistics which may have contributed to greater sympathy which may have, in turn, led to less empathy avoidance. Interestingly, our findings also demonstrated that the people in our study chose to empathize with the Native American targets more so than the African American targets presented in a social disparities context within Cho et al., (2019). This could be due to the differences in demographics between our study and Cho's study. Our sample also contained an older group, on average (37.7 years), compared to the college-aged students (roughly 18-25 years old) in the Cho et al. study. According to a study by O'Brien, Konrath, Grühn, and Hagen (2012), general self-reported empathy (both emotional empathic concern and cognitive perspective-taking) peaks in

mid-adulthood which might explain why our older average participants might have been more empathetic towards Native Americans considering that both studies featured minorities presented in disparities contexts. Although we did record participant's Empathic Concern score as well as their age, both factors were not a focus in our study but could be useful for future studies.

Historical Trauma Context

We also wanted to test how presenting participants with the possible root of many modern Native American issues might affect White American's empathy avoidance. We learned that there were no statistical differences between our historical trauma condition relative to our social disparities condition. This could be due to the similarities of both contexts including using the same photographs for each condition, how both studies dealt with mass Native American suffering, which Cameron and Payne (2011) suggested could be due to people's tendency to people's functional limit for how much emotion they can feel in response to suffering. Overall, people chose to empathize less, though not significantly so when there was a historical trauma statistic present relative to our control condition which was similar to the results of our social disparities condition and may also suggest that the presence of any suffering context may make people slightly less likely to empathize with the people suffering. In this study, we suspect that the general unfamiliarity with Native Americans as well as the disconnection and inefficacy created by encountering such dreadful statistics may have made some participants more likely to empathize with the targets than other participants based on variables such as age, gender, political or religious beliefs as well as life experiences.

Limitations and Future Directions

Our study had several limitations that are important to acknowledge. First, at times it was hard to tell how much effort participants put into the survey, and we had to exclude some respondents that were obviously not taking the experiment seriously. However, others may have been less obvious in their lack of attention and interest, thereby remaining in the sample and possibly skewing our results. Next, our study used a between-subject approach to compare whether participants demonstrated more empathy avoidance in different contexts pertaining to Native American targets (social disparities, historical trauma, control). A within-subject approach might have provided greater statistical power, however, we wanted to avoid any overload of time and information which might have resulted in participant fatigue in this case, given that each condition would require a minimum of 20 trials.

Other confounding variables may have been in play with our trials as well, including the vast differences in the age and gender (e.g. we did not include any child targets under the age of 18) of the Native American targets we presented in our study. In addition, some of the targets were visibly in more distress than others. Although we have not analyzed differences in response to the different targets (in terms of differences in empathy choice), future studies may benefit from examining which targets may elicit more empathy engagement. Future work might also benefit from evaluating the effect that age has on empathy avoidance as well as establishing specific criteria for which responses should be considered effortful.

Conclusion

The goal of our study was to provide some insight into how White Americans may perceive such suffering contexts as well as their willingness to engage in social issues faced by Native Americans. The motivation behind our investigation is the recognition that empathy avoidance by White Americans with Native American targets might be indicative of a greater level of disengagement with the Native American community. If Non-Native American individuals are less likely to interact with and, or more likely to avoid Native American individuals, then Non-Native Americans may also be less likely to acknowledge their roles in the history and systems of oppression that continue to affect Native American communities today. This is important because 22% of Native Americans still live on government established reservations according to the US Department of Health and Human Services (https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov), where they continue to endure cycles of poverty, substance abuse, and limited access to healthcare due to geographic isolation. Also, if people are not willing to engage in prosocial interactions with outgroups, they may be more likely to hold negative stereotypes and ideas that could hurt future interactions with that particular group.

Considering that our results were not statistically different from chance, the roots of empathy avoidance may lie in the evaluation of individual differences in participant's life experiences (in this case their exposure to Native Americans), age, political affiliation, and even gender. Understanding the various factors that play a role in empathy avoidance are important considering that similar contexts exist in today's society by means of news reports, historical textbooks, and social media which may be the only sources the majority of Americans might have to learn about Native Americans and the issues they continue to face. Ultimately, we hope this research will contribute to the humanization and acknowledgment of Native Americans who continue to struggle in modern society despite being America's original inhabitants.

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