



NORTHERN

# An Exploratory Study of the Existence of Intergenerational Trauma as Reported by NNMC Students During Spring, 2019

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## Abstract

This research had the purpose to look at intergenerational trauma as expressed today in NNMC students. Traumatic events have taken place in peoples' earlier generations: Pueblo, Spanish, African American and Caucasian lives daily. These experiences leave people feeling alone and not knowing who to talk to or who will understand what they are going through. Not only that, but what if you don't go through that traumatic situation yourself, how do you know you have trauma to deal with. Students reported using a Bogardus social distance scale.

## Introduction

Intergenerational trauma can be passed from parents to their children, and the child can pick up on symptoms without even experiencing any form of trauma. Through my research I wanted to find from other people's traumatic experiences if forms of trauma have been passed down.

For example, traits of hatred like racism, PTSD, alcoholism or signs of suicide. Also, researching to see if the more traumatic the experience like slavery or abuse can more likely pass down traumatic symptoms to the next generation.

## Theory

Throughout my research, my theory has always been that the more traumatic the trauma from an event the more likely the person will receive trauma, and transmit it through generations. Rather it be from stories told, or teachings being done to the following generations.

## Hypothesis

My hypothesis is that traumatic experiences can pass down serve forms of psychological damages being PTSD and alcoholism also self-harm hatred like racism and signs of suicide. These could all be hidden in your subconscious and conscious mind but are brought forth if not treated by the victim or the people receiving the transmitted trauma and the reason the trauma keeps progressing and being passed down from generation to generation.

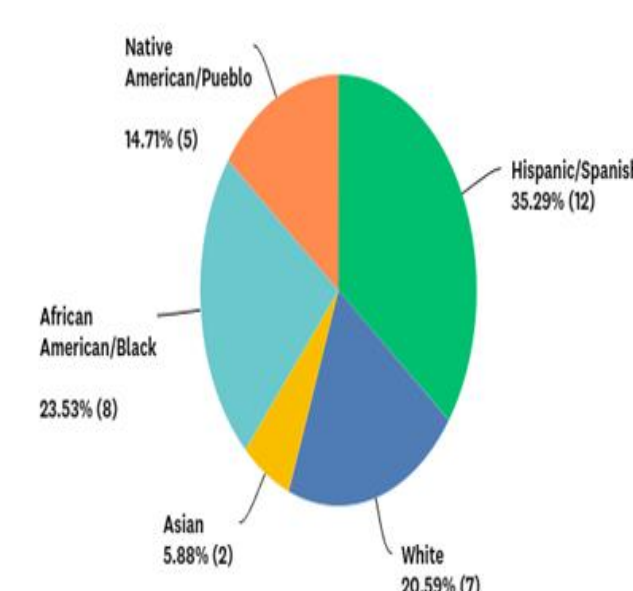
As one example, look at the photograph (RIGHT). This is Gordon, or "Whipped Peter" (fl. 1863), an enslaved African American who escaped from a Louisiana plantation in March 1863, gaining freedom when he reached the Union camp near Baton Rouge. His photo was used by the abolitionists.

## Data Collection and Methods

For my sample selection I used both social media and students enrolled at Northern New Mexico from which to collect data (See Table 1 and Appendix A). I gave two different ways for both people to identify their race. Below the data shows how diverse my studies were, and the different races that were involved with my data. Also, in the pie chart below it only shows 35 people. I believe that is because of the options I gave for people to select. That resulting in 4 people skipping, and not giving their ethnicity. My whole sample involved was a total of 39 people, and in the following question all candidates took part in it, and I believe it was because I made it a write in answer. When people wrote into the box they were able to express what they identify themselves as. The number one race and ethnicity was Hispanic/Spanish who took my survey which was 13 people and being 37.14% of my research. When looking at my different charts for sampling 6 people said they were African Americans and 4 people said they were Black. Could that be were the trauma stands with the African American race. Through different generations we are labeled differently. In the 1930s we were labeled as color, and in the 1970s we used the color of our skin to identify and empower us and labeled ourselves as Black American. Now we label ourselves as African American, but truly don't know our African ancestors, because it was lost with time. Also, noticing the difference in the Latino and Hispanic heritage.

Now, in the pie chart below (Table 1) I used options to click in as if you were filling out paperwork. I combined races together that society believes are the same. Hispanic/Spanish with 12 people resulting in 35.29% African American/Black 8 people and 23.53% following White with 7 people 20.59% Native American/Pueblo 5 14.71% and lastly Asian with 2 and being 5.88%.

Q3 Table 1. Sample "What race, ethnicity or tribe do you most identify with?"



## Data Analysis and Findings

Using a **Bogardus Social Distance scale** (Table 3) asks students to rate their closeness or feeling of distance from various races and cultures. The data for the answer "ok to marry" found:

- The highest response was for Spanish (N=27)
- The lowest response was for Muslim (N=21)
- The next lowest response was for Pueblo (N=23)

Nobody endorsed "build a border wall".

A couple of very interesting findings about this question and scale as well. In the Caucasian people category 1 person put "ban from U.S" in both Likert scales that point was only put once and it was for that culture. Being that this question asked what you were taught it shows that different cultures are taught different things about other races and cultures.

	OK TO MARRY-	OK AS FRIEND-	OK AS NEXT- DOOR NEIGHBOR-	OK AS CO- WORKER-	OK TO SPEAK TO- VISITOR TO U.S.-	OK AS BAN U.S.-	BUILD A BORDER WALL-	TOTAL WEIGHTED D AVERAGE
Mexican people	68.4	21.05	0.00%	0.00%	10.53	0.00%	0.00%	1.63
Black/African American people	65.7	21.05	5.26%	0.00%	7.89	0.00%	0.00%	1.63
Waldoni ans people	52.7	25.00	2.78%	5.56%	11.11	0.00%	2.78%	2.14
Muslim people	55.2	18.42	0.00%	2.63%	21.05	2.63%	0.00%	2.26
Caucasian people	67.5	24.32	0.00%	0.00%	5.41	0.00%	2.70	1.65
Spanish people	72.9	18.92	5.41%	0.00%	2.70	0.00%	0.00%	1.41
Pueblo people	60.5	23.68	5.26%	0.00%	10.53	0.00%	0.00%	1.76



## Discussion

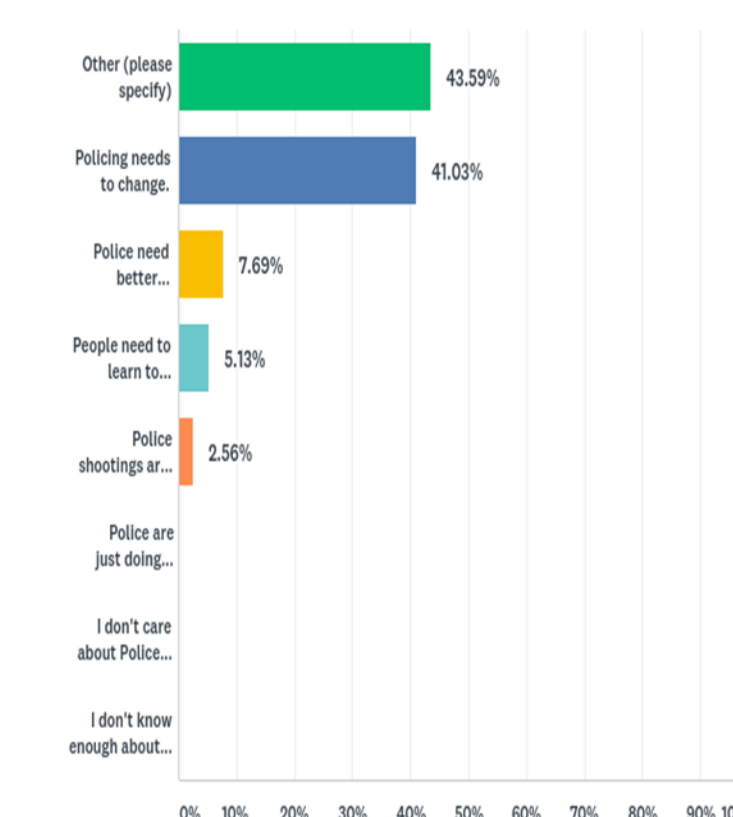
QUALITATIVE COMMENTS FROM RESPONDENTS: "there will always be hatred, jealousy, evil traits embedded from our ancestors she's blood in our jeans. It will never change, but I'm going to for away to change that someday"

"I am positive in general but I recognize things need to change. I have avoided engaging in discussion/debate with racist people, whether they are intentionally out with macroaggressions. I find it too overwhelming. I also recognize that I am able to avoid it because I have white privilege to do so. I also recognize that I'm not being the best ally by disengaging. But I end up doing it anyway ☹️"

## Conclusions

Concluding my research I found what I was looking for, and can accept my null stating the more traumatic the experience, the more likely to cause PTSD and be passed down through generations. In my research people stated what they've been taught certain ways how to look at certain relationships, as well as identifying themselves differently i.e. African American, colored or Black. What I do wish I would have conducted with the survey is asking more questions about trauma or if they know what it is. Majority of the people don't know about or understand what intergenerational trauma is, and asking could bring some feelings up. I also feel like the limitations to my research is I didn't ask generations or ages from my respondents and I believe that would of helped me with identifying different barriers. Lastly, I have a table below showing ideas on police brutality and what people believe should be done among the civilization and the police.

Q14 What do you think about police brutality, in particular, white police shooting unarmed black men?



All 39 people responded giving this question a 100% completion rate. In this question I placed an other box so people could add different options together they would just have to write them in. The common options added together were policing needs to change as well as police need better training which to me play in favor of what my data shows. In the table 16 people responded to policing needs to change which was a 41.03% of my data, and police need better training with 3 people and 7.69%. That being said I believe what we see in the media and even in our own backyards with police brutality can form trauma and be passed down from my generation now to the next, causing for the cycle of intergenerational trauma to repeat.

## References

Love, D. (2016, June 05). Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome and Intergenerational Trauma: Slavery is Like a Curse Passing Through the DNA of Black People. Retrieved from <https://atlantablackstar.com/2016/06/05/post-traumatic-slave-syndrome-and-intergenerational-trauma-slavery-is-like-a-curse-passing-through-the-dna-of-black-people/>

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