

Land Grab Universities: Looking to the Future of Reparations

Blake Marquez

Dr. Finlay

Loyola Marymount University

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Proposal

The United States has maintained a parasitic relationship with Native American people and Indigenous land since the birth of the nation. 52 colleges and universities across the US are known as land-grab universities, referring to the seizing of nearly 11 million acres of Indigenous land under the Morrill Act of 1862 (Ahtone et al., 2020). Over 200 Native American tribal bands and communities were stripped of their land via unsigned treaties and seized land with little to no payment. Since their violent cession, Indigenous land has raised nearly \$500 million (adjusted for inflation) for university endowments (Ahtone et al., 2020). This is especially significant when realizing that of the 52 land-grab universities, only .5% of the undergrad population are Native American (Ahtone et al., 2020). While slight progress has been made in acknowledging a history of genocide and colonization against Native American people, proper reparations have not been made.

I developed a media campaign that brought the history of land grab universities to light. The goal of this media campaign was to have colleges address the abusive relationship between themselves as a higher education institution and Indigenous land/communities. Aside from addressing this relationship, this campaign aimed to generate reparations to the affected tribal population. Past forms of reparation included giving land back to Native American tribes or monetary donations. Given that this campaign was specifically addressed toward colleges and universities, reparations can also be made in the form of full scholarships for Native American students and the development of Native American student services on campus.

This media campaign was carried out on behalf of the 250 Native American tribal communities and bands who fell victim to the Morrill Act of 1862. It is important to note that specific tribes and bands were acknowledged throughout the campaign according to specific geographic location, rather than referred to as a pan-Native American population. Indigenous people repeatedly emphasize that they exist as sovereign nations, being as distinct as different countries. Thus, it was essential that this campaign provided the most accurate depiction of Indigenous people. While this media campaign was on behalf of the Indigenous people affected by the Morrill Act, this campaign was addressed toward all university associated personnel. Because of their decision-making abilities and power granted through their official positions, college administrators were seen as integral in meeting the desired goals of this campaign. However, directly reaching such few and important individuals was difficult. Thus, this campaign heavily focused on the consumer power of the families who pay for their child(ren) to attend these universities. While students make the conscious choice to attend their colleges, parents have the ultimate discretion on whether or not they pay thousands of dollars in their child's tuition. Additionally, alumni who make monetary donations have similar consumer power over their institutions.

The intended audience will be reached via a series of displays in the form of billboards, bus-stop posters, and (indoor) public transit advertising. These displays held varying messages specific to the academic institution that was addressed and the Native American tribe that was acknowledged. Some included information stated how much land was given, how much endowment the Native land raised for the university, and the number of Indigenous students who attended that campus. A hashtag was included on the displays, #landbackfromlandgrabs, in an effort to share the movement across social network platforms. In an attempt to center Indigenous

voices rather than non-Indigenous, each micro-campaign (according to the university) worked in partnership with the specific Tribal communities affected. This will also be done through partnership with NDN Collective, an Indigenous led organization. The exact locations of these displays varied, but all were located within a 10-mile radius of the university being addressed. Some are located on specific plots of Indigenous land. Displays inside public transit and at bus-stops were placed on the routes that are closest to campus or taken most often by students. Universities and students must care about this media campaign because they benefit from a history of genocide against Native American people. To ignore this is to deny history, in turn denying proper education. As institutions of higher education, colleges are responsible for shaping future generations. As such, students and alumni should care that their university acknowledges a history of violent colonialism and creates a campus that is accessible to all students. All parents should feel that their child is being respected and cared for by the institution they pay for. Above all, universities and their students have a moral obligation to recognize the foundation of their institution rests upon violent Indigenous dispossession. This is a step toward acknowledging a history of abuse and attempting to heal.

Because this media campaign is targeted toward universities, their alumni, and parents of students, the direct media environment for this population was largely based in journalism. Through the use of large public billboard displays and press release, we relied on journalists as well as publications to see this campaign as newsworthy. This differs from the media environment of our secondary audience, students, where the media environment was likely to consist of social network sites such as Instagram, Twitter, or Snapchat. Similarly, many universities utilized verified social media accounts as a means of public relations and interacting with their community online. For example, University of California Los Angeles has seven

verified twitter accounts with over 300 thousand followers. This is where the hashtag included on the billboards, #landbackfromlandgrabs, was utilized. This is significant as the digital sphere offered a platform for students, as well as potential students, to engage in discourse over the issue presented before them. Additionally, official university social media accounts provided the opportunity for targeted institutions to view said discourse and potentially interact with it. This two-pronged media environment is significant because it offers a main point of entry, mainstream journalism, and secondary point of entry, social media.

Considering the fact that the report on land-grab universities is relatively new (2020), literature pertaining to land-grab universities is relatively scant. However, analyzing existing literature and media texts on previous and ongoing Indigenous social movements offer insight on the potential future of land-grab universities.

Literature review

History of Indigenous Social Movements

The American Indian Movement (AIM) Trail of Broken Treaties protest in 1972 attempted to directly engage with mainstream media via their press-release that outlined their 20-point manifesto (Blakemore, 2020). AIM's dramatic protests, including the occupation of Alcatraz Island and Wounded Knee, were purposely done to draw attention from mainstream media (Blakemore, 2020). Similar to AIM, contemporary Indigenous movements in Australia, *Recognise* and #sosblakaustralia, utilized online media platforms, such as Twitter, as a means of achieving the goals of their campaign (Dreher, McCallum, & Waller, 2016). These movements received partial concessions from policy makers such as the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act and referendum 167 of the Australian constitution, which amended certain sections concerning Aboriginal people (Blakemore, 2020; Dreher, McCallum, & Waller, 2016). Similarly, the First Nations people of Canada successfully utilized the hashtag #idlenomore on Twitter as a means of connecting online and in-real-life activism (Moscato, 2016). Because AIM, #idlenomore, *Recognise*, and #sosblakaustralia were movements demanding change from political leaders, their media-based tactics were justified given research finding that policy-making is increasingly mediatized (Dreher, McCallum, & Waller, 2016). Moscato (2016) further corroborates this finding as social media based social movements increase agency for the movements themselves and have the ability to easily disseminate information to multiple mass publics. The partial victories of past Indigenous movements can also be understood through minority support theory, which suggests that minority groups who are confident and consistent in their beliefs can impact majority beliefs (Moscovici, Lage, &

Nffrechoux, 1969). Although partial victories, these historical movements are indicative of possibility of success for the future of Indigenous issues. Additionally, they show how media can be manipulated into acting as a catalyst for change.

NDN Collective's LANDBACK campaign is newly revived and is exemplary of crossing real-life with digital protests (Two Bulls, 2020). Similar to the foundational AIM, NDN Collective's website offers a manifesto outlining a list of demands. In addition to a series of press releases, NDN Collective is using the hashtag #LANDBACK online to assert their media presence while simultaneously attracting mainstream news media to their in-person protests (Two Bulls, 2020). NDN Collective recently launched another segment of their #landback campaign that is similar, although not competing, with the #landbackfromlandgrabs campaign presented here (Di Liscia, 2021). Such land reparation campaigns from those like NDN Collective let us know that land back is possible, as seen in the return of Tuluwat Island to the Wiyot people in Eureka, California (Holder, 2019). Similarly, efforts from organizations like the Indian Land Tenure Foundation have successfully received land back for the Wyandotte Nation in South Dakota and Ohio (Sneve, 2021).

Since the release of the Land Grab University report in March 2020, students as well as faculty at some college campuses have tried to respond to this issue. The Native American and Indigenous Students at Cornell (NAISC) released a manifesto with a list of ten commands from the university, spurring the development of the Cornell University and Indigenous Dispossession Project by Cornell professors (Jordan, 2021). In contrast, UC Berkeley offered a symbolic response to their existence as a Land Grab university by leading a two-part conference on the relationship between Indigenous land and the university (Douglas, 2020). The stark difference between the responses to these institutions acknowledging their role as Land Grab universities

signifies that students as well as faculty are concerned with Indigenous issues, but substantial change lies in the hands of University administration. It should be noted that NDN Collective created a free online program, LandGrabU, intended for universities to learn about their relationship to Indigenous land from the voices of actual Indigenous people (Two Bulls, 2020). This is significant in the case of UC Berkeley, who chose to lead their own conference in response to student demands for action in relation to Indigenous issues on campus, rather than taking a seemingly more impactful route like that of Cornell.

Portrayals of Indigenous People in Media

A content analysis from Baylor (1996) analyzing media portrayal of the American Indian Movement during the 1960s and 70s found five main frames in which Indigenous social issues were centered around: militant, stereotype, treaty rights, civil rights, and factionalism. Although seemingly outdated, this provides the perception non-Indigenous people have toward Indigenous issues. Drawing on Baylor (1996) notion of a militant and stereotype media frame, Daniels (2006) found in their comparative media analysis that Indigenous communities are recurrently characterized by clichés that depict Indigenous people as primitive, violent, and hostile. In their analysis of two Australian Indigenous media movements, Dreher, McCallum, and Waller (2016) also found that mainstream media as a constraint for such movements to be accurately heard by political leaders. This is significant as mainstream media coverage of Indigenous events consistently distort the image of Indigenous people across a 50-year period.

Renz (2004) construction of meaning theory, as cited in Daniels (2006), claims that media allows us to understand global realities that we cannot directly understand. In relationship to Baylor (1996) and Daniels (2006), this would mean that media centered around Indigenous people must portray them accurately rather than those of militant or stereotypical frames in order

for non-Indigenous viewers to properly perceive Indigenous communities. This proves to be difficult, however, as proper representation of Indigenous issues and people within mainstream media is severely lacking. The American Indian Movement dropped a 20-point manifesto, “The Trail of Broken Treaties”, in the form of a press release specifically for media, but less than 20% of all mainstream media at the time framed Indigenous stories around treaty rights (Baylor, 1996; American Indian Movement, 1972).

Existing literature suggests that Indigenous media must interact with mainstream media in order to shift the narrative surrounding Indigenous people and Indigenous movements (Dreher, McCallum, & Waller, 2016; Daniels, 2006). Manning, Pieratos, and Tilsen (2021) offer similar suggestions of collaborative work, claiming that alliances among organizations are necessary to direct attention to specific issues affecting Indigenous issues. NDN Collective, who are responsible for the emerging 2021 Land Back Campaign, have found through previous experience that “empowering others and bringing others along the way” is integral to the success of Indigenous social movements (Manning, Pieratos, & Tilman, 2021). This can especially be seen when NPR’s *All Things Considered* began reporting on the First Nations people #idlenomore movement in Canada (Moscato, 2016). This speaks to the necessary relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in creating change and achieving the goals of the proposed campaign.

The Future of Indigenous Movements

In their statistical analyses of media protests that occurred over the course of four years, Banerjee and Case (2020) found that there are two ways of achieving leverage in media-based movements: Direct leverage, having decision making abilities, or mediated leverage, disrupting the interests of those with decision making abilities. While the existing literature suggests that

“having a seat at the table” is a means of direct leverage in achieving concessions from a targeted audience, this conclusion is largely based on a colonial, capitalistic, approach to social movements within the United States. In contrast to Banerjee and Case (2020), Manning, Pieratos, and Tilman (2020) state that, “the dominant public and private sectors are not designed to fix these systemic issues that stem from a national legacy of discrimination, outright genocide, and theft of lands” (pp. 52). Manning, Pieratos, and Tilman (2020) argument is valid considering their voices as actual Indigenous persons, but Banerjee and Case (2020)’s findings take precedent due to the fact that this media campaign is operating within the existing systems of the United States. There is a necessary tone of respectability for American norms of governing in order to achieve the requested concessions of this media campaign. Anner, Briscoe, and Gupta (2015) prove this as they found that disruptive approaches to demands for change lead to targeted organizations exuding resistant and spiteful behavior in response. Abiding by respectability politics can be done by speaking to the established values of the university institutions being targeted. For example, UC Berkeley and UCLA are known for boasting their liberal and progressive values. According to Anner, Briscoe, and Gupta (2015), non-disruptive protest will be effective because advocating for Indigenous reparations speaks to the supposed progressiveness of the universities being protested.

Despite the necessity of slight adherence to American governmental systems, Stewart-Ambo (2021) contributes to Manning, Pieratos, and Tilman (2020) claim that Indigenous voices are essential when addressing the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Cornell University’s response to being a land-grab university being one of the most progressive responses thus far is further indicative that centering Native American voices within this movement is essential for relevant and effective change (Jordan, 2021). Stewart-Ambo

(2021) states that the future of Land Grab universities lies in tribal-university relationships, where tribal nation sovereignty is reinforced, respected, and recognized. Stewart-Ambo (2021) speaking as a Tongvan woman and Jordan (2021) representing the Native American students at Cornell validates the significance of findings from Baylor (1996), Daniels (2006), and Dreher, McCallum, & Waller (2016) in the need for centering Indigenous voices within social movements, especially within media.

Media movements can attempt to uplift voices, but are seemingly ineffective when not heard by key spheres of influence such as mainstream media or policy makers (Dreher, McCallum, & Waller, 2016; Banerjee & Case, 2020). In the case of Land Grab Universities, policy makers are substituted by the hierarchy of university officials. As in the case of Cornell University, pressure from students and faculty alike are effective in being heard by university administration (Jordan, 2021). Drawing on Banerjee and Case (2020) theory of mediated leverage, “Name and Shame” media tactics, similar to what occurred at Cornell and what is being proposed in this campaign, can place necessary pressure on colleges and universities to meet campaign demands. Baylor (1996) found that perceptions of Indigenous movements as hostile, militant, or violent worked against the goals of the movements themselves, causing citizens and policy makers alike to turn away. Similarly, Anner, Briscoe, and Gupta (2015) found that institutions were more adherent to activist organizations that utilized non-disruptive techniques, rather than disruptive techniques such as large-scale protests and sit-ins. Unlike Indigenous movements of the past, such as AIM, the “name and shame” tactics within this media campaign are still responsible for conveying Indigenous demands in a light that is tolerant and respectable, rather than aggressive or overtly angry. The approach utilized in this campaign increases salience of the issue by drawing mainstream media attention, but creates an

environment where the decision makers at the targeted institutions are likely to be more accommodating due to the “politeness” of the approaches used (Anner, Briscoe, and Gupta, 2015)

Critique of the Literature

This literature review has shown that there are gaps in the research regarding specific audience perceptions of Indigenous issues and people in the media. Manning, Pieratos, and Tilsen (2021) and Stewart-Ambo (2021) offer the Indigenous response to Indigenous led movements, but non-Indigenous responses continue to lack. Baylor (1996) and Daniels (2006) suggest that media representation of Indigenous people operate on harmful clichés and stereotypes, but detailed reports from actual audience members are absent. Additionally, the audience is not broken down by specific demographics. Dreher, McCallum, and Waller (2016) claim that *Recognise* and #sosblakaustralia used social media sites like Twitter as a means of gaining concessions, but the way in which these messages were perceived by other Twitter users and policy makers is absent. Similarly, Banerjee and Case (2020) suggest that mediated leverage is a means of achieving movement goals, but responses from the people and organizations subject to such leverage methods are not available.

This gap in the research is significant given the target audience of this media campaign. Where the scholarly literature lacks in non-Indigenous perceptions of Indigenous movements, popular literature from Douglas (2020) and Jordan (2020) act as substitutes. While these two pieces of literature do not speak on behalf of entire non-Indigenous populations, nor entire student populations, they indicate the potential for properly receiving the messages of an Indigenous media campaign. Thus, this campaign potentially fills the gap in the existing

literature as we analyze how specific out-groups (non-Indigenous people) interact with social movements led by in-groups (Indigenous people).

Summarizing Key Points

While scholarly research on student perceptions of Indigenous movements is not available, real-life examples at Cornell University and UC Berkeley are significant indicators of student receptiveness to such issues. Thus, the medium of the proposed media campaign can be expected to be accepted by the targeted audience. The medium of this media campaign is further grounded by the voices of actual Indigenous people and previous Indigenous social movements. This media campaign is necessary in calling attention to the history of Land Grab universities and taking steps toward reparations. Additionally, this campaign is significant in understanding the ways in which out-groups respond to media campaigns.

Methods

The media campaign presented above has an intended audience of university alumni and parents of university students. The secondary audience consists of high school and college students. Given the targeted and underlying audience, this campaign interacts with the American media environment in a two-pronged fashion. Because the first intended audience consists of an adult population 30+ years old, I know that their direct media environment can span from social network sites to mainstream media and journalism publications. While the second intended audience of high school and college students are less likely to engage with mainstream journalism publications, the direct media environment for such a population largely exists on social networking sites.

The first general attitude question being asked to the focus group, “Have you ever used social media to show support or disapproval of a social movement?”, engages with the basic assumption of the direct media environment of the targeted audience. The decision to include a hashtag on the media elements draws on the partially successful #idlenomore, #sosblakaustralia, and *Recognise* online movements in Australia (Dreher, McCallum, & Waller, 2016; Moscato, 2016). Because this campaign utilizes a hashtag, understanding the attitude that focus group members have toward online activism is essential. This will reflect whether or not engaging with social network sites is a valuable means of connecting with potential campaign supporters. In addition, this question will give insight into the behavioral patterns focus group members have in the digital realm. Something that will be especially valuable from this question is understanding how engagement with social media varies across the focus group according to age. Considering that the target audience ranges from young adults in their early 20s to older adults with

college-aged children, understanding the difference in online social behavior is essential. This is especially significant given the previously presented research which found that policymaking is heavily mediatized (Dreher, McCallum, & Waller, 2016). This will tell us if the campaign should alter the online activism approach to address the entirety of the audience population, ignore part of the target population, or micro-target the audience based on specific demographics.

The second general attitude question asks, “when someone mentions Indigenous rights, what do you think of?” This question tells me what knowledge potential campaign supporters may already have about previous movements for Indigenous rights and Indigenous history. I hope that this will reveal assumptions and latent attitudes focus group members have toward historic and contemporary indigenous movements. This question will create a foundation to build the educational curriculum of the campaign off of. Further, the answers to this question will be indicative of which assumptions, stereotypes, and mistruths must be addressed first. Understanding how focus group members have created assumptions and associations with Indigenous rights will let me know what information should be included and what information should be omitted from media campaign elements.

I am building upon the notion that “name and shame” tactics can potentially drive the audience to indirectly apply pressure to the targeted institutions (Banerjee & Case, 2020). Further, building on Anner, Briscoe, and Gupta (2015) suggest that taking a non-disruptive approach to addressing the targeted organizations (colleges/universities) will lead to a more sympathetic response to the message of the given campaign. This method has been proven effective as seen in the case of the Native American and Indigenous Students at Cornell, where students and professors applied pressure to university officials, leading to ongoing changes

relating to Indigenous relations on Cornell's campus (Jordan, 2021). This instance is exemplary of the audience I am targeting, college students and older adults.

In order to apply this indirect pressure, I must know if the targeted audience is persuaded enough by the media presented before them. I will discover this as I introduce the first media campaign element. First, the geographic context of the media element will be explained to focus group members by stating that this billboard was five miles from UCLA's campus in West Hollywood on the corner of Sunset Blvd. and Fairfax Ave. Then, the focus group members will be asked to imagine themselves as UCLA students, alumni, or parents of students. Finally, the focus group members will be posed with the question of, "If you were a UCLA alumni or parent of a UCLA student, how would seeing this billboard make you feel?". This question will tell me if this media element elicits feelings of guilt, shock, or frustration. Drawing on Cialdini et al, (1976) theory of Basking in Reflected Glory, as cited in Burger (2012), focus group members are expected to distance their identity from UCLA after being presented with the media element calling on the University's role in land theft. Based on the emotional response of the focus group, I can analyze how likely individuals might be to change their opinion about UCLA, and thus their decision to positively associate with the institution. As the focus group conversation develops, I can evaluate the likelihood of individuals to develop their change in attitude to direct action against the university. If focus group members exude behavior that aligns with the BIRG theory, then the 'name and shame' tactics being used in this media campaign will prove to be effective. The information I hope to receive from this question is increasingly significant because the effectiveness of the non-disruptive approach underpins the entirety of the #landbackfromlandgrabs campaign.

Additionally, I hope that this question will reveal whether or not focus group members are sympathetic to learning more about Indigenous issues. The text on this media element is intentionally very brief to capture the attention of drivers and individuals quickly passing through the intersection. The drawback of this is that the purpose or goal of the campaign is not clear, relying on viewers to look further into the campaign through their own research. By asking the focus group how this poster would make them feel, they might reveal that they don't understand the context and would look up the hashtag. Or, they might reveal that they are apathetic to the message that is being shown. This will signal as to whether or not the campaign is effectively peaking the interest of consumers and worth investing in.

The second media element presented is intended to capture the attention of subway riders and elicit immediate feelings of shock or surprise. The format of this poster mimics MIT's decision letter format, directly calling out one of the most prestigious Ivy League universities. Although focus group members may not know the Native American tribe addressed in the community, it is my intention that consumers can draw a connection between MIT and the Ko-ya-te people. Specifically, it was my intention that the relationship between the two organizations could be read as one where MIT is the aggressor and the Ko-ya-te people as the aggrieved. While this media element doesn't explain a full history of the relationship between the two organizations, including the amount of money MIT earned from the Ko-ya-te people offers specific information that suggests there is more to be understood about this history.

The questions included in this focus group build upon findings from Baylor (1996) and Daniels (2006) pertaining to perceptions of Indigenous led movements from non-Indigenous people. Reflecting on past representations of Indigenous movements such as AIM in the 1960s, I aim to avoid framing this Indigenous movement campaign as violent or militant. This second

question addresses this concern. The second piece of media will be introduced by explaining to the focus group that the T is a prominent subway line in Boston, Massachusetts. I then ask focus group members to imagine they are getting off of the T subway line at the last stop before the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and see this poster. Finally, I pose the question “Do you perceive any emotion or tone in this poster?” to see if the media text is perceived as angry, harsh, or aggressive. The focus group members will be asked if they perceive *any* emotion within the poster rather than asking if they perceived aggression or anger to have as little impact on the focus group as possible. Because Baylor (1996) found that Indigenous campaigns framed as militant or violent were generally negatively perceived by consumers, the focus group response to this question is significant in understanding how this campaign will be internalized by the target audience.

The final question of the focus group introduces the press release for the #landbackfromlandgrabs movement. To introduce this piece the entire press release will be shown on screen. The moderator will then direct the focus group members to paragraphs six and seven as the moderator reads the section aloud. The focus group members will be asked about this specific section, although they can see the entirety of the press release. The focus group members will then be asked to write down the words or phrases from the text that stood out to them, followed by a group discussion of everyone’s response. This focus group question is significant because it addresses the inclusion of Indigenous people within the construction of the campaign, which is essential to ensure that this campaign is maintaining principles of ethics and accuracy in relation to the mainstream presentation of Indigenous peoples. This speaks to Manning, Pieratos, and Tilsen (2021) and Stewart-Ambo (2021), who reiterated the need for collaborative efforts in Indigenous movements. Additionally, the responses to this question will

signal whether or not consumers are sympathetic toward respecting Indigenous cultures. While the campaign will abide by principles of respect and inclusivity of Indigenous people regardless, this question will tell us if this concept should be something that is heavily promoted throughout the campaign. This is relevant to the campaign because proper education on the subject of land-grab universities and the history of Indigenous rights is essential to cultivate change.

Results

Team A held a focus group to test media campaign material relating to transgender rights, environmentalism, rideshare apps, the gender wage gap, and the campaign presented here relating to Indigenous land back movements. The focus group ran for two hours and two minutes. Three focus group members left before the focus group officially concluded, leaving nine participants that responded to the media elements previously described. Despite stark differences in the campaigns, team A's targeted audience of middle-to-older aged adults holds the campaigns in common. The focus group was held via zoom as a means of reaching participants across different time zones and geographical locations. For my section there were 9 participants total: 2 men and 7 women. The age of focus group participants ranged from early 20s to late 50s with the youngest participant at 21-years-old the oldest participant at 58-years-old. Seven out of nine participants were middle aged in their 40s or 50s. Eight out of nine focus group members were BIPOC presenting (Six Black participants, two Latino) while only one was white presenting.

The focus group participants were prompted with a general attitude question: "Have you ever used social media to show support or disapproval of a social movement?" 66% of focus group participants said they have used social media to engage with social movements while 33% said they have not. There was no dominant difference in responses across gender. The youngest

focus group members (both female, ages 21 and 30 years) both responded “yes” as well as four of the seven older focus group members. The youngest focus group participant (21 years) stated that she shares information on social network sites relating to social movements as a means of rectifying misinformation that is often spread online:

“I know that there are certain people in my family that are not getting the same education or I fear or getting biased info because I also see what they post. And it's, if there's not like credible sources behind it, I'm assuming that they're getting information that could just be full of biases. So, I would like to share what I find legitimate information with others so that they can get the facts straight.”

(Transcript, pp. 31).

All focus group participants who said “no” expressed fear in social network sites reaching high numbers of people. One participant, aged 54, offered this qualification:

“So, I just feel like with me, with stuff like that, I don't post my views on social media when it comes to social justice and stuff like that. I can say it, like, directly to you. But I don't post it where Facebook is a large, large you know scale of people.” (Transcript, pp. 36)

Two older participants (ages 57 and 54) expressed concern for the specific social network sites being used, FaceBook and LinkedIn, and their impact beyond personal life, possibly impacting an individual's career.

“But I think that people have a fear. Again, LinkedIn, I'm going to use that as an example. Myshell may make a comment because I know she's on LinkedIn is that you want to be careful that your business, right, and your personal life don't collide.” (Transcript, 31).

A male focus group participant aged 54 agreed with the previous participant:

“Yeah, exactly. Yeah, that's, uh, whether it's on social media or in person. I typically do not give my opinions. I'll let, somebody's going to express their opinion and I'll acknowledge it either way, um, but I won't agree or disagree with them.” (Transcript, pp. 31).

Focus group participants were then asked, “When someone mentions Indigenous rights, what do you think of?” Only two participants responded, both women (ages 21 and 54). Both participants referred to the inequality Indigenous people face in the United States. One participant referred specifically to lack of education on Indigenous history and missing Indigenous women while the other mentioned US Government theft of resources and Indigenous Youth.

The first media element, the billboard on Sunset Blvd and Fairfax targeting UCLA, was presented first. Three focus group participants (f 30, m 54, m 55) stated that the campaign material led them to feel uncomfortable, one individual said they need more information, and another simply stated that they “love the ad” (Transcript, pp. 32). One 54-year-old male participant responded to the billboard by saying:

“Yeah, I think it would bring two questions to me, I think one, it's going to make you feel, it would make me feel uncomfortable and then number two I would see, what are they talking about? and do my own research beyond that.”

Of the three participants who expressed discomfort, the male 55-year-old expressed shock upon seeing a connection between UCLA and theft of Indigenous land:

“I think the uncomfortableness also is like we know that these things have happened over all these years, but you wouldn't have thought of it being UCLA doing it, might not have or whoever was in charge of battle at that time. And you

never really heard of it being done in California first and most other parts of the country. So I would definitely want to have more information to see what, how this happened, and when this happened, and if it happened.” (Transcript, 32)

Facial expressions and nods from older participants expressed agreement with the previous quote. The UCLA billboard received an overall positive response.

The second campaign element, a subway poster near the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was then introduced. The immediate response from two female focus group participants (age 54 and 57) expressed shock or surprise at the information presented before them. The 54-year-old stated “uh, it’s powerful” with lifted brows and widened eyes. The 57-year-old nodded in agreement as she stated “like, wow.” Another female participant (age 30) responded to the specific information conveyed through the campaign element:

“I think that speaks to two things, too. It speaks to not only what they've done, but also like how this continues to perpetuate in that, um, group of people.”

(Transcript, 33)

Three participants, two male (age 54 and 55) and one female (age 57), expressed confusion at the “Ko-ya-te” name.

“what you're saying, Ko-ya-te, is that the name of the, is that like the name of the people that go to MIT? Or is that like...” (Transcript, 33)

The female participant with confusion about the “Ko-ya-te” name expressed some understanding that this title may be referring to specific Indigenous groups according to the location of the media element.

“so that Ko-ya-te, is that a tribe that is indigenous to that part of the country, I just want to make sure that I understand that part.... OK. OK. Like in New England or

Massachusetts... It's that sort-of-speak because otherwise, I don't know if that was a name they were using, just sort of picking a name that might have an indigenous origin.” (Transcript, 33)

While the initial response elicited what seemed like support or liking of the campaign element, three out of five responding participants expressed confusion.

The final media element, a PR release explaining the details of the campaign, was presented last. In the methods section, an activity was originally planned when introducing this last media element. However, due to the unexpected length of the focus group and the move to a digital focus group, the activity was omitted. Instead, the moderator read the text aloud and asked focus group members their impression of the content. This last media element was met with initial confusion, leading the moderator to re-read the media text and re-state the questions. Two female participants (age 30 and 57) noted that the third campaign element was “conversation starter”, something that might lead them to question more things relating to Indigenous land theft. One female 57-year-old participant tied the first media element with the final, stating:

“And so to me, it immediately makes me look at UCLA and think, who else is an offender? And how do I think about that, that institution, university or business? And so for me, I think it is very effective because that it speaks to me.”

(Transcript, 34)

The second focus group participant, a female age 30, said they found this element of the campaign compelling because of its specificity and micro-targeting.

Three focus group participants, one male two female, stated that they didn't foresee any actionable results coming from this campaign. Rather than lack of faith in the campaign itself, each of the three focus group participants expressed distrust and skepticism that the targeted

institutions would give Indigenous people their land back. One 54-year-old male participant compared the potential outcome of this campaign with the land restitution that occurred at Bruce's Beach, a historically Black beach, in Southern California in the Summer of 2021. Two older focus group members, both female people of color, drew upon their own life experience to generate comparisons between the campaign presented and the plights of Black people in America as it relates to things like affirmative action and DEI initiatives.

One of the participants who perceived no actionable results from this campaign, female age 57, expressed that she viewed this campaign as one relating to education rather than action.

“And that, to me, this campaign is about information because I think the average person, including myself, might well have done a little more work on indigenous folks and understand the plight and the struggle is that it's an information campaign because people just have thoughts like, Oh. Right. I don't know Native Americans get to live on, you know, these multi-million-dollar casinos and they have free schools and they get money.” (Transcript, 35)

This came out of the conversation questioning the potential results of this campaign and the possibility of colleges actually participating in land restitution. The participant referred to misinformation surrounding casinos on Indigenous land and questioned if there were other demands being made from this campaign, such as free tuition for Indigenous students.

The campaign elements presented yielded an overall positive response. The most prominent recurring pattern in participant responses were calls for education. The most common requests in education pointed to how college institutions are involved in land theft, current resources and lifestyles of Indigenous people, and in-depth history of Indigenous oppression.

Discussion

The reaction to the media campaign elements generated generally positive results, indicative of the potential success for the #landbackfromlandgrabs campaign. These results have led to three primary findings: 1. Audience members require some degree of education or context relating to specific Indigenous identities, 2. There is perceived solidarity from non-Indigenous racial and ethnic minorities, and 3. There is reason to believe this media campaign resulted in an intention to activate.

A significant result from the focus group response to campaign elements was shared confusion regarding the name of the Ko-ya-te people and their relationship to MIT as an institution. This suggests that the second campaign element may need to be re-worked in a way that distinguishes the Ko-ya-te people as an Indigenous tribal band, separate from MIT. This can possibly be done through the use of a qualifying phrase, such as, “Dear Ko-ya-te applicant, whose land we reside on,”. Drawing on responses to the general attitude question asking what focus group members thought about when Indigenous rights are mentioned, it can be concluded that participants had somewhat of an understanding of the injustices against Indigenous people. This focus group is more in line with research from the First Nations Development Institute and Echo Hawk Consulting which found that most people have limited personal experience with Native Americans, their understanding of Native Americans follow mediatized narratives of poverty and tragedy, but most people (72%) were aware of historical inaccuracies they were taught about Native Americans in school (First Nations & EHC, 2018). Taking both of these responses into consideration, future campaign development can infer that consumers have at least some understanding of Indigeneity while addressing words or names that are regionally specific. While it may be easier for non-Indigenous people to consume media with generalized names or titles, it is important that this campaign continues to honor and respect the Indigenous

people being served. I want to reinforce the need to center Indigenous voices when addressing issues between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, as explained by Indigenous authors Stewart-Ambo (2021) and Manning, Pieratos, and Tillman (2020).

The ethno-racial identity of the focus group participants is significant given the responses to the media campaign elements and the topic of the media campaign. Because a majority of the focus group were from minority racial and ethnic groups (six Black participants, two Latino), support for members of another oppressed minority group might be linked to minority unity. This can be especially seen in the results of the focus group where two older Black female participants made comparisons between their experiences as BIPOC and the plights of Indigenous people. Drawing on Moscovici, Lage, and Naffrechoux (1969) minority support theory, this campaign has the potential to succeed due to support from non-Indigenous racial and ethnic minorities. As discovered in Moscovici, Lage, and Naffrechoux (1969), a minority group that remains consistent and confident in their beliefs has the ability to influence a public and private majority. Referring to the literature previously reviewed, successful Indigenous movements of the past such as AIM in the 1960s (Blakemore, 2020) and the recent #IdleNoMore from the First Nations people of Canada (Moscato, 2016) are indicative of minority support theory carrying out in-real-life.

While this focus group resulted in perceived racial and ethnic minority solidarity, the ethical concern in utilizing this finding lies in using Black people and people of color as mere means to an end. Drawing on Kant's deontological theory of ethics, preying on the shared oppressive experiences of Black people and people of color can be viewed as a violation of ethics (Christians et al, 2005). The future of this campaign and campaigns building upon this one must wrestle with the ethical dilemma of whether or not the results justify the way in which they

were achieved. Drawing on Bentham's utility theory, targeting racial and ethnic minorities as a source of support from the #landbackfromlandgrabs campaign is justified given the expected success the campaign would result in (Christians et al, 2005). Abiding by Aristotelian virtue ethics, I believe future development of this campaign can remain ethical while yielding impactful results by hailing minority support without explicitly exploiting oppression (Christians et al, 2005). This would be at the discretion of future campaign developers, but ultimately could be achieved. Thus, this finding is especially significant in constructing a future intended audience. Future implications of this campaign from an ethical perspective may draw on Bentham's utility theory in making more aggressive demands. As touched on in the previous paragraph, utility theory suggests that problematic means of achieving an end is justified so long as the outcome produces a greater amount of "good" than the amount of "pain" used to achieve it (Christians et al, 2005). This would further justify more aggressive means of making demands, going beyond public billboard displays and press releases. Collegiate institutions will likely be inconvenienced by the need to re-structure their campuses, re-structure their finances, and publicly address their role in genocide, but this is minimal when compared to the overall benefit for the 200+ Indigenous tribal bands and communities harmed by land grab universities.

The most significant finding from the focus group response to the media mock ups is the intention to activate. This is seen in focus group members who state they would do their own research after viewing the UCLA billboard and MIT subway poster. The challenge in interpreting the success of this result is measuring to what extent this campaign is successful for the population it is intended to serve: Indigenous people affected by the Morrill Act of 1862. As referenced in the literature, the elements of this campaign were constructed to abide by American systems of governing and higher education. Referring back to Stewart-Ambo (2021) and

Manning, Pieratos, and Tilsen (2021), there is consensus that Indigenous people as an oppressed group should not have to cater to their oppressors. This campaign tried to take this into consideration, but ultimately abided by American values and respectability politics. In reference to Banerjee and Case (2020) and Anner, Briscoe, and Gupta (2015), systemic leverage and non-disruptive protest were found to illicit the most favorable concessions from targeted institutions. Acknowledging the tension between serving Indigenous populations while operating under American colonial systems, the success of this campaign exists on a spectrum rather than a binary that identifies the yielded results as a complete failure or complete success. While focus group responses did not state they would immediately boycott land grab universities, the intention to learn more about the history of the subject is a victory in achieving an overarching goal of land restitution. Much of the perceived success within this campaign lies in the potential for the future of land back movements more generally, but targeting land grab universities more specifically. Lastly, it speaks to the developing relationship between colonial and non-colonial groups and how this can be used in further achieving reparations on behalf of Indigenous communities.

Although the overarching goal of this campaign was one of permanent behavior change and action, this is primarily a campaign of education. Therefore, a trend in the desire to learn more about Land Grab Universities and the history of Indigenous oppression is indicative of success. Despite concern that this campaign catered too much to American colonial systems, the reality is that these are the systems we are forced to operate under. Rather than viewing the focus group results as an indicator of campaign elements being too passive, we can understand it as establishing the possibility for future campaigns to become gradually more aggressive in their demands and method of making demands.

Conclusion

This media campaign was constructed to address land grab universities and their relationship with the Indigenous communities they occupy. While the overarching goal of this campaign was rooted in land restitution and reparations on behalf of Indigenous communities in the form of financial compensation and/or free tuition, this campaign was primarily one of education. At the foundational level, this campaign developed out of the need to bring awareness to the violent history of land grab universities and the Morrill act of 1862. The results and implications of this campaign suggest intent to self-educate and creates the opportunity for future campaigns to develop off of. While the results of this campaign are satisfactory, there are still lessons to be learned.

The #landbackfromlandgrabs campaign was developed to take place on social media sites and in-real-life, focus group members only slightly touched on the use of social media. The focus group did not touch on the use of the hashtag in campaign elements, nor did it touch on if focus group members would post such media elements online. Collecting more data on how campaign consumers interact and use online media is essential in understanding how a campaign, such as this one, would fare in a digital public sphere.

This campaign collected minimal information regarding the demographics of focus group members. Drawing on the finding of perceived minority support, future researchers should collect identifying information such as race, ethnicity, and religion. Further, this campaign did not collect information regarding education level of focus group participants. While the level of education regarding Indigenous issues can be somewhat inferred from responses to general attitude questions and the presented media elements, having a firm grasp on education level will

help future campaigns determine how much and what type of information to include within their media elements.

I encourage media researchers and professionals to use this campaign as an example of how to work collaboratively with the community they are serving. Seeing as this campaign took somewhat of a safe approach in terms of calling out targeted institutions, I would challenge future media researchers and campaign developers to make more direct and aggressive demands. It should be qualified that the manner in which these demands are made, i.e how aggressive or how forward, should ultimately be at the discretion of actual Indigenous people. As such, future developers must maintain a similar principle of ethics, especially considering the vulnerability of the communities being served.

Appendix A: Focus Group Questions

1. Have you ever used social media to show support or disapproval of a social movement?
2. When someone mentions Indigenous rights, what do you think of?
3. Imagine you're in West Hollywood on the corner of Sunset Blvd and Fairfax, about 5 miles from the UCLA campus. You see this billboard. What would you, or if you were a UCLA alumni or parent of a UCLA student, how would it make you feel?
4. The T is a common form of public transportation in Boston. Imagine you are in Boston, Massachusetts taking the T subway line. You get off at the stop closest to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and you see this poster. Do you perceive any emotion or tone in this poster?
5. [The moderator will read paragraphs six and seven of the press release] So, if you were to see this, this is a press release, but if you were to see an article of this in a magazine or in a newspaper, and even if you just read the two lines that I read without reading the whole thing, what would you, what conversation would that start? Or would you take that and start conversations with others around in your family and things like that? Just what do you kind of get from that?

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