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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE STATEMENT

A seeming paradox exists in Germany regarding acknowledging homosexuality past and present. At this moment in history (Autumn 2017), Germany's government is grappling with the legal issues associated with instituting the recently passed same-sex marriage law (Board, 2017). However, the conservative leadership, including Chancellor Angela Merkel, may not be ready for it. A YouGov poll in May found that 66 percent of German respondents favored permitting same-sex marriage, but Chancellor Merkel's coalition allies argued that while gay couples can unite in civil unions, legal in Germany since 2001, a marriage of a man and a woman is the only foundation of family life (Board, 2017). This conservative resistance to legalizing same-sex marriage may stem from deep and long-standing dimensions of leadership in German culture. For some Germans, these attitudes may have been strengthened within the last century, including the rise of the Nazi party and the enforcement of Nazi legislation, Paragraph 175, a 19th century law which jailed fifty-thousand gay men (Heger, 1994). Cross-cultural acceptance, such as homosexuality versus heterosexuality, has historically been

accompanied by bloodshed, oppression or genocide, and this is a continuing pattern in today's world, yet we inherit no model from history to guide us (Bennett, 1993). Certainly not from the Holocaust era.

However, as evidenced by the legal passing of same-sex marriage, Germany is attempting to unwind this legacy of virulent homophobia. In 2016, parliament agreed to grant compensation to thousands of gay men jailed under Paragraph 175, a law that was only dropped in 1969 when homosexuality was decriminalized in West Germany (Martin, 2017). These men are known as the "Pink Triangle Prisoners" for the pink triangle badge they wore on their uniforms as part of prisoner classification in Nazi concentration camps (Heger, 1994). Today, Pink Triangles are widespread global symbol of LGBTQ rights and a common emblem in gay-rights organizations and Pride movements.

However, there are still areas in Germany where even the memorial display of the Pink Triangle is still somewhat obscured. The Dachau Memorial Site, whose funding was originally supplied by the Bavarian government, is such an example. Using the Pink Triangle as a case study, a symbol for men who suffered abuse at the hands of the Nazis, the purpose of this composition is to examine through a global and cultural lens if, how and why public acknowledgement, apology and atonement, for those who need and desire it, has historically come in a trickle since camp liberation. The injustice to this particular sect of victims, for which reconciliation may seem long overdue in Germany, is just beginning to garner reparations, up to and including legal gay marriage.

Background/Historical Review

THE PRISONER CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

In concentration camps across Europe, the Nazis used a color coded classification system to identify prisoners (Heger, 1994). Triangles in the colors of the cloth badges were worn by the prisoners on their uniforms to identify their prisoner classification (Jews wore yellow, political prisoners wore red, Jehovah's Witness wore purple, etc.) (Holocaust Encyclopedia, 2017). These badges, primarily triangles, signified why a prisoner had been placed in the concentration camp. The triangles were made of fabric and were carefully sewn on jackets and trousers by the prisoners. Each of the triangles had specific meaning, according to their color and shape. Guards could then identify a prisoner as

political, criminal, Jewish, homosexual and so on (Gavin, 2014).

Male homosexuals, as enemies of the state, endured particularly cruel and unusual punishments in the camps, moreso than other political or religious prisoners, and most of this punishment involved public humiliation including sodomy, medical experiments and mandatory forced participation in brothels (Heger, 1994). Heinrich Himmler, Nazi Director of Dachau, the first concentration camp, depicted the homosexual man as a “traitor to his own people” who must be “rooted out” for his failure to reproduce (Elman, 1996, p. 1).

PARAGRAPH 175

As a result of this mindset, one hundred thousand gay men were arrested under Paragraph 175 (Heger, 1994). Some were imprisoned, others were sent to concentration camps. The number “175” refers to the paragraph within the penal code, adopted in 1871, that criminalized male homosexuality (Heger, 1994). The law was later broadened by the Nazis in 1935 to include any “lewdness” between two men” (Elman, 1996, p. 3). Lesbians, while also forced to go underground, were not seen as a threat to the same degree as gay men. Since women were largely excluded from positions of power, there seemed to be no real danger of a “lesbian conspiracy” within Nazi circles (although a male homosexual conspiracy was to be feared) (Heger, 1994). “Aryan” lesbians could also be used as breeders regardless of their own feelings, and reproduction was the most urgent goal of Nazi politics (Heger, 1994).

Between 1933 and 1945, an estimated 100,000 men were arrested for violating Nazi Germany’s law against homosexuality, and of these, approximately 50,000 were sentenced to prison. An estimated 5,000 to 15,000 men were sent to concentration camps on similar charges, where an unknown number of them perished (Holocaust Encyclopedia, 2017). After the camps were liberated at the end of the Second World War, many of the Pink Triangle prisoners were often simply re-imprisoned by the Allied-established Federal Republic of Germany for the same “crimes”. In fact, the Nazi amendments to Paragraph 175, which turned homosexuality from a minor offense into a felony, remained intact in both East and West Germany after the war for another 24 years (Settington, 2013, p. 130).

The Pink Triangle symbolized the femininity of this group of detainees, whose masculinity was diminished within the context of Nazi heterosexism. Additionally, the Pink Triangles were generally larger than other triangles badges because the Nazis wished gay men to be especially visible, and

considered them “worse than Jews” (Elman, 1996, p. 3). Other prisoners made little contact with the Pink Triangle prisoners for fear of further persecution. By associating with the Pink Triangles, other detainees could have drawn unwanted attention on to themselves and one way of avoiding further abuse was to remain as detached from the homosexual prisoners as possible. This was very isolating for Pink Triangle prisoners.

POST LIBERATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, APOLOGY AND ATONEMENT

After the liberation by the Allies in WWII, while many survivors were rebuilding their lives and families, homosexuals faced further persecution and social exclusion. In fact, many Pink Triangle survivors, re-imprisoned as homosexuals, remained deviants in the eyes of post-war society (Stop-Homophobia.com, 2016). The gay survivors who were liberated (not subject to further prison terms) often found themselves ostracized from society. Some were not welcomed back to their homes in the aftermath of war for the “shame” they had brought on their family’s reputation. Those that did return, often kept their experience to themselves fearing that the sensitive nature of the horrors would bring further distress to family members. Some never spoke out about their suffering (Stop-Homophobia.com, 2016). To this day, there are very few published first-hand accounts or autobiographies of the Pink Triangle experience inside the camps. Among these are *The Men with the Pink Triangle* (Heger, 1994), *The Pink Triangle* (Plant, 1986), *Branded by the Pink Triangle* (Settingington, 2013), *Deported Homosexual* (Seel, 1994), and *Memoirs of a Gay Jew in Nazi Berlin* (Beck, 1999). Although some of the Pink Triangle prisoners tried courageously to gain recognition by challenging the courts all the way to the West German Supreme Court, they were never acknowledged as being persecuted by the Nazi regime, and were excluded from financial compensations for the victims of their atrocities, lacking the moral support and sympathy of the public (Stop-Homophobia.com, 2016).

Despite all of the dehumanizing victimization of Holocaust homosexuals, no reparations were made to the Pink Triangle men until much later. Recognition did eventually come, but late, for many gay victims and survivors, who lived the rest of their lives as criminals in the eyes of the law. While memorials remember the many other victims of the Holocaust, it was 54 years before one included the gay victims. In January 1999, Germany finally held its first official memorial service for the homosexual victims at the former Sachsenhausen concentration camp (Stop-Homophobia.com, 2016). This camp was located at the edge of Berlin, which gave it a higher position among the German concentration camps as the administrative center of all camps, and (along with Dachau and Auschwitz) it held a higher population of homosexual prisoners than most camps (Lisciotta, 2008).

Not until December 2000 did the German government issue an apology for the prosecution of homosexuals in Germany and agree to recognize gays as victims of the Third Reich (Settingington, 2013). Survivors were finally encouraged to claim compensation for their treatment during the Holocaust (although claims had to be registered before the end of 2001) (Stop-Homophobia.com, 2016). The Geneva-based aid agency, International Organization for Migration (IOM) was responsible for the introducing and handling the claims. On May 17, 2002, the process was completed as thousands of homosexuals, who suffered under the Third Reich, were officially pardoned by the German government, and about 50,000 gay men were included (Stop-Homophobia.com, 2016). During this attempt at government-citizen reconciliation, German justice minister Hertha Daeubler-Gmelin told parliament, "We all know that our decisions today are more than 50 years later, they are necessary nonetheless. We owe it to the victims of wrongful Nazi justice" (Stop-Homophobia.com, 2016).

In August 2014, German Chancellor Angela Merkel also extended an olive branch of reconciliation, becoming the first German head of state to visit the former concentration camp at Dachau. While there, she expressed "deep sorrow and shame" at the crimes perpetrated by the Nazi regime (Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, 2016). Today, though, Chancellor Merkel firmly opposes same-sex marriage and voted against it, although she expressed hope that the measure would promote "social peace and togetherness." (Board, 2017). Merkel said that while she had come to support the right of same-sex couples to adopt, she continued to believe that marriage ought to remain a union between a man and a woman. What she did not want, she said, was a culture war over the issue (Shimer, 2017, p. A6).

MODERN LGBTQ AND MEMORIALS AROUND THE WORLD

It is not a coincidence that the worldwide LGBTQ community took the lead in the late 1970s and early 1980s on acknowledging and honoring the Pink Triangle prisoners of the Holocaust, as this was the time of the large HIV/AIDS outbreak, before there were effective treatments to live with HIV (Hall, 2008, p. 520) The incidence of death was highest in the 1980s- reaching 130,000-followed by declines, and has remained relatively stable since at about 50,000 new infections per year (Hall, 2008, p. 521). As the gay male community was decimated by the AIDS epidemic, demands for compassion and medical funding led to renewed coalitions calling for tolerance and equal rights (Elman, 1996). It was at this time that the LGBTQ community began to demand recognition for their figurative forefathers' suffering in the camps, and the Pink Triangle was adopted as an international symbol of gay pride and the gay rights movement (Elman, 1996).

It was not until the 1980s, when the local LGBTQ communities globally took the initiative to have memorials for the Pink Triangle victims erected worldwide. The Pink Triangle was the basis of the design of the Homomonument in Amsterdam (Homomonument, 2017), the Gay and Lesbian Holocaust Memorial in Sydney (History of Green Park, 2017), and the Pink Triangle Park in the Castro neighborhood of San Francisco (Pink Triangle Park & Memorial, 2017). It was also the basis of the design of LGBTQ Holocaust memorials in 26 other international cities and sites worldwide (Koymaksy, 2016). In 2014, the most recent memorial was unveiled to gay Holocaust victims in Tel Aviv (Tel Aviv Unveils Memorial for Gay Shoah Victims, n.d.). But at Dachau, the Pink Triangle remains somewhat hidden in the museum, and not on the large outdoor public art display with the rest of the colored triangles (Gavin, 2014). This perceived failure at apology, acknowledgement and atonement may be a function of long standing, deep-seeded dimensions of culture and leadership in Germany. Despite the current public support for same-sex marriage, the long-held marginalization and intolerance may still be lurking in that society, particularly in government, making reconciliation difficult.

DACHAU CONCENTRATION CAMP TURNED MEMORIAL SITE

The Dachau Concentration Camp, just outside of Munich to the northwest, was the first official concentration camp, under the direction of Heinrich Himmler, and it expanded from a political prison to one that included forced labor and the infrastructure for mass murder (Settingington, 2013). Dachau did not start out as an extermination camp, although 41,500 people were murdered there between 1933 and 1945 when it was finally liberated by Allied Forces (it had over 200,000 total prisoners, during its operation) (Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, 2016). Most inmates died from disease, malnourishment, exhaustion and corporal punishment. The camp was also used as a training center for both the camp guards and the military branch of the German Schutzstaffel (SS), which Himmler commanded (Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, 2016).

The Memorial Site on the grounds of the former concentration camp was established in 1965 on the initiative of and in accordance with the plans of the surviving prisoners who had joined together to form the Comité International de Dachau (Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, 2016). The Bavarian state government provided financial support. Between 1996 and 2003 a new exhibition on the history of the Dachau concentration camp was created, called the "Path of the Prisoners" (Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, 2016). On one end of this path, the International Monument has a wide ramp which slopes down to the base of the sculpture designed by Nandor Glid (December 1924 – March 1997), a Yugoslavian sculptor and the son of parents murdered in Auschwitz (Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, 2016). The public art piece features three large links of a chain

held together by bars in between. This signifies the unity among the prisoners, many of whom were left-wing political prisoners who shared the same beliefs. On the links are large enameled triangles in the colors of the cloth badges worn by the prisoners on their uniforms. Several categories of prisoner, who were represented by various colored triangles, are conspicuously absent from the large Glid monument. These include German hardened criminals “Schwehrverbrecher”, who wore green triangles, “asocials” or “arbeitsscheu” (work-shy) who given black triangles (including lesbians), and finally, homosexuals, arrested under Paragraph 175 of the German Penal Code, who wore Pink Triangles, and all of those colors are missing from this public art piece.

Construction on the monument to the Dachau prisoners was finished in 1968 by the International Prisoner Committee that represented above all the former political prisoners (Comité International de Dachau, 2016). It honored all the categories of prisoners that were accepted as “recognized” persecuted groups after 1945 and this included solely those people who were persecuted for political, racial or religious reasons. The fate of the others, the so-called “forgotten victims,” has only been a topic of research since the 1980s (Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, 2016).

There is one single pink triangle in the entire modern-day camp Memorial. It is buried deep within the Visitor’s Center museum that now fills the Nazi’s original administrative building. There are thirteen permanent exhibits in this building that are chronologically numbered from one end of the building to the other. A pink granite triangle is tucked away in the last exhibit, but it is easy to depart the building for the main barracks area and the rest of the camp before reaching the last exhibit.

Harold Marcuse (2001) spoke of the era in the 1960’s when the camp was being converted into a Memorial by the Comité International de Dachau:

At that time, many still saw homosexuality as a crime. Pink was banned by the survivors who commissioned the memorial. When gay activists wanted to put up a pink granite triangle memorial in that space in the 1970s, they were refused. It had to be placed in the Protestant memorial church at the far end of the former camp.

At some point, that granite panel was quietly moved to the obscure memorial room in the museum.

In a society like Germany that self-proclaims support of gay-rights, where public polls have long

shown the populace to be in favor of same-sex marriage, it seems to have taken a long time for acknowledgement, apology and atonement for the Pink Triangle prisoners. Perhaps a culture like Germany does not want to face embarrassing human rights violations in its own proud history. Or perhaps there is more to this historical relationship between conservative leadership and the will of the people. Using Hofstede's Dimensions of Culture, I will attempt to examine the phenomenon of both the perceived obscurity/absence of the symbol in its place of origin, while paradoxically, a majority of German citizens just voted in favor of gay-marriage.

GERMANY THROUGH HOFSTEDÉ'S DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE

In 1967, Geert Hofstede derived five dimensions of culture: 1) power distance, 2) uncertainty avoidance, 3) individualism-collectivism, 4) masculinity-femininity and 5) indulgence/restraint (Hofstede, 2010). Later, with the help of Canadian psychologist Michael Bond, Hofstede added a sixth dimension, long term-short term (Duarte & Tennant Snyder, 2006). Finally, in 2011, Michael Minkov worked with Hofstede on the development of monumentalism vs. self-effacement (Minkov, 2013).

Power Distance is the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions within a country expect/accept that power is distributed equally (Hofstede, 2016). Low power distance countries tend to be more participative, but also act with prudence and carefulness. In high power distance countries, citizens accept/expect that decisions are made with little or no consultation with their citizens (Duarte & Tennant Snyder, 2006). Germany, like the U.S. and the other countries mentioned here who already have monuments to the Pink Triangles, are considered low power distance (Hofstede, 2010). Highly decentralized and supported by a strong middle class, Germany is not surprisingly among the lower power distant countries (score 35) (Hofstede, 2010). Cultures with low power distance are striving to keep inequalities between people as low as possible (Dellner, 2009). As mentioned, public polls in Germany have long shown the populace to be in favor of same-sex marriage, it seems to have taken a long time for acknowledgement, apology and atonement from the government to reach fruition. Its citizens operate in moderation, following the "middle way", which is to say and do nothing to keep both sides, dominant and subordinate, happy (Duarte & Tennant Snyder, 2006). In this way they may be keeping themselves neutral.

Uncertainty Avoidance is the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these (Hofstede, 2016). Individuals from cultures that have high certainty desire closure and have anxiety in ambiguous situations where there are no right or wrong answers (Duarte & Tennant Snyder, 2006).

Germany is considered high for uncertainty avoidance with a score 65 (Hofstede, 2010). Cultures avoiding uncertainty see a menace in unfamiliar situations and try to minimize them through strict codes of behaviors and laws, though the populace has little interest in politics. (Dellner, 2009). While homosexuality has been in existence from the beginning of time, legal same-sex marriage is a relatively new global reality. In this sense, perhaps the acknowledgement of Pink Triangles is uncomfortable. Perhaps resurrecting the issue and “stirring the pot” keeps, the German society, and Dachau by extension, from adding them back to the monument, and keeps the conservative German government leadership from supporting gay-marriage.

Individualism versus Collectivism is the degree to which people prefer to act as individuals or groups (Duarte & Tennant Snyder, 2006). According to Hofstede (2010), in an individualistic society such as Germany (score 67), people express pride, loyalty, cohesiveness and devotion to their own organizations or families (Anjum & Kumar, 2011). A culture with high individualism is one in which there are loose ties between people, and individuals are expected to look after themselves. (Duarte & Tennant Snyder, 2006). In these cultures, transgressions against the norms result in shame (Dellner, 2009). As previously mentioned, Pink Triangle prisoners were not only marginalized in the camps, even among other prisoners, but homosexual survivors experienced a dearth of acknowledgement for their suffering for years after liberation. Culturally, homosexuals were isolated and expected to take care of themselves, even in acknowledgement of suffering.

An inclusion of ostracized social groups in the definition of Holocaust genocide challenges the notion of the Jewish genocide as unique within the context of the Holocaust, and maybe even makes it more important since the Pink Triangle prisoners experienced additional marginalization. This sentiment has even been articulated by famed Holocaust author Elie Weisel, who argued that “a focus on other victims may detract from the Judaic [sic] specificity of the Holocaust” (Hayes, 2016, p. 1). On the other hand, other scholars such as William J. Spurlin have suggested that such positions foster a misrepresentation of history and devalue the suffering of other victims of Nazi atrocities, and Simon Wiesenthal argues that “the Holocaust transcended the confines of Jewish community and that there were other victims” (as cited in Hayes, 2016, p. 1). Perhaps most individualistic Germans prefer to think of the survivors of the camps as Jews, and that is the group that needs to be acknowledged and memorialized. There may be no need to further acknowledge collective sects of victims like the Pink Triangles.

Germany ranks high on the masculine side of the Masculinity/Femininity dimension of culture (score

66) (Hofstede, 2010). The masculine orientation is more concerned with such things as possessions and with signs of visible success. These have a priority over a more caring/female orientation, which includes nurturing, cooperation, sharing and social justice (Duarte & Tennant Snyder, 2006). There is a literal demographic reason why there should have been a more feminine culture in Germany post-liberation. In the rubble after World War II, there were seven million more German women than men (Evans, 2012). In this atmosphere, when history of the Third Reich was first being recorded, a culture formed which was very different from that in other Western countries, one much more aimed at women (Evans, 2012). Even in this more “female” culture during the infancy of documenting accounts of the atrocities, though there may have been social justice aimed towards certain types of survivors, it seems that there was not a larger commitment to acknowledgement, apology and atonement toward homosexuals, at least initially.

Of all of the dimensions of culture, Germany ranks highest in long-term orientation, which values persistence (score 83) (Hofstede, 2010). This orientation may be evident in a decades-long resistance to acknowledging homosexuality, and even longer to legalizing gay-marriage. Most European countries occupy the low-to-middle range (a more short-term orientation which prefers more immediate returns) (Duarte and Tennant Snyder, 2006). In these cultures, actions should be based on virtue and satisfaction of needs should be delayed (Dellner, 2009). Consistent with delay of needs, Germany did not seem to have any long-term vision for offering acknowledgement and atonement to the Pink Triangle prisoners, which includes memorial sites. Harold Marcuse (2014), Associate Professor of Modern German History at UC Santa Barbara, commented on the missing Pink Triangles from the Glid monument:

Who determines what is and is not represented at the site? There’s a difference between remembering while there are still survivors. And once there are not people who had a stake in the events themselves, is it their children we will listen to about how to change the site? Is it they who will decide how we will commemorate? I think commemoration changes when there are no survivors, when those voices are gone. We don’t yet know whether the descendants of survivors want to have a say, or even whether they should have the primary say.

Certainly the generation gap creates a long-term cultural difference. The urgency to add a physical reminder to honor the victims simply is not there for grandchildren of those who suffered. They cannot know the same frame of reference, and so a type of generational amnesia is created. Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human

drives related to enjoying life and having fun. Restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms (Hofstede, 2016). The low score of 40 for this dimension indicates that the German culture is restrained in nature (Hofstede, 2010). Societies with a low score in this dimension have a tendency towards cynicism and pessimism. Also, in contrast to indulgent societies, restrained societies do not put much emphasis on leisure time and control the gratification of their desires. People with this orientation have the perception that their actions are restrained by social norms and feel that indulging themselves is somewhat wrong. If the social norms dictate that homosexuality is indulgent, there may be a cultural bias towards acknowledgement and atonement to Pink Triangle prisoners and same-sex marriage.

Finally, monumentalism is a cultural syndrome that stands for pride and an invariant self: a conviction that one must have an unchangeable identity and hold onto strong values, belief and norms (Minkov, 2013, p. 371). It also reflects avoidance of personal duality and inconsistency.

Self-effacement, on the other hand, encourages humility, flexibility, adaptation to the situation, and feeling comfortable about life's paradoxes and inconsistencies (Minkov, 2013, p. 372). Minkov measured Germany as a 99 on the monumentalism scale, though this is actually 38th out of 45 countries, indicating Germany ranks low in monumentalism and high in self-effacement (Minkov, 2013, p. 369). Perhaps the lack of the Pink Triangle memorials and/or government opposition to same-sex marriage in an otherwise highly sophisticated culture, could be explained as an unwillingness to assume a two-faced identity, or an inconsistency with previous treatment of Holocaust victims. However, overwhelming citizen support in Germany for gay-marriage may indicate more self-effacement: humility and flexibility towards changing cultural norms.

FURTHER RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

A somewhat "eighth" dimension of Hofstede's work, not included in the original seven, is based on the work of Edward Hall who presents a contextual dimension of communication (Duarte & Tennant Snyder, 2006). Hall and Hofstede worked on this dimension almost a decade after the original dimensions were published, and reported on this new primary characteristic of cultures (Hall, 1976). Context may be one of the more important cultural variables, as it refers to how people perceive the importance of different cues in communication (Duarte & Tennant Snyder, 2006). High-context cultures prefer more historical information and more subjective personal opinions. This may include information about the backgrounds of people involved, previous decisions and the history of the relationship (in this case, previous attitudes and treatment towards homosexuals in Germany). Low-

context cultures prefer more “fact-based”

information. Germany is considered a low context culture, which means that they do not want to consider any more information other than “just the facts”, which they may perceive as nonessential and frustrating. Perhaps this is a type of denial, and the German citizens would prefer not to reflect on this embarrassing part of their history.

Context, though, is a complicated topic for Germany in the case of Pink Triangles. Marcuse says (2014):

How the community of survivors chooses to commemorate is yet another issue. The community that is commemorating needs to have some say, but to what extent should one respect survivors’ rights if survivors are shutting out some of their own? Memorial sites ultimately reflect the goals of commemoration of the power-holders of a given time and place. They may or may not reflect what actually happened in the past, but rather the images of history that later generations hold and want to propagate. As those images and values evolve, so, too, do memorial sites. It’s a dialectical process: a changed memorial site can then in turn help to change and solidify new understandings of the past.

The Jewish community, for instance, does not wear yellow stars. That is not because anti-semitism is dead. Rather, the Jewish community rightfully rejects for itself anti-semitic emblems and labels (Elman, 1996). The LGBTQ community is very much aware of the politics of symbolism. In the first stages of anti-semitic policy, the Nazis insisted on undoing societal assimilation (separating and isolating homosexuals from the “norm”) by using the triangles (Elman, 1996). In other words, a group of people who were attempting to live relatively normal lives and blend-in to society in order to avoid imprisonment, were then arrested and forced to wear a symbol that highlighted their incarceration more than any other prisoners. The Pink Triangle has since been adopted as an international symbol of gay pride, although this new generation may not know the history behind it. Perhaps, the actual victims do not want it resurrected. Identification could have a paralyzing effect on the survivors.

With the exception of gay men, no other group that has survived the camps has proudly claimed the identifier that denoted their demise (Settington, 2013). Yet, unlike any other persecuted group, the requests of gay Holocaust survivors who want to be commemorated as the victims of Nazism had

gone largely ignored for decades after liberation. This is not because historians dispute their victimization, but because long-held dimensions of culture in German government may have overshadowed the effort to commemorate. While ignoring Nazi tyranny against gay men may be considered inexcusable, embracing the symbols of such persecution may offer affirmation only among those ignorant of, or careless with, the past. Indeed, the adoption of such symbols might have the unintended consequence of concealing rather than promoting consciousness of the Holocaust (Elman, 1996). With the exception of Holocaust survivors who object to the pink triangle being worn, those outside of the gay and lesbian communities are sometimes even less familiar with the historical associations of the triangle. One of the appeals of this symbol is precisely its obscurity. That is, the pink triangle is a “discreet” signifier (Elman, 1996).

CONCLUSION

Famed Holocaust author Viktor Frankl (2006) says it takes a special brand of resilience to begin again against such odds and to live in hope and not horror. And yet, when the Pink Triangle Holocaust survivors crawled out of the camps and into the future, they made a commitment to persevere for future generations of homosexual men, that these atrocities would not be forgotten and social justice would be accomplished. That burden is eased by living in a culture that acknowledges and validates their horrific concentration camp experience, and even memorializes it as a form of apology and atonement. Though Pink Triangles may not appear as obviously as they could, Germany seems to be striving towards becoming a culture of tolerance as history progresses. This is illustrated by the vote this past summer to lift the legal barrier to gay couples marrying and raising children.

Countries can cultivate and increase knowledge of diverse lifestyles in two ways: 1) facilitate such knowledge building at the level of individuals (perhaps by displaying more visible Pink Triangle memorials), and 2) build diversity in the composition of the country (or at least accept and embrace citizens of that lifestyle, in this case legalizing gay marriage) (Govindarajan & Gupta, 2002). These approaches complement each other. The former focuses on building cognitive diversity inside the mindsets of individuals, and the latter focuses on assembling a diverse knowledge base across the nation’s members (Govindarajan & Gupta, 2002).

Of course, one of the simplest explanations of the absence of Pink Triangles, is that the artist, Nandor Glid passed away in March 1997 (Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, 2016), and perhaps the members of the Comité International de Dachau did not want to alter his artwork posthumously. However, the question is at what point does “public” art become the property of the public and not

the artist? Is death of the artist an acceptable excuse for not acknowledging the Pink Triangle prisoners in some meaningful, observable, public way, especially within the camp memorials that now exist where concentration camps once stood. Prejudice, even unspoken widespread prejudice, should not be used to cover poor performance or used as excuses for poor performance. (Duarte and Tennant Snyder, 2006).

Perhaps even if deeply ingrained cultural dimensions of leadership keep Germany from displaying widespread visible Pink Triangles, the symbol and reminder of homosexual suffering during the Holocaust, at least it honor the victims' memories by moving towards social justice and legalizing same-sex marriage. Chancellor Merkel and her conservative counterparts, though they are following their consciences, are at least attempting to listen to their citizenry, recognizing the changes in social patterns in Germany, and accepting that old views are no longer the prevailing beliefs. That is progress.

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