Black Genocide, Reproductive Control, and the Crisis Pregnancy Center Movement: A Conspiracy Narrative of Racial Hegemonic Order

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Black Genocide, Reproductive Control, and the Crisis Pregnancy Center Movement: A Conspiracy Narrative of Racial Hegemonic Order

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies from The College of William and Mary

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April 27, 2016
Black Genocide, Reproductive Control, and the Crisis Pregnancy Center
Movement:

A Conspiracy Narrative of Racial Hegemonic Order

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Dedication:

In memory of the people of color across the globe who unfairly suffered from experimentation, violence, and death at the hands of American racism
Acknowledgements:

Many thanks to:

My mom, my dad, and my sister; Kelly O’Toole; Ryan Goss; Grandma Shirley, Grandpa Howard, Granny Lin, and Pops; Al Vernacchio; Eric Garrison; Victoria Castillo; Christy Burns, Bettina Judd, and Suzanne Raitt; Jennifer Putzi and the Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies department; William & Mary’s Roy R. Charles Center for Academic Excellence; and all of my wonderful friends and family from Philadelphia, William & Mary, HOPE, Which Wich, and beyond.
Chapter One:

An Introduction

Today in the United States, reproduction is frequently and understandably labeled as a "women's issue." It is often a woman's agency, or "right to choose," that comes into question within academic, media, and political discourses surrounding reproduction. What this perspective often fails to account for, however, are the many other facets of identity aside from gender that have the potential to influence a person's reproductive decisions. Over the past several decades, many individuals, organizations, and movements have brought attention to the role of race within the setting of reproduction by highlighting the possibility of black genocide.

The Civil Rights Congress was the first to formally introduce the concept of black genocide through their petition to the United Nations Convention on the Punishment of Genocide, "We Charge Genocide: The Historic Petition to the United Nations for Relief from a Crime of the United States Government Against the Negro People." The 1951 publication contended that the United States committed genocide against African-Americans, and it supported this assertion using the Convention's own definition of genocide. The Civil Rights Congress cited hundreds of documented and several thousand undocumented cases of wrongful executions and lynching, the disenfranchisement spawned by Jim Crow laws, and the broad,

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systemic economic and social inequalities that afflicted African-Americans on a daily basis as evidence of genocide against African-Americans in the United States.²

Over time this argument expanded to include other forms of prejudice and violence as several other indictments of black genocide continually sprung from the original charge of genocide. Malcolm X and other movements "skeptical of the system"³ revitalized black genocide discourse throughout the 1960s and 1970s, developing the notion to include all people of color, not just African-Americans, and adding a particular emphasis on the role of abortion, birth control, and sterilization in sustaining black genocide.⁴ In 1997, the National Black United Front (NBUF) petitioned the United Nations in response to the American crack epidemic. While referencing the original We Charge Genocide petition, the NBUF cited "[cuts] to welfare, privatization of public housing, public education and basic health care; racist immigration policies; and the building of prisons and the expanding incarceration of millions of African and Latino youth" as evidence of black genocide.⁵ In November of 2014, a Chicago-based grassroots group called We Charge Genocide sent eight youth activists to Geneva, Switzerland, to present evidence of police violence to the United Nations Committee Against Torture.⁶ Each

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² "Red Plot or Indictment?: UN Asked to Act Against Genocide in the United States," *Baltimore Afro-American*, December 22, 1951.
⁶ We Charge Genocide, http://wechargegenocide.org/.
of these events demonstrates that black genocide encompasses a wide range of matters.

Throughout its history, the concept of black genocide has been provided as an example to deter women of color from abortion. Although black genocidal arguments concerning abortion generally find their roots in people, organizations, and movements of color who were concerned with the preservation and uplifting of the black race, the modern day manifestation of this phenomenon largely takes the form of crisis pregnancy centers (also known as "pregnancy resource centers"). A Congressional report drafted at the request of Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D) describes these centers:

"Pregnancy resource centers" are virtually always pro-life organizations whose goal is to persuade teenagers and women with unplanned pregnancies to choose motherhood or adoption. They do not offer abortions or referrals to abortion providers. In addition to initial counseling for pregnant teens and women, some centers may provide support services or referrals to prenatal care.

7 "Black Panthers and members of the Nation of Islam placed sterilization abuse and other birth control methods, viewed as coercive population control, within a larger context of concern about the overall welfare of blacks [...] Frances Ruffin [...] expressed her understanding of the black militant's legitimate paranoia about genocide: '[...Black Militants realized that] the thrust of government funds to public and private birth control programs followed on the heels of urban upheavals of the mid 60's—such programs were previously out of reach for many Black Women.'" See Jennifer Nelson, Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 87.

This remarkable change in approach shifts the locus of black genocidal arguments surrounding abortion from communities of color to pro-life, religious-leaning organizations. This trend necessitates some degree of exploration when considered in conjunction with the greater narrative of black-white relations. In his book, *Genocide?*, Robert Weisbord writes:

To fully grasp the inclination of some Afro-Americans to equate birth control [or abortion] with a genocidal campaign against them, it is necessary to comprehend what the late Malcolm X meant when he quipped: 'We didn't land on Plymouth Rock. It landed on us.' In other words, it is necessary to acknowledge the grim realities of the history of black-white relations, a history which, until the 1960s, was usually ignored, glossed over, or distorted. When the unvarnished truth is clearly presented, it reveals that for centuries blacks have repeatedly played the role of anvil to the white role of hammer.10

The transition from communities of color to pro-life crisis pregnancy centers could very well constitute the beating of the hammer that Weisbord laments—particularly when observed against the backdrop of women of color's nuanced and troubled history with reproductive and sexual healthcare within the United States medical

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establishment, which includes disposable bodies as test subjects, forced sterilization, sexual violence, and other atrocities that could qualify as acts of black genocide.

With this in mind, this thesis will isolate and interpret reproductive rhetoric within black genocide discourses starting from their conception through the late 1970s. It will then compare these discourses of the past to those of the present as it places particular emphasis on crisis pregnancy centers and their use of the black genocide framework as a means of anti-abortion activism. Upon tracing this history, I will discuss the considerations of the crisis pregnancy appropriation of the black genocide narrative.

**Conspiracy Theory vs. Conspiracy Narrative**

One of the immediate issues that underlie the execution of this thesis is that black genocide is often understood—and subsequently dismissed—as a conspiracy


12 The practice of forcibly sterilizing those seen as "mentally unfit," those on welfare, and those with genetic defects had become common practice in the United States by the 1930s. Some doctors would remove a woman’s uterus or otherwise render her infertile under false pretexts. The practice of sterilizing black women without their permission or knowledge became so commonplace that the procedure was nicknamed a "Mississippi appendectomy," See Harriet A. Washington, *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 202-205.

13 Ibid. 189-216.
theory of massive proportions. Mark Fenster explains, "Employing the term 'conspiracy theory' serves as a strategy of delegitimation in political discourse. Conspiracy theory has come to represent a political Other to a 'proper' democratic politics." This form of othering results in harmful rhetoric (particularly that of victim-blaming) and consequences for people of color being ignored or dismissed on the basis of their implied "culture of victimhood." Fenster writes:

Consider, for example, the reaction to allegations in the *San Jose Mercury News* in 1996 that Nicaraguan contra agents with ties to the CIA played a central role in the introduction of crack cocaine to American cities. The nation's most well-respected newspapers considered both the allegations and the outrage they aroused among African-Americans either to be the result of pathological conspiracy theorizing or "fueled" by a black community whose indigenous "rumor mill" was particularly susceptible to conspiracy theories. One book on conspiracy theory considered the episode to represent the "overtly conspiracy minded" nature of "the black community," who refused to believe the media investigation that claimed to uncover no evidence of direct CIA involvement in cocaine trafficking. The book's author, Daniel Pipes, blamed black journalists and leaders [...] for the vulnerability of African-Americans to reports that the responsibility for the tragic circumstances of the African-American poor is not their own.

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14 An article from *Mother Jones*, a popular progressive news magazine, analyzed the black genocide conspiracy narrative as part of its series covering conspiracies. They ultimately gave the black genocide narrative a "Kookiness Rating" of five out of five, which signifies that readers should "break out the tinfoil hat!" See Titiana Kume, "Conspiracy Watch: Is Abortion Black Genocide?" *Mother Jones*, October 12, 2010, Accessed April 14, 2016, http://www.motherjones.com/media/2010/09/abortion-black-genocide.


16 Ibid, xi-xii.
The use of a "conspiracy theory" framework therefore presents the concerning dilemma of inadvertently perpetuating racism in a thesis that aims to study race and race-based violence. I suggest that a more valuable way of tackling the issue of black genocide is not to view it through the lens of theory, but that of narrative.

One problematic aspect of the conspiracy theory framework is that it exposes the subject of its focus to unnecessary criticism. Fenster acknowledges that a "paradox is at work in the name itself: as a conspiracy theory it is a simplification of a presumptively "complex" reality; but as a conspiracy theory, it is a labyrinthine explanation of that which could be, and often is, more easily explained another way."\(^{17}\) As is often the case with grievances of substance brought up by communities of color, conspiracy theories are similarly constrained by a double standard that states that the accounts they present are at once too simple to be accurate and too complex to be viable. To assume these contradictory expectations as the standard for this thesis could be a subtle marginalization of perfectly valid concerns.

In addition to this, the lens of theory imposes a binary system where there is none. A theory ultimately exists to be either proven or disproven and therefore a conspiracy is primarily judged on the basis of whether it is or it is not. This binary also denies the possibility that an event could have occurred, yet was experienced in a multitude of ways—what one person may empirically define as genocide according to a specific theory, for example, another person may write off entirely.

\(^{17}\) Ibid, 121.
based upon the very same definition. Narratives, on the other hand, allow for that missing spectrum of possibility in that they not only recognize the weight and totality of the variety of interpretations that conspiracies have to offer, but they also acknowledge their roots and the undeniably tangible effects that they may have on the people who listen and adhere to them. This idea is easily explained by the fact that narratives, unlike theories, can more easily provide meaningful lessons in spite (and perhaps because) of the fact that they are sometimes ambiguous or plainly false (e.g. parables, legends, etc.). In other words, narratives are conscious of both the content and the context of conspiracies. In this sense, the narrative lens provides an optimal perspective, as this thesis is not simply interested in the objective "truth" of black genocide. Rather, it concerns itself with the formulation, trajectory, and overall effects of black genocide discourse.

In order to fully take into account the context of black genocide—the experiences of those who perceive, acknowledge and live the black genocide narrative every day—this thesis will acknowledge the considerable precedent for brutality against black people in the United States that justly inspires a belief in

\footnote{18 Raphael Lemkin, the inventor of the term "Genocide" and the initiator of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, asserted that the Civil Rights Congress' petition to the Convention was "a communist dodge" The Chicago Daily Tribune, claimed that African-Americans were attempting to "discredit their own country." See "The Genocide Trap," Chicago Daily Tribune, December 22, 1951, 8. Lemkin additionally cited the text of the Convention's definition of genocide and said that "genocide means annihilation and destruction, not merely discrimination," despite the fact that the definition for genocide includes "serious bodily or mental harm for members of the group." See "Red Plot or Indictment?: UN Asked to Act Against Genocide in the United States."}
black genocide. As the Civil Rights Congress aptly demonstrated through its petition, the United States possesses an extensive history of racism and violence that has taken place on every conceivable level, ranging from the individual to the state. In fact, it is worth noting that there are commonly accepted conspiracies that indicate a horrific statewide disregard for the lives and perspectives of black people, such as the Tuskegee experiments and the FBI's COINTELPRO. These examples, among others, lend themselves to the idea that a black genocide in America is not inconceivable and is therefore worthy of discussion.

Aiding me in the endeavor to write about black genocide is the conspiracy narrative's unique approach towards notions of past and present. Fenster explains that conspiracy narratives are "a melding of fact and fiction, and [are] at [their] core an attempt to tell a particular kind of story about present conditions through reference to the past. Thus, most conspiracy narratives by definition assert some

19 The Tuskegee Experiment was a 40-year study in which the U.S. Public Health Service studied the natural, untreated progression for Syphilis in African-American men. Those who conducted the study never informed the men that they had the disease, nor did they provide them with treatment once it became readily available. See Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Tuskegee Timeline," Last Updated September 24, 2013, http://www.cdc.gov/tuskegee/timeline.htm.
20 The FBI's COINTELPRO (COunter INTElligence PROgram) was an expansive covert operation to "1. Create a negative public image [...] 2. Break down internal organization [...] 3. Create dissension between groups [...] 4. Restrict access to organizational resources [...] 5. Restrict organizational capacity to protest [...] 6. Hinder the ability of targeted individuals to participate in group activities" within target groups. See Mathieu Deflem, Surveillance and Governance: Crime Control and beyond, (Bingley, UK: Emerald/JAI, 2008), 182-185. COINTELPRO used tactics such as eavesdropping/surveillance, harassment, intimidation, and violence against groups such as black civil rights organizations and Black Nationalist organizations. See Charles A. Gallagher and Cameron D. Lippard, Race and Racism in the United States: an encyclopedia of the American mosaic, (Santa Barbara, California: Greenwood, 2014), 277-279.
particular historical truth about the distribution of power."\textsuperscript{21} At the heart of the black genocide narrative, as this thesis will soon reveal, is the "gripping, dramatic story"\textsuperscript{22} that resides within all conspiracy narratives: the perennial struggle for power—specifically, in this case, the struggle of racial survival and supremacy. It is a story that attempts to achieve justice and reach resolution. It is with this story in mind that I attempt to speak truth to power; to marry the past and present as a means of determining whether this story, told in a very specific way within a very specific context is problematic given its perceived meaning and actual context.

In the interest of properly conveying the conspiracy narrative of black genocidal discourse and practices surrounding abortion, I turn to an online humor column entitled, "Selections From The Cosby Codex." The Cosby Codex, cleverly penned by James Fleming, a Ph.D. student from Central Florida, attempts to "offer the definitive theoretical reading of The Cosby Show, a foundational text in Late Postmodern Western Culture."\textsuperscript{23} Of course, I must first point out the profound irony in introducing a thesis concerning black genocide with excerpts from a parodic blog that examines obscure subjects such as ontological ruptures, Blakian prophetic mythology, and Satanic agency within one of America’s most easily recognizable black families—the Huxtables. Where is the conspiracy? What is there to theorize? Aside from the shared quality of black identity, how are The Cosby Show and black

\textsuperscript{21} Fenster, 107.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid, 106.
genocide at all linked? Perhaps most pointedly—why bother with such an irreverent comparison—one that can only beckon a sense of confusion, wonderment, or abhorrence—when this body of work should ultimately be defined by its succinct arguments, tangible evidence, and laser-like focus on the overall subject matter?

Perhaps in referring to this text I take the necessary risk of revealing my own distance from this thesis: Just as the Huxtables ostensibly reside more or less separately from the horrors of black genocide in the minds of most Americans, I too bear little apparent relation to this topic. I am, after all, a white, heterosexual, cisgender man raised in a wealthy Jewish neighborhood outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I cannot pretend to fully understand blackness, or womanhood, or black womanhood; much less the anger that black genocide provokes or the fear of walking into a strange building in order to inquire about abortion-related services. Apart from the fact that I am a Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies major, I cannot identify any obvious personal relation to the subjects that I am about to tackle. My field of study would dictate that the Huxtables and I both live in a sexual and racial world that inextricably ties me to such subjects. Yet, I realize that my connection to this thesis does not wholly lie within my study of feminism. Rather, given the conspiracy narrative lens that I have chosen to use for this thesis, it additionally stems from my study of literature—and what better way is there to introduce the "gripping, dramatic story" at the core of this undertaking than with the beloved literary device of the metaphor?
As it turns out, *The Cosby Show* serves as an excellent microcosm for the nature of conspiracy, truth, and narrative as it pertains to the creation and maintenance of power structures. In a post entitled "Selection 10: Conspiracy, Paranoia and Simulacra in the Huxtable Narrative or the Crying of 10 Stigwood Avenue," Fleming writes that "[The Huxtables] operate in terms of conspiracy, which in turn suggests that the Huxtable narrative itself is something of an allegory of mid to late 20th century Postmodern American political culture."²⁴ I’d argue that this allegory extends beyond this period into the modern-day. Today's mass media consistently perpetuates conspiracy discourse: the Edward Snowden NSA files; the *Realpolitik* of the invasion of Iraq; 9/11; Global warming; GMOs; the wars on Christmas, guns, oil, poverty, religion, science, and women; President Obama's birth certificate; "Deflategate" and the other '-gate' scandals of late; and more. In their sum, these examples indicate that the language of conspiracy is very much part of American, everyday lexicon. It is, perhaps more than ever, an acceptable mechanism for understanding the past and present and generating change within the current socio-political climate.

Perhaps most interestingly, these examples acknowledge a cynical, yet prevalent belief that people are motivated not by their sense of morality or ethics, but largely by their own self-interest. With this in mind, Fleming argues that the mode of conspiracy acts as a medium of instilling and maintaining hegemonic order. The Huxtables appear to be a vision of either a normal or idealized black American

²⁴ Ibid.
family at first glance. Upon further inspection, however, the facade of what was once considered ordinary or benign is lifted and there awaits a raw and powerful drama. Fleming writes:

the younger Huxtable generation [begin] themselves, especially in the later seasons of the show, to actively conspire against their parents. Cliff, by the conclusion of the Huxtable narrative, becomes a man of profound paranoia who firmly believes and insists that his children and their spouses and offspring 'want the house' (i.e. they want to control and the Huxtable hegemony) and are actively conspiring, through grand manipulations and veritable guerilla war tactics, to gain possession of and agency over it.25

Although it is only a single, subtle example of the many Machiavellian dramas that are popularized by television and film,26 the Huxtable narrative surely mirrors the larger racial narrative occurring in the United States. Just as the Huxtable family is portrayed as a depiction of a normal or ideal family and as an embrace of diverse backgrounds and perspectives, the United States has long portrayed itself simultaneously as the international standard for excellence and as the great 'melting pot.' Despite this, there rests a racial conflict in American culture that pits two groups that, at their most basic understanding (and with respect to the notion that there are other factors that make this binary practically [not theoretically] impossible), are as arbitrarily determined as the opposing camps of the Huxtable narrative: White people ("the parents") retain control of racial hegemonic order whereas people of color ("the children") resist that hierarchy. Oftentimes, these groups suffer from the sense of paranoia that similarly plagues the Huxtable

25 Ibid.
26 A few examples include 24, Breaking Bad, House of Cards, Game of Thrones, Homeland, Sherlock, and The Talented Mr. Ripley.
narrative. They eye each other warily, constantly suspecting that one wants to exploit or eliminate the other. They too, react by operating in terms of conspiracy: the black genocide conspiracy narrative is just one of many responses to the numerous conspiracies that white communities have similarly crafted. All of these conspiracies, of course, exist in order to understand, define, and ultimately possess control over the racial hegemonic order.

The American pursuit for racial hegemonic order is concerning in itself, yet Fleming reveals another element of conspiracy narratives:

Conspiracy narratives [...] sometimes serve to convince others of the existence of a conspiracy, even when such doesn’t exist (take, for example, the letters and manifesto of the Unabomber, narratives which served to suggest that there was a collective conspiracy behind the Unabomber’s actions when, in fact, it was a singular conspiracy). Not only does this thesis run the unavoidable risk of analyzing a conspiracy that may not exist, but the Unabomber example also demonstrates that it must confront the possibility that the black genocide conspiracy narrative may very well be a front for a larger conspiracy. The Cosby Show, for example, was largely defined by its depiction of blackness and was created by a man (Bill Cosby) who was (and perhaps still is, even in the midst of the current sexual assault allegations against him)

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27 One example of a white conspiracy narrative was a belief in and fear of a "white slave traffic" operated by foreigners and African-Americans in the early 1900s. The 'moral panic' surrounding the white slave traffic was the basis for the enactment of the White Slave Traffic Act of 1910, also known as "The Mann Act," which was often used to target political foes, including famous boxer, Jack Johnson. See David Langum, "Prostitutes, Progressives, and Moral Panic, 1907-1914," In Crossing Over the Line: Legislating Morality and the Mann Act, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 15-47.

28 Fleming, "Selection 10: Conspiracy, Paranoia and Simulacra in the Huxtable Narrative or the Crying of 10 Stigwood Avenue."
similarly defined by his perspective on and contributions to black culture. Ironically, however, *The Cosby Show* devolved into a justification for racism. Henry Louis Gates Jr. writes:

As long as all blacks were represented in demeaning or peripheral roles, it was possible to believe that American racism was, as it were, indiscriminate. The social vision of "Cosby," however, reflecting the minuscule integration of blacks into the upper middle class [...] reassuringly throws the blame for black poverty back onto the impoverished.

[...]

[There is] a belief that social policies affecting black Americans were largely determined by our popular images in the media. But the success of the "Cosby" show has put the lie to that myth: "Cosby" exposes more white Americans than ever before to the most nobly idealized blacks in the history of entertainment, yet social and economic conditions for the average black American have not been bleaker in a very long time.

[...]

To make matters worse, "Cosby" is also one of the most popular shows in apartheid South Africa, underscoring the fact that the relationship between how whites treat [black people] and their exposure to "the best" in [black people] is far from straightforward. (One can hear the Afrikaaner speaking to his black servants: "When you people are like Cliff and Clare, then we will abandon apartheid.").

Ultimately, it is clear that while *The Cosby Show* was originally meant to discredit racism, it came to additionally represent a justification for racism; in particular it came to represent a subtle form of discrimination specific to the "respectability

politic" that Bill Cosby promoted throughout his career. As the example of *The Cosby Show* demonstrates, a narrative can be interpreted and implemented in wholly opposite fashions. As such, it is important to point out the disturbing possibility that the particular Huxtable conundrum of anti-racist material and discourse being used to preserve racism has repeated itself in the crisis pregnancy center movement’s use of the black genocide narrative and to the effect of maintaining the current American racial hegemonic order.

It is with this possibility in mind that I establish the method I will use to analyze the potential vulnerabilities of the crisis pregnancy center movement’s use of the black genocide narrative. This thesis will focus primarily on the concept of narrative appropriation. It will highlight first and foremost the importance of respecting narratives in their history and originality—an approach that is actually highly compatible with both feminist, religious, and cultural nationalist

perspectives, among others that might come into play within this thesis, given each of their individual emphases on the importance of narrative. Chapters two and three will discuss the history of the black genocide narrative from its introduction through the late 1970s. Chapter four will then discuss the history of the crisis pregnancy center movement and its use of the black genocide narrative. Through the exploration of these histories and the various points at which they intersect, this thesis will ultimately reveal the ways that the crisis pregnancy center movement exploits the black genocide narrative and perpetuates white racial hegemonic order through its marginalization of women of color.
Chapter 2:
"We Charge Genocide:"
*The Historic Petition to the United Nations*

Paul Robeson and William L. Patterson of the Civil Rights Congress delivered to the United Nations a petition entitled, *We Charge Genocide: The Historic Petition to the United Nations for Relief from a Crime of the United States Government Against the Negro People*. Paul Robeson, accompanied by signers of the petition, presented the document to a United Nations official in New York. The Secretary of the Civil Rights Congress, William L. Patterson, delivered the petition to United Nations delegates meeting in Paris.\(^{31}\) The document, which was signed by leading African-American activists and individuals who had suffered due to the American legal system, among many others, included: W.E.B. Du Bois, George Crockett Jr., New York City Communist councilman, Benjamin J. Davis, Jr.\(^ {32}\) Rosalee Mcgee, the widow of Willie McGee,\(^ {33}\) Josephine Grayson, widow of Frances DeSales Grayson, one of the Martinsville Seven,\(^ {34}\) Amy Mallard and Doris Mallard, respectively the widow and

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\(^{32}\) Ibid.

\(^{33}\) In 1945 Willie McGee was arrested for raping a white housewife. In 1946 the Civil Rights Congress took over his case and handled his trial and subsequent appeals. See All Things Considered, "My Grandfather’s Execution," *NPR*, May 7, 2010, Accessed April 14, 2016,

\(^{34}\) In 1949 seven African-American men were convicted and executed for raping a white a white woman. The Civil Rights Congress raised awareness of the case and coordinated a campaign for clemency on their behalf. See Eric W. Rise, "Race, Rape, and Radicalism: The Case of the Martinsville Seven, 1949-1951." *The Journal of Southern History* Vol. 58, No. 3 (August 1992), 461-490.
daughter of Robert Mallard, and Paul Washington. The Petition, one of the first of its kind, alleged that the United States had, according to the definition set by the United Nations, committed genocide against African-Americans.

The *We Charge Genocide* petition ultimately challenged universal notions of what constitutes "true" genocide. Understanding this, it is important to illustrate where the black genocide narrative's vision of genocide does and does not align with several proposed definitions of genocide. Whether or not the black genocide narrative's vision of genocide is ultimately precise to either international law or conventional notions of genocide, understanding the meaning of genocide is still imperative toward understanding its relative infamy in comparison to other claimed genocides or conspiracy narratives and toward further unraveling the profound effect that this narrative has sustained over a period of decades.

**The Meaning of Genocide**

Genocide, a combination of *geno-* from the Greek word for race or tribe, and *cide*, which stems from the Latin word for killing, is a relatively new word in the English language. In 1944, a Polish-Jewish lawyer named Raphael Lemkin coined the

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35 Robert Mallard was a Georgia man who was lynched for trying to vote. See Red Plot or Indictment?: UN Asked to Act Against Genocide in the United States," 19.
36 Paul Washington was a man who, at the time of the petition's submission, faced the death penalty on an attack charge. Ibid.
term in order to describe the Nazi policies of systematic murder.\textsuperscript{37} In his work, \textit{Axis Rule in Occupied Europe}, Lemkin partially describes genocide in the following manner:

Generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be the disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups. Genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group.\textsuperscript{38}

Lemkin successfully campaigned for the universal creation and acceptance of international laws defining and outlawing genocide and the United Nations General Assembly had congregated the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1948. By January of 1951, twenty nations had ratified the convention, although this did not include the United States.\textsuperscript{39}

The convention, however, seemed to elevate the physical acts of genocide above the psychological acts highlighted in Lemkin's definition of genocide. The

definition for genocide as laid out by the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which will also serve as the definition of genocide for this thesis given the Civil Rights Congress’ original use of this definition to illustrate the idea of black genocide, is as follows:

(a) Killing members of the group;
(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life, calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.40

The We Charge Genocide petition touches upon various elements of the Convention’s definition of genocide. In particular, it brought attention to sections A, B, and C. Over the course of the next several decades, several cultural nationalist movements would bring attention to section D through their emphasis on birth control, abortion, and sterilization.

Perhaps more importantly, the petition held the Convention accountable for the words "in whole or in part" (emphasis mine), which refers to the destruction of any one particular group. The Civil Rights Congress asserted that "[a]n effort to eradicate a portion of a people thus qualifies as genocide insofar as international law is concerned. An act of genocide need not entail a bid to murder every man,

woman, and child in any group.” This is an important distinction, yet it is also one that ultimately undermines the black genocide conspiracy narrative due to the commonly held belief that genocide represents the ultimate crime against humanity: violence enacted to its fullest extent. Several critics, including Lemkin himself, took the opportunity to voice this concern. He wrote:

'1. Genocide means annihilation and destruction, not merely discrimination. The colored race in America is increasing in population.
'2. The crime of genocide requires specific 'intent to destroy' a people. This is the fundamental requirement, which must be proven—not presumed.
'In fact, President Truman has been fighting to help the colored people and improve their opportunities. The Supreme Court has ruled against segregation.
'3. The convention outlaws destroying in whole, or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such.' The petitioners list killings, lynchings and race riots. But these are actions against individuals—not intended to destroy a race.
'4. The petitioners complain against 'serious bodily or mental harm'. Genocide does not mean simply fear. Genocide means actual disintegration of minds as a result of tortures and physical agony.
'5. The petitioners complain against 'conditions of life calculated to bring about' physical destruction of a group. They cite depressing wages and difficulties in employment as examples. These may be unjust and discriminatory, but they are not intended to destroy the colored race. Existence on a lower level is not the same as non-existence.'

These criticisms provide the legal bases that continue to work today against the designation of black genocide as 'true' genocide.

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41 Weisbord, 12.
42 "Red Plot or Indictment?: UN Asked to Act Against Genocide in the United States," 19.
That said, the petition additionally calls into question the relevancy of these criticisms by drawing attention to the role of the Convention: Was it meant to prevent genocide? Or was it meant to simply designate it as such after the fact? In a section entitled "Why the Genocide Convention Was Passed," the petition cites Justice Robert H. Jackson's opening statement at the Nuremberg trial:

'[T]he German mistreatment of Germans is now known to pass in magnitude and savagery any limits of what is tolerable by modern civilization. Other nations by silence would take a consenting part in such crimes. These Nazi persecutions, moreover, take character as international crimes because of the purpose for which they were undertaken. If aggressive warfare in violation of treaty obligations is a matter of international cognizance, the preparation for it must also be of concern to the international community. Terrorism was the chief instrument for securing the cohesion of the German people in war purposes.' (Italics [The Civil Rights Congress])

In citing the Justice Jackson's statement before the Nuremberg trial, one of the precursors to the UN Convention, the Civil Rights Congress pointed out the potential hypocrisy in refusing to acknowledge black genocide. According to the Civil Rights Congress, if the world were to ignore the issue of black genocide it would subvert the foundation of the Convention and constitute a severe error in priority. These beliefs, of course, may not have been so far off, considering that the We Charge Genocide petition was mired within Cold War politics.

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43 Civil Rights Congress, 31-32.
44 Martin, 35-36.
Cold War Politics

The fear of Communism had taken a strong hold of American politics even before the *We Charge Genocide* petition was drafted. The American ratification of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was contentious from the start. Although the Truman administration supported the ratification, it was met with resistance from Congress. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a series of public hearings in early 1950 that discussed the possible effects of ratifying the genocide convention. Although there were several religious leaders and representatives from various groups concerned with the Soviet Union’s treatment of Eastern Europeans whom both hoped to describe the possible utility of the Convention as a means of establishing American leadership within the world arena, the American Bar Association argued that it also had the potential to subject the United States to unnecessary criticism.\(^{45}\)

The preparation and submission of the *We Charge Genocide* petition a year later by the Civil Rights Congress (an organization with suspected, if not known Communist sympathies)\(^ {46}\) only added to the tensions sparked by the claim of genocide. Indeed, Lemkin additionally claimed that the petition was "not drafted in good faith, but [was] a communist dodge to distract attention from the soviet union’s multitudinous genocide offenses against Estonians, Latvians, Lituanians,


\(^ {46}\) The Subversive Activities Control Board designated the Civil Rights Congress as a "subversive organization" after it had posted bail for four Communist leaders. See "Civil Rights Congress Quits," *The Chicago Defender*, January 21, 1956, 8.
Poles, and other people subjected by Moscow."\textsuperscript{47} The \textit{Chicago Daily Tribune}, which reported on this statement, characterized African-Americans as traitorous propagandists seeking to "discredit their own country."\textsuperscript{48} These ties to Communism, which were so toxic that they led to the dissolution of the Civil Rights Congress in 1956,\textsuperscript{49} may very well have doomed the concept of black genocide to forever remain at the fringe of intellectual debate and be ridiculed as a manifestation of irrational and unpatriotic thought.

This is not to say, however, that the \textit{We Charge Genocide} petition was wholly rebuked—in fact, it was met with strong praise from the global community. Several major French newspapers covered the story and raised fairly critical questions as to its representation of and impact on race relations in America.\textsuperscript{50} One Paris correspondent for the \textit{Pittsburgh Courier} reported that many Europeans believed that African-Americans suffered on a daily basis, claiming that this perspective came from "the Communist Parties of Europe, which have used the Negro problem as a means of turning European opinion against America."\textsuperscript{51} Telepress, a Czech news agency, distributed Civil Rights Congress news releases throughout Eastern Europe. Meanwhile, the Civil Rights Congress translated the document into French, Spanish, Hungarian, and Czech, among other languages. The span of the story reached so far, in fact, that African-American writer J. Saunders Redding found himself routinely

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{49} "Civil Rights Congress Quits," 8.
\textsuperscript{50} Martin, 53.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
asked about American racial discrimination while on a tour of India—some even asked specifically about Willie McGee and the Martinsville Seven cases. He quickly learned that the majority of educated Indians were adamant in their belief that Americans were "unalterably prejudiced against nonwhites."52

The State Department, facing the world's scrutiny of the racial climate in America, the Civil Rights Congress' Communist ties, and the wide circulation of the petition among pro-Soviet groups, rightly began to fear that the petition would highlight the problematic racial attitudes associated with Western imperialism and colonialism.53 The petition asserted:

[M]onopoly capital is the prime mover in this conspiracy to commit genocide because of the four billion dollars it derives annually from it, and because of the political and economic control it maintains through it. We have alleged that the Government of the United States is the creature of this monopoly capital. This is definitely proved by the fact that almost every key government post in the fabulously lucrative mobilization for war is held by Wall Street representatives. The holders of these posts control the economic life of the United States through controlling the Government of the United States and they use both for their own profit. There was a time when Wall Street governed by pressure and influence. It now governs directly.

[...]

These [Wall Street representatives] are one reason, and a powerful one, that President Truman refuses to create a Fair Employment Practices Commission by executive order, as President Roosevelt did. They are one of the reasons he refuses to use his clear power as commander-in-chief of the armed forces to end segregation, discrimination and jim crow in the Army, Navy and Marine Corps of the United States [...] The political climate these monopolists generate

52 Martin, 54.
53 Ibid.
contributes to an atmosphere in which the Supreme Court upholds the poll tax.54

The petition did not simply point out the racism inherent within American society. It had also called attention to the racism of the "monopoly capital" that was central to American identity as the United States waged a Cold War against the forces of Communism.55

The threat that the petition posed, especially the assertion that capitalism was a tool of American racism, forced the State Department to take swift action. The State Department appealed to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to publicly reject the Civil Rights Congress' petition before the petition was even presented to the United Nations. Although the NAACP had previously submitted its own petition to the United Nations describing biased state laws, discriminatory practices, and the role of the United Nations as it pertained to human rights and racial minorities in 1947,56 the group happily complied and slammed the petition as "a gross and subversive conspiracy."57 The NAACP's criticism of the petition, in addition to the governmental use of several "patriotic" black people as featured speakers abroad and stateside, undermined the petition's credibility among African-Americans.58 After the petition was submitted to the United Nations William Patterson was ordered to surrender his passport in Paris by

54 Civil Rights Congress,167-170.
57 Martin, 46.
58 Ibid, 56.
U.S. officials. Anticipating such an action, Patterson had arranged a flight to Budapest, Hungary. He later gave several speeches in Budapest and in Prague, Czechoslovakia, denouncing American racism and the United States government for their censorial efforts.\textsuperscript{59} Patterson later returned the United States to find, however, that despite international interest in the petition, governmental efforts to suppress the Civil Rights Congress’ efforts were successful and the Civil Rights Congress struggled to stay afloat.

Although the petition ultimately failed to make an immediate and visible impression on American policy when it was first introduced, it paved the way for a new conceptualization of race relations. By providing genocide as a possible explanation for American racism, the Civil Rights Congress established a trend of questioning and rejecting long-held American ideals that would continue throughout the lifespan of black genocidal discourse. Additionally, the American government’s suppression of petition and the implications surrounding it marked the first of many attempts from larger agencies to subvert the black genocide narrative. The black genocidal argument settled into relative silence in the decade following the introduction of the petition, but it would soon experience a renaissance in the 1960s and 1970s as various cultural nationalist movements revamped the idea of black genocide. Inspired by the petition, they laid siege against the ills of American capitalism and the destructive forces of big government through their allegation of black genocide in America and abroad.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, 50.
Chapter 3:  

*The Black Genocide Narrative of the 1960s and 1970s*

In the 1960s the Civil Rights movement shifted radically towards a new and more confrontational approach of negotiating racial identity and survival. The rise of cultural nationalist ideologies oversaw a series of both political and social rebellions against racist oppression that lasted well through the 1970s. Inspired in part by the Civil Rights Congress petition and the various instances of governmental overstep and forced sterilization and birth control measures, cultural nationalists renewed popular interest in black genocide as an explanation for the oppression inflicted upon people of color in America. This is not to say, however, that all cultural nationalists were of a uniform mindset: an examination of the Nation of Islam, the Black Panther Party, and the Young Lords Party of New York reveals the unique conditions and subsequent motivations behind black genocidal discourse that are crucial towards understanding the black genocide narrative’s current manifestation within the crisis pregnancy center movement of today.

*The Nation of Islam*

The Nation of Islam, which was founded in the 1930s in Detroit and later unified by the spiritual leader Elijah Muhammad in Chicago,\(^{60}\) has a very specific theology pertaining to black-white relations that directly influences its stance on

\(^{60}\) Nelson, 85.
birth control. According to Muhammad, the "white race is a race that was produced by using birth control law."\(^6^1\) Black Muslims believe that approximately 6,600 years ago, there was a black scientist named Yakub who studied the "life germ of man." Yakub discovered that black people were made of two parts, one black and one brown and that "he could successfully separate the one from the other [and] he could graft the brown germ into its last stage, which would be white [...]and] rule the black nation for a time." Yakub's plan to create a new race quickly amassed a large following and he and his disciples were eventually exiled. During this time, Yakub began a series of deceptive eugenic practices in order to execute his plan.\(^6^2\) In one instance, he ensured that only people with the brown germ could marry (and procreate) by ordering a doctor to:

> let all the people come to you who want to marry; and if there come to you two real black ones, take a needle and get a little of their blood and go into your room and pretend to be examining it, to see whether their blood will mix. Then, come and tell them that they will each have to find another mate, because their blood does not mix. [...] Give them a certificate to take to the minister, warning the minister against marrying the couple because their blood does not mix. When there comes to you two browner ones, take a pretended blood test of them; but, give them a certificate saying that they are eligible to marry.\(^6^3\)

In another instance that Muhammad labels the "beginning of the first lie or liar,"

Yakub ordered nurses to take possession of black babies once they were born by lying to their mothers and saying that they are "angel child[ren]" who will meet their mothers in heaven. The nurses would then feed the babies to wild beasts or

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\(^6^1\) Elijah Muhammad, *Message to the Blackman* (Secretarius MEMPS Publications, 1973), 64.

\(^6^2\) Ibid, 111-114.

\(^6^3\) Ibid, 114.
cremate them unbeknownst to the children’s mothers.⁶⁴ According to Elijah Muhammad, Yakub successfully breeds an all-white race over the course of 600 years. Muhammad further preaches that God gave this white race 6,000 years to rule over the black race as punishment for Yakub’s interference in God’s divine creation—a rule that ended in 1914. From then onward, it has been the responsibility of black people to depose of white rule and take their place as spiritual leaders.⁶⁵

Muhammad’s theology of the white race’s ‘origin story’ emphasizes the adversarial and genocidal nature of black-white relations within the medical establishment. This is particularly evident in the various instances of eugenic practices taken on by Yakub and his followers, such as the selective breeding of the doctors or the infanticide carried out by the nurses. The reference to the doctor’s blood tests draws a particularly strong parallel between this narrative and modern day medicine. Like the doctor that denied the people with ‘brown parts’ the right to marry (and, by extension, procreate), the doctors of the 1960s and 1970s were also similarly capable of denying people the right to marry due to the legal requirement to take blood tests before marriage.

Indeed, the theme of the dangerous medical establishment was a cornerstone of the Nation of Islam’s crusade against birth control. In an article for Muhammad Speaks, a central publication of the Nation of Islam, Lonnie 2X reported that "so-

⁶⁴ Ibid, 115.
⁶⁵ Nelson, 95.
called 'Maternity Clinics'—specifically outfitted to purge women or men of their reproductive possibilities—are cropping up in hospitals across [Virginia].”

Lonnie 2X described one woman’s experience of being pressured into sterilization by the staff of the 'maternity ward:'

First they go easy [...] by explaining the surgery and trying to persuade you that it's all very harmless. If you don't go for this, they say your relief checks might be cut off. Soon the attitude of the doctors and welfare people changes. Where they asked you to be sterilized first, they start telling you to be sterilized later.

Elijah Muhammad, harking back to the theology of the white race, warned the women of the Nation of Islam against this sort of experience by saying, "Who wants a sterile woman? [...] No man wants a non-productive woman [...] The slave-masters envy their once slaves' future and want to destroy it.”

Although his statement did not necessarily embrace the second-wave feminist perspective that was prevalent during the 1960s and 1970s and instead opted for a procreative stance to combat the effects of genocide, Muhammad established a firm link between the medical establishment and the 'slave-masters' looking to exterminate the black race. More to the point, he acknowledged that sterilization and other proposed forms of genocide were guised as a 'choice' that black women consciously embraced to their detriment. Muhammad reasoned:

This fear of the white slave-master has caused you to love them in a crazy kind of way. You, my dear people, are like a woman desperately in love with a man who does not love her [...] This man can beat,
torture, ravage, humiliate, shame and mock, but she will yet love him
[...] This is a very sad thing, but a very true picture of the so-called
Negroes. They love their tormentors.

[...]

[The white race is] seeking to destroy our race by the birth control
law, just as Pharaoh sought to stop Moses' race by killing off all the
male babies at birth. They are seeking to destroy our race through
women. DO NOT LET THEM TRICK YOU.69

The exploitation of women guised as 'choice,' Muhammad and other members of the
Nation of Islam argued, was indicative of a larger and more disturbing trend that
spanned the globe.

To further this point, Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam accused the
United States of genocidal warfare against Third World peoples residing abroad.
Lonnie 2X wrote that the, "United States has sponsored sterilization clinics and
other 'birth control' programs in nonwhite countries throughout the world. Already
some three million young men and boys in and around New Delhi, India, have been
sterilized" by the United States Peace Corps.70 Although Lonnie may have over-
estimated the actual number of sterilizations and there is little evidence to suggest
that the accusation against the Peace Corps is true,71 it successfully connects the
oppression of black people in America to the oppression faced by people of color
throughout the world at the hands of the United States government. In a 1967
speech to his followers, Elijah Muhammad used India as an example and pointed out
the problematic incentives-based method used to oppress people of color: "Birth

70 2X, 5-6.
71 Nelson, 97.
control has become a major phase of America's foreign 'aid' program—in some cases, the 'hook' on which all other aid to underdeveloped countries hangs.”

In light of serious droughts, an economic crisis, and pressure from both USAID and the World Bank, the Indian government transformed what was once a voluntary program for population reduction and introduced incentives for both individuals and the community. The incentives-based system, reminiscent of the 'choice' given to women facing sterilization in America, was troubling to many Black Muslims.

The Nation of Islam was among the first to suggest that a white neocolonialism that was central to American economic and foreign policy was to blame for black genocide. In making their argument, black Muslims often invoked military action in their rhetoric. One reporter for *Muhammad Speaks* wrote, "'[black people] are birth control targets far out of proportion to their percentage of the population—just like the Black soldiers in Vietnam are drafted, wounded and killed far out of their proportion to the population.'" Another claimed that the government was using birth control to hide the waste of taxpayer money on "criminal, supremacist profiteering warfare in Vietnam." The association between the war in Vietnam and black genocide brought attention to the idea that black genocide was, in fact, a matter of universal scope that could not be divorced from either local or international concerns.

72 Ibid, 96.
74 Nelson, 96.
The Nation of Islam touted a complex historical understanding of a black genocidal plot that dated back to the international slave trade of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One Muhammad Speaks reporter claimed that had it not been "for the incredibly ruthless and genocidal slave trade which raped and wrecked Africa for centuries—Africa today would be the most populous continent and perhaps the most prosperous and thriving." This additional reference suggests that the Nation of Islam equated population growth with economic growth. The Nation of Islam believed that black people had to take advantage of their larger population by encouraging childbirth in place of birth control in order to seize economic power and fulfill Elijah Muhammad’s prophecy.

The Nation of Islam’s belief that black genocide was tied to massive industrial and state interests made it particularly concerning for black Muslims to bear witness to the allocation of federal attention towards population programs in the 1960s and early 1970s. In 1963, Secretary of State Dean Rusk authorized the Agency for international Development (AID) to create family planning programs. Meanwhile, Senator Ernest Greuning (D—Alaska) introduced legislation that allowed AID to research the subject of population increase. By 1964, Planned Parenthood affiliates received Organization for Economic Opportunity (OEO) grants from President Johnson for various welfare programs. The Johnson administration bolstered these grants with additional funds for family planning (not including

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77 Nelson, 95.
78 "Black Population, 1 Billion!," Muhammad Speaks, October 6, 1967, 24.
79 Nelson, 95.
abortion) and maternal health programs. The Nixon administration established a five-year plan to provide contraception to all people unable to afford it through a proposal to increase family planning funding from $48 million to over $150 million during that time period. Congress ultimately accepted Nixon’s proposal and passed the Family Planning Services and Population Research Act in 1970.80

The Nation of Islam bitterly opposed these developments and made the additional argument that the increased focus on family planning and population control was disproportionate to the relatively low level of other forms of healthcare provided to people of color in America. Black Muslims were among the first to advocate for an end to reproductive abuses and total healthcare in poor communities as an alternative to federally sponsored birth control clinics.81 One *Muhammad Speaks* article cited the excessively high rate of infant mortality among black people: "despite the fact that the death of babies in the United States has reached 'an all-time low for the nation,' black infants continue to die at an alarmingly faster rate than white babies."82 Another article entitled "Nutrition Expert Surveys Pre-Natal U.S.A: Pigs Get Better Care Than Pregnant Women" pointed to inadequate nutrition, low birth weight babies, and a high infant mortality rate as evidence of governmental apathy towards black lives.83

80 Ibid, 92-93.
81 Ibid, 100.
Ogun Kokanfo, reporting for *Muhammad Speaks* in 1969, noted that, "welfare for the living is held in suspension [while] the money spent on birth control had already been increased and is slated to be increased even further." Acknowledging the government's stance that these programs were meant to provide equal opportunity for family planning, Kokanfo reiterated a more moderate position:

Certainly poor families should have this right [to family planning]. But shouldn't they also have the same right not to be poor: Shouldn't they have a right to the same education, the same adequate diet, the same medical treatment and the same sanitary and roomy housing conditions as middle- and upper-income levels have: to plan the size and spacing of their families.

Kokanfo invoked the language of genocide within the article’s title, yet also made the case that a program for total health care must be paired with personal reproductive control. This perspective stood in slight contrast to the Nation of Islam’s zero-tolerance policy towards birth control, but was later upheld by other Black Nationalists and black and white feminists in the 1970s.

*The Black Panther Party*

Huey Newton and Bobby Seales founded the Black Panther Party (originally called "the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense) in 1966 in Oakland, California. The organization, then composed entirely of "brothers off the block," initially formed in

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85 Ibid.
order to patrol the police and prevent brutality.\textsuperscript{86} Like the Nation of Islam, some Black Panthers believed that the government was plotting to reduce or eliminate the number of people of color in America and additionally believed that an armed revolution against a white power structure was possible, if not inevitable.\textsuperscript{87} The organization quickly evolved into a Black Nationalist and Marxist effort that outlined its political ideology in a 10-point party platform in response to the fear of white governmental overreach and potential black genocide. This platform, which detailed the wants and beliefs of the Black Panther Party, emphasized a holistic outcome for black peoples in America and called for black exemption from military service, free healthcare, an end to police brutality, the freedom of black men currently held in prison, economic equality, and more.\textsuperscript{88}

Like the Nation of Islam, the Black Panther Party's concerns with birth control were firmly rooted in their disdain for the American capitalist system that they sought to dismantle through their 10-point party platform. In the early 1970's articles began to appear in \textit{The Black Panther}, the Black Panther Party's main publication, condemning all form of birth control.\textsuperscript{89} One article, entitled "Birth Control" opined, "The relevant question is not, 'If you have all those babies, how will you care for them?' But 'Why can't we all get enough to care for our children?'"\textsuperscript{90}

\textsuperscript{87} Nelson, 102.
\textsuperscript{88} "What We Want Now! What We Believe," \textit{The Black Panther}, November 23, 1967, 3.
\textsuperscript{89} Nelson, 105.
\textsuperscript{90} "Birth Control," \textit{The Black Panther} 4, no. 9, February 7, 1970, 7.
The author argued that it was wrong to prevent births because it "dealt with overpopulation rather than capitalism and imperialism. Capitalism is the problem, not too many people." Acting in response to the threat of the capitalist system, Huey Newton created various black-run, community-based 'Survival Programs' that employed the Marxist beliefs of the Black Panther Party. These programs included services such as a free health clinic, a free ambulance service, a free shoe program, prisoner support facilities, breakfast programs for children, a Black Panther elementary school, senior citizen programs (SAFE—Seniors Against a Fearful Environment), teen programs (GED classes and peer counseling), and early childhood education (a day-care center and child development center). The black people who benefited from these programs began to wonder "why the [Black Panthers] can do so much with so little, and the capitalists so little with so much." 

Black Panthers believed that black communities were more suited to take care of themselves, especially given the belief that the forces of big government and capitalism purposefully sought to limit black political power. In a cover story for *Ebony* magazine, Dick Gregory writes:

> For years they told us where to sit, where to eat, and where to live. Now they want to dictate our bedroom habits. First the white man tells me to sit in the back of the bus. Now it looks like he wants me to sleep under the bed. Back in the days of slavery, black folks couldn't grow kids fast enough for white folks to harvest. Now that we've got a

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91 Ibid.
92 Nelson, 103-104.
93 Ibid, 104.
little taste of power, white folks want us to call a moratorium on having children.\textsuperscript{94}

Black Panthers could not help but notice the government’s selective focus on the black communities in America in light of the recent political and social rebellions of the civil rights movement and the riots in Detroit, Newark, and Watts. Black feminist and pro-fertility control advocate, Frances Ruffin, noted that, "the realization that the thrust of governmental public fund to public and private birth control programs followed on the heels of urban upheavals of the mid 60's—such programs were previously out of reach for many black women."\textsuperscript{95} Black Panthers began to suspect that birth control was merely a palliative for black revolution, especially when viewed in contrast to the apparent lack of other programs devoted to other forms of care. As Robert Weisbord noted in his book, \textit{Genocide?:}

\begin{quote}
When congress is remiss in its responsibility to rid the ghetto of rats, when it ignores the existence of malnutrition and the extraordinary danger hypertension poses to black Americans, when it fails to deal with the grave problem of lead poisoning among black slum dwellers, positive congressional action of family planning is bound to raise many black eyebrows.\textsuperscript{96}
\end{quote}

The fact that a country capable of sending men to the moon either could not or would not provide total care for people of color was, in the eyes of Black Panthers, entirely impossible and therefore indicative of a genocidal plot. Several further revelations, including the U.S. Public Health Service's experiments on uninformed

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\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{94} Dick Gregory, "My Answer to Genocide," \textit{Ebony}, October 1971, 66.
\textsuperscript{95} Frances Ruffin, "Birth Control, A Choice: Genocide or Survival?" Reprint, \textit{Essence}, September, 1972, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Box 91, folder 73.
\textsuperscript{96} Weisbord, 93-94.
\end{footnotesize}
\end{quote}
syphilitic black men that left them untreated and the forcible sterilization of Minne Lee Relf in 1973 further fueled the flames of suspicion.97

The Black Panther’s initial opposition to birth control was additionally rooted in a perceived affront to black masculinity. Brother Kahlil of the Black Nationalist newspaper, Black News, explained that "the hidden meaning of the Trojan was to emasculate the black man by convincing him that he should throw away his living sperm in the white man’s rubber contraption rather than to put it into his woman’s fertile womb."98 As mentioned earlier, the Black Panther Party was originally an all-male organization and masculinity dominated the culture of the organization from its inception through the early 1970s. Elaine Brown, leader of the Black Panther Party from 1974-1976, commented on the early years of the Party and expressed her belief that Black Panther men saw women as subordinates: "a woman in the Black Power movement was considered at best, irrelevant. A woman asserting herself was a pariah. A woman attempting the role of leadership was [...]
making an alliance with the 'counter-revolutionary, man-hating, lesbian, feminist white bitches.'99 Like the Nation of Islam, the Black Panthers initially believed that the women’s role was to procreate and ensure the survival of the black race. In a piece for Ebony, one Black Nationalist pointed to a woman and declared, "She’s

97 Nelson, 86-87.
having another baby for me. I need an army and this is how we're going to get it."\textsuperscript{100}

Still, according to most Black Panthers, women could not be trusted to make their own decisions regarding reproductive health and suggested that abortion should be illegal.\textsuperscript{101}

This largely male-centric and procreative perspective changed, however, when Huey Newton fled the United States for Cuba and appointed Elaine Brown as the first female Black Panther leader in 1974. Brown's tenure paved the way for a new, more accepting attitude towards reproductive control for women of color. Brown put women in key positions within the Black Panther Party and expanded upon Huey Newton’s ‘survival programs.’\textsuperscript{102} These programs additionally offered medical care, free food, nutrition information, and help in applying for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) supplements to welfare recipients.\textsuperscript{103} Falling in line with black feminists of the time, Black Panthers additionally began to link abortion and birth control with their notion of total health care—especially with respect to poor and black women. In the years following the \textit{Roe V. Wade} Supreme Court decision that found abortion to be a constitutional right, Black Panthers spoke loudly on behalf of Dr. Kenneth Edelin, one of just two doctors willing to perform legal abortions at Boston City Hospital who was accused by Right-to-Life activists of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[101] Nelson, 106.
\item[102] Ibid, 104.
\item[103] "People’s Free Clinic Helps Meet Community’s Nutritional Needs," \textit{The Black Panther} 12, no. 17, November 16, 1974, 4, 20.
\end{footnotes}
aborting viable fetuses. When the Hyde amendment cut federal Medicaid funding for abortion in 1977, the Black Panthers wrote several articles noting how these restrictions would be especially damaging for black and poor women: "Black and poor women on welfare will suffer the most from this ruling, as Medicaid funds that were previously used for abortions may be denied." Black Panthers also took on something of a working-class feminism as they protested against various workplace related concerns, including a 1977 Supreme Court ruling that allowed employers to refuse to pay disability payments for pregnancy-related disorders or childbirth.

Elaine Brown oversaw a massive movement towards anti-sterilization abuse and pro-birth control and abortion positions. Even when Huey Newton reassumed leadership upon his return from Cuba and the organization once again embraced a hyper-masculinity, Black Panther rhetoric still remained focused on the importance of total health care, which over time increasingly meant women's health care, the end of forced sterilization, and the importance of safe and legal abortions. Although Black Panther attitudes towards birth control and abortion radically shifted in light of their new female leadership, the Roe V. Wade Supreme Court Decision, and recent feminist activism, their concerns still lied primarily in issues such as the need for employment, comprehensive healthcare, child-care, housing, 

106 Nelson, 110.
107 Ibid, 104-105.
welfare entitlements, an end to imperialism, and the end of police brutality.\textsuperscript{108}

Working contemporaneously to Black Panthers to achieve similar aims were The Young Lords Party of New York, a Puerto Rican nationalist group that fought in the late 1960s and early 1970s for an end to sterilization abuse among women of color, community-based health care, and safe abortion for poor and minority women.

\textit{The Young Lords Party of New York}

Cha Cha Jimenez, a young Puerto Rican activist, and other Puerto Ricans allied within the Young Patriots Organization, a street gang, formed the Young Lords Organization in Chicago in 1968. The Young Lords Organization welcomed individuals with diverse backgrounds, including those of European, Native-American, and African descent, as they believed their organization should reflect varied cultural and racial demography of Puerto Rico and American barrios. In the first years of the Young Lords Party, however, gender was not a matter of great importance. Women joined the group because, like men, they also believed that poverty and racism among Puerto Rican New Yorkers was unacceptable. As the men of the Young Lords Party displayed a 'machismo' akin to the Black Panther's hyper-masculinity, women in the organization became discouraged and ultimately forced the issue of sexism.\textsuperscript{109} When the Young Lords agreed to meet with Amiri Baraka, a poet with Afrocentric politics, and discovered "Women [crawling] into the rooms on

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid, 109.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid, 114-117.
their hands and knees wearing elaborate headdresses decorated with fruit,"\(^{110}\)

Denise Oliver, the only female Lord at the meeting and one of the original founders of the organization, was infuriated and organized a sex strike among the women of the Young Lords Party. Young Lords were encouraged to form romantic and sexual partnerships within the organization and extra-group relations were forbidden due to security concerns. When it became clear that some men, including several central committee members, had looked outside of the group for sexual activity in response to the sex strike, it fell to Oliver to deal punishment and she ultimately demoted them to cadre status.\(^{111}\)

After the demotion of the committee members, Denise Oliver and Gloria Fontanez joined the central committee and began holding seminars to teach men in the group how treat women as equals.\(^{112}\) In addition, the Young Lords Party amended its call for "revolutionary machismo" in its 13-point platform (similar to the Black Panther’s 10-point platform) to renounce sexism:

\[\text{WE WANT EQUALITY FOR WOMEN, MACHISMO MUST BE REVOLUTIONARY \ldots NOT OPPRESSIVE}\]

Under capitalism, our people have been oppressed by both society and our own men. The doctrine of machismo has been used by our men to take out their frustrations against their wives, sisters, mothers, and children. Our men must support their women in their fight for economic and social equality, and must recognize that our women are equals in every way within the revolutionary ranks.

\(^{110}\) Denise Oliver, interview, 1999.
\(^{111}\) Nelson, 118-119.
\(^{112}\) Ibid, 119.
FORWARD, SISTERS, IN THE STRUGGLE!113

The Young Lords appropriated the traditional notion of machismo in order to fit its new agenda—machismo within Young Lord culture now meant treating women as equals.114 By the latter half of 1970, the Young Lords Party fully and vocally supported the women's liberation movement and recognized the link between feminist and anti-racist efforts: "Third World Women have an integral role to play in the liberation of all oppressed people as well as in the struggle for the liberation of women [...] the woman's struggle is the revolution within the revolution."115 With their new attitude towards sexism and the culture of machismo, the Young Lords set their sights on reproductive rights.

As part of its revised 13-point platform, the Young Lords additionally advocated for reproductive control for women in Puerto Rico and in New York, including safe and legal abortion and their choice of birth control options. Like the Black Panthers, the Young Lords Party believed that health care should be distributed in publicly funded health facilities under community control. They feared that reproductive control measures under the federal government could become coercive, if not genocidal. These fears were rooted in Puerto Rican history as sterilization was legalized as a birth control method in Puerto Rico in 1937. Sterilization was one of the most heavily promoted methods of contraception and it

114 Nelson, 120.
quickly became the chosen method among the middle-class, whereas the most privileged and well-educated women chose more temporary forms of birth control. With this in mind, the Young Lords additionally spoke and wrote of an international conspiracy by the United States government against all Third World Peoples.116 Speaking specifically in reference to Puerto Rico, Iris Morales, the Deputy Minister of Education for the Young Lords Party, cited the political and capitalist motives for the American-led genocide:

Genocide is being committed against the Puerto Rican women! In no other nation has sterilization been so prevalent as a means of genocide against an oppressed people. Why Puerto Ricans? First, the United States needs Puerto Rico as a military stronghold to maintain 'political stability' and control in the rest of Latin America. Second, Puerto Rico is the fourth largest worldwide consumer of amerikkkan goods and yields massive profits to amerikkkan capitalists. Also, Puerto Rico supplies fighting men and a cheap labor pool, both necessary to u.s. capitalism. One way to control a nation of vital importance is to limit its population size. The u.s. is doing exactly this through sterilization.117

Many, including the Young Lords Party, suspected that Puerto Rican women lacked the ability to choose how they regulated their reproduction and were exploited by big governmental or capitalist interests.

This notion was reinforced in the mid-1950’s with the revelation that American contraceptive researchers worked on behalf of Margaret Sanger, a figure with alleged ties to the eugenic movement,118 and Planned Parenthood Federation of

116 Nelson, 123-125.
118 See Angela Franks, Margaret Sanger's Eugenic Legacy: The Control of Female Fertility, (McFarland, 2005).
America to produce 'the pill.'\textsuperscript{119} One contemporary commentator described Puerto Rico as "crowded, impoverished and ripe for an intensive birth control program—a prototype underdeveloped country on America’s own doorstep."\textsuperscript{120} Their research, following standard practice of the time, involved young Puerto Rican women who were uninformed about the potential side effects of the pill. Several women complained of side effects, including nausea, dizziness, headaches, stomach pain, and vomiting, and various menstrual disorders. Despite these concerns, the pill was brought to market and an early high-dose version of the pill caused serious, sometimes deadly, reactions in a small percentage of women.\textsuperscript{121} Writing for the Young Lords newspaper \textit{Palante} in 1971, Gloria Colon stated:

> In Puerto Rico, the amerikkkan government has been pushing sterilization as the only means of contraception since the 1930's with the result that by 1965, ONE OUT OF EVER THREE WOMEN WERE STERILIZED. The Puerto Rican woman was also used as a guinea pig for the contraceptive pills that were tested on the island for 15 years before being sold in the u.s. market, while even now these pills are believed to cause cancer and death from blood clotting.\textsuperscript{122}

The Young Lords believed that these pill trials and the high rates of sterilization revealed the genocidal intent of the United States government and they vehemently argued against the American perspective that Third World poverty could be eliminated through population limitation.

The Young Lords were equally concerned about genocide occurring stateside as they were about genocide happening in Puerto Rico. Iris Morales writes:

\textsuperscript{119} Nelson, 121-124.

\textsuperscript{120} Paul Vaughan, \textit{The Pill on Trial}, (New York: Coward—McCann, 1970), 39.

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{The Pill}, Directed by Chana Gazit, PBS.

In El Barrio, sterilization is still practiced as a form of contraception among women, especially young Sisters. One out of four sterilized women in El Barrio has the operation done when she's between 20 and 30. But the system justifies the shit by saying the Sisters go to Puerto Rico to get it done. Yet the evidence says that over half the Sisters get the operation done right here in New York City and are strongly encouraged by their doctors to do so.\textsuperscript{123}

Other Young Lords pointed out that many Puerto Rican women felt constrained in their options. Puerto Rican women "chose" sterilization because they felt uncomfortable with or did not know about other forms of birth control options. Some also alleged that Puerto Rican women were purposefully misled: "In many cases our sisters are told that their tubes are going to be 'tied,' but are never told that 'tying' is really 'cutting' and that the tubes can never be 'untied.'"\textsuperscript{124} Many Puerto Rican women who opted for sterilization did not understand its permanence and the Young Lords believed that sterilization had the potential for a negative psychological effect. In response to these concerns, the Young Lords fashioned a new feminist rhetoric that deconstructed stereotypes about womanhood, reproduction, and gender roles that were popular among traditional Puerto Ricans.\textsuperscript{125}

The Young Lords also advocated for safe and legal abortion as part of their platform. Still, they were generally fearful that unsafe abortions in hospitals might become standard in light of the death of Carmen Rodriguez, a 31-year old Puerto Rican woman who the Young Lords claimed died due to hospital neglect following

\textsuperscript{123} Morales, "Sterilized Puerto Ricans."
\textsuperscript{124} "Young Lords Party Position Paper on Women."
\textsuperscript{125} Nelson, 126-127.
an abortion procedure at Lincoln Hospital. The hospital denied responsibility for the incident and the Young Lords Party, working in conjunction with Black Panthers and hospital workers from the Health Revolutionary Union Movement, called a community meeting to discuss Lincoln Hospital’s findings. Mike Smith, a Lincoln Hospital intern and Medical Committee for Human Rights member, presented a chart, or "clinical pathological conference" (cpc), that detailed Rodriguez’s medical history. Records of her autopsy were included and the community meeting concluded that Rodriguez died due to neglect. The Young Lords deemed the meeting "the People’s cpc" in order to claim the community's right to control the medical decisions that affected them. Instances such as these led to the belief among the Young Lords that "Abortions in hospitals that are butcher shops are little better than the illegal abortions our women used to get." With little faith in the capitalist system that enabled these sorts of incidents, the Young Lords advocated for community controlled abortion services in order to ensure safety for women of color. Point six of their 13-point platform states:

WE WANT COMMUNITY CONTROL OF OUR INSTITUTIONS AND LAND.
We want control of our communities by our people and programs to guarantee that all institutions serve the needs of our people. People’s control of police, health services, churches, schools, housing, transportation, and welfare are needed.

The Young Lords adopted the slogan of "End all genocide. Abortions under community control." These community-led services were to be accompanied by a

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127 "Young Lords Party Position Paper on Women."
128 "Young Lords Party 13-Point Program and Platform (revised November 1970)."
total health care program that allowed all Third World women to fully control their reproduction.\textsuperscript{129}

\textbf{The Nation of Islam, the Black Panther Party, and the Young Lords Party of New York constitute three core strains of black genocidal thought and discourse throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Although I have presented each of these organizations in a linear sort of fashion, each of their activisms occurred in parallel and sometimes in conjunction with each other. Their contributions to black genocide discourse, however, were predicated on wildly different cultural understandings that varied from group to group. There is, of course, the obvious difference of cultural demographics within each of these organizations—The Nation of Islam was composed of black Muslims with Afrocentric leanings; the Black Panther Party of black Marxist revolutionaries; and the Young Lords Party of New York of Puerto Rican nationalists. Each of their perspectives took root in very specific religious, political, or cultural ideologies. Similarly, as each of these groups tackled the concerns of reproductive control they held wildly different attitudes towards the women within their ranks. Men initially held dominion and there was a pervasive belief within each organization that women were subordinate to men. While the Nation of Islam held steadfast to its religious ideology and specific gender roles, the Black Panther Party slowly embraced a feminist perspective while still maintaining their iconic hyper-masculinity. Meanwhile, the Young Lords of Party of}

\textsuperscript{129} Nelson, 131.
New York vocally rejected machismo and welcomed women as fellow comrades and revolutionary leaders. No matter how dividing they may initially seem, however, these differences helped broaden the scope of black genocide discourse to include the experiences of all people of color.

Indeed, each of these organizations shared powerful motivations for their rhetoric. All of them held a profound distrust in the United States government and the American capitalist system, which they believed victimized communities of color. Their cynicism regarding these structures contributed to an overall resentment for the current medical establishment and, in response, they advocated for a community-led, total healthcare platform that accounted for all aspects of life—not just sexuality and reproduction. In doing so, they each identified the unique social, political, and economic struggles afflicting people of color in America and successfully linked them to issues of poverty, sexism, and racism with their emphasis on non-voluntary/uninformed sterilization practices both at home and abroad in developing regions. Together, these organizations brought to light the most pressing concerns of the black genocide narrative and formed the crux of black genocidal discourse. Although the subject of black genocide would continue to arise to a lesser degree in the subsequent years and would find something of a re-emergence within the present-day concerns of the war on drugs, police brutality, the Black Lives Matter movement, and more, the experiences of these three organizations will provide the historical and theoretical backdrop against which to compare the crisis pregnancy center movement’s appropriation of the black genocide narrative.
Chapter 4:

The History of the Crisis Pregnancy Center Movement and the Appropriation of the Black Genocide Narrative

As the previous chapters have established, the black genocide narrative was borne out of a genuine sense of fear and distrust in the governmental, economic, and cultural establishments in order to achieve the preservation and uplifting of the black race and other communities of color. In recent years, however, the crisis pregnancy center movement has appropriated the black genocide narrative as part of their anti-abortion activism. These crisis pregnancy centers, by comparison, are largely volunteer-run, pro-life, Evangelical organizations that oftentimes attempt to attract "abortion-vulnerable clients"\(^\text{130}\) through misleading advertisements, deceptive tactics, and the dispensation of incorrect medical information. This chapter will first describe in detail the crisis pregnancy center movement's history and current manifestation in preparation for the conclusion of this thesis, which will discuss the crisis pregnancy center appropriation of the black genocide narrative.

The History of the Crisis Pregnancy Center Movement

The crisis pregnancy center movement began in the late 1960s in response to liberalized abortion laws in several states. These early pregnancy centers sought to

intervene by connecting women to local resources: their services included hotlines, pregnancy tests, small, private maternity homes, and housing in private homes. These centers were modest; they were staffed almost exclusively by volunteers and were located in doctor's offices, churches, and private homes. Over time the movement broadened and several national organizations emerged. Originally founded in 1971 in Columbus, Ohio, under the name of Alternatives to Abortion International, Heartbeat International’s mission was to connect local organizations and individuals providing resources to women in unplanned pregnancies. At first the organization focused on connecting women to existing local resources under a secular framework. Over time, however, they began to adopt a more Christian understanding of abortion that highlighted abortion's immorality. To reflect this changed mission, the organization changed its name to Heartbeat International and focused more on supporting crisis pregnancy centers.131

The second national organization to emerge was CareNet, which originated in 1975 in Washington DC. Unlike Heartbeat International, the CareNet has always been a religious organization.132 Even today all potential affiliates of CareNet must agree that the "primary mission of [a] pregnancy center is to share the compassion, hope, and help of Jesus Christ" and it must subscribe to the CareNet statement of

131 Kimberly Carter Kelly, "In the Name of the Mother: Gender and Religion in the Crisis Pregnancy Center Movement," Ph.D. diss., University of Georgia, 2009, 90.
faith. CareNet, then known as the Christian Action Council, began as an evangelical lobbying organization and focused on congressional lobbying, local organizing, and public education as a means of banning abortion once more. In 1980, however, the Christian Action Council withdrew its resources from the political realm and focused primarily on crisis pregnancy centers. Like Alternatives to Abortion International, the Christian Action Council followed a federation model (one that is still in use today) in which centers affiliated with the organization were meant to share resources, but were not required to obey any policies or guidelines established by the overall networks. Each center was independently financed and operated at a local level.

The first crisis pregnancy centers, founded in the late 1960s and early 1970s, operated under two common assumptions regarding the nature of unplanned pregnancy. First, they assumed that many women experiencing unplanned pregnancy were in a state of crisis due to momentary lapse in moral judgment. This idea stemmed from the assumption that crisis pregnancy center clients shared the same Judeo-Christian values as the activists operating these centers and that they understood both pregnancy and abortion in the same way. Secondly, crisis pregnancy center activists believed that the legalization of abortion constituted only a short-term break from accepted cultural norms and that it would soon be made illegal once again. As a result of this line of thinking, these centers emphasized the

134 Kelly, 90-91.
need for crisis intervention and pregnant women’s immediate concerns, such as housing. This model, known as the Mother and Baby model, was non-religious and based in an ideal of humanitarian service. The assumptions led crisis pregnancy center advocates to believe that they did not need to proselytize to the pregnant women in their centers.\textsuperscript{135}

Over time, however, it became clear that the majority of clients did not share the same experiences and perspectives concerning sexuality, marriage, and abortion and they were not as willing to embrace pregnancy as a viable option. This realization prompted crisis pregnancy center activists to develop the Baby Saving Model in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This model still offered assistance to pregnant women, but prioritized aggressive and oftentimes abusive tactics in order to prevent abortions. These centers, which today still often represent a stereotypical crisis pregnancy center in the minds of pro-choice advocates, frequently advertised in local phone directories alongside abortion providers and with vague wording that did not necessarily clarify the fact that they did not provide abortion or contraceptive-related services. Many clients who visited these centers believed that they were visiting an abortion clinic. Yet, when women entered these centers they were subject to photographs of fetal development and aborted fetuses in the activists’ attempts to remind them of the humanity of their potential child. These

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid, 93.
centers also often exaggerated the physical risks of abortion—oftentimes linking them to infertility, cancer, or death.\textsuperscript{136}

The Pearson Foundation, which opened a chain of centers in Hawaii and published a manual, \textit{How to Start and Operate Your Own Pro-Life Outreach Crisis Pregnancy Center}, represented this extreme form crisis pregnancy center activism both in the past and today. The Pearson manual justified any means to stop abortion.\textsuperscript{137} The manual states: "[o]ur name of the game is to get the woman to come in as do the abortion chambers. Be put off by nothing...Let nothing stop you. The stakes are life or death."\textsuperscript{138} One portion of the Pearson manual instructs staffers to take a urine sample for a pregnancy test. Although these tests usually take two to five minutes to show results, staffers should tell clients that it takes up to 30 minutes. The manual instructs the staffer to leave the client in a room by themselves and play a graphic video of abortion as they wait, with specific instruction to not ask for permission before doing so. Once the film is over, the counselor reads the results of the pregnancy test. If the client indicates that they are planning on having an abortion, then the staffer must tell the client that they would be killing their child, that she is already a mother, and that the staffer is trying to save the child. If the client already has children, then the staffer should ask them how their older children would feel if they ever discovered that the mother killed their younger

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid, 94.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.
sibling.\textsuperscript{139} This is just one example of the various invasive and deceptive tactics employed by the Pearson Foundation. In a 1994 speech, Robert Pearson gave grounds for his foundation’s approach by stating, "obviously, we’re fighting Satan... A killer, who in this case is the girl who wants to kill her baby."\textsuperscript{140}

Although the Pearson Foundation embodies the most radical approach to crisis pregnancy center activism and only a small percentage of centers were ever directly affiliated with the Foundation, many other centers have taken some of the Pearson manual’s recommendations to heart. By the late 1980s critics had taken notice of these abusive practices and crisis pregnancy centers received unwanted national media attention. From the late 1980s through the early 2000s (and even still today) allegations against crisis pregnancy centers came from all directions—popular media, academia, politicians, the court system, pro-choice organizations, and even former clients of the centers. As these allegations piled up and centers began to lose their clients, volunteers, and donors, the crisis pregnancy center movement was forced to re-evaluate its tactics and restore its image.\textsuperscript{141}

The movement revitalized its emphasis on women and publicly condemned the coercive tactics characteristic of the Pearson Foundation that resulted in client lawsuits. Both CareNet and Heartbeat International began the process of professionalizing their network at both the local and national scale. Each network underwent a massive process of standardization among its affiliates and they

\textsuperscript{139} Kelly, 95.
\textsuperscript{140} Stacey, 3.
\textsuperscript{141} Kelly, 96-99
revamped their public image via advertising. The networks urged careful consideration of clients in regards to the local centers' name, decor, services, and the demeanor of volunteers. They also developed various images of younger women and offered multiple versions of each advertisement—some had white women in one and black women in the other, depending on whether affiliates felt the need to advertise towards women of color or not. The models for these images were typically between the ages of 18-24 (which coincided with the age bracket of women most likely to have abortions) and the networks also provided both English and Spanish materials. These images were made available for affiliate use in pamphlets, outdoor signage, billboards, posters, and websites. Over time, the networks strengthened their relationship to women by shifting leadership roles over to women. Critics of pro-life movements often pointed to conservative male leadership as an indicator that these movements were unfriendly to women. Crisis pregnancy centers appeared largely feminine at almost all levels of operation and lent itself to an image of "a movement of women, for women" that was received well by women in the general public.\footnote{Ibid, 99-103.}

As the networks professionalized their operation, local centers also took it upon themselves to take action. The high level of autonomy granted to crisis pregnancy centers enabled activists to more fully demonstrate the sincerity of their motives and prove that their concern for women was legitimate. In the process of expanding and diversifying their services, crisis pregnancy center activists
abandoned the Baby Saving Model and formulated three new model types: The Medical Model, the Prevention Model, and the Evangelistic Model. It should be noted that these are ideal model types in that crisis pregnancy centers typically blend two or more of these models in their everyday practices.\footnote{Ibid, 104.} Still, an exploration of each of these model types reveals an overall picture of the modern crisis pregnancy center movement while highlighting the most relevant and controversial points of practice.

In recent years there has been a trend towards a Medical Model of activism that allows crisis pregnancy centers to establish further legitimacy. It quickly became apparent to crisis pregnancy centers that women are much more likely to approach a center and embrace their message if they believe that they are upholding universally held medical ethics, rather than a polarizing political or religious agenda. Likewise, the person-to-person interaction inherent within a typical doctor-patient or counselor-client type of relationship is appealing to most crisis pregnancy center activists due to their belief that they must have a personal relationship with their clients and persuade them to "choose life." This belief stems from the idea that criminalization alone cannot put a stop to abortion. Rather, they believe that "a combination of both education and cultural change, enacted one person at a time, will reduce and eventually end abortion."\footnote{Kelly, 84.} Crisis pregnancy center activists feel that the persuasion of clients is necessary because of their belief that women have been misinformed as to the true nature of abortion. According to the crisis
pregnancy center perspective, women are told that abortion is a simple medical procedure to remove a "blob of tissue" and are denied the information that would allow them to see their fetus as a living person and abortion as killing this person. Similarly, crisis pregnancy center activists (at least, those who prescribe to the Evangelical Model) believe that secular America has cultivated a "culture of death" that has divorced sexuality from procreation, dismissed the importance of a two-parent household, and subverted the God-mandated roles assigned to both men and women. For these reasons, many crisis pregnancy center activists feel that establishing a personal relationship with their client is crucial—and the Medical Model is their best bet of achieving such a goal.

The Three Models

In establishing this special relationship, crisis pregnancy centers have taken it upon themselves to set the record straight through what they perceive to be a legitimate medical lens. An increasing number of crisis pregnancy centers have acquired sonograms, for example, to lend itself to the appearance of a valid medical establishment and to further convince women not to have an abortion. Indeed, one CareNet survey of over 1,000 centers in the United States and Canada found that 72 percent of women who were initially "strongly leading" towards abortion decided to

145 Ibid, 85.
carry to term after seeing the results of the sonogram.\textsuperscript{146} This approach allows the crisis pregnancy centers to distance themselves from the controversial "scare tactics" approach and shift the focus from politics to healthcare, giving all of their actions more admissibility according to the public eye.\textsuperscript{147} Andrea Hall, the director of the Pregnancy Life Care Center writes: "Ultrasound images may pack an emotional punch, but they aren't confrontational in the way that pictures of aborted fetuses are. We don't believe in graphic pictures or videos. The facts speak for themselves."\textsuperscript{148}

These 'facts', however, are deceiving in that for the most part they only portray the potential risks of abortion, some of which are unsupported by any reasonable medical finding. Many crisis pregnancy centers warn against the possibility of "post abortion syndrome," which is commonly described as severe and long-term emotional harm caused by abortion. One center said that these symptoms may include:

- guilt, numbness, dreams and nightmares, changes in relationships [...]
- difficulty with making friends, sexual problems, preoccupation with abortion date or due date, sadness, anxiety, suicidal ideas, sedatives, alcohol, drug use, eating disorders, sense of loss, inability to relax, fear


\textsuperscript{147} "Medicine or Ministry?: Crisis Pregnancy Centers are using the language and technology of modern language to help soften their appeal to clients--but not their anti-abortion aims," \textit{Indy Week}, Accessed April 4, 2016, http://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/medicine-or-ministry/Content?oid=1189657.

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid.
of failure, crying spells, regret, anger, helplessness, headaches, loneliness, panic [...] signs of marital stress.\textsuperscript{149}

In contrast, an expert panel of the American Psychological Association that convened to "review the best scientific studies of abortion outcome" found:

The best studies available on psychological responses to unwanted pregnancy terminated by abortion in the United States suggest that severe negative reactions are rare, and they parallel those following other normal life stresses. The time of greatest stress is likely to be before the abortion. Despite methodological shortcomings of individual studies, the fact that studies using diverse samples, different measures of postabortion response, and different times of assessment come to very similar conclusions is persuasive evidence that abortion is usually psychologically benign.\textsuperscript{150}

Similarly, crisis pregnancy centers have alleged a link between abortion and various other physical conditions. Some centers have asserted a connection between abortion and breast cancer, despite the fact that there is a medical consensus that there is no causal relationship between the two. Likewise, some centers claim that abortion can cause future infertility—a claim that is also refuted by medical consensus.\textsuperscript{151}

In addition to the use of misinformation, some crisis pregnancy centers deliberately attempt to emulate both the aesthetic and services of family planning clinics. Many centers fashion the interior of their facilities to look like a doctor’s office, complete with a waiting room, and check-in desk. Although the subsequent

\textsuperscript{149} Committee on Government Reform—Minority Staff Special Investigations Division, 12.
\textsuperscript{150} N.E. Adler et. al., "Psychological factors in abortion: A review," \textit{American Psychologist}, 1194-1204, (October, 1992), 1202-1203.
\textsuperscript{151} Committee on Government Reform—Minority Staff Special Investigations Division, 7-10.
examples are not perfectly indicative of the ideal Medical Model and incorporate elements of the Pearson Foundation approach, it is worth noting that some centers go as far as to locate themselves next to family planning clinics and give themselves misleading names. One center in Massachusetts rented an office on the same floor as a Planned Parenthood clinic and placed a sign outside of their office that read, "PP, Inc."\textsuperscript{152} Other centers have called themselves, "Pregnancy Help, Inc., Pregnancy Resource Services, and Center for Pregnant Women."\textsuperscript{153} In addition to this, many crisis pregnancy centers advertise themselves in the phonebook under the headings, "Pregnancy," "Medical," "Women's Centers," "Clinics," "Abortion Alternatives," and "Women's Organizations."\textsuperscript{154} There have also been reports of centers advertising under the labels of "abortion service providers," "birth control information," and "pregnancy options counseling," despite not providing any of those services at all, or at least in full.\textsuperscript{155}

Although state laws vary, there are usually few regulations in place to ensure that clients receive accurate information, comprehensive, non-directive counseling.

\textsuperscript{154} The National Abortion Federation, 3.
and to further make certain that clients’ confidentiality is protected. Since crisis pregnancy centers are not usually licensed, most of them are not subject to HIPAA regulations. Indeed, literature obtained from Bethany Christian Services indicates: "There are times when confidential information may be shared without your permission, [including] giving certain information to parents or guardians of minors; sharing information with companies we contract with to provide services on our behalf." There have been multiple reports that crisis pregnancy centers used confidential information gained under false pretenses to harass clients, their family members, and even their co-workers in the hopes that they might be publicly shamed and choose not to abort.

That said, some centers following the Medical Model have begun to employ medically trained staff and they have added various medical services to their practice, including STD testing, pregnancy testing, prenatal care, and routine gynecological services. One Pregnancy Resource Center report indicated that some centers also provide services such as childbirth classes, labor coaching,

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157 Ibid, 11.
159 Kelly, 104-105.
midwife services, lactation consultation, nutrition consulting, and social work.\textsuperscript{160} Centers have additionally made a concerted effort to reframe their relationships to their clients as "options counseling." As mentioned earlier, crisis pregnancy center activists are of the belief that they are providing a broader range of choices to women that have been indoctrinated to believe that their only choice is to have an abortion. Many of their advertisements, therefore, contain some variation of the words "rights," "choices," or "informed decisions."\textsuperscript{161} In fact, some crisis pregnancy centers and networks have an entire section labeled "options" on their websites. These "options" may list abortion, parenting, and adoption as possible choices, although they usually subtly discredit abortion as a truly viable option. The fact that, unlike family planning clinics, crisis pregnancy centers do not charge for their services and are largely run by volunteers contributes to the effectiveness of the choice-centric rhetoric. Under the heading of "Why Should I Visit a Pregnancy Center," the Epigee Women's Health Center website states: "[since] pregnancy resources do not profit from your decision, you don't have to worry about being pressured into making a choice before you are ready."\textsuperscript{162} Not only have crisis pregnancy centers co-opted the "pro-choice" rhetoric of abortion rights activists in order to strengthen their own public image as an unbiased center of care, but they have also used it to delegitimize their opposition.

\textsuperscript{161} Naral Pro-Choice New York Foundation, 7-8.
The Medical Model, however effective, only worked as a method of intervention and post-intervention and did not constitute a full-scale effort to eradicate abortion. The Prevention Model attempts to designate the various types of sexually active clients and act accordingly. In 2002, Heartbeat International debuted its "Sexual Integrity Program," which is currently used by centers in at least 49 states while many others use similar programs. These programs shifted away from statistics and dire warnings about the consequences of illicit sexual activity and focused more on a selective propagation of STD infection rates and various vignettes about ordinary women making common choices regarding sexual activity and the apparently common reservations they had about sex. These vignettes revealed three "types" of women. The first type was the "Moral Client," a woman experimenting with sexual activity and does not use contraception because she understands that premarital sex is wrong and feels that the use of birth control would prove that she is immoral. This client is typically in her teens and with her first sexual partner and sex occurs infrequently and spontaneously. Often, the sexual activity takes place because the client feels the need to satisfy their sexual partner and she feels guilty for engaging in it. Over time, this character type will come to see themselves as "damaged goods" and her actions will sabotage her chances with a long-term partner. According to the Prevention Model, crisis pregnancy center counselors should gently point out the disconnect between her values and her actions and suggest creative and non-sexual options for dates in order to redirect
the Moral Client’s focus away from the belief that premarital sex is a normal part of relationships.163

The second "type," the "Experienced Client," is a woman who has had several sexual partners and views sexual activity as a normal part of relationships. The Experienced Client is often monogamous and living with their partner, and they believe that sex is a personal decision that everyone should make for themselves. Often, this typology portrays the Experienced Client as having no particular basis for this belief beyond the idea that it simply feels "right" for her. Still, the Experienced Client feels doubt about her relationship and constantly suppresses feelings of guilt and apprehension. She may not trust her partner and may purposefully become pregnant to test or maintain the relationship. Others might assume that their partners are not committed to them and take for granted the possibility that they will have an abortion should they become pregnant. Crisis pregnancy center counselors are urged to ask clients such as these how to examine their current feelings and how they compare to their actual desires.164

The third type, the "High Risk Client," has had many partners and a high probability of non-marital pregnancies or abortions. She may have sex for pay, have multiple partners at once, or move quickly from partner to partner. She believes she is comfortable with her sexuality, but is often driven to sexual activity in order to fill an emotional void that is often caused by a bad father-daughter relationship,

163 Kelly, 149-150.
164 Ibid, 151.
physical abuse, or a series of unsuccessful past romantic relationships. She is caught in a deadly cycle of failed childhood relationships, promiscuity, and further failed adult relationships. According to crisis pregnancy center activists, these women are most likely to convert to Christianity and it is often the counselor’s responsibility to make the "first move" and suggest religion as a way of alleviating her problems.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}, 151-152.}

There are several common factors between these types of clients: Each claims to know their feelings and beliefs, but are in denial and are actively suppressing their true concerns; Each is likely to have a history of abuse, absent parents, or unresolved emotional pain; Each would like to stop having sex, but sees herself as both powerless and undeserving of such a change; Each doubts their partner's level of commitment to the relationship. Each of these typologies stem from several core assumptions about women and sexuality that find their root in both the "culture of death" mentioned earlier—namely that women do not naturally have non-marital or non-procreative sexual activity and that their supposed desire to have sex finds its roots in intense emotional problems from their childhood.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}, 152-153.}

Kimberly Kelly writes of the Prevention Model:

\begin{quote}
Notably absent is any acknowledgment that sexuality outside of marriage may be an informed, healthy decision made by a competent, mature woman, or that heterosexual sex can take place between consenting, equal, and unmarried partners genuinely concerned about each other’s welfare. [The crisis pregnancy center movement’s frame] demonstrate[s] a marked lack of trust in women’s abilities to make their own decisions. Instead, network materials use the patriarchal
\end{quote}
rhetoric to emphasize how much of an effect men and fathers have on women's lives, whether good or bad.\textsuperscript{167}

These typologies represent several core assumptions about women and sexuality and demonstrate an inherent distrust in women’s capability to make their own decisions regarding their sexuality. Indeed, their abstinence programs do not provide or promote contraception, as there is a widespread belief that "safer sex" invites a false sense of safety and encourages non-marital sexual activity. Oftentimes, crisis pregnancy center activists will emphasize the failure rates of various contraceptives and there is usually an "explicit message that clients do not understand what they really feel or need, and lay counseling by activists is required for women to come to an accurate and self-affirming understanding of themselves, their sexual choices, and their lives as a whole."\textsuperscript{168} These mindsets more or less form the basis of the Prevention Model as it pertains to visitors to crisis pregnancy centers.

In the 1980s, however, crisis pregnancy centers saw an influx of clients who had previous abortions or multiple sexual partners. Many centers already had abstinence counseling for their unmarried clients, but felt that this did little in terms of preventing the problem of abortion from occurring in the first place. Centers expanded their efforts into local communities and attempted to teach younger people about abstinence before they could engage in sexual activity and contract an STD or become pregnant. Activists began to give presentations within both religious

\textsuperscript{167} Ibid, 154.
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid, 158.
and public school programs. By 2007, these activists were presenting to over one million children every year.169

The introduction of abstinence-only programs also allowed crisis pregnancy centers to apply for further funding through the federal government. Public funding of these centers began in 1996, when the federal welfare law allocated $50 million to Title V abstinence-only programs. Since then, these programs have been funded by a variety of federal grants that have been matched by state funds, making these contributions even more significant. These allocations began in 2000 under the maternal and child health block grant’s Special Projects of Regional Significance Program, which channeled $20 million in 2001 to a variety of organizations that discouraged sexual activity outside of marriage and whose message specifically targeted teenagers. At least $3 million of this money found their way to crisis pregnancy centers, and that amount doubled to $6 million in 2002. Federal legislators also introduced several bills to increase funding to crisis pregnancy centers: In 1999 Senator Rick Santorum (R—Pennsylvania) sponsored a bill that would have granted $85 billion annually to abortion alternative programs that provided childbirth assistance in place of abortion or birth control. Likewise, proposals by Representatives Cliff Stearns (R—Florida) and Senator Jim Bunning (R—Kentucky) would have authorized $3 million in grants for the purchase of ultrasound machines for nonprofits that provided free examinations to pregnant women. In order to be eligible for these grants, the organization had to provide its

169 Ibid, 105-106.
services free of charge—which meant that money could not go to clinics that are required by law to charge their patients on a sliding scale based upon their ability to pay or clinics that typically provide full reproductive healthcare at a fee, such as Planned Parenthood. As a result the money would have gone to Crisis pregnancy centers in lieu of family planning clinics.¹⁷⁰

Legislators have also made significant efforts to fund crisis pregnancy centers at the state level. In 2004 several states, including Missouri, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, and Delaware, allocated over $1,000,000 to crisis pregnancy centers and other "alternatives to abortion" programs. In California a portion of the state’s tax on tobacco were devoted to crisis pregnancy centers.¹⁷¹ Additionally, several states have introduced tax incentives to crisis pregnancy centers and those who donate to them. Virginia, for example, has a sales-tax exemption on equipment purchased by crisis pregnancy centers.¹⁷² Some states have also implemented a program that contributes funds towards crisis pregnancy centers for every 'Choose Life' license plate that is purchased. Florida, under Governor Jeb Bush, became the first to execute such a program in 1999. In its first four years, the program raised $1.5 million for crisis pregnancy centers. Since then, Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Tennessee have passed 'Choose Life' license plate bills. Additionally, some representatives have proposed bills that

¹⁷⁰ Committee on Government Reform—Minority Staff Special Investigations Division, 11-12.
¹⁷² "Medicine or Ministry?: Crisis Pregnancy Centers are using the language and technology of modern language to help soften their appeal to clients—but not their anti-abortion aims"
would either require healthcare providers to refer women to crisis pregnancy centers or to force women to go to them as a requirement in the event that they want an abortion.\textsuperscript{173} Although some of these laws were challenged and struck down, these bills continue to operate today in several states.\textsuperscript{174}

In addition to public funding, crisis pregnancy centers are funded by a wide variety of private organizations and groups—most of which are associated with conservative religious organizations. These organizations include the Pearson Foundation, Birthright, the Christian Action Council, and Jerry Falwell’s Liberty Foundation. Several crisis pregnancy centers, as was mentioned earlier, are known to share office space with religious organizations and to recruit volunteers from church groups. Additionally, individuals and business that receive large public support are known to fund crisis pregnancy centers.\textsuperscript{175}

Such extensive funding allowed crisis pregnancy centers to expand their Prevention Model in a variety of ways. Some centers, however, maintain that a Prevention Model based on establishing "sexual integrity" is simply not enough. The Evangelical Model, the most overtly religious model, dictates that crisis pregnancy centers devote their efforts to converting clients to evangelical Christianity as a fool-proof method of persuading them away from the sinful lifestyles that accompany

\textsuperscript{174} Committee on Government Reform—Minority Staff Special Investigations Division, 13-14.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid, 14.
non-marital sexual activity, unwed childbearing, and single parenting. This model, primarily developed by the larger crisis pregnancy networks, stems from the "culture of death" belief that asserts that many clients suffer from a culture that devalues marriage and establishes sexual deviance as a norm. These centers believe that they must be "revolving doors" for clients who repeatedly come in for pregnancy tests. The idea is that by providing "healing, ongoing support, and education," through post-abortion counseling based on Biblical teaching, "clients can actually [emphasis mine] regain their sexual integrity." By "being Christ" and continually providing services to women who seem resistant to conversion, activists believe that they themselves can make a compelling case against abortion through their own example and, in doing so, dispute the notion that they are not genuinely concerned for women.176

Ultimately, the Medical Model, the Prevention Model, and the Evangelic Model, work to establish a series of tactics from which crisis pregnancy models draw from and most effectively carry out the work of preventing as many abortions as possible. These models, the result of massive professionalization and reconsideration of their target audience amidst intense media scrutiny and criticism, allowed the crisis pregnancy center movement to grow and prosper. As part of its current effort towards expansion, crisis pregnancy centers have taken it upon themselves to reach out to women of color. In doing so, they have co-opted the

176 Kelly, 107-108.
black genocide narrative and incorporated black genocidal rhetoric into their outreach in order to fulfill their pro-life agenda.

*Crisis Pregnancy Centers and Black Genocide*

Keeping in line with the Pearson manual's recommendation to draw "abortion-bound women," crisis pregnancy centers have redirected their attention towards "underserved" and "urban" women. In a section labeled "Underserved Outreach," CareNet’s website reads:

> In many urban communities, abortion providers outnumber crisis pregnancy centers by a ratio of five to one. Without access to the important resources provided by pregnancy centers, many women in urban communities are heavily influenced by a devaluation of the life of their unborn child and a perceived lack of support should they choose to give birth. Everywhere they turn, they receive the message that abortion is an equally positive option when choosing how to respond to a crisis pregnancy.  

In response to these concerns, CareNet launched its "Urban Initiative" in 2003 with the goal of "developing partnerships and planting pregnancy centers in urban communities." Similarly, Heartbeat International has made it clear that it is "irrevocably committed to urban initiatives" with programs in place in Miami, Los Angeles, and Pittsburgh. In practice, the terms "underserved" and "urban," are

177 Stacey, 3.  
179 Ibid.  
180 National Women's Law Center, "Crisis Pregnancy Centers are Targeting Women of Color, Endangering Their Health," March 6, 2013, Accessed April 9, 2015,
often euphemisms for "black" and, to a lesser extent, "Latina."\textsuperscript{181} In point of fact, CareNet’s Urban Initiative later changed its name to "Underserved Outreach Initiative" in order to:

reflect [its] focus on reaching communities that are underserved [...CareNet is] first seeking to serve the community with the highest abortion rates—African Americans. The lessons learned in engaging the African American community (albeit a different culture) will be beneficial as [it expands their] efforts to reach another underserved community—Hispanic women.\textsuperscript{182}

These initiatives, and others like it, have secured the crisis pregnancy center commitment towards this new enterprise.

Many of these urban initiatives point to disproportionately high rates of abortion within communities of color in order to confirm the need for such undertakings. Indeed, a 2008 Guttmacher study found that the abortion rate for black women is almost five times that of white women. Meanwhile, the abortion rate for Hispanic women is double the rate among white women. As a result, black and Hispanic women account for 59% of all abortions in the United States.\textsuperscript{183} The Guttmacher study and many others like it, however, point to a high correlation between abortion rates and higher rates of unintended pregnancy among women of


\textsuperscript{182} CareNet, "Underserved Outreach."

color as the root of the problem. The study reports, "[t]he disparities in unintended pregnancy rates result mainly from similar disparities in access to and effective use of contraceptives."\textsuperscript{184} The study further elaborates on the issue of access to and use of contraceptives by stating:

Geographic access to services is a factor for some women; however, for many, it is more a matter of being able to afford the more effective—usually more expensive—prescription methods.

[...]

Beyond geographic and financial access, life events such as relationship changes, moving or personal crises can have a direct impact on method continuation. Such events are [...] more common for low-income and minority women than for others [...] Minority women, women who are poor and women with little education are more likely than women overall to report dissatisfaction with either their contraceptive method or provider. Cultural and linguistic barriers also can contribute to difficulties in method continuation.\textsuperscript{185}

In contrast to the crisis pregnancy center movement, several reproductive justice organizations, such as African American Women Evolving (AAWE), the National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum, the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, and Sistersong, have acknowledged the broader contexts of women’s reproductive realities:

[The leaders of these organizations have on occasion voiced their own frustrations with what they consider the ‘mainstream’ reproductive rights movement, contending that the movement has been too narrowly focused on protecting and promoting family planning and abortion rights. They argue that these rights, although critical, must be lodged in the broader health, social, and economic context of women’s lives—especially the lives of poor and low-income women who are disproportionately minority—and interconnected

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid, 3.
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid, 4.
with other critical life needs and aspirations. AAWE’s mission, for example, states forthrightly that 'a woman's ability to lead [a] reproductive healthy life is closely connected to her ability to overcome other social and economic barriers.'

These reproductive justice groups acknowledge the greater contexts surrounding women of color considering their reproductive options. In this sense the crisis pregnancy center movement ignores a critical discussion of the socioeconomic disparities that were often championed alongside the issue of black genocide by the original proponents of the black genocide narrative. In fact, many centers actually oppose comprehensive sexuality education and the use of birth control, thereby contributing themselves to the problems that allow for higher rates of unintended pregnancy and abortion that plague women of color.

Another reason for the urban focus is the crisis pregnancy center movement's belief that there is a higher concentration of abortion providers in cities. In truth, it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of crisis pregnancy centers versus abortion providers, especially in metropolitan areas. Still, as of 2013 it was estimated that crisis pregnancy centers outnumber abortion providers, approximately 2,500 to 1,800. The difference in numbers may be even more drastic today, given the exponential expansion of crisis pregnancy centers in a relatively short period of time and the recent conservative political effort to limit

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186 Ibid, 5, 12.
abortion providers in recent years. In addition to this, 87% of all counties do not have an abortion provider and neither do 97% of non-metropolitan counties.

Although the grand majority of abortion providers are located in metropolitan counties, 61% of these counties had no abortion provider and 70% had no large abortion provider. Although evidence is limited, these numbers concerning abortion provider concentration suggests that the crisis pregnancy center claim that abortion providers outnumber crisis pregnancy centers in urban areas is potentially misled. Still, this claim allows crisis pregnancy centers to paint themselves as saviors to women who are being taken advantage of by the ostensibly callous and money-minded abortion providers who take special care to situate themselves next to women of color whom they perceive to be most vulnerable. Such a characterization, of course, is ironic (if not hypocritical) given the crisis pregnancy center emphasis on drawing "abortion-bound" women of color—especially when

188 Republican legislators have passed several laws that have forced abortion providers to close down. Typically defined by researches as facilities that perform 400 or more abortions per year, abortion providers numbered 707 in the late 1980s. In 2011, the most recent year for which there is data, that number had fallen to 553. Since 2011 162 abortion providers have closed their doors, while just 21 have opened. See Esmé E. Deprez, "Abortion Clinics are Closing at Record Pace," Bloomberg Businessweek, February 24, 2016, accessed April 9, 2016, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-02-24/abortion-clinics-are-closing-at-a-record-pace.


190 Akiba Solomon asserts that anti-abortion activists used the example of Kermit Gosnell, a Philadelphia-area man who conducted illegal, dangerous late-term abortions, to imply that anti-abortion activists care more about women of color than do abortion providers. See Solomon, "The Missionary Movement to 'Save' Black Babies."
their deceptive advertisements, misleading office procedures, and use of misinformation are taken into consideration.

Given each of these beliefs, various crisis pregnancy center networks have undertaken a massive advertising campaign with the black genocide narrative at its center. Through this campaign, activists have laid blame upon abortion providers (although often specifically Planned Parenthood) for systematically wiping out people of color through legalized abortion procedures. *Maafa 21: Black Genocide in 21st Century America*, a film often cited by crisis pregnancy center activists and described as "the closest the predominantly white, Christian right has come to successfully exploiting Black Nationalist themes and aesthetics,"\(^191\) relies heavily on historical context in order to establish a link between the troubling and emotional narratives of slavery, colonialism, Jim Crow, the civil rights movement, and the Holocaust to reproductive control. The word "Maafa" actually stems from the Ki-Swahili term for "Great Disaster" and is a "culturally distinct, self-determined naming of the genocide experienced by Africans under western colonialism and slavery."\(^192\) Indeed, the film echoes some of the revolutionary rhetoric found in chapter three: "Since 1973, legal abortion has killed more African-Americans than AIDS, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and violent crime combined. Every week more blacks die in American abortion clinics than were killed in the entire Vietnam

\(^{191}\) Ibid.
With this sort of rhetoric, the film contends that there exists a white conspiracy to foster an environment in which black people have fewer children and commit race suicide through birth control and abortion. This conspiracy, according to the film, later formed the foundation of the American Birth Control League (currently Planned Parenthood). Additionally, the film asserts that Margaret Sanger (founder of the American Birth Control League/Planned Parenthood) was a racist eugenicist with Nazi ties who tried to eliminate black people. The film concludes by saying that Planned Parenthood is still enacting black genocide and that they remain one of the largest threats to black lives today.¹⁹⁴

In recent years, crisis pregnancy centers and other pro-life groups have gone so far as to put up entire billboards devoted to pointing out the disproportionate levels of abortion amongst African-American women. In 2011, during Black History Month, an anti-abortion billboard located in Soho, New York City, read, "The most dangerous place for an African American is in the womb."¹⁹⁵ The billboard led viewers to thatsabortion.com, a website that criticizes Planned Parenthood and collects funds for pro-life organizations. Similarly, an anti-abortion group called Life Always erected a billboard in Chicago with a picture of President Obama that stated, "Every 21 minutes, our next possible LEADER is aborted" while incorporating the

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.
colors of black, green, and red—the colors of the Black Nationalist flag.196 In what is perhaps the largest campaign of its kind, CareNet launched an 80-billboard series that directed viewers to toomanyaborted.com, a website that solicited funds for the Radiance foundation and listed Option Line, Care Net’s jointly operated phone service, as a potential resource.197 CareNet also purchased advertisement time on BET and partnered with black pastors in order to reach black audiences.198

It is worth noting that apart from these marketing efforts, which consistently invoke cultural nationalist rhetoric and aesthetic, the partnership between crisis pregnancy center networks and local black religious and community leaders is of particular interest. These partnerships, which conjure the memory of both the State Department’s use of "patriotic" African-Americans to denounce the original We Charge Genocide petition and the collaboration between black pastors and community leaders and white activists fighting for civil rights in the mid-20th century, effectively thrive due in part to such a comparison and are therefore suspect. Some allege that white, evangelical activists are taking advantage of black community leaders in order to help fulfill their pro-life strategy. Many of the crisis pregnancy centers and networks were founded and are currently lead by white,

197 Solomon, "The Missionary Movement to 'Save' Black Babies."
evangelical activists and it is often these same activists behind projects such as *Maafa 21* or *The Silent Scream*, an infamous film used by crisis pregnancy centers to convince women not to have abortion.\(^{199}\) Although *Maafa 21* features several high-profile African-American people, including politician Stephen Broden and Martin Luther King Jr.'s niece, Alveda King, the film is actually directed by a white anti-abortion activist and founder of Life Dynamics Inc., an organization whose motto is "Pro-Life, without compromise, without exceptions, and without apology."\(^{200}\)

One article notes that "[o]ne fact anti-abortion activists like to call upon is that Margaret Sanger [...] recruited black preachers to spread the message of birth control in 1939."\(^{201}\) Flipping the logic of this history back onto anti-abortion activists and illuminating its hypocrisy, Rev. C.J. Rhodes of Oakland Memorial Chapel questions, "I wonder if there's a group of white conservatives who have, in essence, hired these particular preachers to be the conservative versions of a Jesse Jackson


or an Al Sharpton.”\textsuperscript{202} The question is legitimate and, perhaps, quite founded. Life Always, the organization behind the Chicago-area billboards featuring President Obama, lists African-American pastor Stephen Broden (of \textit{Maafa 21}) as its founder, but is, in actuality, a front for a white-led organization:

But dig a little deeper, and it’s clear that the man behind Life Always is Brian Follett, a conservative activist from Austin, Texas. Follett was a major backer of Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, donating more than $40,000 to the famous smear campaign. A major foe of abortion, in 2004 he founded a group called Majella Cares Outreach, with the goal of 'reducing abortion through mass media education,' according to its website. In 2009, Majella rebranded itself as Heroic Media and expanded into Chicago and then into Florida. Life Always is simply a front for Heroic Media—Texas state records list Follett as Life Always’ registered agent, and both organizations have the same official address in Austin.\textsuperscript{203}

Such incidences call into question the true leadership of these organizations.

Widespread white leadership and the use of black decoys within the crisis pregnancy center movement run counter to the original black genocide narrative in that it provides another example of white establishments "pulling the strings" of black people, so to speak.

Likewise, the funding of crisis pregnancy centers is cause for serious concern when taken within the context of black genocidal discourse. The current and extensive private and state sponsorship of crisis pregnancy centers mirrors the overwhelming support for sterilization and other birth control services in the 1960s

\textsuperscript{202} Ibid.
and 1970s. There is little doubt that such allocation of funds constitutes the "monopoly capital" feared by original black genocide proponents. Similarly, the singular focus on reproduction and birth despite the other overwhelming disparities faced by women of color is eerily comparable to the way big governmental forces and large corporations concentrated solely on reproductive control despite other societal problems in the past. Such funding towards crisis pregnancy centers may rightly be the cause of apprehension for black genocide proponents critical of the system.

Still, this is not to say that crisis pregnancy centers are entirely remiss—Although these centers often fail to acknowledge the broader contexts that influence women of color, centers have indeed established a firm network amongst themselves and other local agencies in order to help with a large variety of life problems. One report listed some of the community referrals available within these centers, which account for a wide scope of services, including: adoption agencies, child protective services, dental services, domestic violence support and outreach, food banks and pantries, GED completion, grief support, immunization programs, job centers and skills training, legal assistance, mentoring programs, perinatal hospice care, prescription assistance, sexual abuse counseling, shelters for runaway and homeless youth, suicide prevention, and transportation assistance.204 In respect to issues that do not (or only marginally) pertain to the process of reproduction,

crisis pregnancy centers do well in embodying the notion of total healthcare that has been persistent throughout the history of black genocidal discourse. However, the fact that reproductive health is often ignored when taken beyond the purview of birth and childcare indicates that crisis pregnancy centers have not entirely mastered the total healthcare concept. If anything, their understanding and practice of healthcare most aligns with the Nation of Islam’s or the early Black Panther Party’s understanding of it—barring, of course, the probability that neither group would have seriously considered a white, Evangelical group an ally rather than an oppressor and most likely would have eyed them warily.

Indeed, much of the crisis pregnancy center’s Medical Model is problematic given the many parallels that can be drawn to the abusive practices faced by people of color in the past that were denounced by the original proponents of the black genocide narrative. The crisis pregnancy center movement attempts to emulate legitimate medical centers despite the fact that the majority of them are neither medically licensed nor do they have medically-trained staff at their centers. Nonetheless, there is little to stop medical staff from presenting themselves as clinics, including outfitting staff in white lab coats similar to those worn by doctors and nurses in hospitals and clinics. Many centers do not make a concerted effort to disclose that they are not a medical facility. One research report found that only 24% of crisis pregnancy centers revealed such information, which is especially concerning considering that 92% of the crisis pregnancy centers studied had no
medical professionals on staff. Such deception is dangerously reminiscent of the Virginia "Maternity Clinics" that, while appearing to be concerned with childbirth and reproductive healthcare, actually pressured women of color into sterilization with threats. Indeed, the allegation that at least one woman was forced to watch an anti-abortion video in a locked room only strengthens this likeness. The additional possibility that crisis pregnancy centers unbound by HIPAA regulation have used information provided to them by women of color to harass them into carrying to term only cements this parallel. Likewise, the likelihood that crisis pregnancy centers provide this information to other agencies without express permission evokes the cultural nationalist fear that the "powers that be" collude with each other in order to target black women, thus further adding to the long history of so-called medical establishments using black people's information against them.

Similarly, the Medical Models' reinterpretation of "pro-choice" rhetoric is a particularly insidious tool used to attract women of color. Much of this thesis has pointed to a long-standing history of medical and scientific establishments granting people of color "choices" that were, in reality, not really a choice in the truest sense of the word. The Tuskegee Trials, the "Maternity Clinics," the forcible sterilization of Minne Lee Relf, the sterilization of Puerto Rican women, the pill trials, "Mississippi Appendectomies," and more compose only a portion of this troubled history. Just as

206 sasharusa, "Exposing Crisis Pregnancy Centers and their disgusting tactics."
people of color were duped into medically unnecessary operations or as the unwilling participants of dangerous scientific studies, the women of color who enter crisis pregnancy centers are tricked into believing that they are buying into the greatest range of options available to them and with a full sense of personal agency. In reality, however, crisis pregnancy centers do not provide abortion or birth control as viable options. In fact some centers even go as far as to coerce women into signing adoption papers and giving up their children:

Women report tactics such as the withholding of medical care unless adoption forms are signed, lying about the significance of the adoption forms, representing the interests of the adoptive parents over the pregnant women’s interest, and even trying to isolate minors from their parents and/or their newly born child. One former volunteer at a Northern California [crisis pregnancy center] connected with the Christian Action Council stated that ‘adoptive parents usually turned out to be born-again Christians, financial donors to the center itself. Such tactics cannot help but evoke the disturbing image of black women forced to give their children away as their masters sold them to the benefit of their own financial interests during the era of African-American slavery. The use of the pro-choice rhetoric is, therefore, both hypocritical and exploitative of a history of abuses.

Such exploitation can also be found within the Medical Model’s provision of free items and services pertaining to birth and childcare, such as pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, baby clothes and other various supplies. These incentives inherently take advantage of the disparities that afflict women of color in that these women

may be more likely to pick the services that are most affordable to them due to their economic status. Still, one report found that some women found that crisis pregnancy centers "only provide prenatal care up to 24 weeks gestation because their real motive is to stop women from having abortions." Just as Elijah Muhammad condemned the incentives-based birth control program in India as an American plot to "hook" women of color in underdeveloped countries, the crisis pregnancy center supply of services sometimes exist only insofar as they are able to be the veritable "hook" that leads women into their centers.

Still, exploitation can be found within the Medical Model’s use of medically inaccurate information. The crisis pregnancy center insistence on the existence of "post abortion syndrome," which is not supported by any major medical or scientific establishment, and the highly questionable links that they draw between abortion and ailments such as breast cancer, infertility, and depression are cause for concern. Additionally, the fact that some crisis pregnancy centers purposefully obscure or even falsify the results of pregnancy tests is, in all probability, highly unethical from a medical standpoint. Presenting women of color with false medical information or, worse yet, diagnosing them incorrectly (as evidenced by the case of false pregnancy test results) continues the long standing history of people of color being misinformed about their medical care or being told that they have physical conditions that they do not have. Examples of this include the participants of the

209 Ibid.
Tuskegee Trials being told that they were being treated for "bad blood as researchers examined the effects of Syphilis disease left untreated over the course of decades"\textsuperscript{210} or the Department of Defense telling poor, black patients from 1960-1971 that they were being treated for cancer, despite actually trying to determine the effects of high levels of radiation on the human body.\textsuperscript{211}

Following along the lines of inaccurate information, the Prevention Models use of abstinence-only sexuality education may have a similarly debilitating effect. The exaggeration of contraceptive failure rates and the consequences of illicit sexual activity contribute once more to the long-standing history of presenting women of color with false (or at least misrepresented) medical information. Similarly, the widespread use of the three typologies of clients—the Moral Client, the Experienced Client, and the High Risk Client—represent an unavoidable mistrust in women to make their own decisions. Instead, crisis pregnancy networks revert to a patriarchal-influenced understanding of sexuality through their insistence that men and fathers can have a profound effect, either good or bad, on women's lives. They assert that women do not really know themselves, their needs, or their desires and therefore need outside counseling in order for women to self-actualize and make the "right" decisions for themselves. It is, at best, an insulting notion for any woman, but particularly for women of color for whom these typologies often reinforce racial stereotypes, such as absent parental figures or excess promiscuity.

\textsuperscript{210} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Tuskegee Timeline."
For some centers, however, the Prevention Model did not do enough by way of ensuring that the client's values truly reflected the values of crisis pregnancy centers and so they adopted the Evangelical Model to convert clients to Christianity. Preaching religion is not necessarily a controversial idea in itself especially when it manifests itself in the crisis pregnancy center ideal to "be Christ" rather than "impose Christ" onto clients. This, however, is not often the norm as the Evangelical Model is, more often than not, predicated on the potentially dangerous practices of misinformation and deception inherent in both the Medical Model and the Prevention Model. In addition to this, many of the women who enter the doors of crisis pregnancy centers are unaware that they will be receiving an Evangelical understanding towards matters of reproduction and sexuality—a perspective that is often initially unwelcome. As such, the Evangelical model can prove to be a tool of harassment and persecution against all crisis pregnancy center clients.

In short, the crisis pregnancy center movement has employed a range of practices that often carry the possibility of hurting or exploiting their clients. These policies often have an even more detrimental effect on women of color given the troubled reproductive and sexual histories that people of color share. The crisis pregnancy center movement's use of black genocide narrative for its campaign, therefore, poses serious concerns surrounding its narrative appropriation due to its uncanny similarities to injustices posed against people of color in the past. In sum, this appropriation has contributed towards the preservation of a white racial hegemonic order through its marginalization and exploitation women of color.
Chapter 5:

A Conclusion

In the midst of writing this thesis, I have admittedly fallen into one of the classic pitfalls of conspiracy narratives:

After all [...] Oedipa Maas [of Thomas Pynchon’s The Crying of Lot 49] [...] never, at least truly or fully, resolve[s] the mysteries surrounding the conspiracies [she] encounter[s] and attempt[s] to investigate and “solve”; [she] only encounter[s] further questions, further truths, mistruths, and untruths. Indeed, those who seek to resist a conspiracy by investigating it, tend to become first conspirators themselves and, finally, even more subject to the conspiracy itself.212

In other words, just as Oedipa Maas of Thomas Pynchon’s famed postmodern conspiracy novella, The Crying of Lot 49, found herself in the midst of a seemingly insurmountable conspiracy surrounding a centuries-old conflict between two mail distributors, Thurn und Taxis and the Trystero, my pursuit to understand the black genocide conspiracy narrative has only yielded further questions, further conspiracies. It is precisely at this point that I ask openly, just as Oedipa asks of herself as she gazes upon the star systems projected unto the walls of the planetarium, "Shall I project a world?"213 Like the dark machine in the planetarium, I have projected a series of people, places, and events by unfolding the history of the black genocide narrative and the crisis pregnancy center movement. Do I dare impose a two-dimensional sketch onto a three-dimensional reality by connecting

212 Fleming, "Selection 10: Conspiracy, Paranoia and Simulacra in the Huxtable Narrative or the Crying of 10 Stigwood Avenue."
those dots? In forming those constellations, will I even come close to depicting a natural order that is, no doubt, beyond my comprehension? To what degree am I responsible to explore the black genocide narrative to its limits?

Given that this thesis fully embraces the black genocide conspiracy narrative for both its content and its context, it thus has the added responsibility of investigating the parties (apart from the original advocates of the black genocide conspiracy narrative) that espouse the black genocide conspiracy narrative as their own. Indeed—given the extensive and harrowing history of sexual and reproductive injustices wrought against people of color in America and across the globe, the sudden shift in the locus of black genocidal discourse is deserving of intense scrutiny. In line with this duty, I make the bold claim that just as The Cosby Show has become a device of racism, the crisis pregnancy center movement has, according to each of the terms, definitions, logics, and histories that I have previously established throughout this thesis, successfully transformed the black genocide conspiracy narrative itself into an instrument of black genocide. Supporting this assertion is an in-depth analysis of the crisis pregnancy center use of the black genocide narrative against the backdrop of its extensive history, which the second, third, and fourth chapters of this thesis firmly demonstrated.

Before delving into the methodology by which this thesis will determine the validity of the crisis pregnancy center use of the black genocide narrative, it is important to demonstrate that although it may be controversial from both a theoretical and practical perspective, crisis pregnancy centers or organizations
resembling them are not necessarily mistaken in tackling the issue of black genocide in their anti-abortion advocacy. In her Ph.D. dissertation, *Women's Abortion Experiences in Context*, Wendy Carter asserts that the Disowning-Owning Continuum, or the "extent to which women described accepting, expressing, or acting in accordance with their feelings about the abortion experience" was heavily influenced by an increased awareness of the social contexts surrounding their abortions.\(^\text{214}\) The crisis pregnancy center emphasis on black genocide may constitute the acknowledgment of social context for many women of color considering their reproductive options. In her Ph.D. dissertation, *In the Name of the Mother: Gender and Religion in the Crisis Pregnancy Center Movement*, Kimberly Kelly writes: "Acknowledgment of the relevance of the context of women's lives is echoed throughout the [crisis pregnancy center] movement as a whole."\(^\text{215}\) Recognition of the black genocide narrative may empower women to feel more confident in their decision, no matter whether they choose to receive an abortion or not. The crisis pregnancy center movement's tactics may very well be wrongheaded, if not downright exploitative as this chapter will go on to suggest, but they are further ahead of the curve than most family planning clinics and organizations in actually taking the opportunity to address abortion and race in the context of black genocide.

Understanding that the black genocide narrative can play a vital role within women of color's individual pursuit of abortion and within the anti-abortion/pro-


\(^{\text{215}}\) Kelly, 132.
life movements, the critical question remains: How is it possible to determine the
various dilemmas inherent in the crisis pregnancy center movement's use of the
black genocide narrative? In her book, *Other People's Stories: Entitlement Claims and
the Critique of Empathy*, Amy Shuman provides a simple set of guidelines:

To address [the] vulnerabilities in the retelling of other people’s
stories, I have proposed that we begin by asking a few questions:
whose story is it (the question of entitlement), what is it being used
for (what is the allegory), what does it promise (empathy,
redemption, meaning), and at whose expense.²¹⁶

The first three chapters of this thesis have already done the work of determining the
answer to the question of whose story it is: the black genocide narrative is largely a
series of African-American and cultural nationalist accounts of the various and
multitudinous inequities forced upon people of color in America. Although the black
genocide narrative takes its roots within a specific historical and cultural context,
any individual of color who might be a target of black genocide could conceivably
assert ownership of the black genocide narrative. The crisis pregnancy center
movement, however, is an offshoot of the pro-life movement and is not necessarily
identified by its racial identity so much as its religious and political identity. That is
not to say that there are no people of color within the crisis pregnancy center
movement. In fact, there are a number of black churches and organizations that
have partnered with crisis pregnancy centers.²¹⁷ Still, there is also the possibility
that at least some of the black leaders partnering with crisis pregnancy centers

²¹⁶ Amy Shuman, *Other People’s Stories: Entitlement Claims and the Critique of
²¹⁷ The Life Education and Resource Network (LEARN)
function more as puppets than as equitable partners. In this sense, the crisis pregnancy center movement may stake a claim in the black genocide narrative given that there are people of color within their movement, yet it is a weak claim because it is based on a specific sub-section of their populace that is neither particularly representative of their entire demographic, widely present within their leadership, nor verifiably secure in what little power it may yield.

The second question asks: What is the crisis pregnancy center movement using the black genocide narrative for? Over the course of over 40 years, crisis pregnancy centers have demonstrated a deeply personal commitment to eradicating abortion and other forms of birth control, reversing the "culture of death" that devalues cultural mores such as sex within marriage, monogamy, and traditional gender roles, and oftentimes promoting evangelical Christianity. According to these goals, the use of the black genocide narrative by the crisis pregnancy center movement represents a more powerful attempt to reach the women who, in the eyes of activists, are most vulnerable to the "culture of death," but with the least resources to combat it. Like many of the original proponents of the black genocide narrative, these activists point to family planning clinics such as Planned Parenthood as perpetrators of such an atrocity. They largely fail, however, to acknowledge the broader contexts in which black genocide thrives—crisis pregnancy centers do not examine the consequences of socioeconomic discrepancies, the role of government and the capitalist system, or race relations beyond the scope of ensuring that the next possible abortion is averted. Where organizations such as the Civil Rights Congress, Nation of Islam, Black Panther Party,
and the Young Lords of New York call for a national metamorphosis—a bottom-up transformation of American racial hegemony—crisis pregnancy centers focus largely on the end of abortion and not the social circumstances that allow abortion to proliferate. In this sense, crisis pregnancy centers amount to a half-measure towards the real aim of radical and systemic change, thereby failing to meet the second requirement of Shuman’s guidelines.

The answer to the second question greatly informs the answer to the third: What does the black genocide narrative promise? Mark Fenster writes that, "the very act of identifying or chronicling [a conspiracy] provides a map of power." Conspiracy narratives, at their core, offer a particular historical truth about the distribution of power. In this sense, the black genocide conspiracy narrative asserts the existence of a white hegemonic order that seeks to undermine and ultimately eliminate people of color in order to maintain such power structures. In making this assertion, the narrative "represents a populist possibility, a resistance to power that implicitly imagines a better, collective future." The black genocide narrative condenses common and often intertwined feelings of both fear and hope in order to create an explanation for the past and a justification for the future. In other words, the black genocide narrative promises a much-needed sense of resolution for past inequities. Oftentimes, it signifies not only the possibility of racial equity, but of racial supremacy. It is not coincidence that the black genocide rhetoric of the Nation of Islam, the Black Panther Party, and the Young Lords Party all coincided with

\[218\] Fenster, 123.
\[219\] Ibid, xiii.
notions of revolution—the black genocide narrative not only represents the will to survive, but the will to thrive and subvert the racial hierarchy. That said, the crisis pregnancy center movement’s use of the black genocide narrative does not guarantee the same promise. As the previous chapter has suggested, their emphasis is not nearly so focused on notions of revolution as it is on simply preserving life at all costs—regardless of race. In this sense, the crisis pregnancy center use of the black genocide narrative does not hold the same meaning, and therefore does not satisfy the third requirement for rebuffing the potential vulnerabilities in appropriating this narrative.

The final question asks: At whose expense does the crisis pregnancy center propagate the black genocide narrative? As the fourth chapter indicated, the answer is, in short, the majority (if not all) of women of color. Apart, of course, from the countless examples of abuses listed in chapter four that crisis pregnancy centers have perpetrated against individual women of color, much of the crisis pregnancy center emphasis on black genocide could be characterized as race-baiting exploitation. Indeed, it capitalizes upon a harrowing history of trauma and death in such a way so as to pit women of color’s own self-interest and female agency against their allegiance to their respective races and ancestries. Even the few women of color who are either aware of the true nature of crisis pregnancy centers or wholeheartedly buy into the black genocide narrative before entering the doors of the center are generally unconscious to the fact that they are often used to advance a pro-life agenda that is not necessarily pro-black life. Oftentimes the care that crisis pregnancy centers extend to communities of color reach only insofar as they are
needed in order to prevent an abortion—after this point the level of dedication towards the cause of preventing black genocide and racial strife begins to dwindle and, in fact, actually works to counteract such efforts.

It is at this moment, in trying to answer the question of at what expense does the crisis pregnancy center movement’s use the black genocide narrative come, that I assert my own conspiracy narrative: crisis pregnancy centers have perverted the black genocide narrative by using it as a tool to actually achieve black genocide. As was made clear in chapter two of this thesis, genocide, according to both the United Nations and the original proponents of the black genocide narrative, is defined as:

[a]ny of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, as such:

(a) Killing members of the group;
(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life, calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.220

According to this definition and given the history that I have established in chapters two, three, and four, and with the understanding that the "intent to destroy" is inherently unknowable (just as the subject of any conspiracy narrative is inherently unknowable), I argue that crisis pregnancy centers are guilty of sections B, C, and E. I make the case for section B because the crisis pregnancy center movement’s dispensation of medically-inaccurate information, the reported incidents of

harassment, scare-tactics, and fraud, and the deceptive advertisements all contribute to a crisis pregnancy center experience that could potentially have unexpected, mentally and/or physically traumatic, and life-changing outcomes for some women of color. This actually ties directly to section E, given the previous examples in chapter four of adoption coercion. Lastly, in making the case for section C, I refer back to the text in saying that crisis pregnancy centers, quite literally "[inflict] on the group conditions of life" through their insistence on preserving the life of the unborn child that "bring about [the targeted group's] destruction in whole or in part. Crisis pregnancy center tactics, which are generally coercive, have the overall goal of targeting women of color who would not have normally carried to term and convincing them not to have an abortion. This goal could have the potential effect of marginalizing communities of color by increasing the number of instances in which women are forced to face the financial strain of caring for a child before they are prepared, thereby reinforcing a cycle of poverty that disproportionally burdens communities of color and discourages the possibilities of longevity, upward mobility or political influence. This, in essence, allows white hegemonic order to thrive on the labor of women of color.

Given the possibility of the conspiracy narrative that I have just proposed, I argue that crisis pregnancy centers resoundingly fail to meet the fourth and final requirement set by Shuman. So, to reiterate, crisis pregnancy centers only barely (if at all) satisfy one out of the four requirements necessary to ensure that their appropriation of the black genocide narrative is not problematic. Although crisis pregnancy centers bring the topic of black genocide to the forefront and they do
provide some positive services on an individualized basis, the overall theoretical and practical effects of such centers in sum are far more disastrous than helpful. This thesis concludes with certainty that the crisis pregnancy center use of the black genocide narrative, as it currently stands, is plainly and dangerously exploitative.

Let it be clear, however, that the black genocide narrative can and should have some level of representation within both healthcare and pro-life activism. There are many women of color who subscribe to the beliefs of the black genocide narrative and such contexts are critical towards their pursuit of reproductive and sexual healthcare and political power. I assert, however, that such pursuits should not take the form of the current crisis pregnancy center model. Rather, a new model that relates more closely to the original conception of the black genocide narrative might resemble the centers that arose from the total healthcare models of the Nation of Islam, the Black Panther Party, and the Young Lords Party of New York. This means that these centers should be created and led by communities of color in service to people of color and that they should focus not only on matters of reproduction, but also on matters pertaining to all facets of life—everything from healthcare to nutrition to housing. Each of these concepts and so many others, as current reproductive justice activists currently advocate and the original proponents of the black genocide narrative deeply understood, are interdependent on each other. In order to successfully prevent black genocide, a "pro-life" stance should also implicitly mean "pro-black lives" and should be a lifelong commitment—from womb to tomb. The crisis pregnancy center movement has proven itself incapable of this endeavor.
The crisis pregnancy center appropriation of the black genocide narrative is just one of many issues of race that have resurfaced into the public eye over the past few years: the Black Lives Matter movement, the War on Drugs, the prison-industrial complex, income inequality and unemployment, and so many more reside at the forefront of current American thought. In an age and society that heavily promotes certain modes of conspiracy discourse through mass media while discounting others that do not necessarily fit within the larger interests of the governmental forces or corporations, it is critical to remember the importance of conspiracy narratives. No matter how unlikely conspiracy narratives may seem when taken at face value, they each contribute a story—a particular cultural or historical truth—that is constructed from a series of raw and painful realities. In doing so, they provide a constellation of power and meaning yet to be delineated by the outside viewer. In the process of depicting these constellations we unveil that story and take one step closer towards achieving resolution. In demonstrating this point, I refer back to my literary roots and present an excerpt from Thomas Pynchon’s *The Crying of Lot 49*:

[… ] it was part of her duty, wasn’t it, to bestow life on what had persisted, to try to be what Driblette was, the dark machine in the centre of the planetarium, to bring the estate into pulsing stelliferous Meaning, all in a soaring dome around her? If only so much didn’t stand in her way: her deep ignorance of law, of investment, of real estate, ultimately of the dead man himself. The bond the probate court had had her post was perhaps their evaluation in dollars of how much did stand in her way. Under the symbol she’d copied off the latrine wall of The Scope into her memo book, she wrote *Shall I project a world?* If not project then at least flash some arrow on the dome to
skitter among constellations and trace out your Dragon, Whale, Southern Cross. Anything might help.²²¹

Just as I have challenged myself through the enterprise of writing this thesis, I challenge you, the reader, to take a first or second look at the myriad conspiracy narratives that surround you, to pick one that interests you, to consider the injustices they allege and the solutions they propose, and to say, "Yes...I shall project a world."

²²¹ Pynchon, 64-65.
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