

Committee: Special Conference on Global Reform and Ethics

Issue: Promoting the integration of ethnic and religious minorities into society

Student Officer: Anna Giapitzi-Papandreou

Position: Deputy President

INTRODUCTION

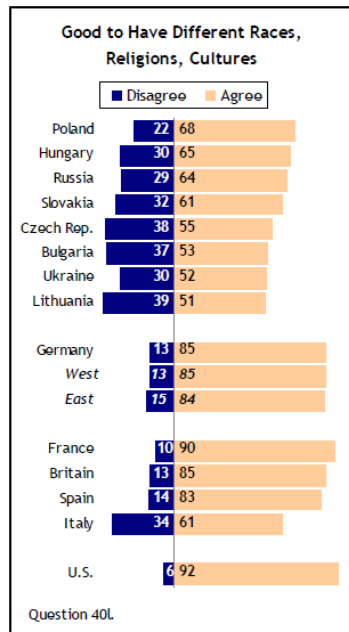
An inclusive society is a society that over-rides differences of race, gender, class, generation, and geography, and ensures inclusion, equality of opportunity as well as capability of all members of the society to determine an agreed set of social institutions that govern social interaction. (Expert Group Meeting on Promoting Social Integration, Helsinki, July 2008)

It is common ground for any large society to be composed of ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities. Ethnic minorities may include migrant, native or landless communities. In this case, ethnic identity is realized through common cultural, religious, linguistic, behavioral or biological characteristics. When it comes to religious minorities, these are constituted by the social groups whose faith is different to that held by the majority.

Ethnic and religious minorities are often victims of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, and social exclusion. In some countries, people may be arraigned for their religious faith and practices. Additionally, xenophobia can evoke or facilitate hostile and violent reactions, such as mass displacement of immigrants, or genocide. Despite these reactions, what is really promising is the fact that there are ethnic and religious minorities which try to maintain both their cultural and religious beliefs without being assimilated with the rest of the society. It is common belief that these groups should have a say in the formation of the political, economic and social life of the broader social group and that's because they are the representatives of new, different and in many cases innovative ideas, which can prove really beneficial.

Apart from their obvious importance, an extra reason why ethnic and religious minorities should be considered an indispensable part of any given society is the fact that in most cases they are not minorities at all. They usually include a respectable proportion of the total population. Still, members of such groups are usually treated differently, which leads to tension between both majority and minority groups.

One of the areas that this discrepancy is highlighted is the distribution of wealth within social groups. There are countries in which power and money are not distributed fairly enough between minorities. These are the countries where there is vital need to promote arrangements, both political and economic, so as to ensure that all groups are adequately represented.



Is it good to have different races, religions, cultures?

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Ethnic minority

A social group whose national or cultural traditions differ from those of the main population. It could also be an immigrant or racial group considered by those claiming to speak for the majority as discrete and unadjusted.

Religious minority

This term applies to social groups whose religion is different from that of the rest of the population of a country, state, or region. Religious minorities may be vulnerable to stigma or discrimination. People who belong to a religious minority may be exposed to discrimination and prejudice.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism depicts the existence, acceptance, or promotion of a variety of cultural traditions within a single administration. It refers to a wide range of multiple groups of different cultural backgrounds living together within the same society.

Nationalism

It is an ideology that places the nation at the center of its concerns and seeks to promote its well-being by achieving three general goals: national independence, national unification and national integrity. Nationalism is an idea or political creed that involves an individual recognizing with, or becoming fixated to, one's nation.

Prejudice

It is a prejudgment or formation of an opinion before becoming aware of the relevant evidence of a case. The word is often used to refer to biased, usually adverse, judgments towards a person because of gender, political beliefs, social circle, age, impairment, religious beliefs, race, ethnicity, language, nationality, or other personal traits.

Social Integration

Social Integration is a dynamic and principled process through which both majorities and minorities participate in dialogue so as to achieve and maintain nonviolent social relations. Social integration does not imply forced assimilation.

Social Participation

Social Participation or Engagement refers either to the extent to which an individual participates in a broad range of social roles and relationships (Avison, McLeod and Pescosolido) or to the commitment of a member to stay in the group and interact with other members (Zhang, Jiang, and Carroll).

Social Exclusion

Social exclusion or Marginalization is the term applied to social detriment and relegation to the border of society. It is the procedure during which people are denied access to various rights, chances and resources that are usually available to members of all groups and which are vital to social integration in a group (e.g., shelter, enrollment, health management, becoming active citizens, and due process).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Europe

There is no doubt that Europe is an ethnically and religiously diversified continent, and that there are only few countries in which population groups with an ethnic identity distinct from that of the country's nominal community are not present.

Although Europe's median score on the Social Hostilities Index dropped marginally, from 2.7 in 2012 to 2.3 in 2013, it is still well above the worldwide median (1.6), with many moves of aggression being directed at religious or ethnic minorities. Provocation of Jews and Muslims was especially extensive. Jews dealt with provocation in 34 of the region's 45 countries (76%) — a higher share than in any other region. In any other part of the world, Jews were harassed by individuals or groups in society in 25% of countries. Muslims experienced harassment in nearly as many European countries as Jews — 32 of the 45 countries, or 71%. Muslims were harassed in 34% of the countries in the rest of the world.

In France, three men attacked a teenager who was wearing an analogue in Vitry-Sur-Seine, yelling: "We will kill all of you Jews." In Spain, vandals painted a large Nazi symbol on the walls of a bull ring in Pinto, along with a message, "Hitler was right." In Komarno in southern Slovakia, metal tiles enclosed in the pavement honoring a Jewish family killed in the Holocaust were destroyed when vandals poured tar over them. And in Norway, a newspaper published a disputed cartoon that actually was insulting the practice of circumcision. In Germany, bloody pig heads were found at a place where the Ahmadiyya Muslim community planned to build Leipzig's first mosque. In Ireland, several mosques and Muslim cultural centers received threatening letters. One of the letters said, "Muslims have no right to be in Ireland. The Irish people are not happy with your presence in our country, which belongs to the true Irish people."

United States of America

The United States of America (USA) presents minority circumstances of unusually high diversity and complication. There are seven minority groupings: Latinos (including Puerto Ricans), African Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, Arab and other Middle Eastern Americans, Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Inuit and Alaska Natives. In most conditions, these groupings involve several distinct subgroups. There are dozens of other distinctive ethnic and religious minority groups in the USA. Some of them are small immigrant groups that do not yet have adequate numbers and history to draw attention. However, others have been rather favorable in reaching reconciliation with the dominant

population and cannot be said to experience significant discrimination as minorities in the USA today. Irish, Italian, Polish and other Roman Catholic European immigrants, for example, came upon serious discrimination prior to the Second World War, but have now integrated as 'whites'. Often these groups have maintained their cultural cohesion while achieving economic advancement. Jewish people - 6.4 million or 2.2% of the US population in accordance with a survey implemented by the American Jewish Committee in 2006 - are a unique case. Anti-Semitism in the USA was extensive and enclosed in social and economic structures recently as well as in the mid-1960s. Today, however, Jews engage with every aspect of life, containing political and social institutions and the media.

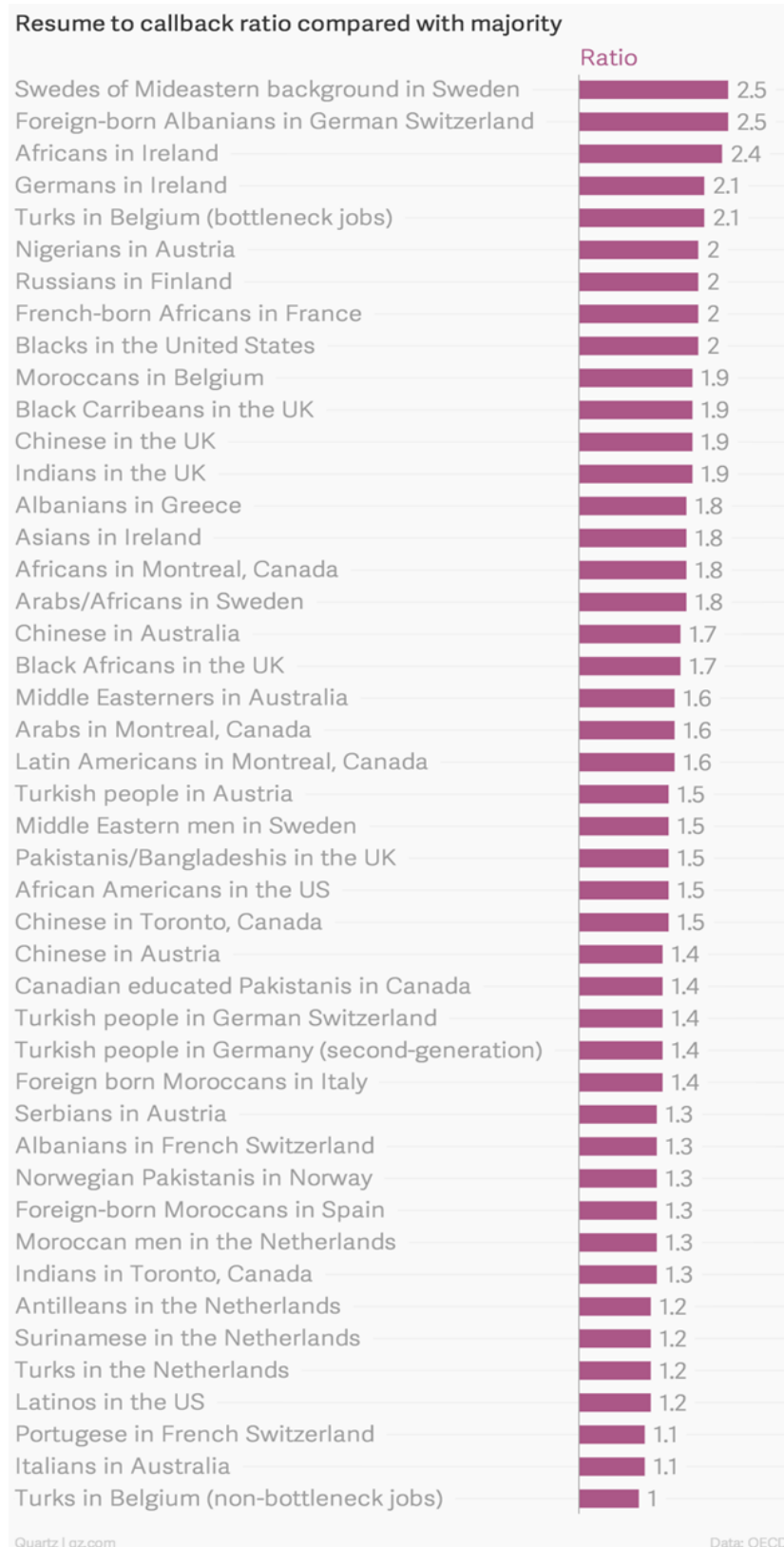
Middle East

Arabs comprise the majority ethnic group in all the Middle East States other than Iran, Israel, and Turkey. In the latter countries, the majority ethnic groups are Persians, Turks and Jews respectively. Originally, the term "Arab" referred to the peoples that inhabited the northern and central parts of the Arabian Peninsula. Adhering to the expansion of various Arab-Islamic empires throughout the Middle East and into Europe and south Asia, the term "Arab" has come to be synonymous to people who speak Arabic. Nowadays, nearly 60% of the entire population in the Middle East speak Arabic and identify as such. In addition to ethnicity, the peoples of the Middle East are differentiated by their religion. Most people in the Middle East practice Islam. They are known as Muslims. Islam is the superior religion in all of the Middle Eastern states except Israel and Palestinian areas. According to the list of states, the Middle East is nearly consistently populated by Muslims. Nevertheless, this probable consistency of religion masks a number of important distinctions. For example, there are lots of different sects within Islam. The majority of people in Middle East are part of the Sunni sect of Islam. Another sect, Shiite or Shia Islam, is the superior religion in Iran, Iraq and Bahrain. Moreover, there are Shiite minorities in Kuwait, and Yemen, whereas in Lebanon the two sects are equally divided. Furthermore, smaller sects exist within Islam. These sects comprise, among others, the Alawites, the Druze, the Ibadis, the Ismailis, the Shafis, and various Sufi orders. In addition to Arabs, there are a number of other ethnic groups in the Middle East.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Countries

Here is a graph with major countries and their minorities:



Additionally, many States face problems with prejudice against ethnic and religious minorities. For example:

Germany

The verdict of a study based on the integration of Germany's immigrants was damaging, concluding that a really high percentage of them live in a world where they have very few opportunities of a proper education and career progression. The study showed that Turks especially, are hardly managing, even though they have lived so many years in Germany. It also shows that foreigners who come to live in Germany are likely to remain outsiders, even after years or generations in some situations. There are even problems among those who hold German passports.

United Kingdom

In Britain today there is a disparity between how non-Muslims often see Muslims and how Muslims typically see themselves. This disengagement leads to an inclination by non-Muslims to assume that Muslims have a hard time with their British identity and divided loyalties. According to Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement Blog: a) 83% of Muslims are proud to be a British citizen, compared to 79% of the public. b) 77% of Muslims firmly identify with Britain while only 50% of the wider population does. c) 86.4% of Muslims feel they are a part of Britain, marginally more than the 85.9% of Christians. d) 82% of Muslims would like to live in diversified and mixed neighborhoods compared to 63% of non-Muslim Britons. e) 90% of Pakistanis have a strong sense of belonging in Britain compared to 84% of white people.

United States of America

Immigration is a huge part of life in the USA. However, there are still concerns about whether immigrants integrate normally into society. Integration results in uncomfortable adaptation between foreigners, their descendants, and host societies. US immigrant integration usually occurs without policy intervention and little confederate funding, because it is more preferable to rely on labor market and high-quality public education.

France

It is in West African traditions that villages send their most courageous young men to work in France. These young men usually send the majority of their salary to their families and come back to their villages, after a lot of years of living in France. Subsequently, and particularly with the Left Wing in power in the 1980s, there was a big evolution of kindness towards these men, who lived isolated for so many years, far away from their families, and a

policy of "Regroupement Familial" (family regrouping) was arranged (law of 29/4/1976) under the basis that "it is a right for each person to have a normal family life". The migration design has dramatically changed due to this policy. Lots of women left their villages with no previous involvement with European life and little ability to adjust, polygamy became a major issue in some countries such as Mali and all children born in France are undoubtedly French citizens, in accordance with French law. In 2004, out of 173,390 new resident cards to non-European, 110,619 were associated with "regroupement familial".

The Minority Rights Group (MRG)

This international Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) strives for the promotion of rights for ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and works to secure the rights of minorities and indigenous people. This NGO works with minority communities and provides education and training in order for these groups to be able to gain their rightful place in society. It also carries out media and advocacy work on behalf of minorities.

European Roma Rights Center (ERRC)

The ERRC monitors the human rights situation of Roma and provides legal defense in cases of human rights exploitation. The ERRC's first concerns are: State reaction to violence and hate speech, access to education, access to shelter, free movement to other places, identity records, women's and children's rights.

Project on Ethnic Relations (PER)

The peaceful resolution of ethnic conflicts in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in the Russian Federation is aimed for here. Representatives of ethnic groups and government officials are given opportunities for dialogue under neutral auspices. Additionally, the PER administers programs of preparation, education, and investigation at worldwide, civil, and society levels.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Event
2010	Open Society Foundation
2009	Forum on Minority Issues
2004	Stockholm International Forum
2001	Durban Declaration
June 2000	Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, concern on the Roma population
2000	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
2000	World Conference Against Racism
1992	Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities
1992	United Nations Minorities Declaration

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

“Minorities in all regions of the world continue to face serious threats, discrimination and racism, and are frequently excluded from taking part fully in the economic, political, social and cultural life available to the majorities in the countries or societies where they live.”

-by Navanethem Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (Statement on Human Rights Day, 10 December 2009)

The UN has established many Declarations, Conventions, Covenants and Forums, in order to protect minorities and in this case ethnic and religious minority groups. All people have equal rights, and the UN tries to do its utmost to protect them. Until now, through the UN’s efforts many people who belong to such groups are now protected and given the rights they were meant to have. Now, the UN with all the Treaties, Resolutions etc. continues the task of protecting as many minorities as possible.

Some of the actions of the UN for the protection of ethnic and religious minorities are:

- United Nations Minorities Declaration:

It establishes that all minorities' rights have to be acknowledged and promoted by all States in order for such groups to enjoy their own cultures and identities and practice their own religions.

- Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities:

It establishes that all States shall protect the ethnic, religious and linguistic identity of all minorities.

- Forum on Minority Issues:

It provides a platform for promoting dialogue and cooperation on issues pertaining to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and identifies opportunities for the further implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (see below).

- UN Commission on Human Rights, 60th Session: 2004/51.

It establishes the protection of Rights of people belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities.

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:

It recognizes that these rights are basic rights of humans and therefore should be protected for both majorities and minorities.

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:

It establishes the protection of these rights for all people.

- Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:

Enforces the purpose of the International Covenant.

- United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination:

Achieves international cooperation in promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms without any distinctions.

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination:

Enforces all actions of the aforementioned UN Declaration.

- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention:

It calls for states to enable legislation which bans all discrimination on any basis such as religion, national or social origin in employment, and to abolish legislation that is not based on equal chances.

- Convention against Discrimination in Education:

It establishes the protection of the right to education without any discrimination.

- Equal Remuneration Convention:

It is aimed at equal work of impartial value for both men and women.

- Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief:

It calls for States to respect and recognize all religious identities of minority groups.

- Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice:

It calls for States to respect and recognize all ethnic identities of minority groups.

- Framework Convention for the Protection of national Minorities:

It ratifies the protection within most regions of the existence of national and ethnic minorities.

- Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women:

It calls for States to ratify measures to protect women both in majority and minority groups.

- Convention on the Rights of the Child:

It ratifies the protection of the rights of all children regardless of the group they are in and without any discrimination.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Legislation is a really important factor when it comes to creating an inclusive society. However, there are some discriminatory laws and practices, which need to be either eliminated or amended, in order to avoid tensions within society. Additionally, nowadays most majority and minority groups do not get along well. Thus, implementing legislation in order to promote better ethnic relations among both groups and to introduce higher penalties for racially motivated crimes might be helpful.

Knowledge and education are really powerful “tools” for someone to possess. Actually, through educational programs we can promote equality, respect and understanding towards minorities, in order for them to be able to integrate into society. Moreover, because schools are a miniature of society, children learn from an early age the meaning of equal rights, diversity, respect and treating people different from them as

equals. So, if schools achieve their purpose, to educate and nurture children, in the future we will have more responsible civilians, who will respect everyone's rights and understand that difference is acceptable. Additionally, there is fundamental need for social participation, in order to achieve more normal integration of minorities into society. They need to be active citizens with a formed opinion about politics and economics. Through education we can achieve the best interdisciplinary information these groups can have.

Raising awareness is also a big step in creating an inclusive society. Through educational campaigns, media and the establishment of forums or advisory bodies we can promote dialogue and cooperation on issues concerning people belonging to religious or ethnic minorities. We can also achieve better integration of such groups into society, if the public is sensitized on negative phenomena such as racism, discrimination, xenophobia, social exclusion and if all States do their utmost to eliminate them. Finally, community leaders and political representatives can play a really important role when it comes to recognition, participation and raising awareness among the public.

Furthermore, it is of utmost importance that States take all possible precautions and measures in order to protect people belonging to minority groups, as well as their human rights. So, to enhance social inclusion of minorities, same opportunities should be given to both majorities and minorities when it comes to shelter, payment, education, healthcare etc. As far as employment is concerned, monitoring the number of people of particular ethnic origin in all kinds of employment might be helpful, in order to increase employment of those of minority origins where they are under-represented. Finally, eliminating hate speech towards ethnic and religious minorities will reduce obstacles to their integration and future occupation with different activities in society.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "Practical Strategies for Social Action." *Librarianship and Human Rights* (2007): 43-46. Web.
- "Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities." *Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities*. N.p., n.d. Web.
- "Indigenous People and Ethnic and Religious Minorities." *Indigenous People and Ethnic and Religious Minorities*. N.p., n.d. Web.
- "Minorities under International Law." *Minorities under International Law*. N.p., n.d. Web.
- "Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic." *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*. N.p., n.d.
- "Linguistic Rights - UN Declaration." *Linguistic Rights - UN Declaration*. N.p., n.d. Web.
- "The UN Human Rights Council." (2011): n. pag. Web.
- "MRGi." *Minority Rights Group International: Advocacy: Resolution on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*. N.p., n.d. Web.
- "Policy Paper No. 4 - Multiculturalism: New Policy Responses to Diversity." *Policy Paper No. 4 - Multiculturalism: New Policy Responses to Diversity*. N.p., n.d. Web.
- FACT SHEET 36 Report on the High Level Advisory Group of Experts on the Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities and Their Full Participation on the Labour Market April 2007* (n.d.): n. pag. Web.
- "Press Kit: Issues - Multi-ethnic States and the Protection of Minority Rights - World Conference Against Racism." *UN News Center*. UN, n.d. Web.
- "Fight, Racism, Antiracism, Racial, Take a Stand, Discrimination, Advocating, Human Rights, Justice, United Nations, UN." *UN News Center*. UN, n.d. Web.
- "Handbook of Research on Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship." *Google Books*. N.p., n.d. Web.
- "Racial and Ethnic Minority Student Success in STEM Education." *Google Books*. N.p., n.d. Web.
- "Multiculturalism and Minority Religions in Britain." *Google Books*. N.p., n.d. Web.
- "School Prayer and Discrimination." *Google Books*. N.p., n.d. Web.
- "Addressing Cultural Diversity in Hospice." *PsycEXTRA Dataset* (2011): n. pag. Web.

"Multiculturalism: New Policy Responses to Diversity." *Multiculturalism: New Policy Responses to Diversity*. N.p., n.d. Web.

Minority Rights. Geneva: Centre for Human Rights, United Nations Office at Geneva, 1992. Web.

"The Middle East." *The Middle East*. N.p., n.d. Web.

"ECMI Founders:." *ECMI*. N.p., n.d. Web.

Pictures' and Graphs' Bibliography

<https://www.google.gr/search?q=ethnic+and+religious+minorities&es_sm=93&biw=1366&bih=667&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ei=ZI2jVYS3JcitU4b-nYgP&ved=0CAcQ_AUoAg#imgrc=_>

"Rich Countries and the Minorities They Discriminate Against, Mapped." Quartz. N.p., n.d. Web.