



JOURney

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Letter From the Editor

Dear Reader,

We are excited to present to you the third annual volume of JOURney, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's first interdisciplinary Journal of Undergraduate Research!

JOURney started as an idea of founder Gabi Stein, to create a journal that would showcase the outstanding, diverse range of student research done by UNC-Chapel Hill undergraduates. With the support of the Office of Undergraduate Research, JOURney became an official publication, providing students a place to publish SURF projects, partial and full honors theses, and independent research.

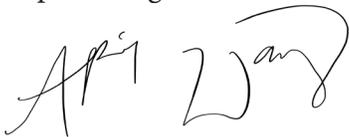
This year, JOURney has continued to expand, gaining many successes along the way with the launch of a redesigned website and receipt of the most-ever number of submissions. With all the excellent work submitted, we are able to exhibit 16 original pieces of work here that explore interesting, topical, and complex areas of research. We congratulate the student authors on all of their efforts put into researching and publishing their work!

We are so thankful of everyone who has helped JOURney continue to meet its mission of celebrating and supporting the research conducted early in students' academic careers. We would like to thank the Office for Undergraduate Research, which has provided JOURney unwavering support since its inception. Specifically, we would like to thank Associate Dean and Director Troy Blackburn (Department of Exercise and Sports Science), Associate Director Monica Richard, Associate Director Boots Quimby, and Business Services Coordinator Denise Carter. We would also like to thank our entire editorial board and publicity team, who have spent many dedicated hours making this edition. As the current Co-Editor-In-Chiefs, we have enjoyed helping JOURney expand as an organization. We look forward to continue watching it grow in the hands of incoming Co-Editor-In-Chiefs, Mili Dave ('21) and Harrison Jacobs ('20).

We leave you here to explore the work presented in this journal. We hope you will enjoy the knowledge collectively presented to you by students of UNC-Chapel Hill.

Sincerely,

April Wang



Zoe Hazerjian



2018-2019 JOURney Co-Editor-in-Chiefs

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Neighborhood Disadvantage and Mental Health Outcomes in African-Americans

by Brianna Baker

This research article studies the effect of neighborhood quality and neighborhood disadvantage on the psychological wellness of African-American populations. More specifically, it evaluates the idea that cumulative stress over the life course can lead to negative health outcomes. This article will first define neighborhood disorder and neighborhood disadvantage for the purpose of this comprehensive review. It will then provide a thorough background on the associations between neighborhood disadvantage/disorder and health, in order to understand the underlying mechanisms as to why these relationships exist. Finally, the paper will conclude with a discussion of the evidence presented and further provide directions and implications of neighborhood disadvantage on African-American populations.

Introduction

Research suggests that neighborhood disadvantage and other place-based contextual factors are associated with a myriad of psychological and physiological illnesses. African-Americans are overrepresented in disadvantaged neighborhoods, thus allowing neighborhood disadvantage to serve as a potential pathway to a multitude of negative physical, mental, and social outcomes and patterns associated with this population (Hastings & Snowden, 2018). More specifically, multiple studies have linked neighborhood disadvantage with depressive symptoms and general psychological distress in African-Americans (Hill, Ross & Angel, 2005; Ross, 2000). This paper will explore the onset of depressive symptoms in African-American populations as they correspond to neighborhood disadvantage. It will look at neighborhood disadvantage as a predictor of and contributor to depressive symptoms through various mechanisms.

Neighborhood Disorder and Disadvantage

Disorder

Neighborhood order and disorder are measured both physically and socially (Ross & Mirowsky, 2001). Physical characteristics of a disorderly neighborhood may include the presence of trash, cigarettes, and graffiti. It could also potentially include physical decay such as deterioration and abandonment of buildings. Social disorder refers to the disorderly conduct of people. This can include loitering, alcohol and intoxication, drug use and distribution, political strife, fighting, and interpersonal crime. The higher the presence of these factors, the higher the

level of neighborhood disorder (Hill et al., 2005). It is important to note that neighborhood disorder can be both objectively and subjectively evaluated. Researchers use self-reported measures of neighborhood disorder to get a feel for the perceived social disorder. Perception of a variable often offers insight into the cognitive processes of participants. Standardized indexes of neighborhood disorder are also used to assess neighborhood disorder. These indexes use counts of the individual components which constitute physical and social neighborhood disorder to provide an objective measure (Aneshensel, Phelan, & Bierman, 2013 p. 482; Clark et al., 2013; Cutrona et al., 2005).

Disadvantage

Similar to neighborhood disorder, neighborhood disadvantage is another area-based measure used to evaluate the social conditions of a neighborhood. Neighborhood disadvantage tends to be captured more objectively through the use of deprivation indexes. Neighborhood disadvantage is characterized by the presence of human, social and fiscal capital that exists within the region of study. Human capital refers to the skills of any individual. More specifically, human capital measures the abilities and skills acquired through an investment in education and training that has the ability to enhance potential income and status. This may be measured by the percentage of the population aged 25 and older with at least a high school education, the percent of persons in a neighborhood employed in white-collar occupations, or unemployment rates. The connections that exist between people and their shared values and culture is referred to as social capital. High indexes of social capital are equated to increased support and

mutually beneficial social cooperation. Social capital measures seek to identify the quality and quantity of social networks within a neighborhood (De Silva et al., 2005). Measures for this may include trust, membership, support, and network resources. Finally, fiscal capital encapsulates the value of the financial assets of a collective community in a defined geographic area. This can be captured through measures of median home values and gross rent, percent of families below the federal poverty level, and median family incomes and income disparities. Cumulative wealth, another dimension of fiscal capital, can be measured by evaluating the value of assets such as the percent of households with a motor vehicle or percent of households with a telephone (Aneshensel et al., 2013 p. 482-483; Almedom, 2005; Echeverría, Diez-Roux, Shea, Borrell, & Jackson 2008).

Neighborhood Disadvantage/Disorder and Depressive Symptoms

Neighborhood disadvantage and disorder has been correlated with negative health outcomes both physically and mentally. Virtually every research study on the topic concludes that neighborhood disadvantage contributes to some degree to negative health psychological outcomes. Interestingly, the relationship varies cross-racially. African-Americans typically fare worse than their white American counterparts even when living in the same neighborhoods (Hastings & Snowden, 2005; Shuey & Willson, 2008). Some research suggests that education and socioeconomic gains are not as beneficial for African-Americans as white Americans when living in disadvantaged and disorderly neighborhoods (Shuey & Willson, 2008). Most research centering around the relationship between neighborhoods and mental health in African-Americans focuses on disadvantage/disorder as a correlate of depressive symptoms and major depression disorder (Cutrona et al., 2005; Hastings & Snowden, 2005, Latkin & Curry, 2003; Ross, 2000). Latkin and Curry (2003) concluded that neighborhood disorder is a strong predictor of depression after a nine-month period. This study found that individuals with higher perceived neighborhood disorder reported higher scores on the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D)- a community-based screening tool for depression. A baseline measure of depressive symptoms was calculated and after nine months of living in a disadvantaged neighborhood, CES-D scores grew. Researchers founded their research on the postulate that social disorganization leads to poorer psychological health. Similarly, Cutrona and colleagues (2005) found that neighborhood disadvantage can serve as a predictor of the onset of major depression and depressive symptoms later on in the life course for African-American women. Additionally, studies examining African-American children and families' mental health outcomes in relation to neighborhood quality also report a psychological toll manifesting as depressive symptoms stemming from neighborhood disadvantage (Natsuaki, Brody, Simons, Gibbons & Cutrona, 2007; Santiago, Wadsworth, & Stump, 2011; Turner, Hartman & Bishop, 2007).

Underlying Mechanisms

While research supports the negative relationship between neighborhood disadvantage and mental health, not all research agrees on which aspects of neighborhood disadvantage prove to

be the most detrimental to psychological health. Some research suggests social integration is not as important as financial and human capital within a neighborhood (Natsuaki et al, 2007). Other research believes that social capital can act as a protective factor against negative mental health outcomes in disadvantaged neighborhoods (Almedom, 2005). Higher educational attainment and income levels were seen as more advantageous for white Americans than African-Americans living in disadvantaged neighborhoods suggesting larger societal inequalities may be to blame (Shuey & Willson, 2008). While there is still debate on the importance of specific factors of neighborhood disadvantage, all studies converge on the fact that subpar living conditions, exposure to crime and violence, and decreased social and economic capital contribute to the onset of mental illness.

Similarly, different hypotheses exist attempting to explain why the relationship exists in the first place. Selection versus causation is a prominent theme in this research. Some believe that those with mental illness, particularly depression, are more likely to perceive neighborhoods as disorderly. Other researchers believe that disorderly neighborhoods and disadvantaged contextual circumstances lead to a greater susceptibility for the development of clinically diagnosed depression and depressive symptoms (Aneshensel et al., 2013). Pathways through which the relationship develops was also a common theme explored. Cumulative stress theories posit that over the life course, stressors associated with living in disadvantaged neighborhoods accumulate and manifest as mental illness. This can be seen through research that examines poverty-related stress in relation to depressive symptoms in children. Santiago's 2011 study found that mental health issues were present at comparable levels in both African-American children and adults living in disadvantaged neighborhoods. This showed that depressive symptoms stemming from early childhood neighborhood disadvantage are likely to persist through adulthood. It also supports the idea that cumulative stress results from neighborhood disadvantage and can be a pathway through which neighborhood disadvantage influences mental health outcomes (Santiago et al., 2011). Additional research focused on the cognitive and affective aspects of neighborhood disadvantage (Natsuaki et al., 2007). One research study hypothesized that neighborhood disadvantage invokes constant feelings of fear due to the social disorganization of the neighborhood (Hill et al., 2005). Ross and Mirowsky (2001) believed that neighborhood disadvantage is a breeding ground for learned helplessness wherein inhabitants of highly disadvantaged neighborhoods feel overwhelmed and out of control of their suboptimal circumstances; this research presented the prospect of a cognitive pathway through which neighborhood disadvantage affects mental health (Ross and Mirowsky, 2001). Finally, research has supported the idea that the lack of resources present in disadvantaged neighborhoods makes residents unable to successfully cope with the demands of society. The diminished resources are therefore insufficient and lead to issues in psychological functioning (Hastings & Snowden, 2018). For African-Americans in particular, it is known that collectively, this population is socially, financially, and educationally disadvantaged. A lack of resources in the community could further exacerbate their susceptibility to mental illness (Hastings & Snowden, 2018; Cutrona et al., 2005; Clark et al., 2013).

Discussion and Future Directions

We can conclude that neighborhood disadvantage is related to negative mental health outcomes in African-Americans. Social disorganization, lack of social, financial, and educational resources and opportunities, and crime are all associated with neighborhood disadvantage and can have negative effects on health. Overall, there is not substantial research support available to make significant claims regarding African-American mental health and its relationship with neighborhood disadvantage and neighborhood disorder through specific pathways. Although many speculations as to how neighborhood disadvantage impacts health exist, researchers continue to produce conflicting evidence, thus prohibiting the potential for consensus. More research is needed to understand these underlying mechanisms and pathways as they connect neighborhood disadvantage with mental health outcomes in African-Americans. Perhaps longitudinal studies on the lasting impacts of habitating a disadvantaged neighborhood or more research on child development in these conditions could be the key to understanding the health implications of neighborhood disadvantage. Isolating individual variables associated with neighborhood disorder and neighborhood disadvantage such as social disorganization, crime, or resource quality and availability to understand their impact on mental health is needed in order to fully explain its relationship with mental health outcomes. Additionally, more research is needed to understand to what degree these mechanisms and pathways influence immediate mental health and mental health trajectories for African-Americans. Sociological research has identified many of the negative effects associated with neighborhood disadvantage. As more research is produced supporting the harmful impact of neighborhood disadvantage on mental health, the overarching issue confronting society is finding ways in which neighborhood disadvantage can be minimized and equitable resources and opportunities are afforded to all Americans.

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Brianna Baker is a senior graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with honors with double majors in Psychology and Interdisciplinary Studies and a minor in Health and Society. Intrigued by racial health disparities, Brianna created her major titled "Community Approaches to African-American Psychological Wellness". She recently completed an honors thesis through the UNC Center for Health Equity, where she researched the effects of natural disasters on the psychological resiliency of low-income African-Americans. During her time at UNC she has served as a Mental Health Ambassador, Undergraduate Research Ambassador, and committee chair for the UNC Minority Health Conference. She has also enjoyed positions in the African-American Youth Wellness Lab, the UNC Department of Social Medicine, and the Duke University Initiative for Science and Society. As a Karen M. Gil Intern, Brianna became inspired to reduce health disparities through clinical practice. She plans to further her studies through an MPH-PhD program in Clinical Psychology."

Through Universal Health Coverage: International Migrant-Sensitive Policies in a Globalizing World

by Danica Dy

The world is currently facing the largest migration era on record, with numbers continuing to rise each year. Migrants are displaced internationally as they confront geographic, socioeconomic, and political barriers to services that allow for an adequate standard of living. Under the Sustainable Development Goals, Universal Health Coverage strives to ensure the right to health for all – including the most marginalized. Migrants are some of the world’s most vulnerable populations confronting targeted discrimination, isolation from quality health and social services, disregard for occupational safety and labour rights, and intersectional experiences of migrant mental-health and violence against women and children. Encompassing migrant-rights to the right to health under UHC requires people-centered public health interventions that ensure accessible, acceptable, affordable and quality services that are comprehensive and delivery-appropriate across linguistic, cultural, gender, and age barriers.

Policy action requires interagency, multinational, multisectoral approaches that focus on health systems and their underlying determinants by reinforcing a global health accountability framework rooted in human rights; utilizing evidence-based practices and inclusive policies and programmes to pursue the progressive realization of health; monitoring human rights-based approaches to health which integrate participation, equality, and transparency by assessing international benchmarks; and strengthening partnerships at the interface of health and human rights to ensure the inclusion of migrants under UHC. This paper explores how Universal Health Coverage may be used to implement migrant-sensitive policies through a human rights-based non-discrimination framework to ensure the human right to health and its underlying social determinants for migrants.

Introduction

The 21st century has brought about the greatest human mobilization on record, at over 257 million international migrants to date (Migration Data Portal, 2018). International migration continues to rise for various reasons including natural disasters, poverty, lack of access to basic services, and conflict (Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, 7). Recipient countries and regions of these migrants face new challenges, which often leads to a lack of resources for migrants such as healthcare due to cultural, economic, and political barriers, and ultimately, violation of human rights. Universal Health Coverage (UHC) strives to ensure access to essential health services, without leaving anyone behind – including those of the most marginalized populations. Therefore, in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal addressing UHC, migrant rights to health must be considered a priority.

Background

The 1946 Constitution of the World Health Organization ratified the human right to health as “the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health [and] one of the fundamental rights of every human being”, defined as the “state of complete physical, mental and social well-being” (WHO 1946, preamble). Ensuring the highest attainable standard of health requires that state duty-bearers uphold their international legal obligations through a rights-based approach that encompasses non-discrimination and equality, participation in developing sustainable and efficient services, accountability in ensuring accessibility to health services, and equity in addressing the underlying social determinants of health (Meier & Gostin, 25.)

Building upon the action of the WHO Constitution, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 which recognized the significance of interconnected social determinants of health and the “right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family” (UDHR 1948). Article 2 specifically emphasized

rights set forth in the Declaration withholding discrimination against race, color, sex, language, religion, political opinion or national origin (UDHR, Article 2, 1948).

In 1978, the Declaration of Alma-Ata identified primary health care essential in realizing human rights through health policy; these comprehensive and sustainable systems would require broad-based socioeconomic development to achieve health for all (Meier & Gostin, 35). In an effort to improve the standard of living around the world, the UN implemented the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) from 2000 to 2015, targeting specific health outcomes. Though relatively successful, the MDGs failed to integrate a holistic human rights-based approach to health and discounted principles of participation, equality, democratic voice, transparency and accountability through a vertical, reductionist approach (53). A reductionist approach to policy, as in the case of the MDGs, fails to recognize the complex phenomena upon which good-willed interventions are developed upon, due to the fixation on targeted goals and anticipated outcomes (Reyes, 25).

The recent Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seek to build upon the MDG foundations, focusing on health and well-being of individuals. The SDGs more comprehensively account for both wealthy and poor countries, “reinforcing a global health accountability framework explicitly rooted in human rights frameworks, aligned with international human rights law” (54). Universal Health Coverage (UHC) , “synonymous with the realization of health” (158), seeks to centralize multi-sectoral action on health efforts and facilitate close collaboration between the health sector and other fields, including migration (157).

Specifically, SDG 3.8.1 aims to “achieve UHC, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all” by 2030 (Sustainable Development Goal 3, 2015), leaving nobody behind and emphasizing needs of the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized segments of the population (Meier & Gostin, 158). Current WHO Director-General, Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus, has made UHC a central priority in his platform, emphasizing the need to include vulnerable populations. Dr. Ghebreyesus’ progressive program recognizes that migrants in particular are of the most vulnerable populations, and face a lack of essential services due to legal status, discrimination, and social exclusion (WHO Director-General, 2017).

Migration itself is a determinant of health-implicit effects of manifestations of forced displacement, and degradation of the person based on gender, race, or class are life events that cannot be separated from the physical and mental well-being of the person (Wolkoff, 2018). Furthermore, anti-migrant or migrant-indifferent policies in legal frameworks and health systems exacerbate distinctive vulnerabilities to migrant health (Tulloch, Machingura, Malamed, 2016). Priorities of action by the WHO, International Organization for Migration (IOM), and UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner in promotion and protection of migrant health rights include monitoring migrant health, policy and legal frameworks, and migrant-sensitive health systems through multi-country, inter-sectoral collaborative frameworks (WHO, IOM, OHCHR, 2013).

Analysis

Under international law, states must recognize positive and negative rights through freedoms and entitlements. Duty-bearers must refrain from infringing on the enjoyment of human rights, and take action to ensure their enjoyment. Under General Comment No. 14, services for all sectors of the population, including migrants, must be available, accessible, acceptable and of adequate quality (ICESCR, General Comment No. 14, 2000).

Migrants and the Right to Health

Multiple states deny migrants access to health-care facilities, goods, and services on the basis of their legal status. However, under the ICESCR, all people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, have rights to accessible services without discrimination (IOM, WHO, OHCHR, 16). Therefore, discrimination of a migrant’s nationality is a violation of human rights. Furthermore, women constitute nearly half of international migrants (WHO, IOM, OHCHR, 13) and are more susceptible to sexual violence, gender discrimination, and often lack access to safe reproductive health services (31). Thus, states must monitor the effects of public health policies and ensure that social policies are anchored in systems forbidding inequalities from infringing on the enjoyment of rights.

Migrant children face barriers to accessible services by the legal status of their parents. In cases where children are recognized as host-country nationals, parents of undocumented status are reluctant to seek social services in fear of deportation (21). In particular, the lack of access to vaccinations is an issue of significance, preventing children from enjoying the highest attainable standard of health and impacting their ability to earn an education and social security through employment exclusion. The CRC has declared that states must “ensure the rights set forth by the Convention...without discrimination of any kind irrespective of the child’s or [their] parent’s legal status” (CRC, Part 1, Article 2, 1989). Migrants also have entitlements to the principle of family unity under the CRC; in the best interests of the child, long-term separation of families has long-term implications on psychological health, substance abuse, risk-prone behaviour, and further exploitation and violence toward women and children (WHO, IOM, OHCHR, 27).

Adequate food and housing are also components of the right to health. Migrants, often subjugated by poverty and economic accessibility, are at risk for malnutrition and chronic non-communicable diseases. Deprivation of food of adequate quantity and quality are a violation of the right to health (22). Similarly, many national discriminatory laws impair migrants’ right to housing, leaving them with limited options of low-quality, segregated housing or even homelessness. Further exploitation of housing rights are also seen where shelter is inextricably linked to migrant labour facilities (24).

Sustaining an adequate standard of life requires protection of rights in the workforce through a safe and healthy working environment. In the dispute of migrant impacts on host-communities, it is important to recognize migration reflecting economic progress tied to better health outcomes (Wolkoff, 2018). Yet migrants remain among the most vulnerable workers in areas of exploitation, discrimination and abuse (WHO, IOM, OHCHR, 24), and are unjustly silenced by legal systems threatening deportation. Under the ICESCR, people are entitled

to social security and insurance aligned with non-discrimination; however, it is up to the jurisdiction of the sovereign state to determine to what extent economic rights are recognized for non-nationals (ICESCR, Part 2, Article 2, 1966).

Challenges to Migrant Health

The process of migration and the implicit consequences on health — physically and mentally — require special consideration. Trauma and torture associated with forced displacement, and the migrant’s native epidemiological profile are pre-departure aspects of their health profile which travel with migrants across borders. Travel conditions such as duration of migration, mode of transportation, alone or mass movement and lack of basic necessities (WHO, IOM, OHCHR, 29) further impact state migrant health. Although international laws and policy are in place, sovereign nations determine to what capacity they choose to exercise and enact these regulations — especially in the context of migrants.

Traditionally, public health measures have focused on disease-specific interventions. Migrants have been subjected to compulsory medical screenings, quarantines and isolations, and in the case of women, pregnancy tests, to control transmission of infectious disease and reduce burdens on the host-community’s health (33). These procedures are often conducted at the expense of migrant human rights violations, especially when conducted to discriminate against women’s sexual and reproductive rights through mandatory pregnancy and DNA tests (34). Travel bans and restrictions on length of stay have also been issued for migrants with HIV/AIDS status. Restrictions on individuals with non-infectious diseases and conditions violate the non-discrimination principle of migrants’ human rights, causing further isolation from necessary treatments and services that would allow these individuals to live productive lives (35-36).

Legal status is the primary cause of limited access to services, including healthcare, for migrants. The anti-immigration argument is made that taxpayers would be burdened with the cost of ensuring these services for documented and undocumented migrants, and that denying social services would reduce irregular migration (40). Many countries allow migrant eligibility to emergency care services, which do not encompass the necessary healthcare services to recognize the right to health. In states where services are available, healthcare systems are not “culturally competent” thus preventing effective diagnosis and treatment as the providers are unaware of traditional methods practiced in the migrant’s home country (44).

Health for All

The IOM seeks to advance UHC and its capacity to address the world’s most vulnerable populations, including migrants, through a “health for all” model that “promotes evidence-based practices and inclusive policies and programmes” (IOM, 2018). Participation in development plans and Declarations by the IOM has allowed the advancement and inclusion of migrant health under UHC and re-emphasizes its relationship to health security for non-nationals (IOM, 2018).

The 2017 Tokyo Declaration recognizes SDG 3.8 as providing access for all people to “high-quality, integrated, people-centered health services; including promotive, preventative, curative, rehabilitative and palliative health services and safe, effective,

quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines” (Tokyo Declaration on UHC, 2017). The Declaration reiterates the necessity to prioritize the most vulnerable and stigmatized populations, including migrants. Strengthening and accelerating global momentum toward UHC involves actions to monitor progress on national and subnational levels, using data to derive recommendations and policy change in the healthcare workforce and political leadership. Explicitly stated, is also the priority to mainstream gender throughout all policies and programmes to ensure equitable treatment. Through a people-centered approach to the right to health, mobilization of community platforms that strengthen the budgetary process will also achieve effective and equitable health spending to ensure adequate access to services.

WHO’s Eastern Mediterranean Region further reaffirmed commitment to achieving UHC through the 2018 Salalah Declaration. Recognizing the number of humanitarian emergencies in regions of conflict, causing global displacement, centralized non-migrants in the context of UHC. The Declaration stated the need to consider in each country “the burden of disease, its economic imperatives, and preferences of its people” (Salalah Declaration, 2018). Therefore, practicing a people-centered approach to health under the distinct considerations of each nation allows effective action for its people, including non-nationals.

Although the role of migrants is not explicitly addressed in the 2018 Declaration of Astana on Primary Health Care, it “underlines the proven economic benefits of providing primary health care to migrants” (IOM, 2018) as “a cornerstone of a sustainable health system for UHC” (Declaration of Astana, 2018). To set the foundations for UHC, the Declaration pledges to “make bold choices for health across all sectors; build sustainable primary health care; empower individuals and communities; and align stakeholder support to national policies, strategies, and plans” (Declaration of Astana, 2018). The IOM presented evidence-based data on the socioeconomic aspect of improving migrant access to health services, which allowed governments to acknowledge the necessity to enhance health equity and security for migrants through addressing their health needs and vulnerabilities. Violation and exclusion of migrants from health services results in failure to attain broader public health objectives (World Health Organization, 2018).

Discussion

In addressing migrant health through UHC, it is important to recognize implications on the macroscopic and microscopic levels. The macroscopic perspective is grounded in an understanding of the social and economic determinants of health. Equal consideration is needed for the microscopic perspective, which accounts for care of the whole person – where they live, how they move, and the mutualistic relationship between the individual and their community (Wolkoff, 2018). Therefore, these multi-dimensional and multi-faceted issues require an intersectoral approach to policy. Advancing UHC through encompassing migrants’ right to health requires a rights-based approach to universal care for the most marginalized people. Progressive universalism will allow for strategic allocation of resources to ensure the right to health for all (Meier & Gostin, 159). To effectively meet the needs of communities and individuals, health systems and their underlying determinants must be people-

centered, as opposed to disease-targeted.

Recognition of the rights of all people requires an “awareness for the linkage between discrimination and health” (160). Migrants, stigmatized on the basis of their country of origin in addition to systemic problems of resource availability, disease-related stigmatization, xenophobia, and gender inequality, experience manifestations of discrimination as inequalities in social medicine and access to care (161). Non-discrimination laws and policies must be reviewed and reinforced to “respect the autonomy in healthcare decision-making; guarantee free and informed consent; and prohibit mandatory tests and screenings” (World Health Organization, 2017), especially in cases where migrants face language and cultural barriers and may be discriminated against for HIV, infectious diseases, or pregnancy. Further policy-action to reduce barriers of discrimination to migrant health may also include investment in healthcare workforce training to ensure culturally-competent services. Health systems should be “migrant- and gender-sensitive, and people-centered” (World Health Organization, A70/24, Guiding Principles) providing appropriate delivery considering culture, linguistics, gender, and age. Thus, it is important that the healthcare workforce be improved by ensuring that managerial, clinical and administrative staff are trained to comprehend and address the health and social requirements of migrants (WHO, IOM, OHRCR, 45).

Inclusion of migrants in UHC involves ensuring healthcare as well as other services, that are often denied under conflict of legal status. Through coordination by bilateral or multilateral agencies, states should “agree to harmonise legislation and policies to social protection to better include migrants” (Tulloch, Machingura, Melamed, 9). This may be achieved by identifying legislation on access to social and health services provided by states; reviewing distinct barriers to access by migrants; and developing recommendations for international collaboration and subnational plans for implementation, such to better integrate migrants into national systems (Tulloch, Machingura, Melamed, 9).

The accessibility component of UHC must also address financing services for migrants. Sovereign nations are concerned that migrant populations will burden the welfare of their society, however, “health systems and their organisation are parts of broader welfare systems” (Onarheim, 4); while in reality, migrants tend to underutilize health services due to legal status, language barriers, and other systemic challenges in accessing care. Thus, any efforts made to exclude or violate rights of migrants undermine UHC. International development assistance may be implemented to assist low- and middle-income countries in achieving UHC. International policy “allocating at least 0.1% of high-income nations’ gross national income as international assistance” could ensure progress towards the same contribution rate (World Health Organization, 2015). When opposing the stigma-generating belief that migrants burden development and health of a nation, it is important to recognize their contributions to the workforce and general taxation surpass what they receive in benefits. Therefore, migrants and the integrated role they play in society should be recognized as a vehicle for development and social advancement.

Conclusion

Rights-based approaches to development, including that of a foundation for UHC, must ensure accountability through multi-stakeholder and civil-society’s engagements through monitoring information on progression toward UHC, reviewing data on health outcomes and whether benchmarks were met, and taking remedial action (Meier & Gostin, 161-162).

The full realization to the right to health, through UHC, including distinct considerations for migrant health requires “adopting a clear political and operational mandate, to health and through health by action-oriented resolution; pursuing strategic collaborations and partnerships uniting global public health and human rights; and demonstrating the impact of human rights on public health through evidence-based results to effect policy change” (164).

States’ accountability may be facilitated through rights-based approaches to health under the SDGs. With respect to each nation’s unique population profile — especially considering the health of migrants, annual reviews of progress toward UHC should include specific rights-based health indicators. These indicators should emphasize goals met for vulnerable populations such as migrants, which may also include vulnerabilities for their mental health, sexual and reproductive rights, access to basic services and healthcare, and those with HIV. Under international law, action prohibiting any and all forms of discrimination should be emphasized; especially in stigmatized migrant populations (165).

States should also be provided with operational guidance and criteria for applying rights-based approaches (167). A human rights normative framework that encompasses rights to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of an individual must be translated to policies and programming that ensures access to healthcare; protection of the family unit; services with integrated approaches to gender- and age-responsive action; food and housing; and occupational safety and labour rights (167). These entitlements and freedoms of migrants should be safeguarded beyond legal status, under international law.

Collaborative leadership through interorganizational, multi-national and multi-sectoral partnerships at the interface of health and human rights would also derive migrant-sensitive policies under UHC. Unification of political vision and operational partnership will engage a broader, more diverse range of sectoral actors and strengthen coordinated action. The engagement of various stakeholders will also enforce accountability mechanisms and accelerate achievement of comprehensive and effective delivery of UHC for migrants (168).

Continuous inclusion and advancement of migrant rights and improvement of care is possible through presenting and analyzing evidence-based practices of human rights-based approaches. Effective monitoring and reporting of multidisciplinary, mixed-method resources founded on the intersection of legislation, policy, specialized programs, and their impact on health will ensure the progressive realization of the right to health, through health, for all.

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The Trauma and Triumph of Bengali Women in the 1947 Partition

by Hannah Feinsilber

This paper examines the experiences of Bengali women during and after the 1947 Partition of India, a subject about which there has been very little formal research. The arguments in this paper are organized around both the traumatic and triumphant experiences of Bengali women. In the first section on trauma, I recount some of the ghastly experiences of Bengali women during Partition. In the paper, I analyze both the physical and psychological traumas they experienced. Thousands were raped, mutilated, abducted, and murdered. However, I argue that these traumatic events set up conditions for women to rise socially, economically, and politically following the chaos of Partition. In the second section, I delve into the roots of this shift in women's roles and positions in society. Throughout the paper, I use fictional, historical, and personal accounts to support my argument. I also frequently refer to the Partition novel, *The River Churning* (1967) by Jyotirmoyee Devi (1894-1988), to help illustrate both themes. In conclusion, this paper draws a connection between the traumatic events women experienced during Partition and the rise in their social, economic, and political power after Partition.

Keywords: Women, Bengal, 1947 Partition of India, Feminism, History

“The world of women is this life of waste. She has a mind, but no means of expressing the world within. She has a heart, but a heart that is not held in esteem. As if there is a tune, but no music; there is bhava, but no language. That’s the kind of life she has.” (Devi, xxi)

This quote, encapsulated by Jyotirmoyee Devi, author of *The River Churning*, shows Bengali women's value in society before and during Partition. The Partition of India in 1947 was to separate Hindus and Muslims. The decision for Partition was made by the British and it occurred with India's independence. Partition created two Muslim majority countries on the east and west sides of India. The west became Pakistan and the east became East Pakistan, later Bangladesh. The rapidness of the decision for Partition led to a hastily drawn border line, chaotic migration, and the suffering of millions of people, especially women. Devi was one of the first female writers who lived through Partition to write about women in and after Partition. In her novel, *The River Churning*, she masterfully illustrates how their voices and hearts were disregarded by the patriarchy.

Devi and other Bengali women flipped the script and rewrote their role in society. However, this rewriting came with a price. During, partition many women had horrific and ghastly experiences. They were raped, mutilated, abducted, and murdered. However, ironically, the Partition set up conditions that helped women gain recognition and social, economic, and political power. In between the years of 1931 and 1961, the employment of women in East Bengal doubled (Guha-Choundary, 66). This transformation in power originates from the loss their traditional homes and/or families. Women were left with no other choice but to be independent and fight for themselves. They made new social connections, received an education, sought out employment, and politically advocated for themselves. In this paper, I will start with the fictional and real accounts of Bengali women during the Partition to illustrate the physical and mental gendered violence

that took place in the time of partition. Next, I will delve into the advancement of women's role in the social, economic and political circles of Bengal following Partition.

Women were the pawns of the Partition and bore the brunt of the hate and violence. Afterwards their stories were muted by society for many decades. They were undeniably the greatest victims of this chaotic time. Partition affected women both physically and mentally. Physically, they were raped, abducted, tortured, and mutilated. Mentally, their experiences were silenced, and they were both haunted and shamed by their experiences. In *Borders and Boundaries*, Ritu Menon says, "Partition fiction has been a far richer source both because it provides popular and astringent commentary on the politics of Partition and because, here and there, we find women's voices, speaking for themselves" (11-12). Literature was where women could better express and release the traumas they had experienced.

For example, in the ground-breaking novel, *The River Churning* by Jyotirmoyee Devi, expresses one women's experiences during and after the Partition. Sutara, the protagonist, is presumably raped and her family is killed. She is rescued by a kind Muslim family where she lives and recovers for six months. Later, they send her to live with her extended family in Calcutta. Her extended family rejects her and she lives in isolation. However, she turns her sorrow into independence. She receives an education and becomes a history professor in Delhi. Countless other fictional works were inspired by Partition. Meghe Dhaka Tara (*The Star Veiled by Clouds*), a 1960 film by Ritwik Ghatak, summarizes the trauma and triumph of women's partition experiences. This film follows Nita, the eldest daughter of a Hindu family that is forced to migrate to Calcutta. Nita becomes the breadwinner of her family and has to sacrifice everything she has for her family. Her final line, "I wanted to live!" sums up the essence of Partition experiences (Ghatak, 219). It artistically presents the ongoing struggle of survival in these harsh conditions.

There are countless tales of real life traumatic Partition experiences from the west side. However, few real-life accounts are released from the east side of the divide. However, Bithi Roy, an East Bengali refugee, remembers, Jyotsna, a girl from a well-off family in her village, whose house was attacked and her family was killed. Jyotsna was kidnapped, gang raped, and later became a complete lunatic (Chakravati, 151). Stories like Jyotsna's are littered throughout all the Partition. Sm. Illa Mitra, for example, was a powerful woman who disagreed the Liakat-Nurul Amin feudal class. She was subjected to inhuman treatment for her belief. In the middle of the night, the police arrested and brutally tortured her for a crime she did not commit. She was relentlessly tortured and abused for weeks. They took her clothes, beat her, raped her, burned her, and ripped out her hair, trying to force her to confess. Yet she refused to confess. After weeks of this harsh treatment, she laid on the very doorsteps of death until she was rescued and taken to the hospital. She slowly, over many months, began to recover (Hossain, 46-58). Following these nightmarish experiences, many women were psychological haunted and were forced to endure the wrath of societal judgement.

Years after the partition, women continued to suffer in silence.

After being raped, abducted, or mutilated, society saw them as 'polluted' and 'tarnished'. The *River Churning* illustrates the long-term effects on women's mental health from this constant ostracization. The main protagonist, Sutara, is socially exiled after her traumatic experiences and for living with a Muslim family. She spends much of her life suffering from isolation and depression. This story shows the family and societal rejection women commonly experienced post-Partition. It also illustrates how mental trauma was often left untreated. Mental health was extremely stigmatized in this time. In fact, in many Muslim families, it was considered taboo to discuss any of the events that injured the grace and dignity of their women (Ali, 432). Social workers, post-partition, were completely unprepared to help these women (Khan, 187). Anis Kidwai, a social worker, said, "None of us had the ability to understand the psychology of these woman nor did we try" (Khan, 187). Social workers would even discourage women from speaking about their experiences. They feared that discussing and bringing up these experiences would hurt these women more. In fact, many women refused to discuss their experiences for years. This long-term repression of traumatic events had mental and physical health effects. Roy's story of Jyostna, for example, shows the mental effects of traumatic experience. Many women suffered from panic attacks and horrific nightmares for the rest of their lives. The pain experienced by these women during Partition motivated them to work towards a better future.

However, despite the pain and suffering inflicted upon women during the Partition, women gained new economic, social, and political power. Partition completely tore apart the traditional public world of men and the private world of women. The very idea of domesticity transformed. In traditional Bengali culture, a woman belonged at the home, the 'private' world where she dominated. Her sole task in life was to take care of the home and the family. Bengali houses were built to physically isolate women from men. This separated, gendered space was called an andarmahal. It was the quarters where women lived, cooked, and performed their homely duties (Weber, 70). Women could not even look at the men's quarters without criticism and judgement from relatives. Women were limited to the andarmahal and the home because public spaces were unsafe, thus completely trapping women in their private world. But, the eviction and migrations of millions in Partition revised this traditional living arrangement which changed how women interacted and were viewed in society.

During and after Partition, millions of people migrated and had nowhere to go. They were forced to live in refugee camps surrounding major cities. These refugee camps were small and densely populated. Physically, there was no space for an andarmahal or any kind of gendered space. Women had no other option but to live among and interact with men and the public world. This simple change in living space transformed women roles worldwide. They left behind the traditional private world and entered the public world. Women encountered many new ideas and connections to the community. For the first time, they could interact and meet people outside of their family circle and safely travel by themselves to Bazaars and other public places. As time went on, the presence of women outside of the home

became normalized. Rachel Weber, a feminist geographer, found that following Partition, “Symbolic shelter was given to women who chose to enter a public world: ladies’ section on public buses and trams” (Weber, 75). Before Partition the very idea of women using public transportation was ludicrous. This new communal living arrangement had opened women to the public world, previously uninhabited and unwelcome to women.

Partition brought death or separation to many families. In many families the husband, the traditional economic backbone, died, became ill, or was separated from the rest of the family. Women were also commonly rejected from their families and forced to be self-reliant. These circumstances, brought on by Partition, forced women to step outside of the home and seek employment. Manikuntala Sen, says “These women were able to take responsibility for maintaining entire families. They were no longer people who were drifting, lost, or overwhelmed. These women from East Bengal were teachers, nurses, or clerks” (Guha-Choudhury, 68). Women worked in many different sectors ranging from unskilled labor to teaching. Many women became the breadwinners of their families. One example was Bithi Chakravarti, the eldest child of her family of eight. Her family moved to Calcutta following Partition and her father became seriously ill and couldn’t work. She was left with no other option but to get a job as a teacher to support her family (Chakravarti, 153). Many women in Western Bengal found employment in unskilled labor. From 1931 to 1961, female employment doubled in the fields of mining, stone quarrying, metal, fuel, charitable services, vegetable oil, and dairy (Guha-Choudhury, 66). Employment gave women economic freedom and a new sense of confidence. This newfound sense of confidence gave them courage to stand up for themselves and their beliefs.

Partition also spurred the education of women. Education started to become a common part of a woman’s life following Partition. This is especially seen in refugee colonies. Jadavpur, for example, was an area littered with refugee colonies and it had the highest female literacy rate in Calcutta (Weber, 75). Refugee colonies drove women to become educated because women wanted better employment and needed to be self-sufficient. The River Churning illustrates the increase in female education post-Partition. The protagonist, Sutara, says, “Women these days were educated. Since there was nobody to support them, these Yajnasenis were forced to fend for themselves” (Devi, 69). In the novel, Sutara even goes on to become an accomplished history professor at Yajnaseni college in Delhi. Education became a staple of women’s path to a better life.

Education and employment opened the door for women to heal and redefine themselves. Becoming more independent by working helped women move past their Partition experiences. It also gave them a new sense of confidence and courage. Connections to a larger community, new economic freedom, education, and the new sense of confidence brought a rise of female political activity. For the first time, Bengali women actively participated and had a voice in politics. Women had a crucial part in the rise of the Communist movement in Bengal. Communism began to rise following Partition, and it offered protection to the millions of displaced people living in squatter colonies. Squatter colonies

were condensed refugee camps that the government refused to recognize and continuously tried to evict. These eviction attacks by the current government mobilized the refugees, particularly women, to defend their homes (Choudhury, 68).

Communism struck a chord with East Bengali refugee women because it advocated for a strong, protective government and better working conditions. Many of them had been forsaken and attacked by the government during the Partition. The story of Sma. Illama, for example, shows how the government even perpetuated the violence against women. Women were also drawn to the job improvements that communism offered. These women worked in wretched conditions for long hours with little pay. In the 1950’s, a vast number of women began to organize and attend political rallies, protests, and conferences. They were undeniably politically active. In 1955, as many as 14,102 signatures were collected demanding employment in government sectors and grants for the remarriage of widows (Guha-Choudhury, 68). They also had a huge effect on the advancement of women’s issues in the government. For example, in 1950, a bill for the equal rights of Hindu women in property inheritance was passed in West Bengal (Guha-Choudhury, 68). Women even directly confronted the government. Nibetdia Nag was an activist for the Communist party who defied the East Pakistani government. She moved to Dhaka in East Pakistan, the opposite direction of everyone else, to fight for what she believed in. She organized conferences, rallies, and fought against the government. She and her fellow female protestors were arrested several times and were tortured by the police. Nag testifies how “the police retaliated by beating us mercilessly” (Nag, 156). However, the threat of the police did not stop them from fighting in what they believed. In fact, they turned the tables. According to Nag they, “used to hoodwink the police by adopting different roles” (Nag, 157). Never had Bengali women even discussed politics before, and now they were standing up and fighting against the government. This shows how even in the most wretched conditions, the Partition gave women newfound power and confidence.

The wretched conditions created by the Partition ironically gave women the chance to gain and use their voice in society. During Partition women were raped, killed, mutilated, abducted, and forcefully ripped apart from their families. However, they rewrote their trauma into triumph. They left behind the traditional role at the home and completely redefined the idea of domesticity. After Partition, women gained employment, education, social, and political power. Overall, women struggled and suffered during the Partition, but after Partition they grew and began to flourish in society.

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Effects of Restraint Stress and Predator Odor Exposure on Anxiety and Alcohol Self-Administration in Male Rats

by Abigail Garcia-Baza

A co-occurrence of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) is associated with even more severe clinical and functional problems relative to PTSD or AUD alone. The current project focuses on utilizing PTSD animal models, restraint stress and predator odor exposure, to examine changes in anxiety-like behavior and alcohol self-administration (SA) in male adult Long-Evans rats. All rats underwent SA training in operant conditioning chambers prior to stress exposure. Rats were separated into control or stress groups 24 hours following the last SA training day. The stress group was exposed to restraint stress (30 min). Fifteen minutes later, rats were exposed to 2,5-dihydro-2,4,5-trimethylthiazoline (TMT; synthetically derived fox feces component; 10 μ L) in a novel environment. Freezing and midline crossings were quantified during TMT exposure as a measure of stressor reactivity. The day following TMT exposure, rats underwent consecutive days of behavioral testing to assess anxiety and hyper-arousal, which are common features of PTSD. Anxiety-like behavior and general locomotor behavior was assessed in an open field (OF) and a light-dark box (L/D). Hyperarousal was assessed by acoustic startle reflex (ASR). After behavioral tests, rats returned to SA to determine whether there is a lasting effect of stress exposure on alcohol consumption. Behavior did not differ in the OF box, L/D box, ASR, or alcohol SA. TMT-stressed rats showed increased freezing and reduced midline crossings compared to control rats, during the treatment exposure.

Keywords: AUD, PTSD, alcohol self-administration, trauma, stress

Introduction

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental illness caused by a single, or a series of traumatic events, resulting in lasting symptoms of anxiety and hyperarousal. PTSD affects millions of Americans and is found to have a high comorbidity with Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) (Schreiber, McGinn, Edwards et al., 2018). PTSD/AUD is associated with even more severe clinical and functional problems relative to PTSD or AUD alone; this includes the increased risk of suicide and a reduction of quality of life (Straus, Norman, Haller et al., 2018). The purpose of the present study is to further examine the relationship between stress and increased alcohol consumption.

Neurobiological models suggest that reward, learning and stress pathways may enhance craving, loss of control, and compulsion to abuse alcohol. Psychological models of addiction

view excessive alcohol use as a coping mechanism to stress in order to reduce tension, to self-medicate, and to decrease withdrawal-related stress (Sinha, 2009). To further examine the effects of stress on alcohol consumption, I utilize an animal model of traumatic stress and alcohol self-administration.

PTSD is a disorder resulting from multiple stressors like physical, psychological, and even economical damage, in the majority of people with PTSD (Török et al., 2018). Multimodal stress models, similar to the single-prolonged stress model, are better stress models for PTSD research as they better resemble these multiple stressors which could cause PTSD (Lisieski, Eagle, Conti et al., 2018). For this reason, I will be using a combination of two common stressors: restraint stress and predator odor exposure, to produce traumatic-like symptoms of stress in Long Evans rats.

Restraint stress is a very common, and effective stressor when studying the neurobiology of stress and anxiety. Studies show that a restraint stress session increases cortisol levels in the blood, which is a symptom of stress, in rats who undergo restraint stress. Anxiety-like behavior in behavioral protocols has also been observed following restraint stress (J. G. Kim, Jung, K. J. Kim et al., 2013; Török et al., 2018).

In the current study, I utilize a predator odor stress to induce traumatic stress. 2,5-dihydro-2,4,5-trimethylthiazoline (TMT), a synthetic derivative of fox feces has been shown to be one of the most effective predator odors in producing innate fear expression in rodents (Rosen, Asok, and Chakraborty, 2015; Török et al., 2018). Additionally, TMT has been shown to increase anxiety-like behavior, especially in the open field test (Schreiber et al., 2018).

To study the effects of predator odor exposure and restraint stress on anxiety-like behavior and alcohol consumption via self-administration (SA) in male Long Evans rats, I will use various behavioral protocols including the open field (OF) test, the light/dark (L/D) box, and acoustic startle reflex (ASR), and will record rat SA over the course of a few weeks, post stress exposure.

I hypothesize that 1) rats exposed to TMT and restraint stress will present altered exploratory behavior and increased anxiety compared to rats in the control group (in the OF and L/D boxes), 2) rats in the stress condition will show higher hyper-arousal relative to rats in the control condition (during the ASR protocol), 3) alcohol SA will be greater in rats in the stress condition compared to rats in the control condition, and 4) that TMT will produce increased freezing in rats exposed to TMT, indicating an innate fear response (during the stress exposure).

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Neurobiological models suggest that reward, learning and stress pathways may enhance craving, loss of control, and compulsion to abuse alcohol. Psychological models of addiction view excessive alcohol use as a coping mechanism to stress in order to reduce tension, to self-medicate, and to decrease withdrawal-related stress (Sinha, 2009). To further examine the effects of stress on alcohol consumption, I utilize an animal model of traumatic stress and alcohol self-administration.

PTSD is a disorder resulting from multiple stressors like physical, psychological, and even economical damage, in the majority of people with PTSD (Török et al., 2018). Multimodal stress models, similar to the single-prolonged stress model, are better stress models for PTSD research as they better resemble these multiple stressors which could cause PTSD (Lisieski, Eagle, Conti et al., 2018). For this reason, I will be using a combination of two common stressors: restraint stress and predator odor exposure, to produce traumatic-like symptoms of stress in Long Evans rats.

Restraint stress is a very common, and effective stressor when studying the neurobiology of stress and anxiety. Studies show that a restraint stress session increases cortisol levels in the blood, which is a symptom of stress, in rats who undergo restraint stress. Anxiety-like behavior in behavioral protocols has also been observed following restraint stress (J. G. Kim, Jung, K. J. Kim et al., 2013; Török et al., 2018).

In the current study, I utilize a predator odor stress to induce traumatic stress. 2,5-dihydro-2,4,5-trimethylthiazoline (TMT), a synthetic derivative of fox feces has been shown to be one of the most effective predator odors in producing innate fear expression in rodents (Rosen, Asok, and Chakraborty, 2015; Török et al., 2018). Additionally, TMT has been shown to increase anxiety-like behavior, especially in the open field test (Schreiber et al., 2018).

To study the effects of predator odor exposure and restraint stress on anxiety-like behavior and alcohol consumption via self-administration (SA) in male Long Evans rats, I will use various behavioral protocols including the open field (OF) test, the light/dark (L/D) box, and acoustic startle reflex (ASR), and will record rat SA over the course of a few weeks, post stress exposure.

I hypothesize that 1) rats exposed to TMT and restraint stress will present altered exploratory behavior and increased anxiety compared to rats in the control group (in the OF and L/D boxes), 2) rats in the stress condition will show higher hyper-arousal relative to rats in the control condition (during the ASR protocol), 3) alcohol SA will be greater in rats in the stress condition compared to rats in the control condition, and 4) that TMT will produce increased freezing in rats exposed to TMT, indicating an innate fear response (during the stress exposure).

Materials and Methods

Animals

Twenty-eight adult male Long Evans rats were double housed in ventilated cages; 14 rats were individually housed following predator odor exposure. Water and food were provided ad libitum in rat home cages. The colony room was maintained on a 12-hour light/dark cycle with the lights turned on at 7:00 AM. All procedures and protocols were conducted during the light cycle. The animals were monitored and continuously cared for by staff from the Division of Laboratory Animal Medicine (DLAM) at UNC-Chapel Hill. All procedures were conducted according to NIH Guide to Care and Use of Laboratory Animals and Institutional guidelines.

Self-Administration

All rats underwent two-lever (i.e. active and inactive lever) 12-day sucrose fading/self-administration training as described in (Besheer et al., 2013; Randall et al., 2015). Self-administration sessions were 30 minutes in duration and were conducted 5 days/week (Monday-Friday) with active lever responses on a fixed ratio 2 schedule; every second active lever press delivered 0.1 ml of alcohol in a well inside an operant chamber. Responses for both active and inactive levers were recorded; inactive lever responses resulted in no consequences. A different sucrose-fading concentration was given to rats each day in the following exact order: 10S, 10S/2E, 10S/5E, 10S/10E, 5S/10E, 5S/15E, 2S/15E, and 15E; of which 10S and 15E were given for three consecutive days.

Stress and Control Group Treatments

Following completion of self-administration training, all 28 rats were evenly divided into two groups (control and experimental) according to their active lever responses and alcohol intake (g/kg) during self-administration training. Control and stress groups received their treatments 24 hours after self-administration training. Rats in the control group ($n = 14$) underwent water exposure. The stress group ($n = 14$) underwent restraint stress for 30 minutes and 2,5-dihydro-2,4,5-trimethylthiazoline (TMT; synthetically derived fox feces component) exposure, following restraint.

Restraint stress

The rats in the stress condition were individually placed in thick cone-shaped bags and the bag secured with a zip tie around the base of the rat's tail. The rat was placed in a manner that allowed the rat's nose to face a small air opening at the end of the bag. Rats in the stress condition were restrained for 30 minutes, and rats in the control group did not receive restraint stress.

TMT and water exposure

Fifteen minutes following restraint stress, rats in the stress condition were placed in clean mouse cages with an attached filter paper on the lid of the cage (above the feeding tray where it was out of the rat's reach) for 20 minutes. A drop of 10 μ l of TMT was placed on the filter paper and a rat in the stress group was placed inside the cage. Rats in the control group were placed in mouse cages with a filter paper containing a drop of 10 μ l of distilled water for 20 minutes. All mouse cages had a yellow top secured on the side of the filter paper of the cage (with a piece of white tape across the yellow top, securing it to the base of the cage). The yellow top acted as an environmental cue for rats in the stress group. All rat freezing and midline crossings were recorded using a video camera and analyzed through the ANYMAZE program; the side with the cue was termed the "TMT side" during ANYMAZE midline crossing quantification. All rats in the stress condition were single housed in new rat home cages following TMT exposure. Rats in the control condition remained double housed with their original partner.

Behavioral Testing

Twenty-four hours after exposure, all rats underwent three behavioral protocols in the following order (1/day): open field (24 hours after), light/dark (48 hours after), and acoustic startle reflex. Twenty-four hours post acoustic startle reflex, the rats returned to alcohol self-administration (15E) for 21 days.

Open Field

Rats were individually placed in the center of a (30 cm x 30 cm x 30 cm) open Plexiglas chamber and their behavior recorded using infrared beams located along the x and y planes of the chamber. Because the open field can be used as a measure of anxiety and exploratory behavior (percent time in center and periphery of the box, and total distance traveled), I hypothesized that rats in the stress condition would spend more time in the periphery rather than the center of the box, compared to rats in the control group.

Light/Dark

A (30 cm x 30 cm x 30 cm) Plexiglas chamber was divided into two sections by a black separator which completely covered half of the chamber to create the "dark" side of the light/dark box. The other half ("light" side) of the box was left uncovered to allow light in. Rats were individually placed in the open "light" half of the box and allowed to freely move from either the "light" or "dark" side of the box through an opening (on the side) of the black separator. Rat anxiety (latency to enter dark, and time spent in the dark) was recorded using sensors along the x and y planes of the chamber. I hypothesized that rats in the stress condition would show greater latency to enter the light side of the box and a larger percentage of their time spent in the dark side of the box, compared to rats in the control condition.

Acoustic Startle Reflex

Rats were placed inside a perplex tube located inside the acoustic startle box. Rats were randomly exposed to tones of 100, 110, and 120 dB in inter-trial intervals of 30 seconds, and to each tone for 250 ms. Rat hyperarousal was recorded through startle response. I hypothesized that rats in the stress condition would show higher rates of startle response compared to rats in the control condition. The day following this test, rats were returned to the self-administration sessions.

Results

TMT causes rats in the stress condition to freeze during predator odor exposure.

Rat behavior was observed by video recording during TMT and water exposures. ANYMAZE was used to denote freezing and midline crossings between the TMT and non-TMT sides of the cage. An independent-samples t-test indicates that rats exposed to TMT showed significant increased freezing relative to rats exposed to water, $t(26) = -7.68$, $p < 0.01$; Figure 1A.

Another independent-samples t-test shows that rats in the stress group demonstrated significantly reduced midline crossings compared to rats in the control group, $t(26) = 2.89$, $p < 0.01$; Figure 1B.

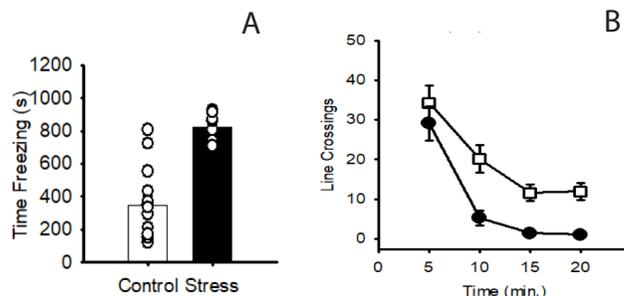


Figure 1A. TMT causes rats in the stress group to freeze during predator odor exposure. Rats exposed to TMT show significantly increased freezing, relative to rats exposed to water ($p < 0.01$). Figure 1B. TMT significantly reduces midline crosses in stress group during predator odor exposure. Rats in the stress group demonstrated significantly reduced midline crossings over time, compared to control group rats ($p < 0.01$).

Predator odor does not alter exploratory behavior and anxiety in open field test and light/dark box.

Twenty-four hours post control or stress exposure, both treatment groups were placed in the open field test to examine exploratory behavior. An independent-samples t-test indicates that rats in the stress group showed no significant differences in percent time spent in the center of the open field box, compared to rats in the control group, $t(26) = 0.53, p > 0.05$; Figure 2.

Forty-eight hours after their treatments, anxiety behavior was observed using the light/dark protocol. An independent-samples t-test indicates no significant differences between control or stress groups, such that rats in the stress group did not differ in percent time spent in the light side of the light/dark box relative to rats in the control group, $t(26) = 0.09, p > 0.05$; Figure 3.

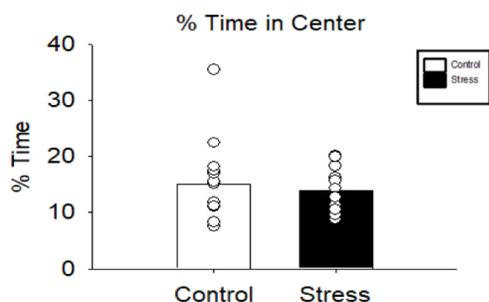


Figure 2. Predator odor does not alter anxiety in open field test. There are no significant differences between stress and control groups in percent time spent in the center of the open field box ($p > 0.05$).

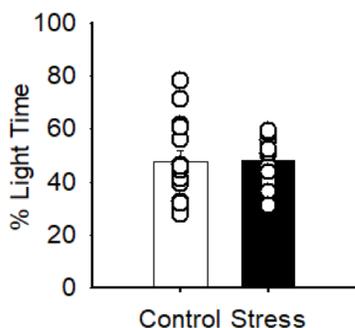


Figure 3. Predator odor does not alter anxiety or exploratory behavior in light/dark test. There are no significant differences between stress and control groups in percent time spent in the light side of the light/dark box ($p > 0.05$).

TMT exposure does not alter hyperarousal in acoustic startle response protocol.

Seventy-two hours after TMT and water exposure, rat hyperarousal was observed using the acoustic startle response test. A 2-way repeated measures ANOVA revealed no significant main effect of treatment on average peak startle response across all three tones, $F(1, 26) = 0.39, p > 0.05$; Figure 4. No significant interaction was found, $F(2, 52) = 1.07, p > 0.05$. In addition, a 2-way repeated measures ANOVA revealed no significant main effect of treatment on average startle amplitude across all three tones, $F(1, 26) = 0.58, p > 0.05$. No significant interaction was found, $F(2, 52) = 1.16, p > 0.05$.

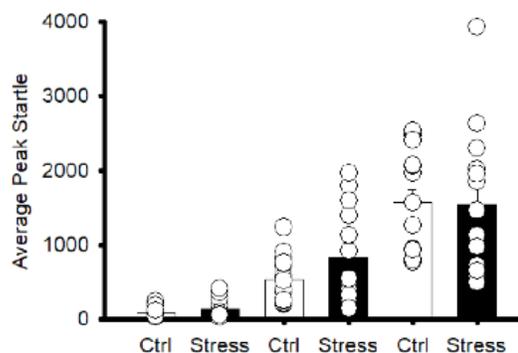


Figure 4. TMT exposure does not alter hyper-arousal in acoustic startle response protocol. There are no significant differences in average peak startle response for 100, 110, and 120 dB tones, between stress and control groups ($p > 0.05$).

TMT exposure does not affect alcohol self-administration.

Rats underwent self-administration for approximately 3 weeks after their respective treatments. A 2-way repeated measures ANOVA revealed no significant interaction of treatment on active lever responses during alcohol self-administration, $F(18, 468) = 1.04, p > 0.05$; Figure 5. There was no significant difference in alcohol drinking (g/kg) between stress and control groups, $p > 0.05$.

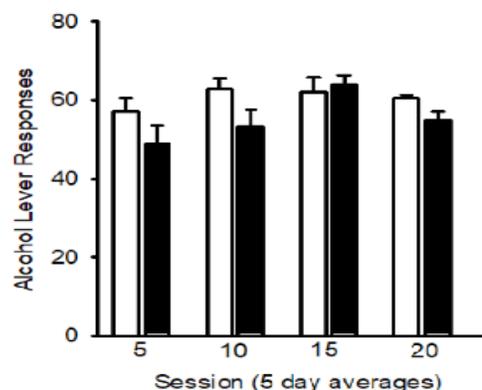


Figure 5. TMT exposure does not affect alcohol self-administration. There were no significant differences in active lever responses for self-administration between treatment groups in 5-day average sessions ($p > 0.05$).

Discussion

The current study examined the effect of traumatic stress on anxiety-like behavior and alcohol self-administration in male rats. I hypothesized 1) rats exposed to TMT would present altered exploratory behavior and increased anxiety-like behaviors compared to rats exposed to water, 2) rats in the stress group would show higher hyper-arousal relative to rats in the control group, 3) alcohol self-administration would be greater in rats in the stress condition compared to the rats in the control condition, and 4) predator odor exposure would produce increased freezing in rats exposed to TMT.

I found that anxiety-like behavior, exploratory behavior, hyperarousal, and alcohol self-administration were not altered after stress exposure. It is possible that rats exposed to stress did not exhibit these changes in behavior due to the limited use of stressors in my experiment. Although I used a bimodal stress model (i.e. restraint stress and predator odor), which is very similar to the single prolonged stress model that is widely used and shown to be effective in producing PTSD-like symptoms in rodents (Török et al., 2018), it is possible my model lacked another stressor and did not fully produce lasting effects of stress.

Another consideration of improvement to the study is to increase restraint stress time. Because I used a bimodal stress model, it is possible rats (in the stress condition) needed to spend more than half an hour under restraint to show increased anxiety. A 2-hour session of restraint stress has shown chronic stress susceptibility in rodents (Kim et al., 2013). Perhaps increasing the 30-minute session to a 2-hour session could produce different results in rat behavior.

Video-recording observations suggest predator odor caused rats to significantly freeze, and reduced the amount of rat midline crossings from one side to the other of the cage, while exposed to TMT for 20 minutes. Rats in the stress group showed significantly less movement compared to rats in the control group. Increased freezing and reduced midline crossings, which indicate an innate anxiety-like response, was presented during the predator odor exposure; these results support the use of TMT as an effective predator odor, as proposed in the previously described literature.

Conclusions

The present study suggests predator odor exposure did not produce prolonged anxiety, reduced exploratory behavior, hyper-arousal, or increased alcohol self-administration; which is in contrast with most of my hypotheses. Significant results indicate that rats undergoing TMT exposure presented greater freezing and less midline crossings, compared to rats exposed to water, indicating that TMT produced an immediate innate stress response during predator odor exposure. Therefore, I propose predator odor stressor is a reliable model that produces traumatic-like symptoms of stress during exposure; however, future research is needed to examine specific changes to this model in order to show changes in anxiety-like behavior and alcohol self-administration.

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Memorials Matter: On the Role of Memorials in Manipulating Space to Create Places of Racial Reckoning

by Aisling Henihan, Melanie Langness

While memorialization practices across the United States have garnered increased popular attention over the past few years, the ways in which memory and space interact with one another have not been sufficiently interrogated. Memorials have the potential to exist as narrational frameworks in a given landscape; they can shape individual experiences of an environment to reflect the story of that place. Memorials shape cultural memory, and they can function as loci for individual, communal, or even national 'healing' as a society comes to reckon with some event and places it within this collected cultural memory. Spatial manipulation and memorialization practices are crucial to the process of confronting historic injustices. By moving through the ways in which the Confederate Monument and the Unsung Founders Memorial at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill affect the campus community before analyzing the capacity of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice to shift the landscape of memory in Montgomery, Alabama, this essay will argue that memorial spaces offer key opportunities to reckon with contested racial memories and move toward reconciliation processes.

Keywords: memorial practices, memory, history, space, place, race, U.S. South

Introduction

The "idea of memory" is suddenly in the national spotlight, garnering close attention from academia and the public media alike.¹ The growing visibility of memory theory in recent years directly coincides with the increased vocality of contested memorial practices. Significant examples of such conflicts are found in the Southern United States, where the ways that violent histories of slavery, Confederate politics, and racial terror lynchings are publicly commemorated are rapidly changing. From 2015 to 2018, at least 111 monuments to the Confederate cause were altered or removed across the U.S. South.² Led by historically

1 Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz, "Introduction:: Mapping Memory," in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, ed. by Radstone and Schwarz, (Fordham University, 2010), 1.

2 Brigit Katz, "At Least 110 Confederate Monuments and Symbols Have Been Removed Since 2015," *Smithsonian Mag.* (2018). As this article was written a year ago, at least one more Confederate monument (Silent Sam) has fallen since its publication.

marginalized groups, this movement to re-contextualize divisive histories has also prompted a new wave of memorialization, as groups traditionally silenced by histories of white supremacy stake a claim to memory-making in the public sphere. In this context, studying landscapes of memory becomes more than a project to deconstruct the impact of toxic memory on the U.S. South. Sites of memory offer a means to explore how alternative modes of remembering "...speak to changes and tensions in contemporary society," particularly in creating places of cultural and historic reckoning.³

This essay draws on extant literature to define key terms related to geographies of memory and the spatial nature of remembrance before exploring contemporary memorialization practices in the U.S. South through two case studies of Southern memorial landscapes: the Confederate Monument and the

3 Derek H. Alderman and Joshua F. J. Inwood, "Landscapes of Memory and Socially Just Futures," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Cultural Geography* (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2013), 186.

Unsung Founders Memorial at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice (NMPJ) in Montgomery, Alabama. We explore how the Confederate Monument and the Unsung Founders Memorial shape the landscape and the campus community at UNC before analyzing the capacity of the NMPJ to transform the memorial landscape of Montgomery, focusing on how each site promotes or inhibits cultural and historic reckoning. Ultimately, this essay argues that memorial spaces offer key opportunities both to grapple with contested racial memories and to move toward reconciliation processes.

Memorials, Space, and Place: Geographies of Memory

Memory studies is a largely interdisciplinary field, but the geographies of memory provide a particularly interesting approach to issues surrounding remembrance processes. In this paper, we argue that memory manifests spatially, and that the histories of a certain place can be read in its landscape. Further, we follow geographer Doreen Massey in asserting that memory is produced through social construction—namely that it is dynamic, motivated, and context-specific.⁴

Two main structures are used to mediate individual memory through singular narratives: monuments and memorials. A memorial is a multi-part structure in purpose-designed space; it works both to commemorate a historical phenomenon and to educate viewers about that phenomenon, synthesizing tangles of individual memory within a single narrative frame. Approaching memorials as active components in the landscape allows us to interrogate the role of memorials in promoting or subverting hegemonic political projects.

Space, place, and landscape

This essay considers space and place as both physical and intangible, or socially-produced. As defined by the geographer Doreen Massey, “space is a complexity of networks, links, exchanges, connections... space is a product: it is produced through the establishment or refusal of relations.”⁵ Space is inherently social precisely because social relations produce it. Space should further be considered a dynamic presence, “always open to the future,” and existing in multiplicity.⁶ Space transforms into *place* as human social relations imbue it with meaning. Places should not be considered bounded entities, or as areas with some single identity, but as products of applied dynamic culture.⁷ Places can be identified by the experiences they offer or the stories they tell. While a given place may never be entirely universal, and its

inhabitants, visitors, or creators may never completely agree on its ‘true meaning,’ places are distinct from spaces in their specific rhythms and how their occupants embody them.⁸

In order to best interrogate memorials, it is essential to consider the ways memorial structures can turn a space into a place supporting a specific narrative. In addition to space and place, the study of memory and its construction is deeply tied to questions of landscape. Within geographic analysis, landscape is used to describe both (or either) the physical environment surrounding a given place, or an intangible set of meanings attached to a place’s particular history and culture. Critical geographers have typically studied landscapes for their multiplicities; landscapes reflect the past, symbolize specific stories (or myths), and shape the present. They can either formally mark moments in history or “give the past an everyday familiarity and spatial permanence that facilitates a shared sense of place and time.”⁹ The terms ‘landscape of memory’ or ‘memorial landscape’ refer to the intersecting historic, social, and political narratives any given landscape holds. Landscapes are the arenas in which memories are constructed, manipulated, and anchored, and as the geographer Nigel Thrift explains, “where we remember the past is important to *how* we remember.”¹⁰ White Americans have long enjoyed claiming the most central public spaces for white memory. Now, increasing numbers of revisionist projects demonstrate how “...the challenging and changing of commemorative landscapes have become strategies used by historically marginalized groups to reconstruct their public importance.”¹¹ The most significant memorials of today work to contextualize landscapes to reclaim certain narratives and allow individuals to develop memories of them.

The politics of memory work

Memorialization is inherently political. Careful analysis of what and how different groups commemorate demonstrates that political decisions are inextricably tied to memorial work. Residents of the U.S. South, a place long ruled by a white majority, are just beginning to confront the reality that the history they ‘know’ does not include the lived experiences of all groups. The uneven memory of the U.S. South¹² has produced uneven memorial landscapes, and since memorial practices can either help or hurt how we understand the past, it is imperative to deconstruct what exactly we remember.

As historian John Gillis writes, “memories help us make sense of the world we live in; and ‘memory work’ is, like any other kind of physical or mental labor, embedded in complex class, gen-

4 See Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994) for further context and analysis on the theory of socially constructed space.

5 Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, 17.

6 Ibid., 17.

7 Ibid., 5.

8 Nigel Thrift, “Space: The Fundamental Stuff of Human Geography,” In *Key Concepts in Geography*, ed. by Sarah L. Holloway, Stephen P. Rice, and Gill Valentine (London: SAGE, 2003), 103. Emphasis added by authors.

9 Alderman and Inwood, “Landscapes of Memory,” 188.

10 Ibid., 189.

11 Ibid., 187.

12 The authors follow the U.S. Census Bureau in defining the “U.S. South” as the geopolitical region stretching down from Delaware to Florida and east from Texas to the Atlantic coast. This essentialist reduction of ‘The South’ down to these 16 states is useful for the purposes of this paper, but further research could engage with contemporary scholarship on contested definitions of the South and Southern Identity.

der and power relations that determine what is remembered (or forgotten), by whom, and for what end.”¹³ Taken in the same vein as Massey’s concept of “power-geometry,” in which spatiality and mobility are both shaped by power differentials and reproduce them, it is crucial to remember that memory is always operated on and impacted by power dynamics.¹⁴

Because memorials exist as narrational agents in a given landscape, they shape individual experiences of an environment. Consequently, they encourage individuals to undertake memory work—to interrogate remembering. In so doing, memorials can actually shape cultural memory, functioning as loci for individual, communal, or even national ‘healing’ as a society comes to reckon with an event and places it within this collected cultural memory. As such, memorialization practices are crucial to the process of confronting historic injustices

What is memory?

Memory and history should not be considered synonymous. French historian Pierre Nora established the standard for memory studies in 1989 when he argued that *history* actually eradicates *memory* by encouraging individuals and groups to submit their own understanding and self-consciousness to a unyielding narrative of some phenomenon as being in the past:

Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting... History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past.¹⁵

While this essay cannot fully explore the nuanced psychological processes that allow individuals to *remember*, it is relevant to understand a basic cognitive framework for memory, as laid out by neuroscientists John Sutton, Celia Harris, and Amanda Barnier. For someone to remember, their brains must “encode” incoming information, retain the information through storage processes, and then access the information again through “retrieval.”¹⁶ These individual behaviors translate to the public scale through group socialization. Thus, it might be argued that all public memory is an attempt to reconcile private memory.

Memory at the social level is generally spoken; understandings

of some phenomenon often come together after discussion with peers. This conception of social memory informs cultural memory; after all, if memory relies on storytelling, the passing down of stories through generations creates *group memory*. In her work on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., scholar Lynn Eastman argued that an entire society can come together around a memorial narrative to produce a specific kind of memory. According to Eastman, collected cultural memory, or the narrative produced by a culturally mediated gathering of contradictory memories, emerges at the intersection of history and individual memory as a society comes to remember some event (even a contested one) through a common lens.¹⁷ Attempts to form collected cultural memories are clearly visible in sites of memory.

First defined by Nora as lieux de mémoire, sites of memory are “where memory crystallizes and secretes itself...a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn.”¹⁸ Such sites are, by nature, contested, not only between past and present or between present and future, but also between groups and between individuals. Their role is distinct from what Nora describes as milieux de mémoire, or real environments of memory, where memory is lived (rather than visualized, spatialized, or otherwise enacted in some concrete way).¹⁹ But the most crucial function of sites of memory, at least for the purpose of this paper, is the way they act as “points of reference” for individuals who have not experienced the phenomena commemorated by the site.²⁰ The memorial historian Jay Winter writes that “sites of memory inevitably become sites of *second-order memory*, places where people remember the memories of others, those who survived the events marked there.”²¹ This idea of second-order memory is crucial to deconstructing contests around memorialization in the U.S. South, where many contested landscapes of memory involve phenomena of the last two or three hundred years.

What is a memorial?

Landscapes of memory are generally created by two types of structures: monuments and memorials. A monument is defined by its singular recognition; a monument is a human creation erected for the specific purpose of keeping single human deeds, events, or a combination thereof “alive” in the minds of future generations.²² Monuments may be solely structural in form, or include a literary element in the presence of some attached commemorative plaque or explanatory text. Most monuments include both of these

13 John Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3.

14 Doreen Massey, “Power-geometry and a progressive sense of place,” in *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*, ed. by John Bird, Barry Curtis, Tim Putnam, Lisa Tickner (New York: Routledge, 1993), 60-70.

15 Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations*, no. 26 (1989): 8.

16 John Sutton, Celia B. Harris, and Amanda J. Barnier, “Memory and Cognition,” in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, ed. by Radstone and Schwarz (New York: Fordham University, 2010), 212.

17 Susan Lynn Eastman, *The American War in Viet Nam: Cultural Memories at the Turn of the Century* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2017), 3.

18 Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 7.

19 Ibid., 7.

20 Jay Winter, “Sites of Memory,” in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, ed. Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz (New York: Fordham University, 2010), 312.

21 Ibid., 313.

22 Alois Riegl, “Le culte moderne des monuments,” *Socio-anthropologie*, no. 9 (2001).

stylistic elements. Monuments are sometimes part sculpture, part architecture.²³ Monuments *commemorate*, or recognize the existence of some person or event, but do not *memorialize*. Commemoration intends to ensure a narrative “never belongs to the past” and is continuously accepted by modern societies.²⁴ As traditional commemorative practices grounded in glorification became increasingly inappropriate for twentieth century’s wars, genocides, and shifting demographics, traditional monuments became less fashionable— and designers began to think critically about how to design structures that would prevent hegemonic versions of history.²⁵ Since the 1980s, advocates of the ‘anti-monument’ form have rejected the notion of memory sites, aiming to de-ritualize and dematerialize remembering so that it might become more a part of everyday life, thus (theoretically) closing the gap between the past and the present.²⁶ While this essay will not analyze the functional value of ‘anti-monuments,’ it is important to note this historical development as it informs modern memorial structures. As a function of the anti-monument movement, the ‘spatial monument,’ a commemorative structure designed with a particular pattern of visitor engagement in mind, quickly became more popular than the ‘statue monument.’ As reaffirmed by design scholars Stevens and Franck, “eventually monumentality became much less important while the spatiality of memorials and attention to people’s movement and embodied experiences helped generate an increasing variety of memorial designs.”²⁷ These spatially-conscious memorials dominate memorialization today.

If monuments are generally singular in both form and narrational experience, memorials are their more complex cousins. Memorials *memorialize*; instead of mere recognition, memorials present a narrative framework within which visitors create their own individual understandings, or, memories, of the event in question. At a contemporary memorial structure, “visitors have to make more of an effort to interpret meanings that are more indirectly or less precisely expressed. Increasingly, remembering is not achieved by simply viewing a sculpture but is instead an active, engaged process, requiring people to ‘look within themselves for memory.’”²⁸ Memorials are designed to lead visitors through a sort of choreographed memory-creating process. By manipulating space in deliberate ways and including specific stylistic elements, the most effective memorial structures of today build individual memories that then create a collected cultural memory.

Memorials and manipulation of space

Sites of memory are composite bodies, imbued with layers of meaning. It is useful to consider this process of layering in terms first used by Winter, who posits that at their inception, sites of memory inherit meaning, and over time, they *accumulate* additional meaning.²⁹ Contemporary struggles over history and memory in the U.S. South suggest that accumulated meaning is almost always contested. If, as Winter argues, sites of memory “materialize” moral messages about our past, then memorials must be coded with certain histories and memories that aim to tell specific stories. So what happens when there is “no moral consensus” about the nature of history or “about what [is] being remembered in public?”³⁰

In the case of the U.S. South, public memorialization before the mid-twentieth century was dominated by the white social, political, and economic elites of the post-Reconstruction period, who sought to cement their power by constructing landscapes that emphasized the South’s “patrician Anglo-Saxon continuity of order, stability, and harmony.”³¹ These groups recognized the power of monuments and memorials to shape memory of the region’s history, and their efforts to transform Confederate memorialization from spaces of private mourning to grand monuments in the public sphere have been clearly documented.³²

Social and political structures created by the elite, including the doctrine of white supremacy and a strict racial hierarchy, were given an air of permanence by the presence of monuments. Catherine Bishir, an architectural historian who has closely studied this phenomenon in North Carolina, writes that, “so effective was the combined effect of cultural and political control that for many it seemed that the hierarchical, racially segregated South had always been thus, except for the brief aberration of Reconstruction, and presumably would always remain so.”³³ In the homes they built, the public buildings they funded, and in the monuments they dedicated, this class of white elites created the visual context for their new version of history.

When read as documents of a hegemonic agenda, Confederate sites of memory in the U.S. South become clear examples of how landscapes of memory can be developed to “naturalize” certain histories in the public consciousness. The nature of power means that dominant groups usually determine what and how we remember, often suppressing marginalized histories and memory in the process. In the case of Confederate monuments, the essential meaning (and purpose) has not changed over time. While these sites are “layered” like any other, they have never really been

23 While obelisk designs like the Washington Monument are solely architectural, traditional equestrian monuments, fallen soldier monuments, and monuments to individual people often feature a sculpture raised on a plinth or base.

24 Riegl, “Le culte moderne des monuments,” 6.

25 While a full account of the history of memorial practices is beyond the scope of this essay, it is key to note that the ‘cult of the fallen soldier,’ arising after WWI and WWII, drastically shifted memorialization practices. For further information, see Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves* (2018).

26 Gillis, *Commemorations*, (1994), 17. The anti-monument movement is not essential to the argument of this essay, but did inspire many of the contemporary memorial designs we know today. For further information, see Gillis.

27 Q. Stevens and K. Franck, *Memorials as Spaces of Engagement* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 21.

28 *Ibid.*, 34.

29 Winter, “Sites of Memory,” 312.

30 Winter, “Sites of Memory,” 313.

31 Catherine W. Bishir, “Landmarks of Power: Building a Southern Past, 1885—1915,” *Southern Cultures*, Inaugural Issue (1993): 6.

32 *Ibid.*, 9.

33 *Ibid.*, 37.

about memorializing fallen soldiers—they have always been about rewriting history. As discussed later in this paper through the case of UNC’s Confederate Monument, these monuments have always been dedicated to Confederate memory and white supremacy. As such, the current debate over their meaning is not so much about contesting what the monuments stand for as it is about uncovering what other kinds of memory have been erased in the process of elevating one particular kind of memory (in this case, white supremacy).

While this paper does not focus specifically on how memorials and other sites of memory evolve, it is important to acknowledge the complexity of socio-spatial processes that allow memorials to acquire new significance, and conversely, to shed old or redundant meaning. Such processes might include dynamic and energetic movements fueled by the elevation of historically marginalized voices, as seen in the push to take down Confederate monuments. But the most common process, as Winter argues, is the “fading” of communities who once valued a certain memory, as seen in the case of First World War memorials:

Constructing sites of memory is a universal social act, and yet these very sites are as transitory as are the groups of people who create and sustain them...These [memorial] associations are bound to dissolve, to be replaced by other forms, with other needs and other histories.³⁴

Shifting definitions of history, the creation of pluralist or competing memories, and the alternate erasure or elevation of different voices all contribute to the transformation of memorial landscapes. Consequently, space can be manipulated to reflect larger social and political agendas— and monuments and memorials contribute to that project.

Memorial Landscapes of the South: the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

As the first public university in the United States, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) has long held a prominent position in higher education in North Carolina, in the U.S., and across the world.³⁵ Its campus is visited by thousands of students, alumni, faculty, parents, visitors, and other affiliates every year. Consequently, its public grounds are public spaces— public spaces positioned to convey narratives supported by the grandeur of a respected public institution. As students of UNC Chapel Hill, we are particularly concerned with the memorial landscapes of campus. While there are multiple monuments and memorials on UNC’s campus, two necessitate discussion here: the Confederate Monument and the Unsung Founders Memorial. While the Confederate Monument is now removed from campus, the long dialogue between these two structures speaks to the contested racial history of UNC Chapel Hill and the work that the entire campus community must do in order to confront its legacy.

The Confederate Monument: ‘Silent Sam’

UNC’s Confederate Monument, commonly known as “Silent Sam,” exemplifies trends in memorialization and memory-making in the U.S. South at the turn of the twentieth century. Dedicated

by the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) in 1913 as a monument to the university’s Confederate dead, the Monument consists of a life-size figure of a Confederate soldier atop a four-sided base with dedication inscriptions.³⁶ Constructed with a clear “memorial” agenda, the visual coding of the Monument reveals the sociopolitical nature of its creation. As indicated through discussion of a few sample details, such coding is visible in the structure, design, language, and placement of the piece.



Fig.1. Confederate Monument at University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Public Use. Taken Prior to August 2018.

The choice to represent a foot soldier is an intentional attempt to “democratize” of the story of war. A departure from traditional commemorative practice, wherein famous figures like generals are memorialized, the goal is to create a new kind of hero, the common man, which suggests a unity for a cause which was in fact very divisive. In his anonymity, this soldier becomes every man. It is a seeming paradox of the personal and impersonal, but in the statue’s non-specificity, viewers could be prompted to imagine a father or brother or son. In this way, the figure becomes a tool for meditation and for self-actualization, bordering on memorial practice. While the Monument is supposed to honor the Confederate dead of the university, nowhere on or near the Monument is there a list of veterans. They are nameless and faceless, trapped in the anonymity of the boy soldier’s face. The emphasis on his youth is an emotional pull to create sympathy for the figure, as this youth suggests innocence. The implied youth and innocence of the soldier is also a direct appeal to the Lost Cause narrative. The historical revisionist ideology of the Lost Cause maintains that, despite losing the Civil War, the Confederacy was a just and righteous state (as opposed to a racist and/or rebellious one). By extension, the Lost Cause argues for the “virtues” of the antebellum South and frames the war as a struggle for a “Southern” way of life, minimizing the role of slavery in the conflict. The fact that the soldier figure faces north and is effectively unarmed gives this appeal to the Lost Cause an extra weight in its suggestion that this boy is reluctant to fight against implied Northern aggression. To a sympathetic viewer, the subconscious extrapolation of this suggestion, of course, is the idea that this soldier is only fighting because he is compelled to do so— because his home is under attack.

Viewed comparatively as just one monument in a trend of Confederate memorialization across the U.S. South in the early

34 Winter, “Sites of Memory,” 324.

35 “History and Traditions,” *The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*, 2018.

36 Figure 1.

twentieth century, it becomes evident that the Confederate Monument is rich with visual messages that support a very specific narrative not only of the Civil War, but also of Southern society. Through this lens, “Silent Sam” is as much a monument to the dominance of white supremacy as it is a monument to the soldiers of the Confederacy. The impact of this narrative on UNC’s campus is pervasive. Notably, powerful individuals at the university and within the community sought to visualize this particular version of history not only in the construction of the Confederate Monument, but also in the organization of the space around the Monument. In fact, the placement of the Monument at the front of campus centered McCorkle Place as a Confederate space, effectively transforming the whole quad into a monument to a white supremacist revision of history.

Given the clear visual coding of the Monument, and all that has been documented about its erection,³⁷ UNC’s Confederate Monument may be read not only as an attempt to perpetuate a hegemonic narrative about the U.S. South, but also as a testament to the violence that non-white Americans living in the U.S. South faced, and continue to face, in public space. In August 2018, a group of student and community activists brought the Confederate Monument ‘Silent Sam’ down after years of protest.³⁸ The future of the Monument still remains to be seen.

The Unsung Founders Memorial

In decided contrast to the Confederate Monument, the Unsung Founders Memorial rests on a quiet section of grassy quad on McCorkle Place.³⁹ Dedicated on November 5, 2005 after its installation in May 2005 by artist Do-Ho Suh, the Memorial was commissioned by the undergraduate Class of 2002 as their ‘class gift’ to the university.⁴⁰ The senior class voted to help design and raise funds for the Memorial in order to “...make an honest judgment about past events.”⁴¹ As its name indicates, the structure memorializes the people of color whose contributions to campus have not been included in official university histories. The Unsung Founders Memorial is currently the only structure attempting to contextualize the McCorkle Place landscape and the rest of UNC’s campus more broadly. While this Memorial attempts to engage its visitors and features an admirable inscription, it alone does not sufficiently remind the UNC community that its institutions were built by people of color.

As a multi-part memorial with both aesthetic and semiotic value, the Unsung Founders Memorial should be analyzed as an art form with a sociopolitical function — as most memorials should

be.⁴² Suh intended the sculpture to both resemble and serve as a table, and formal analysis should consider it as such. The table of the piece is made of black granite, with a polished flat top held up by 300 bronze figures in individual relief forming a circular foundation receding throughout the space visible beneath the table top.⁴³ While the supporting figures vary in their sex and clothing, each have features showcasing a specific phenotype—there is no doubt that the figures depict the enslaved and indentured people of color whose labor went unrecognized by the University for so long.⁴⁴



Fig. 2. Detail from the Unsung Founders Memorial. February 2018.

In creating dynamic movement between the bent bodies of the figures and the solid weight of the tabletop, Suh further emphasized the burden, both literal and figurative, that forced labor placed on the bodies not only of enslaved people but also their descendants’ cultural. Five stone seats appear to rise from the natural earth but are finished with a polished top to mirror the main center surface.⁴⁵



Fig. 3. The Unsung Founders Memorial, view of table and one stone ‘chair.’

37 There is a great deal of existing scholarship around UNC’s Confederate Monument. While this paper’s analysis of the Monument is limited, we recommend sources like UNC’s online exhibition on UNC’s Confederate Monument, curated by James Leloudis, a history professor at UNC, and Cecelia Moore, the university historian: <https://silentsam.online/>.

38 Jesse James Deconto and Alan Blinder, “‘Silent Sam’ Confederate Statue Is Toppled at University of North Carolina,” *New York Times*, 21 Aug. 2018, accessed 23 Feb. 2019.

39 While the terms ‘monument’ and ‘memorial’ do have an important distinction, as discussed earlier in this essay, colloquial references to memorial structures do not always reflect that divide, as demonstrated at UNC-CH.

40 “Unsung Founders Memorial Dedicated Saturday on UNC’s McCorkle Place,” *Our Community*, 17 Nov. 2005, accessed 6 Feb. 2018.

41 “Celebrating the Unsung Founders,” *University Gazette Archives*, 16 Nov. 2005, accessed 6 Feb. 2019.

42 Winter, “Sites of Memory,” 319.

43 “Unsung Founders Memorial, UNC (Chapel Hill),” *Commemorative Landscapes of North Carolina*, 19 Mar. 2010, accessed 6 Feb. 2019.

44 Figure 2.

45 Figure 3.

February 2018.

In designing the Unsung Founders Memorial as a table, Suh gave it a dual function to allow for further internalization of the memory the piece aims to create by having visitors physically interact with it. Intentionally constructing a memorial meant to honor slave labor to then hold up the body weight of its visitors may seem to detract from its message of respectful remembrance. While no one should be changing diapers or spilling food all over the table, Suh designed an interactive structure specifically to *engage* visitors. This engagement builds the memory of the Unsung Founders by encouraging visitors to interact with it more substantially than if they were just passing by.

Personal observation of the Unsung Founders Memorial reveals the importance of the two attached texts in situating the space's memorial function—texts one can only read if seated at the table. The inscription demonstrates the intent of the piece more than any formal artistic choice.⁴⁶ By clarifying that the Memorial honors the “people of color” who were instrumental in building the “Carolina that we cherish today,” the inscription attaches the commemorative function to an art piece that alone is only clear in its depiction of slave labor. The additional plaque on the table further clarifies that the piece is meant to “Honor” “Remember” and “Celebrate.”⁴⁷ While the Memorial does include a small engagement element and clearly works to contextualize hegemonic histories through its attached text, the Unsung Founders Memorial should not be considered a highly effective memorial. Until August 2018, the Memorial sat literally in the shadow of the much larger, much more noticeable Confederate Monument. Now that the Confederate Monument is gone, McCorkle Place faces a unique opportunity to confront its history by following the lead of memorials like the Unsung Founders—but it alone cannot educate the Chapel Hill community about UNC's past.

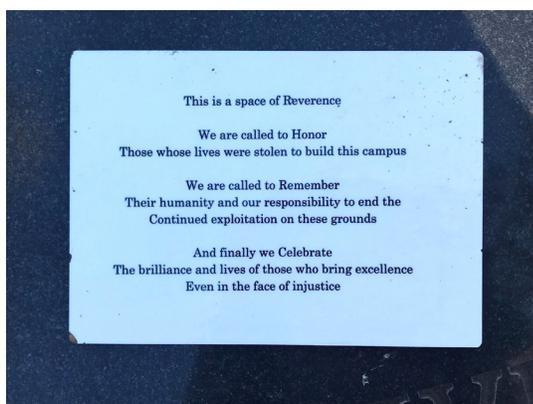


Fig. 4. Label from the Unsung Founders Memorial. February 2018.

UNC Chapel Hill: Looking Forward

The original research for this essay began while the Confederate Monument still stood on the campus of UNC Chapel Hill. Now, both the figure⁴⁸ and the base⁴⁹ have been removed from McCorkle Place. While several proposals have been floated by university officials, the statue's fate currently remains unclear. As a direct result of the turmoil surrounding the Confederate Monument, the university has also begun to consider interventions to elevate the status and spatial experience of the Unsung Founders Memorial. On the morning of March 31, 2019, two individuals affiliated with white supremacy groups and directly linked to the “Heirs to the Confederacy” organization were arrested for vandalizing the Unsung Founders Memorial.⁵⁰ The urine and spray paint used to desecrate the Memorial, framed by these individuals as a direct response to the removal of a Confederate Monument, further speaks to the violent and racist ideology Silent Sam represented. The memorial landscape of UNC continues to be contested and demands change. We hope the next year will bring dramatic transformation to UNC's campus as the university works to reshape public space and memory.

Memorial Landscapes of the South: The National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, AL

From the end of Reconstruction in 1877 to 1950, more than 4,000 African Americans were lynched across twenty southern and midwestern states. As the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) notes in their groundbreaking report on lynching in America, “these lynchings were public acts of racial terrorism, intended to instill fear into black communities.”⁵¹ Yet, until EJI opened the National Memorial for Peace and Justice (NMPJ) in April of 2018, there was no national space dedicated specifically to confronting these acts of white terrorism. Now, the unique structure of the Memorial and its component elements create such a space. This paper argues that by constructing specific spaces of revisionist history, EJI is helping to transform Montgomery into a place of racial reckoning.

The NMPJ, which opened alongside a sister site called the Legacy Museum, guides visitors through a carefully choreographed confrontation with history. Located in the heart of a historically black neighborhood that gave rise to the Civil Rights movement, the Memorial is a modern, abstract structure which commands an entire city block. From afar, it resembles a grid-like maze, with hundreds of rectangular metal blocks visible underneath a flat roof. The building rests atop a manicured green slope, which is actually an artificial hill intended to elevate the Memorial. As visitors get closer, the Memorial is obscured. The walls bound the visual reach of the Memorial, furthering the sense that to walk into this memorial space is to enter a sacred place.⁵²

46 “THE CLASS OF 2002 HONORS THE UNIVERSITY’S UNSUNG FOUNDERS— THE PEOPLE OF COLOR BOUND AND FREE—WHO HELPED BUILD THE CAROLINA THAT WE CHERISH TODAY.”

47 Figure 4.

48 Myah Ward and Charlie McGee, “Silent Sam toppled in protest the night before classes begin,” *Daily Tar Heel*, 20 Aug. 2018.

49 Maeve Sheehy, “Folt says her resignation and the removal of Silent Sam’s base are unrelated,” *Daily Tar Heel*, 15 Jan. 2018.

50 Taylor Buck, “Two Individuals Arrested for March 31 Vandalism,” *Daily Tar Heel*, 8 Apr. 2019.

51 Equal Justice Initiative, *Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror*, 3d Ed., (2017).

52 Figure 5.



Figure 5. Authors' Own. The National Memorial for Peace and Justice. Photograph. 2018.

Upon entering the Memorial, visitors find the first of multiple wall texts that explain the history of lynching in America. Using careful language to describe the journey of Africans who became the “...enslaved labor [that] fueled the economic growth of the United States,” the labels conclude that, after emancipation in 1863, “...slavery in America did not end—it evolved.”⁵³ A gentle gravel incline takes visitors through the narrative, forcing them to pause at certain crucial spots, such as the group statue *Nkyinkyim Installation* by Kwame Akoto-Bamfo, which acts as a visual reminder of the human cost of slavery. At the end of this visual and spatial timeline, the path cuts back 180 degrees to lead viewers to the main memorial structure. The path thus serves to transport visitors through time and space, taking them from the origins of slavery to the acts of racial terrorism that plagued the post-Reconstruction South: lynchings.

The NMPJ's true power comes from the journey visitors experience in the memorial structure: a maze of 800 six-foot corten steel blocks, each commemorating the murder of African Americans lynched in the U.S. South from 1877 to 1950.⁵⁴ The blocks are emphatically large and physical, evoking gravestones and a sense of the forgotten. EJI actually labels the stelae “monuments,” asserting that each marker commemorates a black victim of racial terror. The emotional effect of walking through row after row of these stelae is staggering. This repetition is what Stevens and Franck would be most interested in, noting how “the spatial extent of memorials... with a repetition of elements, takes them out of the traditional realm of sculpture...they are not sculptural forms viewed from the exterior but rather a combination of architecture and landscape, a complex spatial field through which the visitor moves.”⁵⁵ The NMPJ asserts itself as one of the most effective memorials to racial injustice in the United States today by being unafraid to force visitors to remember what black bodies were subject to throughout and after the Reconstruction era.

53 Authors' own field notes, site visit on October 27, 2018.

54 “The National Memorial for Peace and Justice,” Legacy Museum and National Lynching Memorial, accessed 1 Feb. 2019. See Figure 6.

55 Stevens and Franck, *Memorials*, 55.

56 Further research will engage with this idea of exclusion and the NMPJ being a semi-private structure, but that is beyond the scope of this immediate analysis and not presently necessary to interrogate.

57 See Figure 7.

The Memorial, like the museum, does require visitors to purchase timed-entry tickets.⁵⁶ Additionally, the memorial was not built by the public. It was not built by the state. It was not built on public land. As a consequence of a demonstrated lack of public will to remember, a private foundation (EJI) constructed the Memorial with the specific intent of encouraging a country to confront its deeply racist and violent past. The memorial thus functions as semi-private; a structure deeply affecting a place and its public without being public itself. Whether private or public, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice actively shifts the memorial landscape of Montgomery toward a more complete remembrance of the past. And, in encouraging members of the wider public to create their own individual memories which they will carry with them into their own social networks, the memorial has a reach far beyond Caroline Street.

The EJI is working on an additional project to reshape *public* memorial landscapes across the American South: the Community Remembrance Project (CRP). This additional piece of the Memorial is an innovative ‘mobile memorial’ of sorts. At the NMPJ, visitors must walk through a literal field of memory before exiting. Lying outside the main structure, organized in rows by state and county, are carbon copies of the 800 steel lynching site markers.⁵⁷ Starting in Spring 2019, EJI will encourage communities across the South which bear the legacy of racial terror lynching to begin ‘peace and reconciliation processes.’ If these states and counties work to confront their histories of racial terror and move toward racial reconciliation, EJI will deliver the copy-marker to the site it commemorates. The plans for this CRP are not entirely finalized, and it will prove interesting for further researchers to see how the country responds.



Fig. 7. Authors' Own. National Memorial for Peace and Justice, view of the main structure and Marker Garden. Photograph. 2018.

Conclusion

Since the turn of the twentieth century, landscapes of memory in the United States have become increasingly organized. Both monuments and memorials have been crucial elements of such landscapes. Given their power in shaping group memory of complex socio-political phenomena, sites of memory have come under increased scrutiny in recent decades. As minority groups lay claim to their own histories and remember on their own terms, groups exercising hegemonic power may find it more difficult to come to a consensus on what is being remembered. For significant, far-reaching histories that affect disparate groups—such as racial terror lynchings—memorials encourage individuals to build their own memories of an event within a narrative framework presented by the memorial structure.

In the twenty-first century, memorials are successfully shifting traditional landscapes of memory, subverting monumental tradition to create places instead where diverse groups can come together and relegate conflicting experiences through spatially-determined remembrance processes. Depending on their use of space and historically-contingent landscape, memorial structures can have place-making powers. Thus, it follows that constructing new memorial landscapes can contribute to the work of racial reconciliation in the U.S. South. Consequently, it is important to study such spaces, on both a local and a national level, to understand what memory work is being done.

While we do not maintain that simply erecting carefully-designed memorials will achieve racial justice in the U.S. South, this essay does argue that memorial spaces should be considered as powerful forces in the movement toward historical reckoning and racial equality. As Gillis notes, “It seems clear that we are experiencing not just another intellectual fad but a deep cultural shift;” memorials are going to continue being built as the politics of memory becomes more heterogeneous.⁵⁸ If these memorials are carefully designed to present visitors with an opportunity to create new memories that better speak to the lived experiences of marginalized groups, then the ‘memorial mania’ of the twenty-first century will only benefit our American democracy.

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A Hurricane and an Oil Spill: Evaluating the Mortgage Market of the Early 2000s and the Student Loan Market of Today

by Sean Nguyen, Kate Karstens

The default rates of student loans have risen to record highs in recent years with some scholars predicting default rates rising to 40% by 2023. Student debt in the economy is also mounting, as reports show there is nearly \$1.45 trillion outstanding student debt in 2018. Given these figures, popular discourse has compared today's student debt situation to that of the housing market before the 2008 Financial Crisis. In seeking to determine the legitimacy of this comparison, our research examines the current student debt situation within the context of the pre-2008 housing market. Our paper analyzes the similarities and differences between these two markets by examining key themes, such as the prevalence of predatory lending, prevalence of high default rates, and the disproportionate impact on minority groups. Our intent is to provide a thorough evaluation of whether the rising student loan default rates of today will cause the same level of economic turmoil experienced from the 2008 Financial Crisis. Our findings conclude that the high rates of student loan defaults will not impact the U.S. economy to the same extent that the pre-2008 housing market crash did. Evidence shows that the vast majority of student loans are provided through federal programs, and thus are not as likely to pose the same level of systemic risk to our economy as defaulting mortgages did over a decade ago.

Keywords: student loans, student debt bubble, predatory lending, 2008 Financial Crisis, housing bubble

When the housing market crashed in 2008, the fallout was stunning. The toxicity of the mortgage lending business had spread to investment banking and insurance companies, leaving corporations and the entire country of Iceland completely bankrupt. Over ten years later, economists aware of the cyclical aspect of capitalism are searching for the next bubble. Many have settled on student loans, citing the debt rising into the trillions as a foreboding warning sign.

Though there are some eerie similarities in lending practices, there are also notable differences between the mortgage and student loan industries. For instance, whereas privatized mortgages were the norm in America pre-2008, today the federal government finances the overwhelming majority of all student loans.¹ Through the course of this paper, we aim to analyze the similarities and differences between the mortgage market of the early 2000s and

the student loan market of today. In doing so, we outline the current state of the student debt crisis, as well as qualify the widely-circulated claim that student loans will be responsible for the next financial disaster.

The Current State of Student Loans

Not only is student loan debt in the American economy at an all-time high, but scholars predict that the impending crisis will continue to grow. In Quarter 3 of 2018, the New York Fed reported nearly \$1.45 trillion in total student loan debt.² Held by approximately 44.25 million individuals, this debt is currently the largest non-housing debt balance in the American economy — surpassing debts in both the credit card (.84 trillion) and auto loan (1.26 trillion) industries.¹ According to data from the Federal Reserve's Consumer Credit Report, student loans are the only form of consumer debt that has continued to grow in the wake of the

1 Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve Bank, *Consumer Credit Outstanding*, (Washington, D.C., US FED, 2018).

2 Federal Reserve Bank of New York, *Household Debt and Credit Report Q3 2018*, (New York, NY FED, 2018).

Great Recession.¹ Since 2006, this debt has grown over 175 percent, confirming the general belief that the share of students assuming student loans has increased (and will continue to increase).¹ For example, in 1977, about one in three students (34 percent) borrowed for college. Nearly 20 years later, in 2001, approximately two in three students (64 percent) borrowed for college.³ For the current 2018 year, evidence suggests that nearly 70 percent of students borrow to pursue a degree in higher education.⁴

Unlike the housing sector of the early 2000s, the vast majority of student loans today are issued by the federal government through direct lending. In 2010, Congress eliminated the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) program; this program had enabled private banks and certain non-profit agencies to essentially serve as federal student loan lenders with government backing. Since FFEL's elimination, the Department of Education has been the primary lender and administrator for federally-backed student loans.⁵ Private student lending institutions do exist today, but constitute only a small portion of total loans. The percentage of private student loan debt is only about 7.65 percent of all outstanding student loan debt.⁶

Though miniscule in comparison to the \$1.45 trillion of total student loan debt, the \$64.2 billion of private student loan debt is significant nonetheless.⁷ Additionally, the bulk of student loan debt is disproportionately held by a minority of individuals. Only about 415,000 students out of the total 44.2 million student loan borrowers have student loan debts greater than \$200,000.⁷ Because these individuals have such a large amount of student loan debt, they are typically on-time paying graduate students. The overwhelming majority of student borrowers — about 42 million individuals — owe less than \$100,000.⁸ The largest group of student loan borrowers, which constitutes about 12.4 million borrowers, only owes between \$10,000 and \$25,000.²

Why Are Students Borrowing at Such High Rates?

According to some scholars, the rise of student loans in the past 40 years can be attributed to the federal government's continued disinvestment in higher education.⁸ Under the Reagan administration, a "combination of tax-and budget-cutting measures" were enacted that reduced the federal government's commitment to the student financial aid system.⁹ Beginning in the early 1980s, the federal government cut grants and decided to expand loan programs to offset rising college costs. In the 1970s, federal grants covered nearly 70 percent of college costs; however, by 2008, the same federal grant programs covered just one-third.¹⁰

As wages stagnated, household debts rose, and government aid evaporated, and more and more students were forced to borrow to pursue a college degree.¹⁰

Additionally, though federal subsidization has decreased, a college degree is still viewed by many as "one of [our] nation's most reliable postwar routes to upward mobility."¹⁰ Research from a 2016 Congressional Budget Office report found a positive monotonic relationship between annual earnings and degrees attained.¹¹ A study published by Georgetown University in 2015 also concluded that on average, college graduates earn \$1 million more in earnings over their lifetime than non-college graduates.¹² These studies, as well as the plethora of academic literature on this topic, confirm the entrenched cultural belief held by many Americans that the attainment of a college degree is a "golden ticket" to increased social mobility.¹³ Thus, the primary motivation for so many students undertaking loans is to have a chance at upward mobility. For many Americans, the necessity of attending college is as prominent as ever, and student loans offer the only option to do so.

In addition to the desire for a college degree, the federal government's current lending practices makes it dangerously easy to obtain a student loan.¹⁴ Students qualify for federal loans by proving citizenship or eligibility, in addition to filling out a Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) form. Essentially, the FAFSA records the income and assets of the student's household and then determines the amount of money the student should be able to allocate towards higher education. Students can take out annual loans in the range of \$5,000 and \$12,500 depending on their FAFSA score and their undergraduate year. For graduate students, the amount is capped at \$20,500.¹⁴ Once extended a federal loan, all an individual has to do to maintain his/r loan is to remain enrolled as a student and keep above a 2.0 grade point average.¹⁴

Compared to other types of loans in modern day America, these minimalistic conditions are extremely rare and potentially dangerous. A college student's fluctuating credit score, loss of income, or any other kind of recorded financial difficulty does not impact the government's continued financing of a student's education.¹⁵ Though it is in the government's best interest to maintain a well-educated populace, the lack of student loan supervision is reminiscent of the predatory lending practices of the housing market pre-Great Recession. Nearly all students seeking federal education loans are able to receive one, regardless if the students will be able to repay.

3 Devin Fergus, *Land of the Fee*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2018), 50.

4 Debt.org, *Students and Debt*, (Orlando, Debt.org, 2018).

5 Tamara Hiler, *Why We Shouldn't Re-Privatize the Federal Student Loan Program*, (Third Way, 2017).

6 MeasureOne, *Private Loan Student Report*, (San Francisco, MeasureOne, 2018).

7 Zach Friedman, *Student Loan Debt Statistics in 2018: A \$1.5 Trillion Crisis*, (New York, Forbes, 2018).

8 Fergus, *The Land*, 94.

9 Ibid., 51.

10 Ibid., 93.

11 Congressional Budget Office, *Federal Aid for Postsecondary Students*, (Washington, D.C., Congressional Budget Office, 2018).

12 Anthony P. Carnevale, Ban Cheah, Andrew R. Hanson, *The Economic Value of College Majors*, (Washington, D.C., Georgetown University, 2015).

13 Korva Coleman, *Is A College Education Worth The Debt?*, (Chicago, NPR, 2009).

14 Federal Student Aid, *Understanding Delinquency and Default*, (Washington, D.C., US Department of Education, 2018).

15 Fox Business, *Is It Too Easy To Get Student Loans*, (Fox Business, 2014).

The Pre-2008 State of the Housing Market

Though they differ in many regards, studying the housing market of the early 2000s provides critical insights to contextualizing the ongoing student debt crisis. Similar to the current state of student loans, in the early 2000s, the housing market was at an all-time high. In 2004, homeownership on all American housing units reached an “unnatural” high of 69 percent, which was up from 64 percent just a decade prior.¹⁶ With this rise in homeownership, housing debt also increased, leaping from \$4.9 trillion in Q1 of 2001 to nearly \$10.7 trillion in Q1 of 2008.¹⁷ The Saint Louis Fed reports that the peak mortgage debt (the measure of when in a borrower’s life s/he/they are most burdened) also significantly changed. This statistic rose from \$60,000 at age 45 in 1999 to an astounding \$114,000 at age 42 in 2008.¹⁸ Evidence from this period reveals that aspiring homeowners, like student borrowers today, were becoming increasingly indebted.

Why Did Home Ownership Increase So Dramatically?

As we have learned throughout HIST 489H, the rise in homeownership and consequently home mortgages occurred for a myriad of reasons. Not only was there a well-documented housing bubble that continued to drive up housing prices, but the development of predatory lending made it increasingly profitable for lenders (nearly all of whom were private) to issue loans — specifically subprime loans.

Subprime loans were typically given to individuals with low credit scores. Though subprime loans were high-risk and would contribute disproportionately to the high default rates of mortgages, these loans did allow a whole sector of the population (such as the historically redlined or lower-income groups) access to the housing market, which greatly expanded the pool of potential homeowners. Subprime loans were also extremely profitable so long as the housing bubble continued. These loans were securitized and pooled with other subprime loans and then sold to investors in various tranches. Because of the high profits to be made in the subprime industry, lenders would even shuttle would-be prime borrowers into subprime loans. For instance, of the \$2.5 trillion made from subprime loans between 2000 and 2005, over 50 percent of those subprime loan recipients actually qualified for cheaper, less-risky conventional loans.¹⁹ Because of these predatory practices, from 1995 to 2003, subprime loan securitization rates nearly doubled from 30 percent to 58 percent.²⁰ Thus, from 1994 to 2006, subprime mortgages increased from 5 percent of total

mortgage originations (\$35 billion) to 20 percent (\$600 billion) in 2006.²¹

Herein lies a key difference between the housing market prior to the Great Recession and the current student loan market: while subprime mortgages were packaged up and sold by private companies in Collateral Debt Obligations (CDOs) and Mortgage Backed Securities (MBS) to “the world’s most important financial firms,”²² student loans are currently securitized at a minimal rate.²³ As Goldman’s Marty Young and Lotfi Karoui noted in Dec. of 2017, student loan securitization “[is] not [currently] a risk to overall financial stability.”²⁴ Because the overwhelming majority of student loan debt (92.35 percent) is held by the federal government, the market for private student loan securitization is relatively small compared to the overall student lending landscape, and thus does not pose a significant risk to America’s financial system.²⁵

Additionally, similar to the ethos behind obtaining a college degree, homeownership was (and still is) widely viewed as the main source of wealth accumulation in America.²⁶ Given how important wealth building is to an individual’s financial security and upward mobility, owning a home in America has become intertwined with the cultural idea of achieving the American Dream.

Within the U.S., there is a “long-standing and hard-sold American belief that the way to get rich is to buy a house,” as very few other assets increase an individual’s wealth as much as homeownership does.²⁷ Thus, when homeownership became so easily accessible (and potentially profitable) in the early 2000s, it offered an avenue for “millions of blissfully oblivious people” to capture the elusive American Dream, accumulate wealth, and partake in what is so often considered the most “stable” aspect of the U.S. economy.²⁸ Furthermore, the proliferation of subprime mortgages enabled potential homebuyers to build equity, rather than paying rent each month and essentially “throwing [one’s] money away.”²⁹ Given the increasing housing prices of the early 2000s, taking out a mortgage on a house and building equity were viewed by many as a great means to build wealth.

Current State of Student Loan Defaults

Though the amount of student loan debt in our economy is steadily growing, we must also be cognizant of the growing rates of delinquency. In Q3 of 2018, the New York Fed reported that 11.5 percent of total student loan debt is seriously delinquent (or at least 90 days late). This is currently the highest rate of delinquency among all forms of consumer debt (mortgages, auto loans, credit

16 Alan Blinder, *After the Music Stopped*, (New York, The Penguin Press, 2013), 18.

17 FRED, *Households and Nonprofit Organizations; Home Mortgages; Liability, Level*, (St. Louis, St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank, 2018).

18 Carlos Garriga, Bryan Noeth, and Don Schlagenhauf, *Mortgage Debt and the Great Recession*, (St. Louis, St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank, 2015).

19 Fergus, *The Land*, 11.

20 Ibid., 45.

21 Ben Bernanke, *Fostering Sustainable Home Ownership*, (Washington, D.C., US FED, 2008).

22 Blinder, *After the Music*, 133.

23 Sallie Mae, *Asset-Backed Securities: Private Education Loan Trusts*, (Newark, Sallie Mae, 2018.)

24 Akin Oyedele, *There’s an attractive way to profit from the \$1.3 trillion student-loan bubble*, (Business Insider, 2017).

25 Jack Du, *Student Loan Asset-Backed Securities: Safe or Subprime?*, (Investopedia, 2018).

26 Fergus, *The Land*, 10.

27 Michael Lewis, *Panic!*, (New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 2009), 262.

28 Ibid., 8.

29 Roger Ma, *Are You Throwing Your Money Away When Your Rent?*, (New York, Forbes, 2016).

cards, etc.) and amounts to about \$165 billion.² According to a former high-ranking official of the CFPB, everyday an estimated 3,000 borrowers add to this \$165 billion debt by defaulting on their students loans.³⁰ In September of 2018, the Department of Education announced its annual metric tracking the federal student loan default rate.³¹ This metric recorded that 10.8 percent (about 530,000) of federal student loan borrowers who had entered repayment in 2015 had defaulted by 2017.³² This statistic becomes much more alarming when we take into account that “many more [borrowing students] are likely to default in the coming years.”³³

For example, in the two years after the 2012 cohort’s 3-year tracking ended, the default rate of this cohort continued to climb to 16 percent.³⁴ Additionally, nearly as many students in the 2012 cohort were seriously delinquent, but had not yet filed for bankruptcy. Thus, in the five years after the 2012 cohort entered repayment, the true number of students no longer making payments on federal student loans was actually around 30 percent overall — an alarmingly high number.³⁴ The Department of Education only provided this data after Ben Miller, a Senior Director for the Center for American Progress, submitted a Freedom of Information Act request, which raises significant questions about government oversight of this field.³⁴ As more data on earlier federal student loan cohorts becomes utilized in scholarly research, the outlook on the current student debt crisis becomes more grim. The Brookings Institute reports that the trends from the 1996 student loan cohort shows cumulative default rates on loans continue to rise between 12 and 20 years after the initial entry.³⁵ Thus, the respected think tank suggests that by 2023 nearly 40 percent of student loan borrowers may default on their student loans by 2023.³⁵

Research also suggests that institutional and demographic factors play key roles in determining the default rates on student debt. Although the average debt per student has risen over time, defaults are actually highest among those borrowing relatively small amounts in student loans, due to the low earnings of for-profit students and dropouts.³⁵ Brookings reports that trends over time are most alarming among for-profit institutions; students who attend for-profit institutions default at a much higher rate (52 percent) than those who attend 2-year public (26 percent) and 4-year public (18 percent) institutions after 12 years.³⁵ This evidence supports the federal “crackdown” on predatory for-profit institutions seen under the Obama administration.³⁶

Upon further disaggregation of student loan default data,

30 Fergus, *The Land*, 94.

31 The National Student Loan Cohort Default Rate records how many student loan borrowers default within three years of entering repayment.

32 U.S. Department of Education, *National Student Loan Cohort Default Rate Falls*, (Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

33 The Institute for College Access and Success, *Students at Greatest Risk for Loan Defaults*, (Washington, D.C., The Institute for College Access and Success, 2018).

34 Ben Miller, *The Student Debt Problem Is Worse Than We Imagined*, (New York, New York Times, 2018).

35 Judith Scott-Clayton, *The looming student loan default crisis is worse than we thought*, (Washington, D.C., Brookings Institute, 2018).

36 Michelle Hackman, *After Obama-Era Crackdown, For-Profit Colleges Seek Nonprofit Status*, (New York, Wall Street Journal, 2018).

37 Christopher J. Mayer, Karen M. Pence, and Shane M. Sherlund, *The Rise in Mortgage Defaults*, (Washington, D.C., Federal Reserve Board, 2008).

38 Fergus, *The Land*, 13.

39 Because the majority of student loans are issued by the federal government, this section is primarily concerned with federal student loan defaults.

trends also show that default and delinquency rates among black college students “[are] at crisis-levels.”³⁵ Black BA graduates default at a rate of five times more than that of white BA graduates (21 percent versus 4 percent) and are even more likely to default than white college dropouts.³⁵ This more nuanced understanding of the student loan default rate allows us to understand the disproportionate effects of student loans in our society.

Housing Default Rates Before the 2008 Crash

From 1979 to 2002, the share of mortgage loans that were seriously delinquent (at least 90 days delinquent) averaged just 1.7 percent. However, by Q2 of 2008 — in the midst of the Financial Crisis — the share of seriously delinquent mortgages had surged up to 4.5 percent. These delinquencies foreshadowed the sharp rise in foreclosures, as roughly 1.2 million foreclosures began in the first half of 2008, which was a 79 percent increase from the 650,000 foreclosures of the year prior.³⁷ As the effects of the Financial Crisis continued to unfold and more borrowers failed to pay back their mortgages, the Federal Reserve of New York reported by Q1 of 2010, the share of severely delinquent mortgages peaked at 8.9 percent.²

As was previously mentioned, mortgage defaults and delinquencies were most found among borrowers classified as “sub-prime” or “near-prime.” The share of subprime mortgages that were seriously delinquent increased from about 5.6 percent in mid-2005 to 21.5 percent in July 2008.³⁷ Because so many subprime borrowers were dependent on rising housing prices to continue refinancing their mortgages, when housing prices began declining in 2007, these subprime borrowers became increasingly unable to pay back their home loans.

Research confirms that the development of predatory subprime loans contributed to the higher default rates after the collapse of the housing bubble. In 2008, individuals with an adjustable-rate mortgage, prepayment penalty, or balloon-payment mortgage were likely to default at much higher rates (36 percent, 52 percent, and 72 percent, respectively) than someone with a conventional mortgage.³⁸

Repercussions of Federal Student Loan Debt and Defaults³⁹

Because a person often takes out a student loan before assuming other major financial burdens (such as mortgages,

auto loans, etc.), the “multiplier effect” of a student loan can be significant on a borrower’s life.⁴⁰ For instance, holding student debt drags down an individual’s credit score, resulting in higher interest rates on car notes, mortgage and equity loans, personal business loans, and credit card payments.⁴⁰ Additionally, student loan debt erodes the savings needed for homeownership, as an increase in a borrower’s debt-to-income ratio “results [in the delay of the purchasing] of a home or car.”⁴¹ Thus, recent college graduates often fail to qualify for mortgage loans because their student debt skews their debt-to-income ratio.⁴²

The cascading effect of student loans on homeownership and other wealth-building assets has led the Federal Reserve to report that “an average student debt burden for a dual-headed household with bachelor’s degrees from four-year universities (\$53,000) leads to a lifetime wealth loss of nearly \$208,000.”⁴³ This can be generalized to predict that \$1.5 trillion in outstanding student loan debt will lead to a total lifetime wealth loss for indebted households of about \$4 trillion.⁴⁴ Thus, with consumer spending responsible for up to 70 percent of America’s economic growth, the consequences of student loan debt will continue rippling throughout the U.S. economy for years to come.⁴⁵

Though a college education cannot be repossessed, defaulting on a student loan not only adds to the federal government’s growing deficit, but also triggers major repercussions for an individual’s future financial opportunities. The Congressional Budget Office notes that a federal student loan becomes delinquent after one missed payment.⁴¹ While the exact point of default depends on the type of loan given, the federal government reports an individual’s delinquency to credit agencies after 90 days.⁴⁶ This act dramatically lowers students’ credit scores, ultimately delaying their ability to accumulate wealth and contribute to the U.S. economy. However, a borrower also loses his/r eligibility for deferment, forbearance, and loan forgiveness programs, and certain colleges also have the power to withhold a student’s academic transcript. Federal loan agencies can also garnish portions of a borrower’s paycheck, typically up to 15 percent.⁴⁶ Because the risk of the student loan industry has been overwhelmingly absorbed by the federal government, the rise of student loan default rates are felt much more by consumers, rather than large financial institutions.

Conclusion

As we have learned throughout HIST 489H, the 2008 Great Crash was a disastrous occasion to say the least. Millions of Americans lost their homes and jobs as a result of the toxic mortgage industry. However, our economy has since moved beyond the recession, setting records high in the Dow Jones Industrial Average⁴⁷ and maintaining unemployment rates below 5 percent since October 2016.⁴⁸ To describe the mortgage market pre-Great Crash in relation to the student loan market today, we label the

former as a metaphorical hurricane; the rise of housing default rates, like a turbulent storm, swept through and left significant, immediate effects on the American economy. Over-speculation of home prices and the prominence of subprime lending resulted in CDOs that were distributed to the world’s most important financial institutions, embedding systemic risk. When the housing bubble popped, havoc was unleashed upon investment banks, insurance companies, and the greater American economy reliant on these financial institutions. For years afterwards, policymakers and financial leaders worked together to rebuild and ensure that a crisis of this magnitude would never occur again.

The student debt crisis, however, is a markedly different disaster. We find it much more apt to compare the rising number of student delinquencies to the disaster caused by an oil spill; it is a steady, slow-moving, site-specific conundrum with its full effects still remaining to be seen. Whereas the mortgage industry was extremely interconnected, the rising student loan debt seems to be localized to the government’s balance sheets and the affected students. Though an argument can be made that student loans, in ultimately decreasing consumer spending, can have widespread effects on the entire economy, the student debt crisis appears to be relatively confined for the time being. Scholars attempting to compare the student lending market to the housing market in an effort to encourage action against the surmounting debt are misguided. Attempting to clean up an oil spill using hurricane preparation tactics is futile. As this research reveals, the stark differences between the housing and student loan market expose the inability of using the fallout of the former to predict the latter.

40 Fergus, *The Land*, 17.

41 Ibid, 49.

42 Ibid., 50.

43 Ibid., 14.

44 Ibid., 15.

45 Ibid., 49.

46 Shawn Carter, *Here’s what happens if you default on your student loans—and how to get back on track*, (New York, CNBC, 2017).

47 Kimberly Amadeo, *Dow Highest Closing Records*, (New York, the balance, 2018).

48 National Conference of State Legislatures, *National Employment Monthly Update*, (Washington, D.C., NCSL, 2018).



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Kate Karstens is a junior within the Honors Carolina program pursuing a B.A. in Sociology with a minor in Statistics and Analytics. The daughter of a lifelong public servant, Kate's interest in government regulation and consumer protection has remained constant throughout her upbringing and academic career. While taking a course depicting the historical and financial foundations behind the housing market crash and Great Recession, Kate and colleague Sean Nguyen researched the student loan default crisis. Since then, she has maintained her interest in financial institutions, securing an internship at Wells Fargo within the Chief Administrative Office for Summer 2019. During the school year, Kate works as the Assistant University Desk Editor at UNC's official student newspaper, The Daily Tar Heel.

It's Her Turn(Out): How Latinas Influence Political Participation in the Latinx Community

by Tana Stamper

Latinas have been identified as unique political elites in American Latinx communities, but little is known about how this affects Latinx political participation. In this paper, I explore the role of Latinas as community organizers at the local level in order to evaluate if they are able to increase participatory politics in the form of voter registration over a time span of a decade, specifically the years of 2006-2016. This paper contributes to understanding of the Latinx community, and it also advances knowledge on how engaged members of certain communities can foster group consciousness among a multi-ethnic group. I begin by situating this lens in the context of current political participation knowledge and arguments about the Latinx community in general, as well as Latinas specifically. I then explain the theory and corresponding hypotheses to be tested, with the succeeding section detailing the methodology for doing so. The next section presents the results of the tests and corresponding geospatial data, including a discussion of the results and a positive relationship between Latina population and Latinx voter registration growth. Finally, I conclude with a brief summary of the results and recommendations for future scholarship on the subject.

Introduction

In 2006, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 4437, a bill on border protection and undocumented immigration. This marked the first time in United States Congressional history that legislation dealing with undocumented immigration sparked a national discussion. H.R. 4437 received countrywide backlash; hence the Senate did not pass the bill. Throughout the nation, pro-immigrant marches led by Latinx activists exploded, with messages emphasizing no human being as illegal. A sense of linked-fate encouraged the pan-ethnic Latinx community to peacefully protest the legislation and acknowledge a common identity. More than ten years later, immigration laws continue to be a unifying force among the Latinx community. However, scholars have not evaluated how the community mobilizes when there is no nationally unifying legislation on the floor. At the municipal level in particular, political scientists know very little about the Latinx community and what forces drive political participation. In this paper, I explore the role of Latinas as community organizers at the local level in order to evaluate if they are able to increase participatory politics in the form of voter registration over a time span of a decade, specifically the years of 2006-2016. This paper contributes to understanding of the Latinx community, and it also advances knowledge on how engaged members of certain communities can foster group consciousness among a

multi-ethnic group¹.

The following section situates this paper in the context of current political participation knowledge and arguments about the Latinx community in general, as well as Latinas specifically. The third section explains the theory and corresponding hypotheses to be tested, with the succeeding section detailing the methodology for doing so. Section four presents the results of the tests and corresponding geospatial data as well as a synthesis of the interviews, including a discussion of these results. Finally, I conclude with a brief summary of the results and recommendations for future scholarship on the subject.

Current Literature and Arguments

There is little consensus on what drives political participation and mobilization for Latinx folks, with some linking action to community value (Hardy-Fanta, 1995) and others considering

1 It is important to note that although this paper utilizes a gendered lens, the author recognizes the difference between sex, gender, and gender non-conformity and in no way is asserting the gender binary as compulsory. Rather, due to data limitations, the only substantive material available utilized the gender binary of male/female. Thus, the term "Latinx" is used to refer to the entire population; this term includes those within and outside of the gender binary.

the significance of an ethnic group-consciousness or national origin as a way to mobilize Latinx (DeSipio, 1996; Padilla, 1985) or interpersonal interactions (Michelson, 2005). Despite demonstrations that ethnic group-consciousness may be crucial to understanding the Latinx community and mobilizing them to political participation, the question remains how this ethnic identity and sense of group-consciousness develop (Barreto et. al, 2004; DeFrancesco-Soto, 2004; Leighley, 2001; Sanchez, 2006; Shaw, de la Garza, & Lee, 2000; Stokes, 2003; Uhlaner, Cain, & Kiewiet, 1989). Those who claim their ethnic identity as salient are more likely to be registered to vote, especially regarding racial policy issues, and participate for other Latino causes (Masuoka, 2008). Accordingly, the Latinx community turns out at higher rates when there is a Latinx candidate running, with those rates increasing more so when that candidate has unlocked the Latinx identity of their potential voters (Benajmin, 2017, Hanjal and Lee, 2011). Outside of candidates, there have been more recent revelations in regards to the context of an election, claiming elite mobilization, relational goods, and the explicit racial and/or ethnic context of a campaign and its candidates can facilitate higher rates of Latinx turnout (Benjamin, 2017, Hanjal and Trounstine, 2005), as can “go vote” campaigns, particularly when delivered from Latinx folks (Michelson, 2005). That is, identity and interpersonal interactions emerge as a theme of mobilizing the Latinx community.

I am studying Latinas because they face a multitude of racial, gendered, and cultural barriers to political participation, yet are the fastest growing demographic in Congress. Based on the existing literature, an intersectional framework is essential to understanding the relationship between Latinas and Latinx political participation. An intersectional analysis allows consideration for all of the various identities that may or may not affect how Latinas operate, such as gender and race. While minority groups are less likely to have high rates of political participation and efficacy, this is most dramatic for the Latinx and Asian communities (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba and Nie 1972; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Without understanding why these rates are so low, the Latinx political participation rates cannot be improved, and instead, will likely become further alienated from the political process. This, in addition to the large body of scholarship pointing out the disadvantages women in politics have, makes the political orientation around Latinas even more vital.

Latinas, in particular, have been identified as quintessential vessels to activating an ethnic identity and group consciousness (Hardy-Fanta, 1995). Latinas are in a rare position, facing what is called the “triple bind” of oppression: racism, sexism, and harmful cultural norms. It may be this triple bind of oppression that creates the unique Latina political identity, centering around selfless community development and progress, behind the scenes work, and not often traditionally political (Hardy-Fanta, 1995 Pardo, 1998)-thus the use of an intersectional approach. At the local level, Latinas operate differently than Latinos in the political sphere, and as women of color they operate differently than white women, some suggesting this conception of politics and community organizing being synonymous to a mindset unique to Latinas (Hardy-Fanta, 1995, Pardo, 1998). Latinas seem to participate in politics for their community, and similarly to other female political actors, they hold themselves accountable as responsible for the well being of their community (Dolan, 2016, Volden et. Al, 2013).

Just as the literature on what drives Latinx political participation

is diverse, equally mixed is the scholarship on which local election design serves the community best, let alone Latinas. Latinas appear to be key leaders in the Latinx community as forementioned, making it important to consider which system best enables them to be as active and efficient as possible. Part of this confusion stems back to the triple bind: do Latinas fall into the scholarship that says women excel in certain contexts or the scholarship that says people of color excel in other contexts? There are some intersectional analyzes, which draw on literature that predicts minorities to benefit from single-member designs and women do better in at-large systems. Yet, the results have often been inconclusive or insignificant, sometimes showing electoral systems to affect black men and white women but not Latinx, then sometimes claiming Latinx electoral design benefits/disadvantages seems to vary by region, but that other times districts depress turnout (Hanjal et. al, 2011, Lee, 2008, Hanjal et. al, 2005).

Additionally, the current arguments discussing the most effective electoral system for African American representation at the local level almost always include a population threshold as the first step for any sort of mobilization, participation, and representation (Hanjal et. al, Lee, 2008). This threshold number is often around 10% of the voting body, and North Carolina’s Latinx population is about 10% (U.S Census Bureau, 2017). While some counties have but a few Latinx folks, some double, triple, or quadruple that number. North Carolina’s varying Latinx population with an average of the accepted threshold for African American political incorporation in combination with its ranking as ninth in the fastest-growing state Latino population (Pew Research Center, 2016) create a prime platform for observance and analysis.

Theory and hypotheses

My theory focuses on the role of Latinas as community organizers. Based on the relevant literature, their presence in a community appears to catalyze group consciousness among Latinx people, which should increase political participation, particularly in the form of voter registration. Scholars have theorized more concentrated ethnic populations as being correlated to higher levels of political participation, but the question for this exploration considers whether or not gender may be a factor in that relationship. In operating as community organizers who focus on interpersonal connections and intimate interactions, Latinas seem to be in a position to unlock others’ ethnic identity and then, in continuing in their activism, facilitate a sense of linked-fate that results in an ethnic group consciousness. Latinos tend to gravitate towards more center stage political roles instead of community organizing, such as running for office. That being said, it is important to question whether it is Latina’s activism or activism in general that is linked to Latinx political participation. If Latinos are equally as involved in the community as Latinas, does the Latinx community feel equally inclined to participate? Beyond this, is it the activism of Latinas or their mere presence that is linked to Latinx political participation?

Thus, my theory aims to examine both the presence of Latinas via a population analysis and interviews with Latina activists. Now, after recognizing the how ethnic identity is linked to political participation, group consciousness often occurs as a result of realizing ethnic identity and leads to higher rates of political participation, such as voter registration, and the Latinx community is no exception. Essentially, Latinas may be a key element to unlocking the Latinx community’s ethnic identity and

overall group consciousness, whether it be due to their presence or activism. Ultimately, I predict that over the years of 2006-2016, if a county's Latinx population has demonstrated growth in Latina population, then there will be simultaneously increasing rates of Latinx voter registration.

While this theory is based upon Latinas being vital to Latinx political participation, it is important to consider the receptivity to participation from the chosen political venue, in this case-local elections. If there is an electoral design working against the community, how much does population and participation matter? Determining which electoral system the Latinx community is more receptive to and active within is the first step in discovering more about this increasingly influential community. The second step is determining why this is happening and regressions can only go so far. In order to really answer why Latinas may be linked to political participation and how activism is involved, I spoke to about ten Latinas in the state of North Carolina about their experiences as activists and community organizers.

My hypotheses are as follow:

H1: As the number of Latinas in a Latinx countywide population increases, then the Latinx countywide population of registered voters will increase in a decade-long time span.

H2: The number of Latinos in a Latinx countywide population should not affect the Latinx countywide population of registered voters over a decade.

H3: As the number of Latinas in a Latinx countywide population increase, then the Latinx countywide population of registered will increase as a result of the Latina increase.

H4: Single-member district systems are more likely than multi-member district systems to demonstrate a decade long positive relationship between the Latina population and the number of registered Latinx voters.

While these tests are intended to be helpful in providing more information about the Latinx community, it is crucial to include a more in-depth element as well: the interviews. Political Scientists have struggled to gain concrete knowledge on the Latinx community due to language barriers, misunderstanding cultural values, and pan ethnicity, to name a few. Thus, while statistical models are informative and telling, an interview dimension to this project is vital to gain a more holistic understanding of the Latinx community and Latinas role in political participation. As mentioned, interviews, collected from key Latina community organizers throughout North Carolina, will give a direct voice to the Latinx community and provide an opportunity for a deeper analysis of the results.

Interviews, in addition to a quantitative analysis, can provide a meaningful perspective to understanding and interpreting the significance of the data. Interpersonal interactions help answer the why and how of results, which is particularly vital in terms of the Latinx community within political science. Language and cultural differences can complicate attempts to examine various facets of the Latinx's community motivation for political participation. Furthermore, interviews seem to facilitate a more intersectional approach in that they allow the interviewee total freedom on what they say and provide the space to express themselves without the limits of non-free-response surveys and the like.

Methodology:

As for the hypotheses referring to voter registration increases

over time as related to the Latina population, these were tested in a variety of methods to differentiate correlation and causation. In order to understand the justification behind the methodology it is important to recognize the limitations of the data. That being said, the voter registration data has racial/ethnic limits in terms of labeling and identity. The current forms have a section for ethnicity, which provides two options of Hispanic/Latino and Not Hispanic/Latino. The racial categories include African American/Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Multiracial, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, White, and Other. Multiple Latinx scholars have suggested the diverse Latinx community struggles to adopt these identities, particular first-generation immigrants. Furthermore, the North Carolina Board of Elections has not always had the ethnic section, therefore resulting in potential registered Latinx voters who are misrepresented ethnically and possibly racially as well. Moreover, the ethnic section is not mandatory to complete to submit a voter registration form in North Carolina. While this observance is a limitation on the data, it is another example of the need for research on this community and an introductory explanation as to the contradictory scholarship on Latinx folks. Despite these limitations, voter registration is an effective number to track over time and provides a clear result for growth over time.

Initially, I ran multiple regressions to determine the exact correlation that the Latina and Latino populations had on voter registration over time. This included an OLS regression due to the continuance of the dependent variable, the Latina or Latino population, and was repeated for each population. These regression models were run twice: the former with averaged controls and the latter with median controls. The controls included socioeconomic status, derived of income and education attainment of a Bachelor's degree, the Latinx population, total population, and voting age population, of which were organized by county, in accordance with the rest of the data collection. All of the control data was pulled from the US Census Bureau's ACS 5-year estimates. Considering the 2006-2016 time frame for the data, implementing the controls by average of those ten years as well as the median of those ten years provides two different ways to analyze the data and validate the results. Next, I ran a Granger test of causality to determine, beyond correlation, the extent of the relationship between Latinas or Latinos and voter registration increase, decrease, or irrelevance. The Granger test was utilized as it is the strictest test of causality possible to determine if and how strongly a relationship exists.

Secondly, I utilized a geospatial program to create multiple maps of North Carolina during the first year of observance, the last year of observance, and the percent differences and/or growth over the ten year time span. These maps shifted per variable mentioned in each hypothesis and were analyzed by separate geographic classes of either town/city or county. The intention of these maps was to consider how for human information, particularly in relation to intersectional demographics such as ethnicity and gender, there are spatial patterns in the way humans are distributed. Displaying these patterns via maps can visualize these patterns in a way traditional statistical models cannot or may not be able to do as clearly. While a regression may be able to prove a relationship and causation between population, gender, and voter registration, these maps provide a more subtle and refined visualization of patterns otherwise potentially impossible to observe. The maps allow for a statewide all-inclusive county analysis to search for patterns by

varying geographic and cultural areas in North Carolina.

As for the interview element of the project, I collected ten in-depth interviews from various community organizers in the Triangle Area (Raleigh – Durham – Chapel Hill) in North Carolina. The Triangle Area was chosen as each area has varying Latinx population, Latinx voter registration, and varying history of Latinx political representatives. Raleigh has the lowest Latinx population and has never elected a Latinx candidate, nor has it had many Latinx candidates. Chapel Hill, on the other hand, has a moderate Latinx population, partially due to its proximity to small-town Carrboro, which has a relatively high Latinx population and Latinx elected officials. Chapel Hill has not had a Latinx representative since the 1970s, nor has it had many Latinx candidates. Durham, known once as the Black Wall Street of the south, has a thriving Black population and growing Latinx population. With its rich history of electing people of color, Durham has recently elected its first Latinx candidate to its city council. Overall, these areas are close enough in population and municipal structure to provide an equal comparison, but different enough to vary in community and narrative.

As for the individual interviews, I utilized a snowball technique to find interviewees, meaning I first met and spoke with community leaders I knew of, then asked them who they knew as a community organizer and if they could connect us. Snowballing the interviews allowed for a more organic networking process and often led to more comfortable conversations and a deeper understanding of Latinx community values and what community organizing means to Latinas. Each interview was recorded with an iPhone and written notes, but the questions were not standardized. Instead of having an ordered list of linear questions, I employed a subject map. That is, I broke my interview questions into topic areas and then asked the predetermined questions as we approached the corresponding topic. Using topic areas enabled the conversation to flow easier and more genuinely, but still provided an organized structure to keep the interviews consistent. The interviews were offered in English and Spanish and will be kept anonymous. Due to this anonymity, no specific demographic information of the interviews will be provided as to preserve privacy. The ages ranged from 20-50, all identifying as female, Latina, and a community organizer and/or activist.

Results and discussion

Some of the models utilized the change over time controls, with Table 3 demonstrating the positive relationship between the Latina population and Latinx voter registration. Table 3 provided more dramatic results, suggesting Latinas are somehow linked to Latinx political participation. The Latina population coefficient was statistically significant and positive, demonstrating a mutually increasing relationship between Latina population and voter registration over a ten-year period. A one-unit increase in Latinas results in a 0.01% increase in Latinx voter registration; more simply, an increase of one Latina person in a county leads to approximately a 0.01% increase in Latinx registered voters. Contrastingly, the Latino coefficient was negative, but also significant, showing an increase in the Latino population correlated to a decrease in Latinx voter registration. Plots 1 and 2 visualize the results, with Plot 1 showing little relationship between overall Latinx population and Latinx voter registration. Plot 2, on the other hand, compares the Latina population with Latinx voter registration and demonstrates

a positive relationship between the two.

As a result of the statistically significant positive coefficient for Latina population and Latinx voter registration per county in Table 3, a stricter test was needed to determine causality, hence the Granger test. Unlike regressions that test the correlation of a unit X on a unit Y, the Granger causality test goes both ways. That is, the statistical model tests both each unit's effects on the opposite unit to discover a more refined and stricter relationship of causation. Furthermore, the Granger causality test accounts for determining the cause prior to its effect. The results of the test suggest no relationship between the change in Latino population and the change in voter registration per county between 2006-2016. When applied to the Latina population, the coefficient remained positive and significant, establishing causation between the change in the Latina population and the change in voter registration over a decade. Similarly to Table 3, the Granger test produced a statistically significant 0.01% increase in the Latinx voter registration over time as in a strict causality relationship to increase in one Latina in the county's Latinx population. The positive coefficient represents a mutually increasing and potentially cyclic relationship between increases in the Latina population and increases in voter registration over time. The Granger test demonstrates robust support for the third hypothesis:

H3: As the number of Latinas in a Latinx countywide population increase, then the Latinx countywide population of registered will increase as a result of the Latina increase.

The second half of the quantitative analysis dealt with geospatial data to visualize some of the patterns the statistical models suggested. The maps were created using a bivariate choropleth, which enables simultaneous spatial coding of two variables, categorized from low to high. For example, Latinx voting age population may be coded as A (0-10%), B (11-20%), and C (21-30%) with Latinx percent registered to vote coded as 1 (0-10%), 2 (11-20%), and 3 (21-30%). Therefore, depending on county data, it may be labeled A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, and so on, deriving a total of nine classes per bivariate choropleth. These categories were created intrinsically via the geospatial program depending upon the variable's values. Due to each county's widely varying Latinx population, this program accounts for the most even distribution of each category per two variables.

These classes, such as A1, B2, or C3, were then given colors and various saturations to represent correlation of the variables. The color-code was based off of the lighter colors representing the lower correlations and darker colors representing the higher correlated counties. These color-coded classes serve as the map keys and as a geospatial graph. Similar to a graph, the bottom left corner of the key, color-coded white, is the overlap of the lowest classes for each variable. The middle square, a light purple, represents a moderate correlation between the variables, with the top left square holding the highest possible correlation between the variables. The top left square and bottom right square, again similar to a graph, represent the outliers. The top left square is colored dark pink and the bottom right is colored teal.

Figure A compares the Latinx voting-age population in a county to the percent of Latinx folks registered in said county during the year of 2006 to provide data on the state's status at the time regarding the two variables. This map illustrates a high amount of the pink-hued colors, establishing a multitude of areas with a high Latinx population, but low levels of voter registration. While some of the

rural areas on the borders of North Carolina are white, the color representing no to little correlation between the variables, many fall into the bottom row of classes, the lightest blue and teal colors. These colors demonstrate a correlation between low Latinx voting-age populations and high amounts of Latinx voter registration. This may be a result of the extraordinarily rural areas, having not only a low Latinx population, but a low overall population.

Figure B again compares the Latinx voting-age population in a county to the percent of Latinx folks registered in these counties, but this map visualizes the variables ten years later, in 2016. Figure B displays an increase in the darkest blue, the top right color, which represents the highest correlation between the variables. Multiple counties previously with a pink tone of high population and low voter registration transitioned to this dark blue, suggesting a certain population threshold may be connected to voter registration. The rural areas appear to have no trend when comparing snapshots the 2006 and 2016 data, presumably due to the low populations, particularly that of the Latinx community, in these areas.

The third map, Figure C, shows the change in percent Latinx voter registration by the total Latinx population increase between the years of 2006–2016. Essentially, the percentage for 2006 and 2016 is the actual count of the number of registered Latinx voters divided by the number of the Latinx voting age population, derived from native-born and naturalized citizens. Comparing this percentage of Latinx folks that are registered to the increase in Latinx voting population using nine separate classes provides visual clues to see if a large increase in the Latinx voting population will have an effect of the percent of Latinx registered voters. Figure C demonstrates the most correlation of the bivariate choropleth, with a significant amount of dark blue and light purple areas.

Figures D and E provide a gendered lens of the geospatial data, with Figure D examining how a change over ten years in the Latina population may be related to a change in Latinx voter registration. Figure E similarly compares a change in the Latino population to a change in Latinx voter registration. Building upon the trends laid out in these maps, Figure F includes a second key of either a triangle or circle shape that represents various randomized municipalities local electoral system design, being either single or multi-member systems. Figure F allows for an investigation of areas with significant Latinx voter registration growth over time and if this growth occurred most often under a certain electoral system. Correspondingly, Figure G compares areas with high correlation of Latinas and Latinx registered voters to electoral design, as does Figure H but for the Latino population. Referring back to the latter hypotheses regarding electoral system:

H4: Single-member district systems are more likely than multi-member district systems to demonstrate a decade long positive relationship between the Latina population and the number of registered Latinx voters.

It is unclear how related electoral system design at the local level may be to Latinx political participation, at least in terms of voter registration. A deeper analysis is needed to determine a relationship, as no pattern was suggested by the geospatial data as expected. Of the approximately 150 municipalities randomly collected, a significant amount was at-large systems due to North Carolina municipalities being overwhelmingly at-large, which is important to distinguish the quantity of the electoral design affecting the results. A more equal distribution of the district/ward systems is needed to effectively assess any potential trends.

While the quantitative element of the project suggests support of the theory, the interviews must be considered in order to understand why the Latina population coefficient was statistically significant and positive. I have organized the interviews into topics and then topic-areas: Actions and Challenges. The interviews provided clarity on some subjects and conflicting opinions on others. Overall, the vitality of including the Latina voice in this project cannot be understated. Without individual narratives, statistics are nothing but numbers. These interviews allow a more nuanced understanding of the how and why, rather than the what.

Actions: Community/family

One of the most common themes throughout the interviews when discussing why and how the interviewees became involved in community organizing was community and family. Beyond this, multiple interviewees explicitly emphasized the universality of community and family being an important, albeit obvious, part of the Latinx community. In considering the diversity of the Latinx community, family values appeared as a common thread. When asked why she had run for local office, one respondent stated,

“(I was) mainly thinking how can I really support the community; it’s about giving back but more than that it’s about working together, as commerce and immigrants. Which tools do we need to be an active and positive part of the community? Everybody has different culture; we are very family-oriented, trust is important, and thinking about working with a community and what we need to know... It’s not only important to speak the language, but to know the culture.”

Even more explicitly, another activist commented that she “want(ed) to be a good mother for my daughter.” Whether it be for the community at-large or immediate community of family, both serve as deeply personal motivations for becoming involved in activism. Another young activist, in the midst of explaining how she was unexpectedly starting a non-profit that aimed to warn folks of ICE raids reiterated this theme, explaining,

“For me it’s always been about the people. How do I support my community and protect my community and make the voices of people who aren’t being heard heard? How do I do that and balance not being the one person everyone turns to?”

While this activist struggled with providing help but also providing for herself, another commented on the importance of the community in political reality. She had served as the only Latina on a town council and remembered the difficulty of maintaining community support in her journey to help her community,

“You can’t do politics alone. You have to have the voters behind you, at least in our democratic representative system, where you have eight council members and a mayor, I was one vote and I needed five. I had to have people out there watching and writing and reacting.”

She had entered politics for her community, but needed them to maintain success. The community appears to both motivate and sustain Latina activism and possibly political representation.

Actions: Representation and Gender

Of the interviewees, a couple had run for office and others had previously served in local capacities. In discussing either their experience as a representative or motivation for doing so, accountability was mentioned continually. One activist discussed representation as a next level in her community organizing,

implying there was a limit to the influence of her activism and in order to provide for her community to the fullest of her ability, being a representative may be necessary. Another emphasized that the community was vital to hold representatives accountable,

“If you don’t help me hold us accountable, it won’t happen, so I had to stay really grounded and say I’m not speaking just as redacted, but these people out here, the ones who elected me. And a lot of the people who were counting on me can’t vote yet. I did try to represent not just the people who voted for me, but everybody that I felt needed to be represent.”

When it comes to women in politics and running for office in particular, women reference this idea of accountability more than their male counterparts (Dolan, 2018). Women tend to run to serve their community and feel more linked to their community than men, who run for status and power (Dolan, 2018). Latinas reinforce this, but also seem to have a dual accountability beyond accountability to the public, but also accountability by the public. Some seem to feel held responsible to the Latinx community, as one interviewee noted,

“We need to be able to be the voices for those that can’t up for themselves and for those that can we work together”

And others reiterate the gendered differences within the Latinx community:

“I’ve noticed that women tend to show up more than men to do work and contribute to the cause. Men, to not sound harsh, tend to show up for the “bigger” events, where they can act as though they were a part of the entire effort and initiative. However, women have been more inclined to lean in and do the dirty, ‘boring,’ work that people don’t really want to do.”

“Sadly, I think Latinas and Latinos differ greatly in regards to politics as I don’t feel they are heavily involved and choose not to run, vote, or volunteer as much as other groups.”

These above quotes capture the idea of community organizing being gendered, and thus Latinas in particular being the key to Latinx political participation. That being said, it is also important to keep in mind how Latinx culture may have unique gender dynamics, as one interview mentioned:

“I think that Latinos tend to run for office more, while Latinas will vote, volunteer, and help more. I think this in large part comes from the machismo culture that often is associated with Latinx communities. This, in essence, means that the men are in charge and women should be submissive. This can carry over to politics, where Latinos will run for office in order to stay in charge, while women will stay submissive and stay in the background.”

Challenges: Fear and mistrust

Another theme that continued to come up throughout these interviews was the concept of trust, or lack thereof. Whether it was in reference to running for office, voting, or non-profits, trust seems to be a huge part of engaging, or disengaging, the Latinx community. Trust was noted as quintessential to more than turnout and community organizing,

“We have to meet people where they are and the way we meet them where we are is we have to understand what each race is dealing with. Speaking from the Latino community, fear is huge. The fact that some of us as parents, we just want to have food on the table and not being able to get a driver’s license? It’s a huge impact in our community because we have a lot of parents where all they’re trying to do is get from point A to point B, being from work to home, in order to provide for stability to their family. Not knowing

where the police department stands when it comes to us: is there really a relationship, are they providing information, what are they doing in general to take care of their residents in here. So, some of the issues are safety, safety is huge, housing is huge.”

Without trust, there cannot be a conversation of political participation. Registering to vote comes second to providing food for your family; before jumping to wondering why the Latinx community is not registered to vote at higher rates, it is vital to understand other priorities and basic survival needs. Others linked this mistrust to documentation,

“For a lot of our community members, there is still a barrier of language and knowledge of the system. It’s not a secret that we have a lot of people without documents and they can’t trust everybody.”

And some noted the delicacy and complexity of this trust,

“I definitely think trust plays a lot with the Latinx population’s involvement in politics. Even among family and close friend situations, trust plays a humongous role in how we operate. If someone betrays that trust, which is also very hard to come by, then it’s a huge deal and can be equivalent to a slap to the face.”

Challenges: Language

One of the most interesting results of the interviews was the conflicting opinions on the language barrier. Some scholars have suggested that the lack of Spanish has kept the Latinx community in the dark and encouraged more bilingual resources in political venues. Almost all of the interviews agreed, emphasizing the importance of language resources. They acknowledged the prevalence of Spanish in the Latinx community as another value, like community and family, which linked quite a few of the various groups together. One interviewee who had served on city council said that Spanish was one of the most important skills she brought to her community, as she was a sort of personal translator for folks who otherwise had no resources due to the language barrier.

Yet, one interviewee claimed,

“I’m sure there are people who would benefit from having a better understanding of what is going on. However, we live in a country where English is the official language and in a world that often uses English as its official language. It is difficult (time consuming and expensive) to translate everything. I’m not sure how to gauge the value of language services versus other things. I would focus on putting money into understanding community needs not necessarily focusing on language.”

This interviewee demonstrates a key characteristic of the Latinx community in general: they are not homogenous. Cubans are not Peruvians and Mexicans are not Honduran. There is huge difference in culture, even language (re: vernacular), and value within the Latinx community. This leads us to yet another challenge: misunderstanding.

Challenges: Misunderstanding

While this may seem obviously linguistic, misunderstanding the Latinx community is often born out of a generalization, especially by the political science community. For example, in asking respondents to clarify race and ethnicity, some answered with Latina for both, some did not put Latina for either, with some putting Latina for race and others, for ethnicity. The point of this is that scholars are creating identity labels and definitions without asking those of that identity what they even mean. I had one interviewee exclaim she had never considered herself a Latina before coming to the United States,

“In Columbia, I was Colombian, it wasn’t until I came here I had to say I was Latina or Hispanic. I think it’s more, because now we’re seeing second-generation in our area, and it’s more that you become a Hispanic, or Latina/o when you come here. I don’t think it’s bad or good, but I think we need to continue to inform people about the diversity. A majority feels everybody is from Mexico.”

Another shared,

“Yes. I was born in El Salvador and immigrated when I was 4. My parents are immigrants also but were not educated in the U.S. I was educated in the U.S. There are two generations there. Then, my cousins who were born in the U.S. — they have a different perspective on being Latinx. Latinx is NOT synonymous with immigrant. All communities and generations bring rich perspectives.”

One important takeaway from these quotes is that in order to understand identity within the Latinx community, we must first listen before we label. Without listening to what Latinas connote with Latinx and Hispanic, political scientists will not be able to accurately understand the community in general, let alone when it comes to political participation. One interviewee questioned the use of Latinx in general,

“Latin America is a very large geographic region with 33 countries. I think it is a mistake to assume that the entire community feels one-way-or-another about anything.”

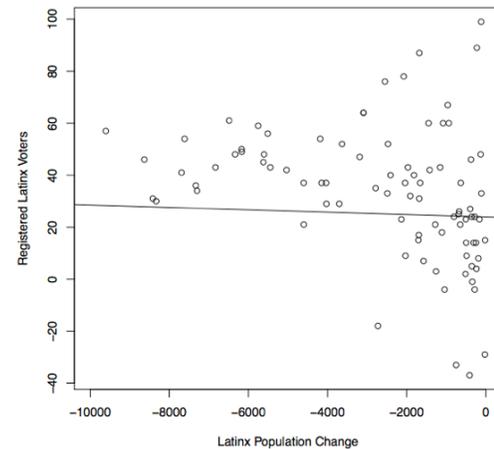
Conclusion and Future Intentions

Regression tests, the Granger test, and geospatial patterns suggested strong support for the theory of Latinas being key to Latinx political participation. The constant finding of an increase in the Latina population leading to an increase in Latinx voter registration is notable. Latinas appear to be both a necessary and sufficient condition to Latinx voter registration. Furthermore, the lack of a relationship between the Latino population and voter registration calls for a reevaluation of prior theories that suggest a population threshold is needed for political participation within various racial and ethnic groups. While electoral system appears to be unrelated, an analysis with a more balanced dataset and controls for population density would result in a more accurate evaluation of the relationship or lack thereof between the Latinx community and local electoral systems.

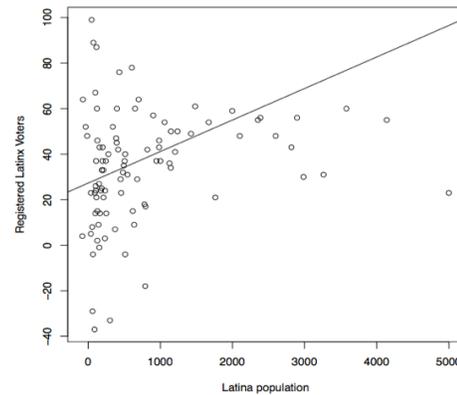
The interviews helped to provide a more clear picture into why these numbers are not only statistically significant, but culturally and politically significant as well. The interviews recognized potential actions and the corresponding motivations that led to Latina community organizing and Latinx political participation, as well as what continues to be challenging about these experiences. These findings suggest certain community members are more important than others in affecting political participation and in terms of source cues, as possibly connected to community organizing and the importance of community, as the interviewees demonstrated.

The interviews also strengthen the notion that listening to the Latinx community is a vital element of thorough research on the Latinx community. Whether it be due to the size, scope, documentation, language, none of the above, or a combination of the above, without listening to the people of a community, it is impossible to accurately assess their political participation. Moving forward, scholars should be considerate of giving a voice to the Latinx community, especially Latinas.

Appendix:



Plot 1



Plot 2

TABLE 3. CHANGE IN LATINA VOTER REGISTRATION, 2006-2016

Dependent variable: Change in Latina Voter Registration, 2006-2016	
	Percent DV/100
Latina Population Change	0.019*** (0.003)
Latino Population Change	-0.013*** (0.005)
Constant	34.509*** (2.616)
Observations	100
R ²	0.106
Adjusted R ²	0.087
Residual Std. Error	23.643 (df = 97)
F Statistic	5.723*** (df = 2; 97)

Table 3

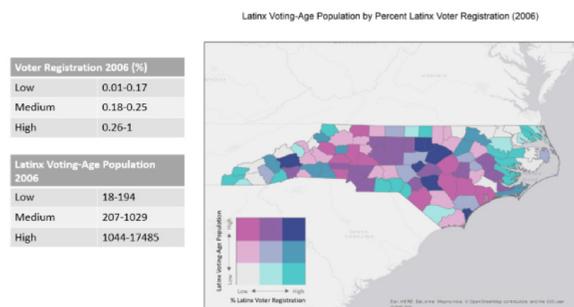


Figure A

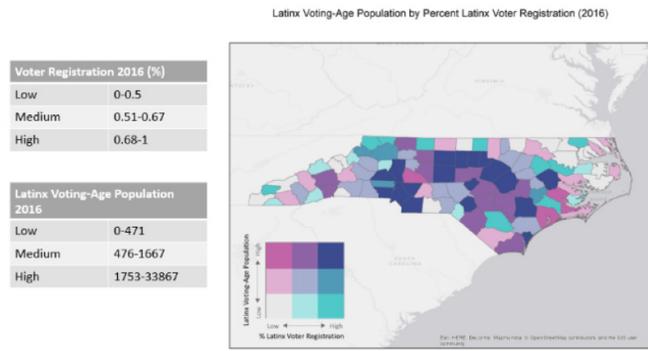


Figure B

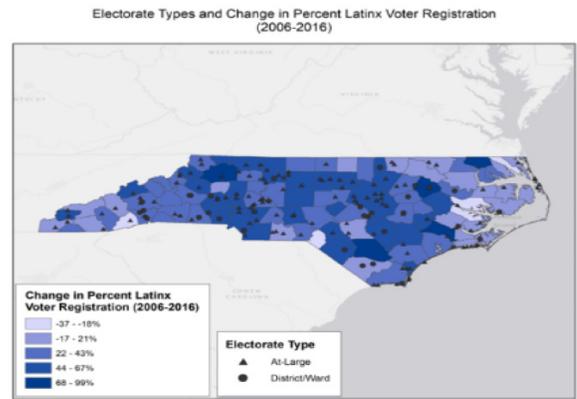


Figure F

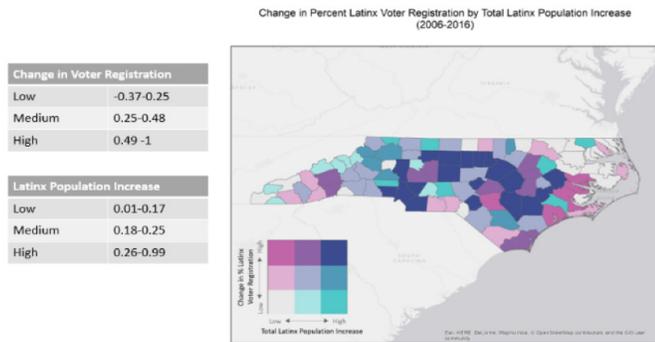


Figure C

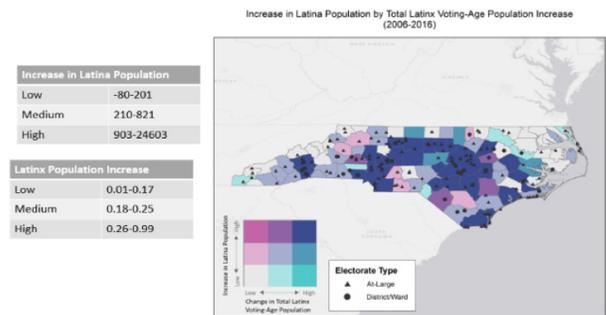


Figure G

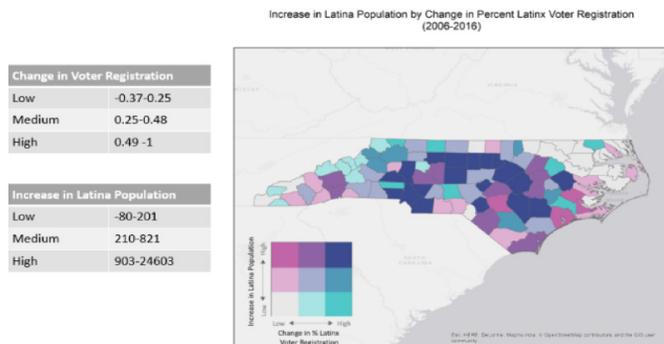


Figure D

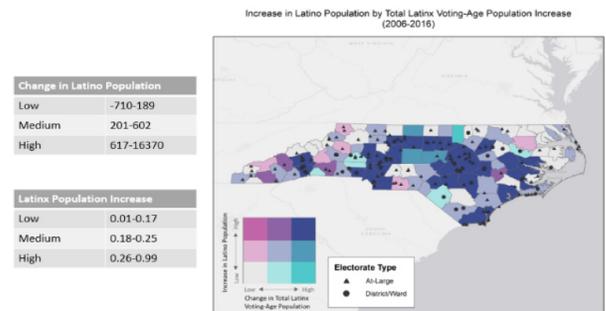


Figure H

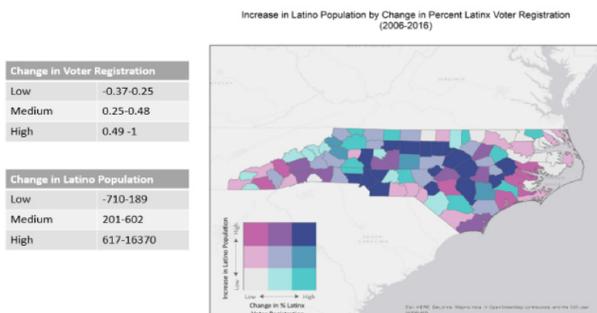


Figure E

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It's the Gift That Counts: An Analysis of Gift-Giving in Mendicant Missions to the Mongols

by Catherine Blake-Harris

This paper examines a clash of civilization between the Mongol East and Catholic West. In an analysis of the gift-giving incidents in three separate accounts, said cultural clash will be examined through the eyes of those papal envoys and mendicants who sought to reach out to a new force sweeping onto the stage of European history. By choosing to examine gift giving within the context of diplomatic efforts directed at bringing the Mongols into the Catholic fold, securing powerful alliances, or securing souls for Christianity, light is shed on a largely unanalyzed section of history. I examine first in chronological order primary source accounts from John of Plano Carpini, first papal emissary to the Mongols who trekked across much of the known world to connect with and dispel rumors about the Mongols. Second, I turn to a section of the primary account of the life of Louis IX of France by Jean de Joinville, where a mission to the Mongols by Andrew of Longjumeau, brought big gifts but few hoped-for gains. Finally, I turn to William of Rubruck's account of his journey to the Mongols as a disputed missionary or papal emissary. All three accounts represent breakdowns in communication between very different societies, each believing themselves superior and each believing the other would submit themselves to their rule because of differing interpretations of cultural gift-giving practices.

Keywords: gift-giving, Mongols, William of Rubruck, John of Plano Carpini, diplomacy

Introduction

Writing in the 1290s, Riccoldo of Montecroce, an Italian Dominican friar, wrote that “The Mongols believed that they were the true masters of the world, and that the whole world had been created for their enjoyment and was under an obligation to present them with tribute and gifts.”¹ Half a century before, this certainty about the Mongol view of a world-empire was not understood by Europeans. In 1246, two unlikely world leaders were in the midst of an unorthodox and unforeseen correspondence, namely Guyuk Khan, newly elected leader of the Mongol Empire, and Pope Innocent IV of the Catholic Church. Innocent IV had sent the first missives in the form of two papal bulls, carried by a mendicant emissary, addressed to a man he presumed was an eastern Christian ruler. The pope called for the khan to cease the killing of his “fellow” Christians in order to avoid the wrath of God, much akin to those who he dealt with in Western Europe and under his spiritual jurisdiction, or so he believed². Guyuk's reply was as brash as it was characteristic of

Mongol beliefs about their own supremacy. Writing to the man whose role was to act as Christ's earthly representative, who had the power to call crusades and excommunicate kings, Guyuk declared “How knowest thou whom God absolves, in truth to whom he shows mercy? How dost thou know that such works as thou speakest are with God's sanction? From the rising of the sun to its setting, all the lands have been made subject to me. Who could do this contrary to the command of God?”³

A number of questions arise from this small excerpt from a longer letter in which Guyuk demanded Innocent's submission. How could a diplomatic mission between two giants of the 13th century happen when they were so far-flung and disconnected? How did these two powerful figures and their respective cultures so

IV Addressed to the Emperor of the Tartars”. In *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, 74.

3 Christopher Dawson, “Guyuk Khan's Letter to Pope Innocent IV (1246).” In *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 85.

1 Peter Jackson, . *The Mongols and the West, 1221-1410* (Harlow, England ; New York: Pearson Longman, 2005), 184.

2 Christopher Dawson, “Two Bulls of Pope Innocent

misunderstand each other that diplomatic efforts were hamstrung seemingly from the get-go? What were the intentions of the envoys who facilitated this discourse and were principally responsible for it? How did they differ based on who sent them and their sponsor's goals? Did Mongol definitions of peace preclude alliance or diplomacy? The Mongols demanded gifts as part of diplomacy yet often saw them as a token of peaceful submission rather than only an offering from those who came in peace.⁴ What was the meaning of gifts to the Mongols in diplomacy and what did gifts mean to European envoys? Could gifts have facilitated diplomacy better or were efforts predestined to wreck on cultural preconceptions from their inception, with gifts acting as a potential space for connection and communication but leading to misunderstanding?

In a review and analysis of the primary accounts of John of Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck, as well as an excerpted episode detailed by Louis IX's biographer John de Joinville, gifts and gift giving play a central role in European experiences with the Mongols, especially as a symbol of diplomatic good faith and peace. The three encounters discussed here are emblematic of the cultural disconnect experienced in the inaugural years of Mongol-Western interaction where different idea about peace, gifts, and diplomacy created a cultural clash in communication after the initial conflict. However, it is important to note that these accounts come down to us removed by several degrees from actual events, and should thus be treated as being seen through a European cultural filter.

The Mongol relationship with Western Christendom was defined by the traditions both parties brought to the table. Particularly important was the process of gift-giving, rather than the usual gift exchange, which operated as a new facet of conquest and submission after the initial period of conflict between the Mongols and the West. As John of Plano Carpini observed during his mission to the Mongols on behalf of Pope Innocent IV, "The Tartars never make peace except with those who submit to them."⁵ The selected religious envoys found this aspect hard to balance with their own orders' expectations of a life of poverty; consequently, because of their status, religious envoys were incompatible with the expectations of Mongol diplomacy, which emphasized gifts and tribute. The idea of gift-giving in diplomatic efforts directed at the Mongols has not been well largely analyzed. The majority of works on the subject touch on the facts that all subjugates and envoys brought gifts to the khans and mention the efforts of John of Plano Carpini, Louis IX, and William of Rubruck. Peter Jackson in his book *The Mongols and the West, 1221-1410*, writes about "the Mongols' sense of their own superiority ... [and the fact that] they regarded all Westerners as future subjects. And early Latin visitors leave us in no doubt that their Mongol hosts held them in the greatest contempt... because they were members of Mendicant Orders, who were devoted to poverty and abstinence, who brought only meagre gifts for the qaghan."⁶ This is the most attention given to the connection between diplomacy, mendicants, and gifts. Amanda Powers also turned her attention

to the topic in her article "Going among the infidels: the mendicant orders and Louis IX's first Mediterranean campaign," focusing on the journey of William of Rubruck, a monk dedicated to vows of poverty and roaming evangelism. She touches on the experiences of Andrew of Longmejeau and the ornate tent sent by Louis IX. Powers notes that the mendicants "employed standard strategies of diplomacy and debate"⁷ but does not discuss gifts as an experience or diplomatic paraphernalia besides a section about the chapel as a diplomatic gift. Christopher Dawson's work *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* is also of use when examining this topic, as a collection of primary sources with commentary and introduction. He focuses on the translated experiences of John of Plano Carpini William of Rubruck, among others and gift-giving runs throughout the primary narratives. Lars Kjær and A. J. Watson note in their European-focused "Feasts and gifts: sharing food in the middle ages" that "'Loyalty is venison' ran the motto of the Danish king Frederik II,"⁸ an idea that was true and familiar to all Europeans for centuries before according to their own analysis, and one that certainly extended to Mongol practices as can be seen in the primary accounts that will be examined later. Yet, there is no seminal or definitive work discussing gifts in the Mongol world in regards to diplomacy, much less one taking a deep dive into religious diplomacy at this time with the Crusades as a background. I use the works of Neil Murphy's *Ceremonial Entries, Municipal Liberties and the Negotiation of Power in Valois France, 1328-1589* to give context to what Europeans would have expected from gift exchanges, namely that it established a reciprocal relationship between ruler and ruled, and pressuring the ruler to accede to requests, while the Mongols, as perceived from the examined accounts, saw entrance into the Pax Mongolica as enough of a gift. Similarly, Felicity Heal's *The Power of Gifts*, is useful for cross cultural reference; she remarks on the mutual obligation that gifts created for early modern rulers and notes that generosity on the part of the ruler was more valued sometimes than the gift by the subject, an idea that runs counter to the earlier experiences discussed in the primary sources.

My work delves deeper into the specifics surrounding gift-giving as an aspect of diplomatic encounters between the Latin West and the Mongols, with the hope of building on the broader works of previous historians, and placing gift-giving in the context of both culture's views and practices of diplomacy. I conclude that Mongol-papal diplomacy could not get off the ground because of cultural beliefs and holdings that prevented peace or could not recognize equality in negotiations, only supremacy, no matter the quality of gifts given by these envoys from the West in the period from 1245-1255.

If one wishes to understand the Mongol diplomatic interactions, it is necessary to understand their perspective when it came to their view of others and their place in the world. In their quest to take their rightful inheritance of the world, the Mongols reached

4 Peter Jackson. *The Mongols and the West, 1221-1410*, 90.

5 Christopher Dawson, "History of the Mongols by John of Plano Carpini." In *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 184.

6 Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221-1410*, 126.

7 Amanda Powers. "Going among the Infidels: The Mendicant Orders and Louis IX's First Mediterranean Campaign." *Mediterranean Historical Review* 25, no. 2 (2010), 187.

8 Lars Kjær, and A. J. Watson. "Feasts and Gifts: Sharing Food in the Middle Ages."

the furthest frontiers of the West in 1241. The Mongols crushingly defeated Georgia and Hungary, both Christian kingdoms, on the battlefield⁹. Confusion struck with them, as reports coming out of this area and this skirmishing were increasingly distorted as they came from a wide variety of sources with little certainty about who the attackers were or why they chose to descend on Europe.¹⁰ Adding to the confusion were “prophecies current in the crusading army, regarding the simultaneous arrival of Christian monarchs from East and West and the downfall of Islam” which the Mongols used to their advantage in war.¹¹ Yet, the Mongols receded back to their domains as a result of dynastic dispute, laying the way for even more confusion as the Mongols left as soon as they had come, disappearing like mist. But the idea of the Mongol forces as a Christian force out of the east coming to the aid of the Latin Christians remained, and with this tantalizing concept, Pope Innocent IV began to send out religious envoys to these supposedly lost sheep of Christendom to “make fully known to us through [them] what [the Mongol] intentions are for the future,”¹² not knowing the danger that lurked like wolves for those on their way.

I: The Path to Mongolia Is Paved with Good Intentions

This section analyzes the encounter of John of Plano Carpini with the Mongols as a papal envoy from 1245-1247 as detailed in his brief to Pope Innocent IV after his return. An inaugural member of the Franciscan order, John would also be the first Western envoy sent to treat with the Mongols on behalf of the pope and to secure valuable information about their lifestyle and warfare to be used in the event of another invasion. Because of his status as a mendicant friar, John found himself in a difficult situation because of the emphasis on and great desire for gifts that the Mongols associated with diplomacy, a situation that put his role as poor brother and religious envoy at odds. This pioneering encounter set the tone for future Mongol-Papal interactions, highlighting the cultural disconnect of diplomatic efforts.

In the spring of 1245, John of Plano Carpini found himself on the precipice of the unknown. The Franciscan friar headed a papal mission to the newest threat to Europe—the Mongols. Uncertainty shrouded the mission; after all, Friar John’s mission sought to discover the true nature of this new menace, because European reports were increasingly distorted. They believed the Mongols might be the mythical Prester John, come to aid them in their struggle against the Muslims in the Crusades, or perhaps they were instead the killers of Prester John. Perhaps, they were harbingers of God’s wrath and destruction on the people of Europe for their sins and a sure sign that the end days were upon them, or even a representation of the coming of the Antichrist. Over the

course of his two year journey, John of Plano Carpini discovered the Mongol desire for a world-empire, one where peace meant subjugation or surrender and one where the universal mission was not Catholicism but rather conquest. Friar John found himself at a crossroads between two defining ideologies and empires, between two rulers, pope and khan, who saw themselves as universal rulers, and between his two roles, as mendicant and diplomat, one requiring impoverishment and scarcity and the other, gifts and gaudiness.¹³

John of Plano Carpini’s unpreparedness for this mission cannot be overstated. His mission to the “Tartars” of the oriental nations under the command of the Apostolic See aimed to collect information about the recent scourge visited on the eastern reaches of Europe. He also hoped to discover a new mighty, Christian ally, yet this meant he went into a challenging situation almost completely blind.¹⁴ This difficulty arose out of a lingual and cultural disconnect for “in the Mongols’ vocabulary...the terms for ‘peace’ and ‘subjection’ were identical.”¹⁵ Following this line of Mongol thinking, John of Plano Carpini’s mission had come to offer the submission of Innocent IV to the khan, not as a fact-finding mission or to seek potential allies, a fact which muddled the waters for the remainder of the encounter.

Carpini’s mission had been warned by Mongol vassals early on of the necessity of presenting presents in order to treat with the Mongols with whom the friar came into contact. As he travelled from Lyon to Mongolia and passed through Kiev, Carpini wrote that:

[The Duke of Russia] told us that if we wished to go to them we ought to have valuable gifts to present to them...if they were not given them...an envoy could not properly fulfill his mission, nay rather he would be held of no account. We did not wish the business of the Lord Pope to be hidden and the Church to be hindered on that score, so out of the money which had been given to us as alms to help us on our way so that we should not be in want, we bought some beaver pelts and also the skins of various other animals.¹⁶

Here appears the first instance in John of Plano Carpini’s account of the difficulties of the duality of the friar’s roles. The unpreparedness of the mission came not only from the fact that they were the first of their kind to travel to the great unknown of Asia on such a mission but also in their religious character. A man who had taken vows of poverty, and whose order nor patriarch had sent the necessary accoutrements nor provided sufficient monies to purchase the very same, found his mission at the least committing

9 Ibid, 47.

10 Christopher Dawson, *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), xiv.

11 Peter Jackson, . *The Mongols and the West, 1221-1410*, 48.

12 Christopher Dawson, “Two Bulls of Pope Innocent IV Addressed to the Emperor of the Tartars”. In *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, 74.

13 Peter Jackson, . *The Mongols and the West, 1221-1410*.

14 Christopher Dawson, “History of the Mongols by John of Plano Carpini.” In *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 3.

15 Peter Jackson, . *The Mongols and the West, 1221-1410*, 90.

16 Christopher Dawson. “History of the Mongols by John of Plano Carpini.”, 51.

a diplomatic faux-pas and at worst negating the potential power of the whole assignment. It is interesting to note that a biblical precedent existed for the use of gifts to curry royal favor. As noted by Neil Murphy, “Melchizedek offered gifts of bread and wine to Abraham while Abigail offered David gifts of food and wine to win his favor.”¹⁷ Innocent IV would have assumed that the prestige of being representatives of the Vicar of Christ would be enough to carry his emissaries to the highest echelons of Mongol leadership but temporal desires far outweighed spiritual clout for the Mongols. As seen, this was first occurrence of the necessary shedding of the more monastic nature of the papal mission in order that provision could be made for the purchase of the all-important gifts.

According to Carpini’s observations concerning the cultural practices of the Mongols, “from whatever quarter envoys come to him bearing tributes, they have likewise to be provided with horses, carts and supplies. Envoys who come for any other reason, however, are in a most unhappy position as regards both food and clothing, for poor and inadequate provision is made for them.”¹⁸ His own experience shines through here, for by the time Carpini and his compatriots had managed to reach the kurultai at Karakorum, they found themselves in the unenviable position of having run out of gifts before they could present themselves and their aims before the new great khan. At every stop along their trip, each new Mongol commander had proved intractable in allowing them to travel farther without the presentation of sufficient gifts, meaning that the presents bought with charitable donations in Russia were long since spent. Europeans were used to treating with fellow Western Christians or the Muslim Levant but, as Amanda Power observes, “the Mongols had gaudier tastes. They liked display and lavish gifts.”¹⁹ In his account of his travels, Carpini himself recounts that envoys, and even the rulers they represented, were bound by necessity to “give substantial presents both to the chiefs and their wives and to the captains of a thousand and the captains of a hundred; indeed, it is the general rule for all, even the slaves, to pester them with requests for gifts.”²⁰ This practice of gifts to curry favor and facilitate diplomatic discussion grew reciprocally as the rank of the receiving party of the diplomats increased.

Friar John’s mission came at a crucial time for the Mongols, as a new khan named Güyük had just been elected. The desire to have these envoys of the Frankish power present at the enthronement acted to speed the process of their trip onwards into the heart of the Mongol empire, because of the Mongol cultural standard that

as a diplomatic mission of peace, they were there to submit and pay the pope’s homage to the new khan.²¹ When it came time for them to be presented before Güyük Khan to deliver the pope’s démarche about Christianity and warring against the khan’s supposed fellow Christians, John of Plano Carpini recounts that, “When we arrived at the orda, his steward, who is called Eldegai, asked us with what we wished to bow, that is to say what gifts we were ready to give. I gave the same answer ... that the Lord Pope had not sent any presents, but we wished to honor him as well as we could from among those things which, by the grace of God and the Lord Pope, we had with us for our needs.”²² Here lies the crux of the diplomatic disconnect between the two parties in the above phrase “with what we wished to bow.” Gifts came as an access card to proceeding any further with diplomatic missions and aims for the Mongols. If a diplomat hoped to have dialogue take place, their favor had to be bought and secured, especially any dialogue beyond the initial submit-for-peace discourse. This should not have been an unfamiliar concept to the European envoys, as noted by Neil Murphy, in France, “gift giving [by] urban administrations used the act to oblige the monarch to grant their petitions.”²³ According to John’s observations, other emissaries from other Mongol domains or those who bordered the empire had come more prepared and offered, as is detailed in a page long account, “gifts of silk, samite, velvet, brocade, girdles of silk threaded with gold, choice furs, and other presents.”²⁴ The papal envoys paid the price of their unwitting unpreparedness and uncovered that a relation to the head of the universal Christian church gained one little headway without following the diplomatic protocol of gift-giving.

John of Plano Carpini and his company were left to languish before they received a reply to the papal bulls because of their pauper’s status and due to the fact “the qaghan was affronted that the embassy had brought no gifts; immediately following his enthronement, the friars’ rations were reduced.”²⁵ According to early modern and medieval diplomatic and gift-giving standards, “gifts constructed an inescapable debt to be paid by the sovereign recipient...men value what they choose to give.”²⁶ This shows that as they had brought no gifts, the khan did not see himself as under any obligation to show them the respect they had failed to give him by providing a gift nor provide sufficient sustenance. When Güyük Khan’s reply to the papal demarches finally came, it scourged the West’s view and practice of Christianity, a biting and diatribe of Innocent IV’s conception of Christianity.²⁷ The end

17 Neil Murphy. “Petitioning the King.” In *Ceremonial Entries, Municipal Liberties and the Negotiation of Power in Valois France, 1328-1589*, 75–127. Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2016, 96.

18 Ibid, 27.

19 Amanda Powers. “Going among the Infidels: The Mendicant Orders and Louis IX’s First Mediterranean Campaign.” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 25, no. 2 (2010).

20 Christopher Dawson. “History of the Mongols by John of Plano Carpini.”, 39.

21 Igor de Rachewiltz., *Papal Envoys to the Great Khans*, Stanford University Press, 1971, 96.

22 Christopher Dawson. “History of the Mongols by John of Plano Carpini.”, 56.

23 Neil Murphy. “Petitioning the King.” In *Ceremonial Entries, Municipal Liberties and the Negotiation of Power in Valois France, 1328-1589*, 75–127. Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2016, 99.

24 Ibid.

25 Peter Jackson. *The Mongols and the West, 1221-1410*. Harlow, England ; New York: Pearson Longman, 2005, 90.

26 Felicity Heal. *The Power of Gifts : Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England*. Oxford, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014, 4.

27 Christopher Dawson. “Güyük Khan’s Letter to Pope Innocent IV.” In *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries.*, 85–88. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955.

to this encounter showed that Mongol diplomacy would be one-sided in their own favor for this period, a fact that no amount of presents could fix, for peace with the Mongol Empire could only come as a result of a suzerain-subject relationship, a yoke the Latin West could not and would not acquiesce to. However, Friar John of Plano Carpini's account filtered back to Europe and out to different domains, and with it came his accounts and experiences to influence and inform subsequent missions to the Mongols, as well as give a guide to stopping them should further invasion ever come.²⁸

II : Big Tent Revival

This section analyzes the circumstances surrounding Louis IX's gift of a resplendent and ecclesiastical tent to the Mongols with the goal of either mass conversion or targeted conversion with the khan and his immediate retinue in mind, though the primary source leaves this open to interpretation. Taking place about four years after the completion of John of Plano Carpini's mission, this incident expands on the importance of gifts in opening diplomatic avenues and dialogue with the Mongols that he encountered and recounted. It also follows the significance of gift-giving by diplomatic envoys as a symbol of the ideas of peace and submission, which were one and the same to the Mongols. Recounted by Louis IX's biographer John de Joinville, this analysis of the tent will be set between the two accounts by the holy fathers, John of Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck, as an intermediary phase of relations where both sides were hopeful that the other would fall in line with ideology and alliance.

In 1284 in Cyprus, a mirage of alliance and fellowship appeared from the East to Louis IX of France. It came in the form of ambassadors from the mighty Mongol empire, bearing the gift of proposed friendship and collaboration. The assistance promised by these envoys was the proffering of the Mongol armies to crush a common Franco-Mongol enemy—the Mamelukes—and the liberation of Jerusalem. This was a longed for prospect for any Christian king, much less the paragon Louis Capet. The potential conversion of the Tartars and/or their leader was a great hope, as it came with the double prospect of the deliverance of the Holy Land and the potential to mend Western and Eastern Christianity.²⁹ It was with these goals in mind that Louis IX sent ambassadors back to the “King of the Tartars” with “a tent made in the form of a chapel, which was very costly being made entirely of fine cloth of scarlet. To see if he could attract them to our faith, the King had pictures embroidered in the chapel of the Annunciation of Our Lady and all the other articles of faith.”³⁰ This gift of such a striking tent was one that, based on the customs of Mongol diplomacy as discovered by John of Plano Carpini in his earlier mission and disseminated

as part of the plan to prote, aimed to pave the way for diplomatic dialogue between Mongols and crusaders in the accomplishment of their mutual goal of eliminating a common enemy in the Near East.

The information John of Plano Carpini had brought back from his mission in regards to the gift-giving that the Mongol khanate expected as part and parcel of diplomatic encounters was now put into practice for the first time by a crusader. Friar John had been sent to St. Louis when he returned from his mission around 1248, so his experiences would have been known to the king when he encountered the Mongol emissaries.³¹ John of Plano Carpini had come unprepared for the fray of envoys and presents present at the Mongol court but Louis IX was now more prepared by both this information and his own envoy's previous experience, Andrew of Longjumeau who had acted as one of Innocent IV's initial envoys to the Mongols, to make the best gambit at an alliance between powers of the West and East, though he had the added advantage of being a secular power and not needing to be hindered by the customs of solely religious missions. According to Felicity Heal, “Early modern Europe princes and states normally used gifts, as they used other elements in diplomacy, to emphasize the autonomous control they exercised in their own dominions, and to claim equality of status with fellow rulers.”³² As will be seen later, the Mongols at this time failed to meet Louis' gift with this perspective. Andrew of Longjumeau had noted the Christianity of some Mongols and reported back, in somewhat of an overstatement, presence of eight hundred mobile, Christian chapels that accompanied the Mongols. He reported back also the sumptuously decorated tents favored by the khans.³³ With this information in mind, Louis commissioned a sublime gift with the intent to compel the receiving khan to convert to Christianity through sheer flamboyance and the resulting chapel was all that he could have hoped for. Louis' biographer, John de Joinville recounts that:

The King sent his envoys in return, and with them a chapel, to attract them to our faith, he had embroidered all that we believe: the Annunciation by the Angel, the Nativity, the Baptism in which God was baptized, the whole of the Passion, the Ascension and the coming of the Holy Ghost. He sent chalices, too, and books, and all that is needed for singing Mass, and two Friars Preachers to sing Masses for them.³⁴

The opulence of such a gift preyed on the Mongol's particular infatuation luxury, though not a cultural aspect unique to them, but owing in large part to their aforementioned view of themselves as the preordained rulers of the world. Amanda Powers notes also

28 Rossabi, Morris. “John of Plano Carpini, Mission to Asia.” In *The Mongols and Global History : A Norton Documents Reader*, 26–36. New York: W.W. Norton, 2011.

29 Amanda Powers. “Going among the Infidels: The Mendicant Orders and Louis IX's First Mediterranean Campaign.”, 193.

30 John de Joinville. *The Life of St. Louis*. Edited by Natalis de Wailly. Translated by Rene Hague. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955, 57.

31 Christopher Dawson. “History of the Mongols by John of Plano Carpini.”, 2.

32 Felicity Heal. *The Power of Gifts : Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England*. Oxford, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014, 150.

33 Igor de Rachewultz. *Papal Envoys to the Great Khans*, 87.

34 John de Joinville. *The Life of St. Louis*, 144.

that amongst these also was a “fragment of the True Cross – from the Christian perspective, this last was the most precious gift of all, suggesting that Louis was very serious indeed”³⁵. Not only would these gifts offer a presentation of all Christianity might have to offer the Mongols and attract them to conversion but it would buy them admittance into diplomatic discourse at the highest level so as to better secure the much anticipated alliance, or so the crusaders hoped.

When they first arrived bearing the spectacular tent, Joinville relates that the envoys found themselves the recipient of gifts in a bit of turnabout from the usual gift-grabbing others had experienced. “The great King of the Tartars was given a present of a horse laden with flour, which had come from a distance of three months’ journey. He gave it to the King’s envoys”³⁶. This small anecdote in a section devoted to a rather distorted discussion of Mongol does show the mutual respect offered to those envoys who came in the correct fashion with gifts as a sign of deference and diplomacy, unlike the previously related experience of John of Plano Carpini and his compatriots who were reduced to fasting rations during their own stay. The cycle of gift-giving and intercourse was facilitated by three parties in this brief episode but also demonstrates the very pervasive and critical nature thereof.

As was invariably the case, the efforts at alliance through diplomacy fell through between the Mongols and Frankish crusaders, as mediated by the religious envoys. Again there flared the seemingly perpetual cultural disconnect between the two groups. For the Mongols, gifts so often were seen as offerings to an overlord and the receipt of presents from diplomatic envoys, no matter their origin or ruler, were seen as a token of submission by said ruler. It was this exact instance that occurred yet again. Joinville writes that

When the Great King of the Tartars had received the envoys and presents, he sent under safe-conduct for several Kings who had not yet recognized his suzerainty; he had the chapel erected for them and spoke to them. ‘Sirs,’ he said, ‘the King of France has submitted himself to our mercy and acknowledged himself our subject. See here the tribute he sends us. If you do not submit also, we shall send for him to destroy you.’³⁷

Though removed by several degrees from the actual interaction and conversation, Joinville’s account of the mission nevertheless reflects back the Mongol belief that overtures of peace equal to surrender and any approach would be repurposed as propaganda for the power of the khans.

Diplomatic missions bore little fruit with the Mongols for the Latin West, as the Mongols had their own unique view of the world and their place astride it. The Dominicans who headed the delegation returned with the disheartening news, along with an

equally dismaying missive from Möngke Khan, declaiming, “This we send you for a warning, for you cannot have peace if you are not at peace with us. Prester John rose against us...and all we have put to the sword. We bid you, then, every year to send us of your gold and of your silver so much as may win you our friendship.”³⁸ The mention of the mythical and Christian Prester John, who some Europeans connected to the actual Mongol khans, dispelled further any notions of a great joining of Christian factions for the good of Christendom and made clear the Mongol desire for one thing—a world-empire as dictated by the mandate of Chinggis [Genghis Khan]. Rather than smoothing the way for diplomacy and discussion, the gift of the chapel-tent only whetted the appetite for tribute and accompanying tokens, as the Mongols continued on in their conquest, unperturbed for the most part with the West and Louis IX’s plans, though the two were fated to have their historical narratives cross again with the travels of William of Rubruck.

III : Acquisitive Minds and Missionaries Maligned

This section examines the mission of Friar William of Rubruck, occurring shortly after the failed delivering of Louis IX’s chapel tent and the Mongol’s assumption of this as an act of submission on the part of the Latin West. Friar William’s extensive, memoir-like report builds on the previous experiences discussed and yet differs from the other two, as his mission was solely focused on the evangelical side of Mongols life, rather than securing them as allied converts, something the Mongols found to be hard to separate.

The mission of Andrew of Longjumeau had left a bitter taste when it came to any diplomatic endeavors on the part of Louis IX. As noted previously, he greatly regretted sending the mission as he and his sovereignty, at least in the eyes of the Mongols, had been burned for his troubles. It was thus that he would have hardly looked on the sending of a new mission with any sort of alacrity. Another chance to offer his “submission” to Mongol overlords would hardly have been welcome. It was this sort of trepidation and recalcitrance that greeted the Franciscan William of Rubruck’s proposed mission. Rubruck was a Flemish Franciscan attached to Louis IX’s royal household, who had been with him for some time while the king was out on crusade. He was almost certainly present when Louis’ sent out the mission of Andrew of Longjumeau and heard of the disastrous results of the ill-fated diplomatic venture.³⁹ In fact, it was details from this mission regarding enslaved German Christians by a Mongol prince that first spurred William to abandon the quest for the Holy Land and undertake a new missionary mission.⁴⁰ It also did not hurt his supposed chances that the son of the founder of the Golden Horde, Sartaq, was Christian.⁴¹ If William could secure a prize as great as the conversion of a large swathe of the Mongol empire, how great would be his reward in heaven. Amanda Powers writes in her own analysis of the mendicant orders and Louis IX that “William’s journey was meant to be an obscure undertaking consistent with Franciscan notions

35 Amanda Powers. “Going among the Infidels: The Mendicant Orders and Louis IX’s First Mediterranean Campaign.”

36 John de Joinville, *The Life of St. Louis*, 148.

37 Ibid, 148-9.

38 Ibid., 149.

39 Amanda Powers. “Going among the Infidels: The Mendicant Orders and Louis IX’s First Mediterranean Campaign.”, 194.

40 William of Rubruck. *The Mission of William of Rubruck*. Translated by Peter Jackson. London: The Hakluyt Society, 1990, 144.

41 Ibid, 42.

of the *vita apostolica*, but as he quickly discovered, the Mongol world did not function like that.⁴² As a Christian king famed for his piety, Louis IX could hardly forbid a mendicant to go out to evangelize to lost souls, much less a monk of his own household for whom he had a sufficiently close relationship to warrant William of Rubruck's detailed report of his travels after the fact. It was with his blessing and a letter of introduction that William of Rubruck set out on a journey that would take him from the Near East to the furthest reaches of the Far East.

William of Rubruck's status is a contested topic: was he a secret envoy for Louis IX or heartfelt missionary? As an envoy he was expected to, as his forerunners had done, bring gifts as a courtesy or a sign of submission but as a missionary he was expected to be able to operate with a greater degree of freedom, though a lesser status. Writing in the 1940s, Eric Voegelin saw him as an diplomat for Louis seeking to do better than before, who "cautioned by the result of his first mission, enjoined his ambassadors not to declare themselves openly as such, but to travel as a private party, stating as their purpose the propagation of the Gospel."⁴³ Later analyses have differed though, as Amanda Powers' previous quote shows. Colleen Ho saw Rubruck simply as "a missionary because he was not officially commissioned by the pope as a diplomat, though he did carry a letter from Louis IX of France."⁴⁴ Peter Jackson, the most recent translator of *The Mission of William of Rubruck*, noted best that though he "travelled in the Mongol empire in a private capacity, as a missionary, in 1253–5....the king insisted that he should not allow himself to be taken for another French ambassador. ...[but] the letter Rubruck carried from the French king served to obscure his purpose."⁴⁵ The simplest answer comes in William's own answer to a query by Möngke Khan that he came as he believed "It is a duty of our faith to preach the Gospel to all men."⁴⁶ Even before this, he references a mandate by Louis IX, writing to him, "I took good care at no point to say that I was your envoy."⁴⁷ However, it made no matter to the Mongols whether or not William of Rubruck came as a diplomatic envoy or a Christian missionary, though he was by turns perceived as either or both, he would nonetheless be seen as a foreign newcomer who should, holding to both European and Mongol standards.

William of Rubruck's mission to the Mongols did not face the same challenges of the unknown as those that came before it, such as John of Plano Carpini or Andrew of Longjumeau. Though he certainly faced similar physical hardships along the road, he had the advantage of prior and contemporary knowledge to ease his path to the Mongol heartland, especially as it pertained to gifts. Like John of Plano Carpini, he also received advice along the road

and wrote that "I had brought with me from Constantinople, on the advice of merchants, fruit, muscadine wine and rich biscuit to offer to the prefects in the first instance and make my passage easier, since they regard no one with favour who arrives empty-handed...I was told that if I succeeded in transporting them as far as Sartach he would be delighted with them."⁴⁸ Such gifts of food would not have been unfamiliar to a European of the time, though the context of the gift-giving was without a similar level of precedent in terms of submission in the West, though ritual did often accompany vidual.⁴⁹ Though planned for, nothing could have outright prepared Rubruck's company for the alacrity the Mongols brought to making acquisitions off of new visitors. As soon as they encountered a new party of Mongols and they realized the missionaries had never come among them before, they harried them for gifts. William felt apparent disgust from the outset when "their ingratitude when pestering had finally secured them some gift."⁵⁰ As he journeyed deeper into the Mongol territory, this would in no way lessen, though his mention of his religious vows took pressure off of him to give gifts of the same quantity and quality as diplomatic envoys would have experienced.

William of Rubruck was not one to mince words. He obviously found many things exasperating or tiresome in his journey, though he seemed to be willing to endure hardships to reach his goal of bettering the souls of others. His annoyance with the Mongols was especially seen, as noted, in their demands for gifts to such an extent that he took the time to title Chapter IX in his report "How They Came Among the Barbarians, and How Ungrateful They Were." Though not asked for gold, silver, or samite like John of Plano Carpini, he recounts in the same chapter that "They began brazenly to demand some of our rations. We gave them some of the biscuit and wine we had brought with us from the city. Having drunk one flagon, they demanded another...We gave it to them, saying by way of apology that we did not have much."⁵¹ William of Rubruck would have been familiar with the practice of food-giving as a facet of gift-giving, as it appeared commonly in religious and especially monastic life, though it was often reversed in roles from the situation here. As Lars Kjaer and A. J. Watson describe it "providing hospitality and solemn feasts [was] central to the societal and religious obligations of men in power."⁵² When the Mongols pushed Rubruck too much on one occasion and "asked what was in the wagons: whether it was gold or silver or rich garments that I was taking to Sartach," he "retorted that Sartach would see for himself what we were carrying when we reached him."⁵³ He would not tolerate such thanklessness as it came to presents from those he had come to proselytize to as he felt that

42 Amanda Powers. "Going among the Infidels: The Mendicant Orders and Louis IX's First Mediterranean Campaign," 195.

43 Eric Voegelin. "THE MONGOL ORDERS OF SUBMISSION TO EUROPEAN POWERS, 1245-1255." *Byzantion* 15 (1940-1941), 381.

44 Ho, Colleen. "Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century European-Mongol Relations." *History Compass* 10, no. 12 (2012), 948.

45 Peter Jackson. *The Mongols and the West, 1221-1410*, 99.

46 William of Rubruck. *The Mission of William of Rubruck*, 229.

47 Ibid, 97.

48 Ibid, 68.

49 Kjaer, Lars, and A. J. Watson. "Feasts and Gifts: Sharing Food in the Middle Ages." *Journal of Medieval History* 37, no. 1 (2011).

50 William of Rubruck. *The Mission of William of Rubruck*, 48.

51 Ibid, 97.

52 Lars Kjaer and A. J. Watson. "Feasts and Gifts: Sharing Food in the Middle Ages."

53 William of Rubruck. *The Mission of William of Rubruck*, 97.

“if man gives it to them, it is wasted because they feel no gratitude; for they regard themselves as the masters of the world, and think that nobody should deny them anything. If he fails to give, and later has need for their services, they serve him with an ill will.”⁵⁴ He could recognize the potential pitfalls of holding out on gift-giving but as a missionary, and not a secular envoy, he would not be penalized as such, and even received understanding rather than anger from those rulers he encountered. Yet, in several instances when recounting this to the Mongols, he writes that “They were amazed and kept repeating constantly: “Why have you come, seeing that you did not come to make peace? For they have already reached such a level of arrogance that they believe the whole world is longing to make peace with them.”⁵⁵ William’s temper at the inconveniences and inhospitality he encountered reared its head again as he wrote that he was inclined to preach a war against them, namely calling a crusade. Compounding this was his growing realization that neither diplomacy or conversion would pan out in the long run, as the Mongols saw themselves as Mongols first and, if applicable, Christians second.

Still there were hopeful signs and pleasant interactions for William and the Mongol courts he encountered. At Scacatai’s court camp, they experienced by then rote demands for gifts by intermediaries and the expected need for gifts to the rulers. Scacatai, a Mongol captain of Batu, himself proved amiable and receptive towards a Christian message, even going so far as to hear the creed. However, first William recounts that:

I asked him in addition whether he would deign to accept a trifling gift from us, saying by way of apology that I was a monk and that it was not in keeping with our Order to own gold, silver or expensive garments, and that for this reason I had nothing of that kind to present to him; but would he accept some of our food for a blessing?⁵⁶

Such an explanation for his actions rather than simply expecting understanding yielded better results in the gift-giving cycle for William of Rubruck. He later explained at the court of Sartaq “by way of apology, that I was a monk and neither owned nor accepted nor handled gold or silver or anything of value...so that we were bringing no gifts for him or his master: as one who had relinquished his own belongings, I could not be the bearer of what belonged to others.”⁵⁷ Rubruck had seemed to do better than his predecessor’s in articulating his own social context to the Mongols and placing himself in a better position to achieve his aims. Though not an official diplomat, Rubruck understood the best way to work the angles of his situation.

However, like all the missions before and after it, William of Rubruck’s bore little fruit, though he was able to baptize a number of those he encountered.⁵⁸ When denied the ability to stay and preach by the khan for fear he was a secret diplomat or spy,

he returned home bearing a letter intended for his lord, Louis IX, which contained the typical Mongol demand for submission but with the interesting phrase “In Heaven there is only one eternal God; on earth there is only one lord, Chingis Chan.”⁵⁹ The Mongols were certainly not above using Christian beliefs for their own use, especially when their world-empire stood to profit, with the greatest gifts of all—subjugation and submission. Friar William of Rubruck concludes his report that, regardless of the preparedness or gifts accompanying them, “I regard it as inadvisable for any friar to make any further journeys to the Tartars.”⁶⁰ Though not the last such mission, William of Rubruck’s failed attempt at going around diplomatic guises dampened the onset of further missions and also represented the culmination of the mendicant and papal misfires at bridging the cultural divide between all-powerful forces through gift-giving or the lack thereof.

54 Ibid, 98.

55 Ibid, 173.

56 Ibid, 101.

57 Ibid, 115.

58 Ibid, 253.

59 Ibid, 248.

60 Ibid, 248.

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Comparing Feminist Approaches to Gender in the Black Lives Matter Movement

by Jess Casimir, Sophia Hutchens, Chelsey Radford

Black Lives Matter (BLM) is a well-known social movement that campaigns against police brutality and institutionalized racism towards Black people in the United States. In this paper, we examine the influence of the movement's popular uptake on its focus and discourse. Through a literary review, we analyze this social movement through three different feminist lenses—intersectionality, transfeminism, and performativity—with the aim of highlighting ways to improve inclusivity within the Black Lives Matter movement. With an investigation of Black feminist perspectives, we call attention to the unique experience of Black women as members of oppressed identities in both race and gender. By articulating this experience with the works of bell hooks, Patricia Hill Collins, Audre Lorde, and more, the intent is to highlight the marginalized of the marginalized and to extend protection and recognition to not only Black women, but Black people of any identity location (nonbinary, trans, Afro-Latinx, etc.). The theoretical frameworks of intersectionality, transfeminism, and performativity can, and should be employed within BLM to aid the movement in reaching its full potential.

Keywords: Feminism, Social Movements, Intersectionality, Performativity, Transfeminism

Introduction

In the five years since its conception, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement has been at the epicenter of social justice activity. Its platform has sparked countless marches, protests, social media campaigns, and more. At its core, the presence of BLM has been instrumental in the acknowledgement of and fight against police brutality in the United States. The movement has penetrated many prominent facets of our society—including its role in shaking the foundation of American sports culture with the controversies surrounding Colin Kaepernick and the National Football League. With all of the traction BLM has gained, the successful spread of this movement across the nation and the world seems to have subsequently hidden its flaws.

In this paper, we analyze the popular uptake of BLM and how this affects its message—particularly as it pertains to the inclusion of women and members of the LGBTQ+ community—through an application of multiple feminist approaches. This exploration will mainly focus on a comparative analysis of intersectional, transfeminist, and performative theoretical frameworks as approaches to understanding why a movement founded on

inclusive principles often in its popular focus erases and excludes police violence against Black women and LGBTQ+ folx. With this investigation, we hope to bring recognition to the issues within the BLM movement whilst also providing ways to improve the success of the movement for any and all individuals who are in need of protection.

Black Lives Matter: Reinstating an Intersectional Framework

A History of Erasure at the Intersection of Race and Gender in Social Movements

At the crossroads of race and gender sits a social locus that has long been neglected. If it were a physical place, it would lack representation on maps, and many people would be none-the-wiser to its existence. And yet, the people who find themselves at this crossroads are the ones who march alongside you at rallies, stand shoulder to shoulder with you at protests, and dedicate themselves to the same beloved causes. The people of whom we speak are Black women. And, despite the fact that their counterparts fail to recognize

the challenges they face at an intersection that is impacted by both the patriarchy and white supremacy, Black women continue to participate in such social movements. The intersection of race and gender is a place where one must grapple with the material effects of double jeopardy and maneuver in a way that often calls for them to give up parts of their gender or racial identity (hooks, 1981). On account of this experience of double jeopardy - a term used prior to theorizations of intersectionality to describe the social marginalization of Black woman due to both race and gender - Black women have become susceptible to erasure in the very social movements that they have helped found and develop (Guy-Sheftal, 1995). From the Suffrage movement to the Civil Rights movement and beyond, Black women have been silenced and neglected. It is only by looking at instances of this erasure in previous social movements that we might be able to move forward and strive for a reinstitution of intersectional frameworks at the core of the BLM movement.

Essentially, intersectionality is a theoretical framework best used to analyze and explore unacknowledged experiences that are pushed to the margins: experiences that slip through the cracks and lacked proper attention in discussions of justice and equity. Kimberlé Crenshaw, one of the leading voices in the use of intersectional frameworks, utilized the theory in her discussion of violence against women of color. Crenshaw argued that the current notions of identity politics “fail to transcend difference...but rather the opposite—that it frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences” and, therefore sought the use of intersectionality as a frame of analysis throughout her investigation which she entitled “Mapping the Margins” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242). In her writing, intersectionality acts as an anchor when exploring the erasure that many marginalized individuals experience at the crossroads of their identities.

First and foremost, it should be noted that the BLM movement was created with an intersectional framework in mind. The co-founders—Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi, and Patrisse Cullors—represented a range of Black feminist experiences, with Garza herself identifying as queer. With this intersectional feminist framework at the root of the movement, BLM was a call to protect all Black lives. In fact, the official website for BLM states that Garza’s leadership and work are centered around a desire to:

challenge the misconception that only cisgender Black men encounter police and state violence....In order to truly understand how devastating and widespread this type of violence is in Black America, we must view this epidemic through of a lens of race, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity (“Our Co-Founders”, n.d., para. 5).

Nevertheless, the dominant discourses surrounding police brutality—largely due in part to media coverage—places emphasis solely on the protection of Black males suffering violence at the hands of law enforcement and the criminal justice system. It is this very discourse that the BLM movement aimed to fix. However, even with Black women at the start of the movement, in practice as its popularity has increased, the issues at the intersection of race and gender still seem to fall onto the wayside. With this erasure of Black women resurfacing in yet another movement, it is imperative that we assess the invisibility of Black women in previous movements as

we think critically about the best way to move forward.

The Suffrage movement was a distinct starting point for the erasure of Black women in prominent social movements. The fellowship between the suffragettes and abolitionists had been strong at the beginning, with individuals such as W.E.B Dubois and Susan B. Anthony considering themselves friends and allies in the fight against their common oppressors (Watkins, 2016). In the act of giving Black men the vote in 1870, the patriarchy asserted its dominance by separating the powerful force that had been the collective effort of white woman and Black men. It caused a racialized break in solidarities within the suffrage movement to occur along gendered lines. This can be seen as Anthony was compelled to say to her once friend W.E.B Dubois: “I will cut off this right arm of mine before I will ever work or demand the ballot for the Negro and not the woman” (Anthony, 1866). There was no home for Black women in the midst of this rift. Where does one fall when her race is denounced by those who share her gender?

bell hooks details this problem posed to Black women within the Suffrage movement in her work entitled, *Ain’t I A Woman: Black Women In Feminism*, when she states:

Black women were placed in a double bind: to support the women’s suffrage would imply that they were allying themselves with white women activists who had publicly revealed their racism, but to support only Black male suffrage was to endorse a patriarchal social order that would grant them no political voice (hooks, 1981, p.3).

It was this separation at the hands of the patriarchy and white supremacy that planted the seeds of unmarked whiteness within feminism and promoted a replication of patriarchy within the Black community that continues to resurface in the decades to come.

While this split did bring the problematic nature of double jeopardy to light, it is imperative that we also shed light on the lack of intersectional awareness when the Suffrage movement was still unified. Before the split within the movement drove a wedge between Black and white suffragists, there were definite differences in the shared experiences of Black and white women. While white women were fighting for the vote, Black women were fighting for their right to personhood (Truth, 1851). The particular experiences of Black femininity remained largely invisible to most white women suffragists until Sojourner Truth amplified these differences in her iconic “Ain’t I A Woman?” speech at the Women’s Convention in Akron, Ohio in 1851. She exposed the distinct nature of the Black woman’s struggle by stating: “That man...says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place!...I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns and no man could head me! And ain’t I a woman?” (Truth, 1851). Here, Truth is already calling attention to what has been called the “white damsel” myth that continues to strain Black and white feminist relations in future movements (Birnbaum & Taylor, 2000).

Following the Suffrage movement, the Civil Rights movement gave way to yet another prime example of the erasure of Black women, this time at the hands of Black men. It is during this movement that the co-linked effects of patriarchy and white supremacy can be seen within the Black community, as patriarchal gender discourses were adopted in the desire to properly assimilate

to white respectability norms (hooks, 1981). We often hear the discussion of “white-washing” history, but this phenomenon also takes place in the production of gender through an implicit masculinizing of history and culture. We are taught to idolize prominent civil rights figures such as Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, yet find ourselves scratching our head at the names Daisy Bates and Dorothy Height. In fact, hooks claims that Black women were forced to enact supporting roles to the Black men in their revolution, performing passivity, rather than being recognized for their work in logistics and standing at the front lines of the movement alongside their Black male counterparts (hooks, 1981). hooks discusses this saying: “Black male activists publicly acknowledged that they expected Black women involved in the movement to conform to a sexist role... that Black women assume a subservient position... Black women were told that they should take care of the household needs and breed warriors for the revolution” (hooks, 1981, p.5). If the Black woman is in her household and not being recognized in the construction of ideals for the movement, how might her needs be met? hooks goes on to point out the erasure of Black women in the very language used to describe the Civil Rights and feminist movements by stating that negro referred to Black men and women referred to white women. So again, where did Black women see their issues truly discussed (hooks, 1981, p. 7)?

This lack of regard for the experiences of Black women in the revolution against white supremacy made the movement oblivious to issues of gendered violence experienced by Black women within the Black community. For hooks this meant that, “no one bothered to discuss the way in which sexism operates both independently of and simultaneously with racism to oppress us” (hooks, 1981, p. 7). And, to have women who stay at home and breed warriors for the revolution or fetch coffee at civil rights meetings does nothing but reinstate these same issues of patriarchy within the Black community. Moreover, according to hooks, “Black activists defined freedom as gaining the right to participate as a full citizen in American culture; they were not rejecting the value system of that culture” (hooks, 1981, p. 5). How, then, does one expect to take down a system of oppression when they themselves practice and abide by the discourses perpetuated by their own oppressor? In other words, particularly Audre Lorde’s words, how does one expect to take down the master’s house using the master’s tools (Lorde, 1984)?

Drawing further examples from this idea of recognizing the remnants of the oppressor’s discourse within social movements, Audre Lorde’s essay, *The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House*, can be used to better understand the erasure of Black women in contemporary feminist movements. Feminist movements in which unmarked and unacknowledged white supremacy has continued to sustain the deep-seated roots of white feminism within today’s social revolutions (Lorde, 1984). Lorde calls out such white feminism when she states that feminist theorizing without discussions of difference is nothing more than academic ignorance (Lorde, 1984). With the lack of attention paid to different women’s experiences and perspectives, the feminist movement remains overwhelmingly heteronormative and white-centric in its views about what it means to be a woman fighting for women’s rights. These elements of heteronormativity and white supremacy are directly related to the discourses of the oppressing force acting upon the feminist movement, that being

the patriarchy. This leaves Lorde asking the question: How do we seek to take down the patriarchy when there are remnants of the patriarchal discourses and narratives within our own movement (Lorde, 1984)? Lorde’s, as well as hooks’, work insists on the re-evaluation of feminist uses of standpoint theory—a precursor to intersectionality that claims one’s outlook and knowledge is rooted in social position—on account of the fact that a “women’s standpoint” easily becomes a “white, straight women’s standpoint” when employed in women’s movements throughout history (Borland, 2014). Both Lorde and hooks question whether feminist standpoint theory is ultimately capable of truly encapsulating the needs of all women (hooks, 1981).

Theorists who argue for the sole use of feminist standpoint perspectives are contributing to the problem of white feminism. To argue for the use of a feminist standpoint on its own fails to see the value of women’s differences and intersections (Lorde, 1984). Standpoint theorists, such as Susan Hekman in her work entitled, “Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited,” make their claims for using feminist standpoint theory on a founding call for unity and sisterhood (Hekman, 1997). Hekman claims that focusing on the differences that arise at our many interactions (race, sexual orientation, etc.) only serves to divide and weaken the feminist front—that we must fight as women, not as women from multiple subgroups (Hekman, 1997). To this point, we refer back to hooks’ comment on associative power of words in which we need to reassess the idea that when we say women we are often referring to white women (hooks, 1981). This is why the use of a feminist standpoint, even in the most strategic of ways, can still serve to silence and neglect of entire groups of women within the movement. There is a similar call for unity operating within the Black Lives Matter movement, in which the movement operates from a standpoint of race and often neglects the fact that society discursively associates Black with Black men (hooks, 1981). It is this discursive connotation that has resulted in the popular uptake of BLM honing in on the Black male experience in a disproportionate manner. Since Black women are erased under both the labels of women and Black, an intersectional framework is necessary to acknowledge their unique experience moving forward.

To acknowledge the manifestation of the erasure of Black women in BLM, we can look at the discourses that surround the movement. First, we call attention to Kimberlé Crenshaw’s TED talk in which she explores the framing of police brutality as being a men’s issue (2016). She argues that we must continue to plug parallel movements, such as #sayhername, in an attempt to remember the names of those who suffered at the hands of police violence as Black women. Black men are totalized as dangerous and predatory people; however, that does not negate the fact that many Black women also fall victim to police brutality in different ways (Crenshaw, 2016). The stereotypes forced upon the bodies of Black women, such as “being sexually promiscuous,” leaves them open and vulnerable to gendered and sexualized violence (Collins, 2000). This stereotype – referred to as being a “Jezebel” – is often used to further silence the experiences of Black women. The “Jezebel” stereotype is so common that Black women are already under suspicion in cases of sexual violence that justice is rarely served (Collins, 2000). Moreover, if the perpetrator is white or wealthy (bringing in another intersection of socioeconomic status), it is even less likely that justice will ever be served (Collins, 2000).

All in all, the crossroads of the patriarchy and white supremacy

manifests in very material ways for the Black woman who are forced to choose between their race and their gender. And because we are choosing to accept that there has been an erasure of Black women, we also need to be open to accepting the fact that large groups of people have been rendered invisible within movements. Therefore, we must seek to open this intersectional framework to include classifications beyond that of the gender, race, and class. In fact, it is essential that we do this in order to return to the intersectional roots of the movement in which Black women of all identities were meant to have the same power as anyone else—this would include opening up the intersectional framework to include that of African American Black women in addition to Black Latinx, Caribbean, Brazilian women, and Black lesbian/queer/non-binary women. There should be a conscious effort to include Black trans women in particular, as they suffer at the hands of violence like no other group of Black women.

Transfeminist Approach to Black Lives Matters

Incorporating Queer Theory and Transfeminism into Intersectional Theory

In her essay “There Is No Hierarchy of Oppression,” feminist and activist Audre Lorde states, “Any attack against Black people is a lesbian and gay issue, because I and thousands of other Black women are part of the lesbian community. Any attack against lesbians and gays is a Black issue, because thousands of lesbians and gay men are Black. There is no hierarchy of oppression” (1985, p. 220). Lorde reasons that oppression against any group affects every group and she “cannot afford the luxury of fighting one form of oppression only” (p. 220). This argument is critical to understanding the power of queer theory and a transfeminist perspective within BLM. Activist and author Emi Koyama explains this approach in *The Transfeminist Manifesto*: “Transfeminism is primarily a movement by and for trans women who view their liberation to be intrinsically linked to the liberation of all women and beyond... it extends and advances feminism as a whole through our own liberation and coalition work with all others...” (2003, p. 245). The founders of BLM movement explicitly and repeatedly agree that all Black lives matter, including trans and queer Black folks, yet this specific focus does not translate to the public usage and popular understanding of the message. By exploring how transfeminism supports and is completely necessary for an effective, inclusive intersectional approach within the public movement. First, we will briefly address the leadership and organization of Black Lives Matter to provide a more complex understanding of the movement’s relationship to trans and queer issues.

BLM is both an organization and a movement with a collection of sub-organizations, such as Campaign Zero, that work against systemic racism and police violence. Leadership within BLM (beyond the central group) is localized. Patrisse Cullors, a founder of BLM, has said that they intentionally avoid having a leader or spokesperson for BLM because that could discourage communities from starting their own groups and chapters in their own communities (Cobb, 2016, para. 18). The most well-known and visible local leaders of the movement, besides the founders, are cisgender, including Brittany Packett, DeRay Mckesson, and Johnetta Elzie.

The official BLM website states, “We affirm the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, undocumented folks,

folks with records, women, and all Black lives along the gender spectrum. Our network centers those who have been marginalized within Black liberation movements” (“About,” para. 3). BLM publicly advocates for the inclusion of queer, trans, and gender nonconforming people by actively avoiding deadnaming and misgendering Black trans people, such as Jaquarius Holland, an 18-year-old transgender woman who was killed in February of 2017 in Louisiana (@blkivesmatter). Misgendering – the act of referring to people with pronouns and forms of address that do not correctly represent their gender identities – and using dead names – the birth names of people who have changed their names – are prevalent ways the media reasserts the gender binary. It is significant and intentional that BLM actively avoids doing so in public mediums.

The sociopolitical movement was founded by cisgender queer Black women - Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi - who are consistently vocal in the media, through interviews and public speaking, as well as on their social media accounts, about the “non-relevancy” and “invisibility” of queer women of color (Garza, 2014, para. 7). In a 2017 interview with Mic, Patrisse Cullors stated: “What people don’t realize is not only do Black people have to deal with racism, many of us have to deal with patriarchy, homophobia, transphobia...” and “We have to call out institutions that are violating our human rights, our civil rights and are allowing for people — women, Black trans women in particular — to be seen as objects” (Alexander, para. 6). Thus, the founders of BLM are vocal about the invisibility of their own roles due to their gender and queer identities; they condemn the public erasure their roles and contributions due to a social preference for focusing on straight Black men.

The movement for Black lives has been taken up popularly and used in ways the founders did not intend and, in fact, protest against. This includes other groups that do not appropriately cite BLM yet co-opt and reappropriate BLM’s hashtag, like the #MuslimLivesMatter and #LatinoLivesMatter movements. The founders of BLM encourage groups to not condone the marginalization of Black people and instead create their own messages, which the BLM movement would then share and support. Founder Opal Tometi stated in an interview in 2015: “The larger public narrative and discourse... is still focused on Black male bodies, cisgender males... Black Lives Matter has been viral and people are taking it, appropriating it, and using it however they see fit. We become invisible...” (as cited in Dernikos, 2016, p. 7). This aligns with the pattern of other social movements in which women, women of color, queer women of color, and transgender women of color are regularly erased.

Homophobia and racism are systemically and historically tied, as evident by Black respectability politics that interlink with issues like “being on the down low,” or homophobia within the Black community, in ways that erase Black LGBTQ+ identifying folks, especially effeminate Black men and transgender women. Lorde notes this from her own experience saying, “I have learned sexism and heterosexism both arise from the same source as racism” (1985, p. 219). Black folks’ expressions of femininity and masculinity, particularly in relation to their sexual orientation, are violently and actively policed. bell hooks writes about gender expression and status in *Ain’t I A Woman?*:

Scholars have argued further that by not allowing Black

men to assume their traditional patriarchal status, white men effectively emasculated them, reducing them to an effeminate state... To suggest that Black men were dehumanized solely as a result of not being able to be patriarchs implies that the subjugation of Black women was essential to the Black male's development of a positive self-concept, an idea that only served to support a sexist social order (1981, p. 20).

According to hooks, Black men throughout the history of slavery in the United States were allowed some semblance of their societal definition of masculinity: strength, prowess, and virility (1985). Black masculinity was forcibly twisted and exaggerated by white people so Black men could be perceived as inherently dangerous. Insecurity about sexual orientation is deeply connected to this historical manipulation of masculinity and Black men's roles. This is foundational to the rigid expectations about Black folks' gender expression.

The severity of such policing and its effects on the lives of queer and trans people of color was a basis for the modern movement for LGBTQ rights. The Stonewall Inn in New York City was a safe space for transgender and gender nonconforming folks and homeless queer youth in the city ("Stonewall National Monument"). In June 1969, police officers raided Stonewall and violently arrested and injured members of the club who wore clothing that was deemed not "gender appropriate." Around 13 people were arrested the first night, and six the following day. Resistance towards this harassment and violence was led by transgender women of color, including Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson, who were self-identified street queens. They asserted their space and right to exist through this protest; however, violence continues to be committed by the police and figures of power against trans women of color.

In *Ain't I a Woman?*, bell hooks analyzes systemic violence against Black bodies and the erasure of Black women in her discussion about violence during the time of slavery (1981). She argues the importance of remembering Black women's experiences during slavery and the role of white women in reinforcing violent acts. This conversation about violence against Black bodies needs to be extended to include trans Black folks, who are statistically proven to be more vulnerable to violence – including high rates of murder – due to constructed ideas about gender expression. The National Center for Transgender Equality found in a 2015 survey that one in five Black transgender women have been physically or sexually assaulted by a police officer (James et al, 2016). One in three Black transgender women answered in this survey that police officers assume they are engaging in sex work, just by existing in public. The National Coalition of Anti-Violence found in 2013 that near 90 percent of LGBTQ+ homicide victims were people of color (Shapiro, 2016). Due to multiple forms of violence and racism, including police brutality, the lack of affordable housing, and the prevalence of poverty, the average life expectancy of transgender women of color is reported to be between 31 and 35 years (Kai, 2018). This is unacceptable, and the lack of focus on transgender lives in our discourse encourages an inaccurate narrative about police brutality, especially in relation to Black bodies. This is why transfeminism matters as an approach to BLM and why it was included in the founding statements. The popular uptake of the BLM movement, influenced by trans and homophobic mainstream cultures as well as misogyny, has erased the intentional

inclusion of queer and trans people of color in the fight for Black lives. It is urgent and necessary that transfeminist approaches are intentionally and actively re-incorporated into the popular movement's intersectional approach.

Given the disproportionate and continuous violence committed by police and other figures of authority against Black trans women, the silence about them in the popular BLM movement is telling. This, a primary mechanism of discrimination and oppression at the intersection of gender, race, and violence, is enabled because violence against queer and trans people of color is not a part of our common narrative and discourse about police brutality. Leaders of BLM express the importance of Black trans folks' voices, yet Black trans women are not recognized as leaders within the movement and given the appropriate level of support. Transfeminism can only benefit an intersectional approach to the Black Lives Matter movement. As Ashlee Marie Preston, a writer and activist, says, we must be committed to "seeing to it that Black trans women thrive. When we thrive, so will everyone else" (Kai, 2018).

Using Performativity as an Approach to Black Lives Matters

Using Judith Butler's Theory of Performativity to Understand the Role of Gender

In her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, gender theorist and philosopher Judith Butler proposed the concept of "gender performativity" to describe the ways that constructed gender roles are produced and reproduced (Butler, 1990). It details the ways in which society uses citationality – which is a way of referencing ideal forms and representative behaviors and practices – that others "read" as our gender. Butler argues that this process tends to reinforce traditional gender roles and categories (Butler, 1990). This theory can be used to understand how gendered power dynamics are maintained within the popular uptake of BLM. Butler suggests that gender is created through performative action and language; while citational practice means that as we "do" our gender those acts are rehearsed and performed until they are absorbed into hegemonic culture (Butler, 1990). Through the gendering of other discourses – such as domestic duties, parenting, work, and media representations – this system is regulated and maintained. This can contribute to our understanding of how BLM's popular practice has become focused on cis, heteronormative masculinity in our current cultural context. Here the erasure of Black women and LGBTQ+ people is affected by the interaction of the overlapping structures of hetero-patriarchal gender and sexuality in generating hierarchies of power. Our framing here is specifically intersectional in nature, this is important because gender within the BLM movement is racialized and thus gender performativity has different effects. Through "doing gender" in these contexts, it is expected that the people performing femininity as "women" be submissive compared to those performing masculinity as "men." When women perform masculinity or men perform femininity, they may potentially be subjected to violence (Big Think, 2011). These citations work differently because of racial stereotypes, but these same stereotypes also work to reinforce the submissive feminine role in BLM because of tropes and discourses about Black women, specifically the trope of the Black Matriarch (Collins, 2000). To subvert this trope – particularly the idea that Black women as matriarchs emasculate Black men – Black women

must perform a submissive role.

Black women have specifically been taught through social norms that to perform as a Black woman is to work behind the scenes and not as the face of social issues (Greene, 2016). However, they are often the creators and promoters of movements seeking equality. BLM, for instance, was created by women (Cullors, 2018). Through work in intersectional feminist studies, specifically the #SayHerName movement that works to bring recognition to Black women who have died because of police violence, it is clear that Black women have not been the cultural focus of work done to prevent and eliminate police brutality against Black people. This is one of the many times within the movement that Black women have had to take a secondary role. Unfortunately, this secondary role is not new to the women in these movements, as it dates back as far as the Civil Rights movement in America (hooks, 1981). As actors in society, through the process of citationality, we recognize and replicate the behaviors and aesthetics of those in groups we identify with (in this case gender categories). Black women in movements, such as the Civil Rights movement, are taught to support the Black men in the movement while not asking for the same immediate rights (hooks, 1981). During the Civil Rights movement, this secondary status impacted women of color materially through suffrage. Black women were not able to vote until long after white women and Black men were granted their rights. In 1870, Black men who were not slaves were granted the right to vote in America. In 1920, white women were granted this right. It was not until the 1960s, that Black women were able to access this same right (Gordon & Collier-Thomas, 1997).

In relation to BLM, the material effects of this inequality - including the murder of Black women - comes in the form of not being recognized in the fight against police brutality. Black femininity and womanhood, when used to represent BLM, have been exploited by those outside the movement - a traditional type of exploitation of Black women's pain particularly in media (Collins, 2000). A primary example of this is the viral image of a BLM protest (Fig. 1.). It is that of an unnamed Black woman standing in front of two police officers. The police officers have full riot gear. The Black woman, on the other hand, has on a sundress and is reaching out to the police officers. This woman is performing a nurturing role in this image; she acts as an ambassador from the movement and shows a face of peaceful protest.



Figure 1. A Black Lives Matter protester stands near armed police officers

Not long after this image went viral, Pepsi released an advertisement exploiting the image with an attempt to capitalize on the youth market's support for BLM. Therefore, you may also recognize this imagery from a now infamous ad starring Kendall Jenner (Fig. 2). The reference - or citation - is unmistakably clear. Pepsi attempted to co-opt the protestors image and the BLM movements' following in order to sell a product.



Figure 2. Kendall Jenner confronts police officers in an advertisement for Pepsi (Victor, 2017).

This imagery shows one of the many ways Black femininity is performed socially. Common stereotypes of Black femininity from which viewers understand this image include the strong or angry Black woman, who seems to be able to take any amount of pain; the Jezebel, a hyper-sexualized young Black woman stereotype often used to justify sexual violence against Black women; the matriarch who is "too strong" and therefore aids in the demasculinization of Black men; and the mammy, a cartoonish over nurturing figure often used in advertising for products such as Aunt Jemima's Maple Syrup (Collins, 2000). The image of the protester could potentially fall into the "Jezebel" or "Strong Black Woman" stereotypes because of how this young woman is positioned against authority. Other stereotypical figures of the Black woman (such as the mammy) would not stand against an oppressor in this way.

Other media portrayals of Black gender performativity include music videos. The music video for "The Story of O.J." by the musician Jay-Z is a good example of mediatized common stereotypes of Blackness. The music video portrays Jay-Z and other Black characters in the style of vintage racist cartoons and stereotypes. The song title itself refers to O.J. Simpson, a former football player who was accused of murdering his ex-wife Nicole Brown and her friend Ron Goldman. Between the 1960s and 1990s, Simpson joined predominantly white, wealthy social groups. He seemed to desire "racial transcendence" and hoped he would not be seen as Black (VanHouten, 2017). The song addresses this issue and Simpson's infamous line, "I'm not Black, I'm O.J." Jay-Z contends that regardless of how much money a Black person makes or what they look like, they are still seen as inferior (Carter, 2017). The song and video focus on the experiences of cisgender Black men, which is also a persistent issue within the popular practices of the BLM movement. Women remain in the background as sexual distractions or mothers providing support.

At their core, music videos are meant to be performative and expressive in nature. Nevertheless, such videos contribute to the construction of the gender binary as they produce and reproduce gendered performance for millions to see. For this reason,

this music video shows the ways that Judith Butler's theory of performativity works in daily life. "The Story of O.J." explores the stereotypes and archetypes that are often cited in the performance of "Black gender."

"The Story of O.J." is compelling for its explicit citation of vintage, twentieth century cartoons. Throughout the video, the images on screen depict exaggerated versions of Black femininity and masculinity. The video cites the "Jezebel" stereotype as an example of Black femininity. This is represented through the hyper-sexualized burlesque dancer, complete with voluptuous, swinging hips and pasties (Fig. 3) (Carter, 2017). In addition to this, there are also direct references to the classic mammy as a Black female performance; a heavysset Black woman performing domestic duties covered from head to toe with an apron and a head-wrap (Fig. 4) (Collins, 2000). However, while these aspects of Black femininity appear, depictions of Black masculinity take center stage. This could be due to the fact that Jay-Z is a male artist, but his citations of Black masculinity appear front and center and are the only archetypes explicitly discussed in the lyrics, directly referenced as 'hustlers' and 'criminals' (Carter, 2017). It is, however, important to understand the context of these images. Jay-Z stresses in his lyrics that these depictions of Black people are made from the collective white point of view (Carter, 2017). This further supports Butler's argument that we cite performances to both construct our own behavior as well as to perceive the behavior of others (Butler, 1990).



Figure 3. A burlesque dancer featured in the music video for The Story of O.J. (Carter, 2017).

While the social commentary of the video is compelling, particularly in the way that these stereotypes are being used to make a point about the perceptions of dominant white culture, the issue of inclusivity within the video must be raised. In this video, the centrality of Black cisgender men as the focal point works to obscure and minimize Black women. Thus, Black women are shown on the sidelines, and gender-nonconforming and transgender Black people are virtually invisible—similar to the way popular framings of BLM obscure and minimize female and gender non-conforming Black people

bell hook's work provides a useful addition to the analysis of Black gender performativity in order to understand better how cultural media such as the video and Black women's erasure in BLM are linked. In "Ain't I a Woman," hooks explores gendered behavior – what Butler would label performativity – in the Black patriarchy and how sexism is reproduced through Black masculinity and



Figure 4. A representation of the mammy stereotype in the music video for The Story of O.J. (Carter, 2017).

femininity. She discusses the ways that Black patriarchy has forced Black women into a submissive role in social movements. While both Black men and women are affected by racism, women have had to fight harder to be included in the movement for equality. During the women's suffrage movement, Black women originally positioned themselves with non-Black women trying to gain the right to vote, but they were also forced to submit to the reality that Black men should have that right first in America. Black women have, additionally, primarily had to take on the image of the "respectable Black woman" to be seen in movements. Rosa Parks is a good example of this. Performativity can be applied here to look at why her bus protest was used as a face of the Civil Rights movement. She protested in a way that, while resistant, was still seen as passive compared to marches of the time and to other protests led by Black men.

Performativity cannot account for all of the factors that are at play in relation to gender in BLM. It cannot completely account for how race intertwines with gender and the effects of those overlapping systems on the movement. Furthermore, it cannot account for the ways race might fuel those who criticize the movement. However, strategic use of Butler's theory of performativity - particularly when linked to an intersectional framework - may help us understand more about how racialized gender is portrayed and its impacts on racialized citational practices or even representations themselves. It can also help us better understand the ways that queer Black women have been pushed out of the center of the popular practice in the movement, although they created it, by helping us understand how gender roles have emerged in relation to white supremacy in the Black community. Thus, when used in conjunction with intersectionality, performativity can offer a way to approach these dynamics both within the community and in representations of the community outside of it.

Conclusion

In truth, the Black Lives Matter movement can benefit from instituting any combination of these feminist approaches. It is compelling to see the ways in which the popular uptake of the BLM movement has set its focus on a cis-male experience with police brutality while failing to recognize the similar oppressions experienced by others. However, by employing these theoretical frameworks we highlight sites where the popular framings of BLM can improve the inclusivity of the public movement. It is important to note that BLM, while flawed, has still made countless strides in the fight for justice. By critically analyzing the utility of feminist

approaches in the BLM movement, our hope is not to diminish the progress that has been made; but rather, we do so with the intention of allowing all to benefit from the success that this movement has brought to the Black community. Being intentional about the way inclusivity is employed in BLM can only serve to benefit the movement's overall reach and mission. To make this happen, it is imperative that Black women and members of the LGBTQ+ community are included and that their experiences are acknowledged. It is only after acknowledging these experiences that we can hope to actualize the Black Lives Matter movement to its fullest potential.

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The authors’ inspiration for researching feminist theory is rooted in the study of communication. All three have declared a Communication Studies major, with both Jess and Sophia having a concentration in Interpersonal and Organizational Communication, and Chelsey in Media Production. While enrolled in ‘Gender, Culture, and Communication,’ they were tasked with applying feminist theoretical frameworks to contemporary issues. Coming from a range of identities themselves—race/sexuality/gender expression—they made it a point to highlight the importance of inclusivity in all spaces and places. This passion led them to explore the importance of inclusivity within social movements, particularly Black Lives Matter. The group presented their research at the Feminisms Here & Now conference in 2018.

Women's Liberation in China: Necessity or Afterthought?

by Linda Cheng

How did the People's Republic of China treat the question of women's liberation? To answer this question, this paper delves into the famous work of contemporary Chinese revolutionary and writer Ding Ling, *Miss Sophia's Diary*, thoroughly analyzing the text from a Materialist-Feminist framework in order to understand Ding Ling's critiques of patriarchal society and her conception for women's true liberation. This paper will also explore Ding Ling's life, revolutionary experiences, and writings critiquing patriarchal culture within the Chinese Communist Party to contextualize *Miss Sophia's Diary* within the larger political-economic conditions of the time. Drawing from Ding Ling's framework for women's liberation and her explicit critiques of the Chinese Communist Party, this paper will critically analyze the policies undertaken by the People's Republic of China (PRC) towards women, specifically in the time period following the PRC's founding. The broader argument this paper aims to address is the claim that women's liberation can be subsumed under socialism; that patriarchy stems from capitalism. Through carefully analyzing Ding Ling's critiques of the PRC's treatment of women and studies of women's circumstances in China following the establishment of the PRC, this claim proves erroneous.

Keywords: gender, patriarchy, feminism, heterosexuality, China

Introduction

Ding Ling cuts a striking figure in Chinese history. She is one of the most celebrated writers and communist revolutionaries in China, having authored more than three hundred works throughout her lifetime.¹ Her book, *Miss Sophia's Diary*, was a feminist masterpiece which not only showcased all the complexities and contradictions of being a woman under patriarchal society, but explored themes of sexuality, "modernity," and autonomy. Her essay, *Reflections on Women's Day*, criticized what Ding Ling saw as an oppressive patriarchal culture still held by much of the Chinese Communist Party at the time, and elicited scorn from the Party leadership.² Ding Ling's life is in many ways a reflection of women's lives within socialist China; her work, evidence of the antagonisms and contradictions rife within communist China regarding women's liberation, gender justice, and sexuality.

There is much scholarship on the question of women in China, much of which is written by outsiders and predicated on western, Cold War-era biases. There has not been much research, however, exploring Ding Ling's works or her critiques of patriarchy within the People's Republic of China. While her works and legacy are lauded in China, her many salient criticisms regarding the reproduction of patriarchy within the very ranks of the Chinese Communist Party

(CCP) itself remain by and large ignored. The aim of this paper, then, is twofold: first, to analyze Ding Ling's critiques of patriarchy and heterosexuality in order to synthesize her conception of women's liberation and second, to contrast Ding Ling's conception of women's liberation with the Chinese Communist Party's official line on women following the founding of the People's Republic of China. This paper has great implications for understanding Ding Ling's works in the context of socialist China, and is original in its analysis due to the lack of historiography regarding this topic.

Methodology

The methodology of this paper will focus on analysis and interpretation of primary sources, using secondary sources to provide historical-material context for the primary sources. This paper will draw on Materialist-Feminism to present its critiques, specifically from the French lesbian feminist Monique Wittig's works. Materialist-Feminism describes a body of feminist theory that, broadly, conceives of heterosexuality as a political regime which cements men's class oppression of women and patriarchy as rooted in political-economic circumstances—rejecting biological essentialism and determinism. The major primary source used in this paper will be *Miss Sophia's Diary* (1928) written by Ding Ling as this paper is a targeted analysis of this work in comparison to the CCP's policies towards women.

Ding Ling Speaking through *Miss Sophia's Diary*

Miss Sophia's Diary begins not with the first page, but with Ding Ling's escape from an arranged marriage with her cousin in Shanghai, China in 1920.³ Her escape and subsequent struggles along the way color and fuel her masterpiece, *Miss Sophia's Diary*. The book centers Sophia, who is a tuberculosis patient struggling with past mistakes and present desires. The first entry of the diary finds Sophia musing to herself about her past loves and failures as the wind blows outside: "The doctor's instructions are to sleep and eat a lot and not to read or think. Exactly what I find most impossible".⁴ It is clear from the beginning that Sophia is a character who lives in her head—someone filled to the brim with contradictory thoughts, musings, and questions of herself. The self awareness of Sophia established by Ding Ling allows the reader to understand Sophia as a woman who is neither pawn nor pedestal—rather, she is someone who is simply human. The vulnerable nature of Sophia's musings not only draws the reader in, but runs as an integral theme throughout *Miss Sophia's Diary*—what is the reader to do with Sophia's yearnings, confessions, sadness, joys? Are Sophia's experiences reflective of the larger structural systems which determine women's lives? Does Sophia represent a larger experience?

A larger experience is what Ding Ling hints at with each of Sophia's contemplations. Take for example Sophia musing over her friend Weidi's feelings for her: "Oh, I know. I know what's behind those shy glowing eyes...You've been in love with me for such a long time, Weidi. Has he captured me? That is not my responsibility"⁵. The honesty of this inner musing is striking—not only is Sophia aware that her friend is in love with her, she knows it is not her responsibility to satisfy Weidi.

Through Sophia, Ding Ling speaks to the larger patriarchal norm of women centering men in their lives and prioritizing men's feelings above their own needs. Through Sophia, Ding Ling writes, "That is not my responsibility." Sophia's stark understanding of Weidi's love for her as part in parcel with the dependence and entitlement with which men chase women is striking; her defiance against the role she is expected to take is integral. It is through this quote that Sophia morphs from narrator to protagonist. She is a woman who is awake and well aware of the burdensome womanhood which she is expected to carry. Through this quote, Ding Ling asserts the importance of women centering their own needs and defying the societal norm of women prioritizing men before themselves.

Sophia's understanding of the suffocation of womanhood is complemented by her loneliness and desire for mutuality and understanding: "I've always wanted a man who would really understand me. If he doesn't understand me and my needs, then what good are love and empathy?"⁶ This quote can be understood as a larger critique of the institution of marriage. The mutuality and understanding that Sophia so yearns for juxtaposes the harsh reality of the heterosexual marriage, which entails the woman's subordination of her emotional, domestic, and reproductive labor to her husband.

Thus, Sophia's musings about what she wants out of a relationship can be understood as Ding Ling's intentional critique of the lack of mutuality and understanding available to women within heterosexual relationships. The last part of this particular quote is particularly salient: "If he doesn't understand me and my needs, then what good are love and empathy?"⁷ Indeed, what is the

point of the institution which supposedly enshrines "love" between man and woman, if women are not allowed understanding and love when they participate in that institution?

But it is Sophia's contradictory attraction to Ling Jishi that proves to be the vehicle of Ding Ling's most pressing critique within *Miss Sophia's Diary*. Sophia is having dinner with her friends Yufang and Yunlin, when she meets their guest Ling Jishi. She is immediately drawn to Ling, whom she describes as "...dazzling... there is an elegance to him, difficult to describe, an elusive quality that shook me profoundly"⁸. What is most notable about this passage is how Sophia prefaces her confession of attraction to Ling with the assertion that "I've always felt that it was normal for men to be glib, phony, cautious; that's about the extent of it"⁹. The tension here is palpable. If normal men are "glib, phony, cautious", what is Ling Jishi?¹⁰

Ling Jishi is the forbidden desire. Ling Jishi himself is not an important character insofar as his character or development. He is not the love interest of Sophia, but the object of her desire: the figure who represents the suffocation of womanhood within society and Sophia's attempts to rebel against such suffocation. This suffocation is encapsulated in Sophia's forlorn musing to herself:

"All this stuff about his lips, his eyebrows, his eyelashes, his hands, is pure fantasy. Those aren't things a person should need...I'm so full of regret! I regret all the wrong things I did today, things a decent woman would never do".¹¹

This quote's salient representation of the repressive norms faced by women in China prior to and under the People's Republic of China are encapsulated in the characterization of the decent woman as contrary to that of the narrator. The description of the decent woman can be drawn in juxtaposition to Sophia's fantasies, providing a fascinating dichotomy of deviant versus acceptable behavior for women. The deviant woman, the woman who is not decent, fantasizes about her object of desire and actively pursues her sexual desire. The decent woman, on the other hand, is desexualized and would never have thoughts driven by sexual desire—the decent woman is passive.

When Sophia confesses her great sense of torment to her friend Yufang in the hopes of empathy and advice, Yufang seizes on the conversation to shame Sophia for getting involved with Ling Jishi:

"Sophia, I don't think you're being honest...you should be more careful about the way you look at men. You must realize that people like Ling Jishi are not like the guys we ran around with in Shanghai. They have very little contact with women and don't understand well-intentioned friendliness. You don't want him to end up disappointed and unhappy, do you?"¹²

Here, Ding Ling uses Yufang as a vehicle for her critique of the shaming and blame that society places upon women for their sexual activities. Ding Ling's clear assessment of the double standards imposed upon women throughout these passages poses several pressing questions: What is liberation if women are constrained to suffocating dichotomies of decent versus indecent? What is freedom, when women are not allowed to pursue their desires without fear of shaming or dehumanization? Ding Ling's answer:

“...pure fantasy”¹³

Ding Ling furthers her narration of sexuality and forbidden desires through Sophia's contemplation of her previous relationship with her ex-lover Jianru:

“Oh Jianru, Jianru, how you've crushed my self-respect. She looks and acts so much like a girlfriend I had when I was younger, that without being aware of what I was doing, I started chasing her. Initially she encouraged my intimacies. But I met with intolerable treatment from her in the end. Whenever I think about it, I hate myself for what I did in the past, for my regrettably unscrupulous behavior”¹⁴

Here again, Ding Ling uses the torturous inner dialogue of Sophia as a vehicle for critique of heterosexual gender norms in society. Ding Ling's intentional use of language here is especially cogent: upon musing about her previous relationship with Jianru, Sophia admits that Jianru “...crushed my self-respect,” immediately following with professed hatred for her past actions.¹⁵ The words regrettable and unscrupulous take on new meanings under the implication of Sophia's bisexuality—they become words of self-harm. The shame professed by Sophia can be understood as double layered: not only was Sophia participating in the taboo practice of actively pursuing an intimate relationship as a woman, she was pursuing an intimate relationship as a woman with another woman.

Jianru, in this case, does not represent the forbidden object of desire as Ling Jishi does, but one of Sophia's demons which haunts her. The shame that immediately follows Sophia's thoughts of her relationship with Jianru can be drawn in parallel to the Chinese Communist Party's censorship and prohibition of homosexuality and sex education following the founding of the People's Republic of China.

Indeed, the Chinese Communist Party's suppression of homosexuality must be understood as inherently connected to its desexualization of women. Both entailed not only the suppression and state control of women's sexuality and state control, but the reinforcement of heterosexuality as not choice—but duty. In *The Category of Sex*, Monique Wittig writes:

The category of sex is the product of a heterosexual society which imposes on women the rigid obligation of the reproduction of the 'species', that is, the reproduction of heterosexual society. The compulsory reproduction of the “species” by women is the system of exploitation on which heterosexuality is economically based.¹⁶

Expanding upon the compulsory heterosexuality which society imposes on women is Sophia's bitter mourning for her dead lover whom Jianru reminded her of: Yunjie.

“It hurts even more to think about the nights I spent lying on the grass in French Park listening to Yunjie sing ‘Peony Pavilion’...If she hadn't been tricked by God into loving that ashen-faced man, she would never have died so fast and I wouldn't have wandered into Beijing alone... When I think of Yunjie, I want so badly to lose myself in unrestrained sobs, the way I could do when we were together”¹⁷

Here is Ding Ling's sharpest criticism of heterosexuality and its norms yet. Sophia strongly implies that the labor Yunjie contributed to her boyfriend resulted in her early death. The jealousy and pain that underlies Sophia's entry about Yunjie is palpable; although Sophia and Yunjie shared a deeply mutualistic and intimate relationship, Sophia was unable to compete with a man. Embodied within this quote is the compulsory heterosexuality that plagues all women; the notion that one must be with a man to be worthy and legitimate.

It is not “God” as Sophia states, who “tricked” Yunjie into loving the “ashen-faced man,” but rather patriarchal society which compelled Yunjie to be with a man even though her and Sophia shared such a deeply close relationship.¹⁸ Here, Ding Ling uses Yunjie to pose the question: are women truly free if they are compelled to center men in their lives? Are women liberated if they are still systematically coerced to perform certain labor and adhere to a societal norm which necessitates their subjugation?

Expanding upon Sophia's shame for her desire for Ling Jishi, her profession of her affair with Jianru, as well as her loneliness and yearning for mutuality allows the reader to understand Ding Ling's larger critique of the oppressive gender norms bore by women within patriarchal society. Throughout all of Sophia's diary entries is a profound sense of powerlessness in her life. Sophia is unable to act upon her sexual desire for Ling Jishi, constrained by the standards of respectability for women. In getting to know Ling Jishi, she finds him to be physically beautiful, but in possession of a “...cheap, ordinary soul”¹⁹ She is ashamed of her past relationship with Jianru, which not only ended in rejection, but transgressed the heterosexual societal norm. She is tortured by the death of her lover, Yunjie.

The juxtaposition between Sophia's dissatisfaction with both men in her life, Weidi and Ling Jishi, and her yearning for the relationships she had with Jianru and Yunjie provides a window into Ding Ling's critique of men's inability to reciprocate in relationships, and her analysis of the patriarchal system which conditions men into believing they are entitled to a woman's desire and labor with no mutual reciprocation. In addition, the rejection that Sophia faces from both Yunjie and Jianru can be tied into Monique Wittig's illuminating critique in *One is Not Born a Woman* on how the heterosexual regime punishes women who deviate from it: “...one feature of lesbian oppression consists precisely of making women out of reach for us, since women belong to men”²⁰

Thus, through careful analysis and deconstruction of *Miss Sophia's Diary*, Ding Ling's conception of women's liberation can be understood as one in which women are able to (1) self-determine free from shame or material threat, (2) have full and autonomous ownership of their bodies, (3) explore their sexualities and love for other women without fear of violence or danger, and (4) find mutuality and understanding in their intimate relationships.

The Chinese Communist Party's Conception of Women's Liberation

Ding Ling's conception of women's liberation stands in direct contrast to many of the CCP's policies. Most important is the marriage reform implemented by the CCP a year after the PRC's founding in 1950. Coined as the New Marriage Law, the policy officially offered women the freedoms to choose their own partner, decide their employment path, and have equal ownership of property with men.²¹

In addition, the Marriage Law raised the marriageable age to 20 and 18 for men and women respectively, prohibited marriage by proxy, and necessitated full consent to marriage from both parties.²² It should be noted that while the increase in marriageable age certainly marked an improvement from previous eras, the difference in marriageable age between men and women reflected the continuation of the patriarchal practice which expected women to marry earlier than men.

Most important within the New Marriage Law was the new divorce stipulation. Previously, women in China had been forced into arranged marriages or concubinage with no hopes of divorce or independence. With the passing of the New Marriage Law came the legalization of divorce on the requirement of obtaining official approval.²³ Indeed, working within the confines of marriage as an institution, the legalization of divorce proved a necessary step towards ensuring women's independence. In practice, however, patriarchy was in many cases reproduced to different degrees via the divorce stipulation. Divorces were notoriously hard to obtain, and women who sought divorce experienced shaming and stigma.²⁴ In many cases, women who attempted to exercise their rights to divorce faced brutal violence and death. In the province of Shaanxi, for example, the Women's Federation reported 195 instances of domestic murder related to marriage cases by the end of 1950.²⁵

Such occurrences in response to women's exercise of their rights to divorce can be seen not as deviations, but continuations of patriarchal norms from as recently as the revolutionary period of the 1940s: "The sexual inequality prevalent in the revolutionary camp itself was the controversial subject of 'Reflections on Women's Day,' published in March 1942. Ding Ling was aggrieved that women, especially if they were single, were a constant subject of rumours and gossip, the result of male prejudice."²⁶

In *Reflections on Women's Day*, Ding Ling noted that "There were [also] social pressures on married women...they were expected to please everyone: if they had no children, they were constantly asked why on earth they had married; if they had children, they were too busy to participate in political life and could be divorced for 'political backwardness'."²⁷ This characterization of the reality for women within the CCP directly contradicts Ding Ling's conception of women's liberation as one that allows for women to self-determine without fear of shame or material threat, as well as Ding Ling's conception of women being able to find mutuality and understanding within their intimate relationships.

Thus, the New Marriage Law can be understood as notable not only for the changes it brought to Chinese society and especially women's place in society, but also for its contradictory preservation of the inherently patriarchal institution of marriage—an institution which was inarguably founded for the very purpose of selling and owning women as unpaid slaves to men.²⁸ Marriage in China, long an institution which has naturalized the objectification and subordination of women, encountered reforms but nevertheless continued as an institution upon which society depended for its economic and social reproduction.²⁹ The violence many women encountered as a result of exercising their right to divorce also directly contradicts Ding Ling's envisionment of women being able to self-determine free from shame or material threat.

In complement with its reforms of marriage, society under the Chinese Communist Party's rule saw the wholesale desexualization of women, and the enforcement of sex as strictly enshrined within marriage.³⁰ Along with this desexualization of women was the

Chinese Communist Party's definition of marriage as strictly between a woman and a man.³¹ "Premarital sex and homosexuality were forbidden, as was prostitution, pornography, sex education... any reference to sex in books or film was prohibited."³² The prohibition of pornography and prostitution effectively abolished the commodification and objectification of women as consumable products, marking a radical change from the treatment of women as subordinate objects in previous eras.

The demonization of sex education and homosexuality, however, are indicative of the CCP's tight control over women's sexuality and private lives. "The Chinese Communist Party... wrapped its people in a cocoon of chastity...[it] was intent on creating a society that was basically sexless outside of their homes."³³ Such desexualization and homophobia can be understood as part in parcel with the preservation of the heterosexual marriage institution—an institution integral for the reproduction of the Chinese workforce.³⁴ This criminalization of deviation from the heterosexual norm can be held in tension with Ding Ling's conception of women's liberation. Specifically, the officialized desexualization and homophobia of the CCP can be understood as directly contradicting Ding Ling's tenet's of women's liberation in which women have full ownership of their bodies, and are able to explore their sexualities and love for other women without fear of violence or repression.

Conclusions

While the People's Republic of China ushered in an era which saw the abolition of the hypersexualization of women and a relative equalization of labor between women and men compared to previous eras, it maintained the major institutions that upheld the functions of patriarchy in socialist China. Women's place was notably improved, but women were not liberated according to Ding Ling's conception of women's liberation. This can be attributed to the Chinese Communist Party's official conception of women's equality, which necessitated the depoliticization of women's liberation: "[The CCP's] policies and laws relating to women had the purpose of liberating women from their domestic duties in order to take up the Communist struggle by contributing to the task of economic development outside the home."³⁵ Women's liberation, in the CCP's view, was and remains to be understood as simply a tool towards building the socialist economy. It is clear that the CCP's line towards women is built upon Engels' assertion that:

Men traditionally have been able to rule over women because of their superior economic power, which was achieved when men came to produce goods outside the home that had a higher value than that of the goods produced by women inside the home.³⁶

The policies carried out by the CCP thus had the goal of pushing "...women...to emulate men by entering into the economic life of the community."³⁷ This depoliticization of women's liberation, naturalized understanding of gender, reinforcement of men's social position as the universal standard to emulate, and subsumption of women's struggle under economic class (in the process neglecting to acknowledge that women have historically constituted the lowest echelons of their respective economic classes, as compared to men) likely resulted in the notable contradictions between CCP policies and Ding Ling's arguably more full-bodied envisionment

of women's liberation. In short, the CCP under the leadership of Mao Zedong freed women's ability to contribute productive labor to the economy, but maintained the majority of institutions upon which patriarchy stood.

In comparing *Miss Sophia's Diary* and its critiques of patriarchy to the policies towards women undertaken by the CCP, it is clear that there are many ways in which Ding Ling and the PRC's conception of women's liberation differ. Measured by the criteria embedded in *Miss Sophia's Diary* by Ding Ling, the policies taken by the CCP after the PRC's founding fell short of giving women the ability to: (1) self-determine free from shame or material threat, (2) have full and autonomous ownership of their bodies, (3) explore their sexualities and love for other women without fear of violence or danger, and (4) find mutuality and understanding in their intimate relationships. Thus, women's liberation remains incomplete in China today—and Ding Ling's fight against patriarchal oppression remains integral to understanding women's struggle in contemporary China.

Notes

1. John Beyer, "Profile: Ding Ling," *Index on Censorship* 9, no. 1 (1980): 35.
2. *Ibid.*, 36.
3. *Ibid.*, 37.
4. Ling Ding, *I myself am a woman: Selected writings of Ding Ling* (Beacon Press, 1989), 50.
5. *Ibid.*, 52.
6. *Ibid.*, 52.
7. *Ibid.*, 52.
8. *Ibid.*, 55.
9. *Ibid.*, 55.
10. *Ibid.*, 55.
11. *Ibid.*, 58.
12. *Ibid.*, 72.
13. *Ibid.*, 58.
14. *Ibid.*, 52.
15. *Ibid.*, 52.
16. Monique Wittig, *The straight mind and other essays* (Beacon Press, 1992), 6.
17. Ding, *I myself am a woman*, 72.
18. Ding, 72.
19. Ding, 71.
20. Wittig, *The straight mind*, 13.
21. Gail Hershatter, "The gender of memory: rural Chinese women and the 1950s," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28, no. 1 (2002): 43.
22. *Ibid.*, 44.
23. *Ibid.*, 48.
24. *Ibid.*, 48.
25. *Ibid.*, 50.
26. Beyer, "Profile," 36.
27. *Ibid.*, 37.
28. Maria Jaschok and Suzanne Miers, eds. *Women and Chinese patriarchy: Submission, servitude and escape* (Zed books, 1994), 20.
29. *Ibid.*, 25.
30. Raymond J. Noonan, s.v. "Heterosexual relationships," in *The international encyclopedia of sexuality* ed. Robert T. Francoeur, vol. 1 (New York: Continuum, 1997).
31. *Ibid.*, 144.
32. *Ibid.*, 146.
33. Ann D. Jordan, "Women's rights in the People's Republic of China: Patriarchal wine poured from a socialist bottle," *J. Chinese L.* 8 (1994): 45.
34. Jaschok, *Women and Chinese patriarchy*, 27.
35. Jordan, "Women's rights," 52.
36. *Ibid.*, 51.
37. *Ibid.*, 51.



Linda Cheng is a junior at UNC, majoring in History and Economics with a minor in Statistics. Her areas of interest broadly span contemporary China, and specifically focus on the ways in which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) dealt (and continues to deal) with gender, "class struggle," and socialist economic construction following the founding of the People's Republic of China. In her free time, she enjoys running, eating, and reading.

Detecting Orientalist Representations of India in *The Indian Detective*

by Marsela Hughes

In 2009, more people had viewed *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), a film about a boy from the Mumbai slums, than had visited India in the same year. In the United States, film and television provide representations of faraway places, peoples, and cultures for an American audience. For many Americans, the conceptualization of foreign spaces is largely constructed through these representations rather than through direct experience, contact, or relationship. However, film and television are not benign forms of entertainment. They are imbued with power as makers of meaning and identity. This article focuses on representations of India in the Netflix television show *The Indian Detective*. Through narrative analysis, it argues that these representations operate as a contemporary manifestation of Edward Said's epochal theory of "Orientalism." The representation of India in *The Indian Detective* is "Orientalist" in nature because it produces a particular knowledge about India that distinguishes Indian identity from American identity, thus allowing an American audience to have control over India.

Keywords: Orientalism, Media representation, Meritocracy, Colonial discourse, Essentialization

Introduction

In the 2017 Netflix series *The Indian Detective*, a Toronto constable, Doug D'Mello (Russell Peters) finds himself involved in a transnational drug and money laundering scheme during his time in Mumbai visiting his father. It contains representations of Indians that juxtapose Indian identity with American identity, producing an essentialist Indian identity, as immoral and brutish, that is antithetical to an essentialized American identity that is morally pure. D'Mello, a Canadian of South Asian descent, travels to Mumbai to visit his father after he is suspended over a failed drug bust. The senior D'Mello moved back to Mumbai five years prior to the events in the series. Shortly after arriving in Mumbai, Doug D'Mello finds himself involved in a murder investigation with the local Mumbai police. While the investigation serves as an opportunity for D'Mello to regain his integrity as a constable, D'Mello's involvement in the investigation exposes a transnational drug scheme involving a notorious Mumbai crime boss and a wealthy white businessman. The series follows D'Mello as he navigates the investigation in Mumbai, represented as a corrupt and alien land, and in Toronto, a place of order and familiarity. In doing so, stereotypical, "Orientalist" narratives are reproduced that situate India in contrast with the West.

Focusing on *The Indian Detective*, I argue that contemporary representations of India in television construct an essentialist

conceptualization of Indian identity within the American consciousness that allows America to exert control over India. In order to engage with this notion of extant "Orientalism," I begin by examining the American ideology of meritocracy that is prevalent in the series and then explores how this ideology allows an American audience to distinguish India from the United States. First, I will define the ideology of meritocracy and situate the article within colonial discourse about India. Then, I will identify the articulation of meritocracy and colonial discourse in *The Indian Detective* through an analysis of the characters Gopal Chandekar and David Marlowe in order to demonstrate how media representations operate as contemporary manifestations of Edward Said's (1978) "Orientalism."

Meritocracy and *The Indian Detective*

According to *Race and Racism in the United States: An Encyclopedia of the American Mosaic*, an interdisciplinary reference work with concepts related to the study of race and racism in the United States, meritocracy is defined as "a system in which advancement of social position, resources, and other social goods are distributed based on individual talent, ability, and ingenuity" (Lippard & Gallagher, 2014, p. 776). Meritocracy asserts that upward mobility and individual success have a linear relationship with work ethic and ability. Closely related, the ideology of egalitarianism grants legitimacy to meritocracy (Seymour, 1996). Egalitarianism holds that all people are created equally, and

therefore have equal endowments of talent, ability, and ingenuity. Differences in social position, resources, and social goods are therefore associated with differences in skill and effort (Lippard & Gallagher, 2014). However, both this system of meritocracy and the ideology of egalitarianism neglect to acknowledge the influence that race, class, gender, and other categories of identity have on the accessibility of resources, the application of talent, and the allocation of social goods. The consequences of such neglect will be further discussed through an analysis of the narrative of meritocracy evident in *The Indian Detective*. Prior to this analysis, it is helpful to identify the origin of meritocracy in the United States and its relevance to the construction of an American identity.

Currently operating as a dominant ideology in the United States, meritocracy is an ideology dating back to the founding of the country. The origin of meritocracy lies in the initial formation of America as a settler colony and in the early formation of a national identity (Seymour, 1996). With its war of independence against Britain, the inception of the United States from a former settler colony is exceptional compared to that of most other nation-states (Seymour, 1996). The creation of a new nation by Europeans on non-European soil allowed the nation's newest citizens to determine which ideologies it would adhere to. Among these founding ideologies is egalitarianism. Egalitarianism was claimed as a defining ideology of the new America in the very document that declared its independence from its colonial master. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal..." (U.S. Declaration of Independence, Paragraph 2, 1776). With the issuing of this declaration and the subsequent creation of a new nation, equality became - and continues to be - a beacon to the world of what America stands for. Thus, the establishment of egalitarianism as a foundational ideology granted legitimacy to the ideology of meritocracy, asserting that all people have equal endowments of talent and ability as well as equal opportunity to translate their endowment to upward mobility.

Meritocracy and the American Dream explain one's failure to achieve social mobility as a result of some internal quality inherent to the individual (Seymour, 1996). Again, the extent to which socioeconomic and political systems oppress individuals of various categories of identity, limit the availability of resources, and deny opportunity for social advancement is wholly neglected within these ideologies. A society founded upon meritocracy with the promise of the American Dream "leads naturally to the subsidiary theme that success or failure are results wholly of personal qualities, that he who fails has only himself to blame..." (Robert Merton, as quoted in Seymour, 1996, p. 47). This theme is articulated in *The Indian Detective* through the juxtaposition of the characters Gopal Chandekar and David Marlowe - a theme further explored later in the article.

In the production and consumption of narratives, both the author and the audience possess an ideological framework that informs how meaning is created and concluded from the narrative. Anandra Mitra (2016) identifies this framework as an "ideological position", or "a set of material practices that determine the worldview of a person" (p. 10). Material practices are commonplace, routine practices of an individual that are shaped by one's culture. Thus, the ideologies of a culture shape the practices of the individual and consequently determine their worldview. Through their worldview, an author encodes meaning into a narrative and an audience decodes meaning from that narrative (Hall, 1993). In

viewing *The Indian Detective*, an American audience will engage with the show through their ideological position. Due to the centrality of the ideology of meritocracy in American culture and identity, the American audience is able to apprehend the ideology of meritocracy in the show. Not only is meritocracy articulated through the representation of India in *The Indian Detective*, colonial discourse is also reproduced.

Indian Despotism in Colonial Discourse

Contemporary representations of India and Indians in film and television reinforce and reinscribe colonial discourse that distinguished India from Europe. Lata Mani, feminist historian and author of *Contentious Traditions*, (1987) defines colonial discourse as "a mode of understanding Indian society that emerged alongside colonial rule" (p. 122). In *Contentious Traditions*, Mani (1987) analyzes how colonial discourse shaped debates surrounding the practice of sati, or widow immolation, in colonial India. During the colonial era, colonial powers secured their domination and authority over their colonial subjects through means of knowledge production. In the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, power resided in the one who was able to describe and define the other. In a discussion of knowledge and domination in his 1978 publication *Orientalism*, Edward Said identifies knowledge production as a Western style of control over colonized spaces. The power the West exerted over its colonies did not come from moral or economic superiority, but from having knowledge about its colonies. Consequently, the colonized subject is denied its autonomy and the power to represent itself. In the Western consciousness, the identity of the colonized subject was constructed through the knowledge produced about the colonial subjects.

In *Orientalism*, Said (1978) offers multiple definitions of Orientalism, with the first definition as "the teaching, writing, or researching of the Orient" (p. 2). Said's use of the terms "Orient" and "Occident" are titles referring to the colonized space and the colonizing power, respectively. Therefore, the use of the term "Orient" refers to formerly colonized spaces in Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa (many of these regions are commonly referred to as the "Global South" today). The knowledge produced about colonial subjects by colonial powers resulted in the construction of the "Orient" "politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively" through discourse (Said, 1978, p. 3). Colonial powers were able to define what the "Orient" was and who the people living in those spaces were for a Western audience. Consider the example given in *Orientalism* of the construction of Egypt by Britain, its colonizing power:

England knows Egypt; Egypt is what England knows; England knows that Egypt cannot have self-government; England confirms that by occupying Egypt; for the Egyptians, Egypt is what England has occupied and now governs; foreign occupation therefore becomes 'the very basis' of contemporary Egyptian civilization; Egypt requires, indeed insists upon, British occupation. (42)

From this example, the relationship between power, knowledge, and identity is apparent. Britain exerted power over Egypt in producing knowledge about Egypt. Once Egyptian identity was

constructed through that knowledge production, Britain was able to represent Egypt on the basis of the knowledge acquired. This method of knowing and this style of dominating was employed by European powers throughout the colonial period. Specifically, through the process of “otherization,” the “Orient” was constructed as alien, exotic, and all-together different from Europe. In order to secure authority over India, Britain produced a particular knowledge about India that effectively otherized India.

Both general stereotypes about the “Orient” and specific stereotypes about Indians were influential in shaping the conceptualization of India in the Western consciousness. Despite the variety of cultures, languages, and religions that comprised the “Orient”, colonial discourse primarily regarded the “Orient” as a homogenized space with essential characteristics. Lord Cromer, secretary in India from 1872-1876 and England’s Controller-General and Consul-General in Egypt from 1878-1907, provides many representations of the “Orient” during the colonial period. In *Modern Egypt*, a two-volume work detailing his experience and observations as an appointed General, Cromer (1908) asserts many problematic conclusions about all “Orientals”. Cromer claims that, “Orientals are inveterate liars, they are ‘lethargic and suspicious,’ and in everything oppose the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race” (Said, 1978, p. 39). In other colonial documentation, Cromer describes Europeans as rational, virtuous, mature, and normal with the “Orient” as irrational, depraved, childlike, and different (Said, 1978). Through anthropological, medical, and religious forms of discourse, Britain consistently represented liberty, equality, progress, change, and dynamism while India was consistently represented as ahistorical, unchanging, static, and paralyzed by tradition (Ramasubramanian, 2005).

One of the earliest colonial stereotypes about India that presupposes the contemporary caricature of the inherently evil Indian is India as despotic. Despotism is defined as “a country or political system where the ruler holds absolute power” (Oxford English Dictionary Online, 2019). Despotic rulers are stereotypically regarded as brutish, unreasonable, and malevolent. Ruling with an iron fist, everyone is subject to his authority alone. This characterization of the political structure in India prior to the arrival of the British East India Company became justification for colonial rule. To the British, India’s despotism reflected the natives’ innate disposition towards evil while India’s unchanging nature made modernism, progress, and enlightenment unattainable. Therefore, colonization by the British was propagated as a noble endeavor to save the “backwards” Indians from their own depravity. Initially, this stereotype effectively denied the reality of the dynamic, complex, and organized political structure of the Mughal Empire, which ruled in India both before and after the establishment of the British East India Company. Over time however, this stereotype became grounds for the characterization of the Indian as “the embodiment of evil” (Mitra, 1999, p. 138).

A second, seemingly less problematic yet equally vilifying, colonial stereotype about India is the enervated Indian. By this I mean the construction of Indian identity as weak, devoid of energy, and lacking vitality. In *A History of Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan*, British soldier Robert Orme (1763) provides a description of Indians that is indicative of the British perspective on the natives:

An abhorrence to the shedding of blood, derived from his religion, and seconded by the great temperance of a life which is passed by most of them in a very sparing use of animal food, and a total abstinence from intoxicating liquors; the influence of the most regular of climates, in which the great heat of the sun and the great fertility of the soil lessen most of the wants to which the human species is subject in austerer regions, and supply the rest without the exertion of much labour; these causes, with various derivations and consequences from them, have all together contributed to render the Indian the most enervated inhabitant of the globe.(303)

Orme not only identifies Indians as the weakest type of human, but he also attributes that weakness to religious principles, eating practices, as well as the climate of the Indian subcontinent. This representation posits Indians as the absolute antithesis to European identity. Indians are bound by an Eastern religious tradition while the British subscribe to Enlightenment ideals. Everything from the consumption of animals and liquor to the climate in India differ from that in Britain and contribute to the disparity. Around 150 years later, Lord Cromer (1908) would issue a corroborating claim that the “Oriental” “generally acts, speaks, and thinks in a manner exactly opposite to the European”. The characterization of Indians as weak was essential to “the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all non-European peoples and cultures” (Said, 1978, p. 15). This distinction between Indian and European identity continues to inform the representations of Indians, allowing for the juxtaposition of Gopal Chandekar and David Marlowe.

Lastly, Indians were routinely characterized as savage and violent throughout the colonial era. Both the alleged event, “The Black Hole of Calcutta”, and the idea of “Criminal Tribes” are emblematic of how India was represented in the British imagination. “The Black Hole of Calcutta” was a sensationalized event in 1756 in which 146 British prisoners were locked in a cramped dungeon, resulting in the death of 123 people from suffocation and heat exhaustion (Bayon, 1944). John Holwell, employee of the British East India Company and self-proclaimed survivor of “The Black Hole”, offered an account of his experience in the dungeon following his release. While there is no account of the event having occurred from Indian, Dutch, or French soldiers and civilians, the supposed event led to Indians being viewed as vengeful, malicious, and threatening.

Similarly, the idea of “Criminal Tribes” instilled within the British imagination an Indian’s propensity for violence. “Criminal Tribes” are groups of Indians believed by the British to have practiced crimes as a hereditary profession (Kapadia, 1952). These “Criminal Tribes” were believed to adhere to a coherent set of violent practices passed down from father to son. Therefore, the British government considered all persons born into the caste of “Criminal Tribes” criminals upon birth (Kapadia, 1952). However, similar to “The Black Hole of Calcutta”, “Criminal Tribes” were a sensationalized idea within the British imagination. In actuality, the “Criminal Tribes” were much smaller in number did not constitute an entire caste, and did not practice crime as a hereditary profession.

Both “The Black Hole of Calcutta” and “Criminal Tribes” reveal the extent to which criminality, violence, and barbarity

were associated with Indian identity. In attributing these qualities to Indians, a particular “identity narrative” was produced about Indians (Mitra, 2016). While these attributions were not entirely accurate, they could be perceived as authentic. When there is no competing reality to the portrayed reality, the narrative within the portrayed reality is regarded as truth. This leads to the essentialization of those attributes with the corresponding Indian identity. In the process of essentialization, a single characteristic or quality is identified as a fundamental and intrinsic trait of a culture, space, or people. Therefore, with the repeated and consistent attribution of criminality, violence, and barbarity to Indian identity throughout the colonial period, those qualities came to be understood as innate and essential to all Indians.

Even though the United States never had any colonial relationship with India, Americans have been exposed to an essentialized Indian identity and participate in the circulation of that identity. Literature, history books, travel accounts, news sources, films, and television shows have preserved this “Orientalist” construction of Indian identity within the Western consciousness since the end of the colonial period. This process of essentialization continues today, laying the foundation for the character Gopal Chandekar in *The Indian Detective*. In the following paragraphs, I will identify the articulation of the ideology of meritocracy in the show and explain how the representation of Gopal Chandekar in *The Indian Detective* is simultaneously a product and a reproduction of colonial stereotypes about India.

Locating Meritocracy and Colonial Discourse in *The Indian Detective*

The relationship between the characters Gopal Chandekar, the Mumbai crime boss, and David Marlowe, the wealthy white businessman, serves as a juxtaposition between Indian identity and American identity. Gopal Chandekar is Mumbai’s young, notorious, and elusive crime boss. Born in the slums of Mumbai, Chandekar attempts to attain legitimacy as a wealthy and powerful individual by eradicating any affiliation he has with his impoverished upbringing. To accomplish this goal, Chandekar, with the help of his twin brother Amal and the businessman David Marlowe, participates in a transnational drug industry to finance the demolition of the Annapuri slums in which he was born, and erect a towering skyscraper in its place. In a conversation with David Marlowe, Chandekar speaks of the slums saying, “That skyscraper will destroy this place once and for all and give me the one thing that you have that I don’t: legitimacy.” Despite Chandekar’s best efforts, the Toronto constable Doug D’Mello disrupts Chandekar’s plans at every point along the way, ultimately leading to the arrest of the Chandekar twins.

In *The Indian Detective*, the representation of Chandekar draws on colonial stereotypes of Indians as despotic, enervated, and savage. In doing so, Chandekar is posited as the antithesis to Marlowe. Through the process of differentiation, the American audience is able to render Indian identity as an incomparable and clearly inferior identity to the superior American identity (Festinger, 1954). I argue that representations of India in television, such as that in *The Indian Detective*, are contemporary manifestations of Said’s (1978) “Orientalism” because they produce a particular knowledge about India, create distinctions between India and the United States, and allow the United States to have authority over India.

The ways in which Gopal Chandekar and David Marlowe contrast from one another illuminate the ideology of meritocracy and establish Indian identity in direct opposition to American identity. As a white billionaire, David Marlowe exemplifies the American Dream. Closely related to the ideology of meritocracy, the American Dream claims that upward mobility, power, and wealth are equally available to all and are gained through “hard work, responsibility, and individual talent” (Lippard & Gallagher, 2014, p. 777). An American audience will recognize David Marlowe as someone who “made it”, someone who attained the American Dream. In a conversation from episode two, Marlowe and Chandekar briefly relate their humble beginnings:

Chandekar: I left this place 20 years ago and still can’t seem to scrub off the humiliation.

Marlowe: Being poor is nothing to be ashamed of, Chandekar.

Chandekar: Easy for you to say, you’re rich.

Marlowe: Wasn’t always.

Chandekar: Yeah, but you were never this poor. You didn’t have to do what I had to do to get ahead.

Marlowe: You have no idea what I had to do.

In this dialogue, Marlowe suggests that he had an equal starting point as Chandekar and therefore is able to sympathize with Chandekar’s ambitions to disassociate himself from an impoverished upbringing. While it is not clearly stated what Marlowe had to endure to attain his status of wealth and power, his comments indicate that he had to strive to succeed. This reinforces both the ideology of meritocracy, where upward mobility is an opportunity made equally available to all, and the notion of the American Dream, where upward mobility is achieved through hard work and responsibility. In the system of meritocracy, anyone is capable of living the American Dream.

Similarly to Marlowe, Chandekar emerges from poverty to acquire wealth and power. Throughout the series, Chandekar steals, murders, and breaks the law to accumulate wealth and power. According to the ideology of meritocracy, David Marlowe and Gopal Chandekar had equal social position, equal access to resources, and equal allotments of social goods. In order for Chandekar to reach the same degree of social influence and capital that Marlowe enjoyed, he could have exhibited the same hard work and application of individual talent as Marlowe exercised. Instead, Chandekar attempts to gain wealth and power through criminal practice. While Marlowe also achieved social mobility through criminal practice, as demonstrated by his involvement in Chandekar’s transnational drug scheme, Marlowe is not vilified in the same way as Chandekar. Marlowe’s corrupt actions are easily dismissed according to the ideology of meritocracy. The audience is able to overlook his offense because his actions are justified as a means to achieving the American Dream. While he may be exhibiting criminal behavior, Marlowe is not seen as a criminal. In direct contrast, Chandekar’s actions are seen as a reflection of his inherently corrupt state. In viewing Chandekar’s behavior through the lens of colonial discourse, his criminal behavior is attributable

to a criminality inherent to Indian identity.

The series ends with the arrest of the Chandekar twins, further reinforcing the relationship between criminality and Indian identity. When the transnational drug scheme is exposed by D'Mello, Chandekar is sent to prison while Marlowe is able to walk away unscathed. Through his manipulation and extortion of the Toronto police, Marlowe successfully covers his tracks and denies any allegations of his implication in the crime. Marlowe's immunity augments the ideology of meritocracy because it suggests that Chandekar's failure in achieving the wealth and power that Marlowe enjoys is due to a deprivation of his character. Marlowe not only attained wealth and power, but he is also able to protect it while participating in corrupt practices. Chandekar's corrupt practices are not what led to his failure, since Marlowe was not punished for his corroboration, but it is an internal, innate disposition towards corruption that prevented Chandekar from achieving the success that was equally afforded to both him and Marlowe. To an American audience, the representation of Indians as immoral and corrupt will resonate with previously-held conceptions of Indians. This association between moral depravity and Indian identity is a reproduction of the colonial discourse that allowed for European domination over India (Said, 1978).

Gopal Chandekar reaffirms to an American audience the stereotypes of Indians as despotic, enervated, and savage. In his scheme to destroy the Annapuri slums and assert his power, Chandekar appears to have absolute authority over every individual involved in the plot, harkening back to the stereotype of India as despotic. Chandekar secures the complicity of the commissioner of the Mumbai police department in exchange for monetary contributions to the commissioner's family. Chandekar advances towards his goal through the use of henchmen, but is quick to cut ties when his colluders fail to serve their purpose - as evidenced when Chandekar murders his nephew for betraying him. Even Gopal's twin brother, Amal, in Toronto seems to be subservient to Gopal. Amal Chandekar takes orders from Gopal but does not express similar ambitions as Gopal for the eradication of any trace of his impoverished roots. Throughout the series, the only people that challenge Gopal's power and authority are David Marlowe and Doug D'Mello, two Westerners. This reinforces the idea that India is not only different from the West, but stands in opposition to the West.

In *The Indian Detective*, the ideology of meritocracy and colonial discourse are tools employed in the construction and imposition of a particular identity onto an Indian character for the subordination of Indian identity to American identity. In order for Chandekar to be juxtaposed with Marlowe as the antithesis to the American Dream, Chandekar must be represented as enervated and savage. Operating on the principle of egalitarianism, meritocracy would confer equal opportunity, resources, and power to both Marlowe and Chandekar. Therefore, according to colonial discourse, Chandekar's alternate method of wealth acquisition and his violent means to that end must be an outward display of his internal disposition. Chandekar's decision to engage in illegal and immoral acts then serves as evidence of his innate weakness. According to the ideology of meritocracy, his weakness makes him unable and unwilling to demonstrate the same hard work, responsibility, and application of individual talent as Marlowe exercised in the advancement of his social position. Therefore, Chandekar does not merely resort to violent measures as an alternative to an honest

work ethic, his violent actions are both a reflection and result of his violent nature. Violence is all he knows. As the American sociologist Robert Merton points out, "the stress on success, on getting ahead, presses the unsuccessful or those without means to win out legitimately - the poor and oppressed minorities - to violate the rules of the game" (Seymour, 1996, p. 26). In combination with meritocracy, the stereotypes of Indians as despotic, enervated, and savage take Merton's assessment one step further by demonstrating the violation of the rules as inherent to Indian identity, and therefore the only way they know how to play the game.

Since colonial times, these stereotypes of India have been reproduced over and over, leading to the naturalization of these representations for a Western audience. In the representation of foreign cultures in film and television, the producer intentionally chooses every cultural practice, every character, and every element of the landscape. Once these components are decided upon, their inclusion in the media text can make those practices, characters, and landscapes seem natural to that culture (Mitra, 1999). The naturalization of these singular representations become essentializations - the dominant view of that culture, space, and people. Consequently, colonial stereotypes about India have become contemporary stereotypes about India. The dominant view of Indian men today has been produced through the lens of despotism, effeminacy, and savagery. Ferdinand de Saussure's (1974) work on signs can be applied here. The qualities of despotism, effeminacy, and savagery have become signifiers of Indian identity over time through representations. When an audience is repeatedly exposed to these signifiers, Indian identity becomes the mental image associated with those qualities. Therefore, an American audience is able to recognize these signifiers in *The Indian Detective* because they have been disciplined through previous representations to expect this singular caricature of Indian identity (Mitra, 1999).

The Indian Detective as Orientalism

As a result of a repeated representation of Indians over time, the construction of Chandekar's character follows a singular narrative for normative Indian behavior and morality. The Indian male has become "the embodiment of evil" in contemporary Western film and television (Mitra, 1999, p. 138). Ananda Mitra, Communication scholar and professor at Wake Forest University, has contributed several works analyzing the representation of India in the West. In *India Through the Western Lens: Creating National Images in Film*, Mitra (1999) explains that the "color of skin, virtue and the role of the various protagonists in the narrative conflate together to produce an image that portrays the Eastern/dark person as the repository of evil" (p. 139). All bad Indian characters are really bad, lacking any redeeming characteristic, because everything they do must exemplify their inherent evilness. Consider the Indian men in *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008) and *Lion* (2016), two widely-acclaimed films produced in the United States. In these films, Indian men are shown stealing children, pimping out little girls, and gouging out the eyes of little boys so they will earn more money from empathetic passerbys. Just like David Marlowe, these men are seeking wealth and power. However, because they are Indian like Gopal Chandekar, their propensity for evil naturally results in their use of violent, immoral, and illegal means. The essentialization of Indian identity in *The Indian Detective* distinguishes India from the United States, allowing an American audience to assert its dominance and superiority over India in a contemporary manifestation of Edward

Said's (1978) Orientalism.

In addition to Orientalism as the "teaching, writing, or researching of the Orient", Said defines Orientalism as "a style of thought based on distinctions between the Orient and the Occident" and as "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said, 1978, p. 2-3). In distinguishing itself from the Orient, white Europeans were able to reproduce and retain their authority over the Orient because they were able to demonstrate their moral, political, and economic superiority through means of comparison. Social comparison theory claims that "there exists, in the human organism, a drive to evaluate his opinions and abilities" (Festinger, 1954). This evaluation is conducted through comparison. Therefore, in the evaluation and production of European identity, an "other" was needed. By distinguishing themselves from the "Orient", Europe was able to define who they were through contrast with who they were not - the "Orient" (Orgad, 2012). Where the "Orient" was depraved, Europe was virtuous. Where the "Orient" was inhibited by spiritual tradition, Europe was emancipated by enlightened ideals. Where the "Orient" was primitive, Europe was industrial. This "style of thought based on distinctions" was not only employed during the colonial period; contemporary media representations allow an American audience to distinguish themselves from the Indians on the screen in the same way (Said, 1978, p. 2).

Representations of Indians in film and television provide a visual point of reference for an American audience upon which they can distinguish themselves and construct their own self-identity. In his work on the relationship between media representations and identity formation, Shani Orgad (2012) explains, "People, at least in the global north, increasingly are evaluating and constructing their selves, bodies and relationships on the basis of, and in relation to, images and stories that appear in the media" (p. 157). Operating as "symbolic resources", the American audience is able to use images and stories of India in the media to form their own identity (Orgad, 2012). Furthermore, the process of differentiation allows the American audience to render Indian identity an incomparable and clearly inferior identity to the superior American identity (Festinger, 1954). According to Orgad's explanation, Said's (1978) "style of thought based on distinctions" was not only employed by colonial powers to govern the "Orient" (p. 2). The United States also employs this style of thought in the protection and promotion of its perceived superiority by distinguishing itself from other nations and identities.

In the creation of American identity, perhaps the most recent and relevant "symbolic resources" have been the images and stories that emerged from 9/11. Following 9/11, an "American way of life" was identified through the creation of a dichotomy between America and the Middle East (Silva, 2016, p. 28). As a result, the ideal American citizen was constructed as white and Christian, while brown bodies became seen as deviant, antithetical forces threatening core American beliefs. Even though India lacked any involvement in the events of 9/11, brown bodies became a catch-all category for deviance. This conflation of Middle Eastern and South Asian identity in the United States following 9/11 was aided by centuries of "Orientalist" discourse that grouped the varied geographic and cultural spaces of North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia into a single designation of the "Orient" (Said, 1978). In *Brown Threat: Identification in the Security State*, Kumi Silva (2016)

defines the "new brown" as "any behaviors, places, spaces, and performances that challenge the hegemonic Whiteness of U.S. neo-nationalism" (p. 29). With India continuing to grow in power as a political and economic player in the current global system, brown Indian bodies become a threat to American hegemony in need of containing.

Stereotypical representations of Indians, such as that of Gopal Chandekar, allow the American audience to mitigate the threat brown bodies pose through the otherization of Indian identity and the subsequent disparaging of that identity. Silva (2016) goes on to explain that, in the containing of deviant brown bodies, "it is also important to construct that threat as containable and controllable, because such containment is imperative to reinforcing this particular nationalist discourse" (p. 30). Representations of Indians as depraved, primitive, and mystical distinguish the United States as morally superior while representations of Indians as enervated, effeminate, and impoverished present India as an inferior, containable and controllable opponent.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the underlying ideology of meritocracy and the reproduction of colonial discourse in *The Indian Detective* allow an American audience to distinguish themselves from Indians and claim superiority over India. Chandekar's attempts to gain wealth and power through criminal means, and his subsequent failure, are attributed to the inherent depravity of Indian identity. This proposed correlation between depravity and Indian identity reproduces colonial discourse that characterized Indians as despotic, enervated, and savage. Those qualities have become essentialized markers of Indian identity in the American consciousness. An American audience then forms their self-identity through the viewing of representations of other peoples and cultures. Consequently, Indian identity is juxtaposed with American identity. Through these distinctions, the American audience is able to justify their superiority and claim authority over India. This process of knowing, distinguishing, and dominating India by an American audience through media representations serves as a contemporary manifestation of Edward Said's (1978) "Orientalism".

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The In-Between State: A Critical Examination of Recaptured Slaves in Liberia

by Jacob Koehler

Between 1821 and 1861, the US Africa Squadron—the naval group in charge of American efforts to halt the Atlantic Slave Trade—patrolled the seas around Liberia and deposited over 6,000 recaptured Africans on the country’s shores. These African people, known as “recaptured slaves” or “recaptured Africans,” represented a unique group in Liberian society. While they had managed to narrowly avoid slavery, they then became members of an African working class in Liberia, forced to adopt aspects of western culture, such as Christianity and the English language. By examining the history of this distinct cluster of people, this paper shows how the case of recaptured slaves highlights the ambiguous nature of the term “freedom.” For those individuals who believed freedom meant something more than simply avoiding slavery, including a right to work, worship, and speak or think according to one’s own beliefs, then most of the recaptured Africans who landed in Liberia did not come close to liberation. In this sense, the recaptured Africans represented an “in-between” state, a middle-ground between enslavement and true freedom.

Keywords: Liberia, Africa Squadron, recaptured, freedom, slaves

During the year 1858, the cargo of eight American slavers, amounting to nearly 4,500 enslaved Africans, was confiscated by American Navy vessels and deposited in Liberia. While this process had been commonplace for some time, the sheer volume of people in such a short period led one American journalist to ask if the “mass of barbarism would have an injurious effect upon the population and prospects of the rising republic.”¹ In response to this question, famous black nationalist Alexander Crummell—who had been living in Liberia for some time—encouraged readers not to worry, as this great mass of people would both positively impact and be positively impacted by Liberia.² Crummell argued that this shipment of humans would help the new country greatly, as they would become the laboring class and help with the production of staple crops, such as sugar. Simultaneously, he emphasized the benefits these recaptured slaves would receive through living in Liberia, like learning English, participating in Christian worship, and inevitably internalizing ideals of western culture that would make them better, more civilized, beings. Crummell ended his argument by saying the country could “receive 20,000 [recaptured slaves] without any

detriment to [Liberia’s] own civilization.”³

Beginning in 1821, the US used the territory of Liberia as a place to send unwanted black individuals. The government, as well as the American Colonization Society (ACS), encouraged free blacks to emigrate to Liberia to create a better life, which they believed would help ease racial tensions in their own country.⁴ For various reasons—proposed by both staunch abolitionists and slavery stalwarts—many Americans believed that free blacks and free whites could not coexist in one country without one group being subjugated. With this idea in mind, Liberia became the perfect solution to their problem: an entirely separate country for free blacks to live and prosper, allowing whites to exert total control over the United States and continue to preserve a system of slavery that needed subjugated blacks. Simultaneously, Liberia became a crucial piece of America’s quest to end the Atlantic Slave Trade, as the territory served as a disembarkation point for recaptured slaves to be deposited. Between 1821 and 1861, the Africa Squadron—the Naval group in charge of American efforts to halt the Atlantic Slave Trade—patrolled the seas around Liberia and deposited over 6,000

3 Ibid., 29.

4 Lisa Lindsay, *Atlantic Bonds: A Nineteenth-Century Odyssey from America to Africa* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 49.

1 “Recaptured Africans in Liberia,” *The Friend; a Religious and Literary Journal*, vol. 35 (1861): 29.

2 Ibid., 29.

recaptured Africans on its shores.⁵ This not only allowed the US to present themselves to the rest of the world as a force against the slave trade, but also enabled them to reduce the potential free black population in America and avoid truly confronting the thriving system of slavery in their southern states.

The early history of Liberia and recaptured slaves showed the potential of black nationhood in Africa, a concept that was not only important for white Americans yearning for separate racial spheres, but also black individuals hoping for prosperity. Liberia highlighted the potential of what an entirely-black nation could accomplish, and the republic inspired future black nationalist leaders, like Edward Wilmot Blyden and Marcus Garvey, by giving them hope for what the black race could achieve. Additionally, Liberia became a focal point of contention in American governmental discussion during the middle of the nineteenth century. While the American government benefited from the country's willingness to accept recaptured Africans, it also became partially responsible for the nation's well-being and had to constantly send supplies and funds to the new state. Therefore, Liberia became an interesting topic in the United States, as it both helped the United States in some ways and frustrated its lawmakers in others.

When examining the early history of Liberia, historians and other researchers have tended to focus on the fledgling nation's involvement with the United States, an important part of the republic's history. Individuals like Roland Falkner and Karen Fisher Younger have delved deeply into the connection between the two countries and the history of the Africa Squadron, showing how both nations benefited from one another and examining the colonial-like relationship between the two.⁶ Similarly, historians like Lisa Lindsay and Claude Clegg have examined the lives of freed American blacks who helped establish the country and later became its leaders, and the influence the ACS had on the country as a whole.⁷ However, research suggests the need for a significant examination into the lives of the recaptured slaves who helped populate Liberia, the uniqueness of their situation, and what their existence highlighted about the indefinite boundaries of freedom and enslavement. Historian Sharla Fett detailed the history of these individuals in her work *Recaptured Africans*, and her descriptions of the experience of this distinct portion of the Liberian population emphasized the important role they played in world history as members of a group in between true freedom and enslavement.⁸ Africans recaptured from slavers and deposited in Liberia between 1822 and 1861 were forced into a purgatory-like state: while they narrowly avoided the brutal conditions of New World slavery, they had been "returned" to a place thousands of miles from home. Though expected to relish the opportunity for new lives, they struggled as displaced and alienated individuals. Their experience highlighted the ambiguous nature of the term "freedom," as they

represented a strange middle ground between slavery and liberty, showing how undefined these categories truly were.

Recaptured Africans, the ACS, and the Creation of Liberia

To begin, it is important to understand what the terms "recaptured African" and "recaptured slave" meant in the context of the time period, especially because the term has taken on different meanings throughout history. For the purposes of this paper, a recaptured slave or recaptured African refers to an individual confiscated from a slave ship by a representative of the United States Navy following the abolishment of the slave trade in the United States. While the transatlantic slave trade did not become universally prohibited until the late 1860s, the United States outlawed the trade on January 1st, 1808 through a prohibition written into the Constitution in 1776.⁹ Yet, while the trade was "officially" outlawed, many American slavers—as well as slavers from other countries—still continued their practices, bringing slaves from Africa to different parts of the New World like Cuba or Brazil, much to the frustration of the British government. Beginning in 1819, the British government created a Royal African Squadron to try and intercept slave ships leaving the coast of Africa and search them, confiscating any enslaved humans being illegally transported.¹⁰ Thus, the terms "recaptured African" and "recaptured slave" became common nomenclature in British (and soon American) society, as it recognized an individual "recaptured" from illegal slave traders and placed in the hands of a certain country's navy. In their quest to rescue all recaptured Africans, the British naval squadron tried to impose their right to search slavers of other nations, such as those flying American flags, and they attempted to create bilateral treaties with the United States to establish this privilege. However, the United States, harboring resentment following the War of 1812, refused to grant these search rights, and instead decided to create their own group in 1819, known as the Africa Squadron, designed for the same purpose as the British fleet.¹¹

The decision to create a new division of the Navy to suppress the slave trade helped calm American anxieties about British naval officers searching their ships, but it also created a new problem. For the first few years, the Africa Squadron primarily patrolled the waters near the African coast, acting as a watchdog for illicit slave trade activities, but the group was still tasked with capturing illegal slavers and confiscating their cargo, thus begging the question: what was the Africa Squadron supposed to do with the recaptured slaves confiscated from illegal slave trade activities?

Before 1819, the US federal government deposited any recaptured slaves they discovered at ports in the United States and allowed the state governments that received those individuals to decide what happened to them, which in many cases meant they

5 Karen Fisher Younger, "Liberia and the Last Slave Ships," *Civil War History*, vol. 4 (2008): 441.

6 Roland P Falkner, "The United States and Liberia," *The American Journal of International Law*, vol. 4 (1910); Younger, "Liberia and the Last Slave Ships," *Civil War History*, vol. 4 (2008).

7 Lisa Lindsay, *Atlantic Bonds: A Nineteenth-Century Odyssey from America to Africa* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Claude Clegg, *The Price of Liberty: African Americans and the Making of Liberia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

8 Sharla Fett, *Recaptured Africans: Surviving Slave Ships, Detention, and Dislocation in the Final Years of the Slave Trade* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

9 Lisa Lindsay, *Captives as Commodities* (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), 132.

10 *Ibid.*, 130.

11 Fett, *Recaptured African*, 21.

became slaves within the American plantation system.¹² However, following the establishment of the Africa Squadron as a result of the Slave Trade Act of 1819, the federal government decided this process needed to be changed, and they worked to find a place for slaves outside US borders.¹³ Incorporating these individuals into American society meant they would likely be re-enslaved—as most naval ships brought recaptured Africans to ports in the south, like Charleston or Key West, where plantation slavery thrived—meaning the American government needed to find a new destination for their confiscated cargo. The question of where to return these individuals became even more complicated when the government realized they could not simply bring them back to the place they had been purchased; doing so would place the Africans back into the hands of slave traders, where they would surely be re-enslaved and re-sold. Not only was this process cumbersome for American officials, but it also meant their efforts would have had little to no effect on the slave trade whatsoever. With all these ideas in mind, when the Congress asked President James Monroe to find a landing spot for these displaced individuals in 1819, he turned to a small group focused on sending free blacks to Africa: the American Colonization Society.¹⁴

The American Colonization Society, founded in 1816, represented a body of individuals attempting to encourage free black individuals to travel to Africa to establish a new life outside of the United States.¹⁵ During the period preceding the American Civil War, many white individuals living in the country—especially those examining the growing prevalence of free blacks and the beginning of the downfall of American slavery—believed the country could not survive if blacks and whites were to both live free. Even people in power, such as Abraham Lincoln, held these sentiments; for example, in one of his debates with Stephen Douglas in 1858, the great emancipator argued “that there [was] a physical difference between the white and black races which [he] believe[d would] forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality.”¹⁶ This notion led many to postulate on possible solutions to this race problem, with most answers resulting in a whitening of America, and thus the ACS’s vision to create a new country for free blacks to live attracted a wide range of members. On one end of the spectrum, some members were slave holders, yearning to eliminate the free black population in America to avoid inspiring slave uprisings, and to solidify slavery in the United States by creating two distinct classes: free whites and enslaved blacks. On the other end, some members of the ACS were abolitionists, who viewed the establishment of a distinct country for free blacks in Africa as a stepping stone on the path to eliminating slavery as an institution.¹⁷ As a whole, members fell between these two opposite ideals, but all agreed on one overarching idea: the establishment of a new nation in Africa where free blacks could emigrate.

Both Congress and Monroe saw this idea as the perfect solution to their question of what to do with recaptured slaves, as the creation of an American-sponsored colony in Africa could not only help decrease the free black population in the United States, but could also become a drop-off zone where displaced Africans could be returned. American lawmakers even believed that Africans would view the creation of a republic in Africa as a good solution; most American citizens had no concept of African ideals of nationhood, and believed the Africans would think they were being “returned” to their homeland. Thus, these recaptured slaves would, in theory, supplement the population of a burgeoning nation in their home continent, not only gaining a sense of freedom and home, but also helping to positively impact the new society by working necessary jobs and procreating to make the republic self-reproducing. For all these reasons, Monroe supported the ACS’s vision, creating a vital relationship between the government and the ACS which helped establish Liberia. In February of 1820, the ACS sent a group of scouts to Africa—protected by a Naval troop—to try and find a piece of available land to establish a colony.¹⁸ While this group encountered trouble with nearby indigenous groups and ultimately failed to create a lasting colony, a second contingent sent in 1821 found a desirable site at Cape Mesurado, on the West Coast of Africa just south of Sierra Leone. After Navy Lieutenant Robert Stockton forced the indigenous Africans populating the area into negotiations a few months later, both parties signed a treaty that ceded land to the US, effectively creating the new state Liberia.¹⁹ The fledgling republic even named its capital Monrovia, an homage to the President who helped establish the new nation.

Impact of the Africa Squadron

While the US now had a place to deposit the recaptured Africans the Navy found, the Africa Squadron still struggled to do their job effectively, especially in the early decades. Across their entire period of operation, from 1821 to 1861, the Africa Squadron did not bring nearly as many recaptured Africans to Liberia as many assumed they would. The Africa Squadron and the United States attempted to help suppress the slave trade and positively impact these individuals, but the process of recapture took time. After a naval officer in the Africa Squadron deemed a slaver to be trafficking illegally, the officer confiscated the slaver’s cargo—i.e. enslaved human beings—and had the recaptured slaves transported across the Atlantic to the United States, where they could be registered in ACS record books. The Navy kept these individuals in military forts while the ACS processed them—which took at least a few weeks, if not months—before they were granted passage to Liberia, a voyage that took upwards of two months. As a whole, the process was slow-going, and the Africa Squadron initially struggled to relocate Africans to Liberia; ACS records

12 Ibid., 17.

13 An Act to Protect the Commerce of the United States, and to Punish the Crime of Piracy, United States Congress, March 3, 1819.

14 Falkner, “The United States and Liberia,” 532.

15 Clegg, *The Price of Liberty*, 31.

16 “The Lincoln-Douglas Debates 4th Debate Part I,” updated 2018, <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/the-lincoln-douglas-debates-4th-debate-part-i/>, accessed 26 November, 2018.

17 Clegg, *The Price of Liberty*, 31.

18 Younger, “Liberia and the Last Slave Ships,” 428.

19 Falkner, “The United States and Liberia,” 531.

indicated that only 286 Africans actually landed in Liberia between 1822 and 1843.²⁰ Furthermore, throughout the decade of the 1840s, slavers landed more than 350,000 Africans in Brazil, yet the Africa Squadron failed to catch a single ship in four of the ten years of that decade.²¹ Clearly, the Africa Squadron, while perhaps intending to suppress the slave trade, failed to make a significant impact in its first few decades of existence.

However, the Africa Squadron did improve its tactics in later years, especially after democrat James Buchanan became president in 1857. While Buchanan had not been staunchly against the slave trade during his time as a senator, by the end of 1858 he and his administration faced what Karen Fisher Younger called “a triple threat” of pressure coming from various groups, including British diplomats, American citizens fearful of the reopening of the Slave Trade, and members of the Republican party who accused his administration of being “unable to enforce the slave-trade law itself.”²² In the wake of this opposition, Buchanan made two important decisions to better enable the Africa Squadron’s efforts: he granted the Navy’s request for the addition of eight steamers, making the squadron faster and vastly increasing its size, and he approved the transfer of the African supply base to St. Paul de Loando, a port on the coast of modern day Angola, meaning the squadron was much closer to slave trading activities.²³ These decisions drastically improved the squadron’s ability to intercept slavers, and the statistics throughout the period back up this claim. Between 1858 and 1861, when the American government ended the Africa Squadron due to the Civil War, the squadron captured approximately twenty-two slavers and disembarked over 4,670 Africans on the shores of Liberia.²⁴ Although quite small in comparison to the British Royal African Squadron or the numbers of illegal slavers trafficking people to the New World, the Africa Squadron did eventually make an impact on the slave trade, helping to save a few thousand individuals from the hells of New World slavery.

Unfortunately, while the Africa Squadron was attempting to rescue Africans from a lifetime of servitude, they inadvertently created a miniature middle passage, and one with fairly high mortality rates. For example, historian Sharla Fett examined the capture of four slavers—the Echo, Wildfire, William, and Bogota, all intercepted between 1858 and 1860—and showed how the Africa Squadron, while intending to “save” Africans, still forced many to succumb to a premature death.²⁵ As the tables below highlight, the combined mortality rate of these four ships was 52.4 percent, a staggering figure, especially when compared to actual Middle Passage mortality rates, around ten to fifteen percent. It is important to emphasize this mortality rate, especially when determining what the existence of recaptured slaves says about the ambiguity of freedom. While the slave traders who purchased enslaved Africans inflicted a great deal of mental, physical, and emotional harm upon their captives, slave ship captains viewed their slaves as precious cargo, meaning that their survival was directly related to their pay, bolstering their drive to keep them alive. Contrastingly, naval crews who intercepted these slavers

had little reason to keep recaptured slaves alive other than a sense of morality. In that sense, the shockingly high mortality rates of recaptured slaves highlighted the undefined boundaries of true freedom. While they were saved from slavery in the New World, the impetus to help these individuals attain real liberation was

TABLE 2 Recaptive Death and Survival in Circuits of Slave Trade Suppression, 1858 and 1860

Slave Ship/U.S. Ship to Liberia	Sold from African Coast	Naval Seizure	U.S. Landing	Embarkeed U.S.	Liberian Landing
<i>Echo/Niagara</i> 1858, Charleston	450	318	306	271	200
<i>Wildfire/Castilian</i> 1860, Key West	650	550	507	400*	308
<i>William/South Shore</i> 1860, Key West	744	570	513	355*	233
<i>Bogota/Star of the Union</i> 1860, Key West	418	411	411	383	337
TOTAL	2,262	1,849	1,737	1,409	1,078

*Thirteen *Wildfire* shipmates from the Key West hospital did not board the *Castilian*, sailing later instead with the *South Shore*. In this table, they are included in the 355 captives listed for the *South Shore*.
Sources: Young Ship Log; McCalla Journal; reel 177B, folder Letters Rec'd "Liberated Africans," ACSR; Letters Received from John Seys, reel 10, RSI; John Seys, Certificate of Receipt of Liberated Africans, reel 3, RSI; Howard, *American Slavers and the Federal Law*, 223–54.

not very strong; a majority still lost their lives on the journey to Liberia, showing how far away these individuals still were from emancipation.

Figure 1: Recaptive Death and Survival in Circuits of Slave Trade

TABLE 3 Percentage Mortality on Slave Ships, in U.S. Camps, and on Transport Ships to Liberia

Name of Slave Ship/U.S. Ship to Liberia	Middle Passage to U.S. Camps	In U.S. Camps	Voyage to Liberia	Total Atlantic Circuit
<i>Echo/Niagara</i>	32.0	11.4	26.2	55.6
<i>Wildfire/Castilian</i>	22.0	18.5	23.0	52.6
<i>William/South Shore</i>	31.0	33.3	34.4	68.7
<i>Bogota/Star of the Union</i>	1.7	6.8	12.0	19.4
Shipmates Combined	23.2	18.9	23.5	52.3

Note: Percentage mortality is based on the total number of captives alive at the beginning of each phase of forced migration.
Sources: Young Ship Log; McCalla Journal; reel 177B, folder Letters Rec'd "Liberated Africans," ACSR; Letters Received from John Seys, reel 10, RSI; John Seys, Certificate of Receipt of Liberated Africans, reel 3, RSI; Howard, *American Slavers and the Federal Law*, 223–54.

Suppression, 1858 and 1860. Cited in Sharla Fett, *Recaptured Africans: Surviving Slave Ships, Detention, and Dislocation in the Final Years of the Slave Trade* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 140.

Figure 2: Percentage Mortality on Slave Ships, in U.S. Camps, and on Transport Ships to Liberia. Cited in Sharla Fett, *Recaptured Africans*:

- 20 Fett, *Recaptured Africans*, 161.
- 21 Younger, “Liberia and the Last Slave Ships,” 431.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 432.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 432.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 433; Fett, *Recaptured Africans*, 167.
- 25 Fett, *Recaptured Africans*, 140.

Surviving Slave Ships, Detention, and Dislocation in the Final Years of the Slave Trade (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 141

Life in Liberia

Still, while a great number of recaptured slaves perished on their journey to Liberia, over 6,000 did land on the shores of the American-sponsored republic.²⁶ Upon arrival in towns like Monrovia, the Africans were handed over to a government official — either an officer of the ACS or a member of the Liberian government, depending on the time period—where they waited to be placed somewhere in the country. During this waiting period, recaptured slaves received governmental assistance, partially from the United States and partially from Liberia. Most individuals typically received housing in whatever form was available during this interim period, and the housing varied greatly depending on when they were dropped off. On the one hand, some recaptured slaves were sent to live in towns created specifically for them. For example, a report in the American Periodical the *Western Recorder* from 1831 chronicled the creation of approximately fifty-five wooden houses in Caldwell and Millsburgh, two towns established for the explicit purpose of providing a place of residence for these newly arrived individuals.²⁷ On the other hand, most remained in the port in which they were dropped off for a brief period before being sent to a permanent home, as indicated by a report from 1859 mentioning that an entire company of two hundred Africans was kept in a “large and commodious receptacle” established by the ACS in Monrovia.²⁸ Some still, particularly women and children, were sent to live in mission homes, as the Amero-Liberians—a term designated for black American settlers who emigrated to Liberia—believed these individuals would not make good apprentices (an aspect of recaptured slave life that will be discussed shortly).²⁹

In addition to housing, most recaptured slaves received some resources and assistance, especially from the United States government. For example, a letter from the leader of Liberia, President Stephen Benson, written in 1862 expressed his thanks for the clothing sent to the republic from the United States, which he indicated was being used to clothe “recaptured children.”³⁰ Similarly, the forty-seventh annual report from the ACS, published in 1862, highlighted that the United States sent approximately \$23,216.66—a little over \$544,000 in today’s money—to the government of Liberia for the express purpose of housing, feeding, and clothing the recaptured slaves.³¹ This amount of assistance was not always the case throughout the four decades the Africa Squadron was operating, but this number still highlighted the vested interest both the Liberian government and the United States government

had in the livelihood and survival of these individuals. While the United States primarily hoped that these Africans would become indoctrinated with western values, the Liberian government and its citizens hoped to utilize them for one main purpose: a free laboring population.

Throughout the existence of the Africa Squadron, the Liberian government viewed the recaptured Africans they received not simply as people needing help, but also as an opportunity for free labor in the form of indentured servitude. One of Liberia’s main revenue-producing endeavors was the cultivation of cash crops, like coffee, sugar, and cotton, all of which require intense labor (one of the primary reason growers in the New World utilized slave labor). Thus, when the Africa Squadron landed a large group of recaptured slaves in the republic, all of whom needed a way to provide for themselves, most citizens saw these individuals as a free labor source; Alexander Crummell, the black nationalist mentioned previously, even emphasized this in his letters to the US, arguing that recaptured slaves were almost necessary to help Liberia prosper.³² Notably, most recaptured slaves tended to be young and male, as slave traders originally sold them to slavers bringing workers to labor-intensive sugar farms; Sharla Fett’s work showed how a majority of recaptured slaves came from regions in Africa where at least half of the captives were men under the age of fifteen.³³ This unique age and gender makeup played an important role in shaping Liberian relations with recaptured slaves. Most of these young men became “apprentices” for Amero-Liberians, often through the auspices of the ACS. This apprenticeship resembled indentured servitude, a tool used by Great Britain in the colonial days of the United States to encourage emigration to the new country: most recaptured Africans worked for a lengthy period, between seven and fourteen years, before the government granted them land of their own.³⁴ During this apprenticeship period, recaptured slaves became indoctrinated with western values—such as a belief in Christianity and an inclination to speak English—while they worked to support the new republic for free. Thus, while these individuals avoided becoming slaves in the western hemisphere, the Liberian government still employed them as menial laborers and only paid them with land. The parallels between this idea of indentured servitude and slavery were quite important, and will be explored more later in the paper.

As apprentices, these individuals helped improve the republic by contributing to the agricultural sector, leading to a very positive reaction from Amero-Liberians and ACS members back in the United States. For example, a division of the ACS in Pennsylvania printed the main points of their 1862 meeting in a Pennsylvania newspaper called the *German Reformed Messenger*, and they made sure to emphasize the positive impact these individuals had on Liberian society through their labor. The ACS wrote that “prosperity

26 American Colonization Society, “Fifty-Eighth Annual Report of the American Colonization Society,” *The African Repository and Colonial Journal*, vol. 53 (1877): 43.

27 Ann Worcester, “Colony of Liberia,” *Western Recorder*, vol. 6 (1831): 1.

28 “Interesting from Liberia,” *The Sun*, 4 March 1859.

29 Younger, “Liberia and the Last Slave Ships,” 438.

30 Stephen Benson, “Liberia and Emancipation: Letter from President Benson.” *New York Times*, 24 November 1861.

31 American Colonization Society, “Forty-Seventh Annual Report of the American Colonization Society,” *The African Repository*, vol. 40 (1864): 2.

32 “Recaptured Africans in Liberia,” 29.

33 Fett, *Recaptured Africans*, 37.

34 Younger, “Liberia and the Last Slave Ships,” 438.

[attended] all interests” in the republic, and they focused on the “increased attention” the newly arrived Africans gave to the agricultural sector.³⁵ Similarly, Crummell’s aforementioned letter furthered the idea of Liberia’s reliance on recaptured slaves for agricultural work, especially in the sugar trade. He highlighted the republic’s inability to create its own laboring force, mainly because the indigenous Africans surrounding Liberia could not be coerced to do the labor for free, and because they “inconvenienced planters by a demand for high wages, and by irregularity in labour.”³⁶ Both these reports emphasized the need for a laboring population—primarily because Amero-Liberians were unwilling to do menial work and were unable to force nearby Africans to do it cheaply—and showed how the recaptured slave population filled this societal gap, an idea which could be argued to be exploitation. While these individuals helped the republic and its people to grow and prosper, they did so for free and without much of a choice, highlighting yet another similarity to apprenticeship and slavery.

Moreover, these individuals were not only used for sugar cultivation, but multiple facets of production. In 1862, the ACS interviewed a sugar-grower living on St. Paul’s River about his view of the recaptured Africans and their work ethic, and he raved about this group’s reliability and willingness to work. He mentioned that his entire sugar farm was run by Africans, as well as his fireman, sugar-maker, and cooper, and he believed that these individuals were the best at chopping wood in the entire republic.³⁷ Clearly, recaptured Africans became an integral part of society, especially because of their proficiency in fields of menial work. Most became workers in job fields that no other group wanted, making them not a burden, but a benefit to the prosperity of the Liberian republic.

Alongside their experience with government assistance and apprenticeships, recaptured slaves underwent an interesting identity alteration. While many primary sources, like newspaper articles or ACS reports, simply referred to this group as “Africans” (as well as some shocking terms, like “semi-savages” because of their African heritage combined with western influence), they began to take on a peculiar moniker in Liberia: “Congoes.”³⁸ The term, derived from the fact that many of these individuals were born in the Congo region, created an identity grouping that created both feelings of separation and inclusion. On one hand, the term “Congo” differentiated them from the other people living in Liberia, creating a constant reminder of their origins as African slaves. Crummell even remarked that recaptured Africans felt great pride when they were called “Americans” and were ambitious to earn the title, emphasizing how different titles represented different symbols of status in Liberian society.³⁹ Additionally, the all-encompassing term undermined the truth of these individuals’ origins. While some undoubtedly came from the Congo region, not all did, and grouping all of these people together was not only false,

but also further alienated individuals away from their true home. Simultaneously, however, the crude nickname strangely helped to create a shared identity among this wide array of people. A unique aspect of the recaptured slave population was that most were quite young, and therefore yearning for, among other things, a sense of belonging. In this context, many younger individuals actively pursued the term, as it gave them what Sharla Fett described as “affiliations with earlier generations of recaptives on the basis of geographic origin and forced migration experiences.”⁴⁰ The term “Congo” held a great deal of psychological and societal weight, and recaptured Africans were forced to either embrace the name or strive to be called something else, adding yet another dimension of struggle to their existence within Liberia.

Ultimately, however, life in Liberia provided some opportunities for recaptured Africans to create their own identity, and not simply in terms of moving up the labor ladder. As mentioned previously, towns like Millsburgh and Caldwell housed exclusively recaptured Africans, meaning these individuals were allowed to create their own unique area within the larger context of Liberia. Towns established by and for recaptured Africans became commonplace in the republic, such as the area Ashmun, mentioned in the ACS report from 1862.⁴¹ The report emphasized that Ashmun and its citizens were self-sufficient, even providing industrial products for the neighboring towns, and highlighted that both a school and church had been created in the town, enabling the citizens in Ashmun to improve themselves academically and learn more about western ideals of spirituality. Additionally, recaptured Africans were granted unique opportunities within Liberia to improve themselves, marry Amero-Liberians, and hold public office. This same report reprinted W. S. Hall’s observations of a town of recaptured slaves in Liberia called New Georgia in which he emphasized the great strides these individuals were making in terms of personal improvement. Hall noted that some of the recaptured Africans had learned to read and speak English, and many had taken the oath of allegiance to Liberia that enabled them to vote. Similarly, he emphasized how many had married American colonist women, and noted that at least one recaptured African held a position on the State Legislature.⁴² In this sense, many of these individuals had more opportunity for social advancement and personal improvement than free blacks living in the United States. While recaptured Africans experienced a great deal of suffering, including identity loss, forced labor, and a loss of homeland, they still had opportunities to improve their lives within the context of Liberian society, making their existence truly unique.

Recaptured Slaves and the Ambiguous Nature of Freedom

Having explored the uniqueness of the recaptured slave

35 American Colonization Society, “Colonization Society.: Finance. Emigration from Pennsylvania. Recaptured Africans. The Slave Trade. Exploration of Liberia. Ricognized by the United States. Their Permanent Home,” *The German Reformed Messenger*, vol. 28 (1862): 2.

36 “Recaptured Africans in Liberia.” 29.

37 American Colonization Society, “Forty-Seventh Annual Report of the American Colonization Society,” 6.

38 “Recaptured Africans in Liberia,” *The Anti-Slavery Reporter*, vol. 8 (1860): 284; American Colonization Society, “Forty-Seventh Annual Report of the American Colonization Society,” 2.

39 “Recaptured Africans in Liberia.” *The Friend; a Religious and Literary Journal*, vol. 35 (1861): 29.

40 Fett, *Recaptured Africans*, 159.

41 American Colonization Society, “Forty-Seventh Annual Report of the American Colonization Society,” 6.

42 *Ibid.*, 294.

experience, it is important to understand how these individuals highlight the ambiguous nature of the term freedom. While it is certain that the Africa Squadron helped these Africans avoid slavery in the New World, it would be false to assert that by confiscating these individuals from slavers the United States enabled them to immediately achieve true freedom, as shown throughout many aspects of this essay. These men, women, and children represented a strange middle ground between enslavement and liberation, occupying a weird, gray zone of existence stemming from the fact that after they were sold into slavery they could practically never return home. Simply by being thrust into the slave trade, any semblance of life before enslavement disappeared, and even recapture did not change that. As mentioned previously, the United States government's struggle to answer the question of what to do with the people they found on slave ships highlighted the inability of their Navy to simply take them home. The United States government had few notions of what specific region or area these individuals wished to return to, and this problem was only exacerbated by a language barrier that in many cases was never overcome. From the very beginning of their journey, these recaptured slaves lost a chance to gain true liberation in their homeland, simply because no one really had the ability or understanding of how to get them there.

The idea of longing for home and true freedom was exemplified by the inclination of some individuals living in Liberia to run away in search of their home country, an occurrence that was not common, but still attempted by Africans living in Liberia. For example, in 1860 a group of approximately twenty-five young men left their assigned households in Liberia and set out on a quest to find their homeland.⁴³ Similarly, eleven boys fled their mission home in Muhlenberg that same year, utilizing resources like grass-cutting knives and a canoe to travel southeast, and when asked where they were going by a bystander, they reported that they "were on their way to the Congo country" and using the sun as a compass.⁴⁴ Both of these groups were hunted down, inevitably captured and taken back to Liberia, a process that itself resembled American slavery. Importantly, even putting aside the overtones of enslavement, this experience showed a clear desire to escape their new life. The yearning of these individuals to return to their true home, no matter the consequence, highlighted how un-free these individuals actually felt.

In terms of unfreedom, the intricacies of the journey these individuals underwent from the United States to Liberia—what one might call a second middle passage—further highlighted the indefinite boundaries of freedom, as these trips resembled the actual middle passage in many aspects. While these voyages were not nearly as disparaging or difficult as the journeys enslaved individuals endured, both trips shared similar facets, such as spatial restriction. Sleeping quarters were divided by gender, and the ship authorities denoted some areas of the ship as off-limits to recaptured Africans, often utilizing rope to delineate separation. Similarly, the sleeping quarters on some ships had poor ventilation, such as the naval vessel the *Star of the Union* that only had three

hatches to let in fresh air, resulting in a depressed and sickened atmosphere.⁴⁵ Poor diets for recaptured slaves also resembled those of enslaved individuals heading towards the New World; most crews simply gave their passengers portions of salted meat, rice and water, often distributed using buckets. This combination of pitiful living spaces and a lack of nourishment contributed to the spread of disease and high mortality rates mentioned previously. Perhaps most shocking, however, was the possibility of violence or suppression that recaptured slaves could suffer on their voyage to Liberia. On the *Star of the Union*, all passengers were labeled with a physical tag somewhere on their body, which helped officers on board keep track of each individual. Authority members on the ship used these tags to single out disruptive passengers and watched those Africans more closely. Additionally, reports and diaries from various ships mentioned that individuals were sometimes placed in chains or iron shackles as punishment. Even worse, an officer on the ship *Castilian* reported that men were whipped with cowhide for theft, or were forced to wash the ship's deck while being lashed by a cat-o'-nine-tails.⁴⁶ These tactics of intimidation and violence were eerily similar to those used by slave ship captains, further underscoring the peculiar nature of the lives of recaptured slaves. Their escape from slave ships should have saved them from the harsh realities of the middle passage, yet most still endured events that greatly resembled those that enslaved individuals suffered through, furthering the idea that this group fell in between the categories of free and subjugated.

For those Africans who did survive the journey to Liberia, however, the murkiness surrounding the freedom of their state of existence deepened, especially when looking at their loss of identity and forced westernization by the ACS and Amero-Liberians. When arriving in the republic, their group took on the collective name "Congoes," a clear deprivation of their original identity, but this feature of life only represented the beginning of a long process of adoption of western ideals. Alongside this group name, all receptive Africans received a "proper" English name when they arrived in the colony, either by the agents who accepted them or the settlers who housed them, partially as an attempt to help them assimilate into the larger population of citizens. Recaptured Africans received generic English names like John, Eliza, or Abraham, and some even gained the identity of famous English-speaking individuals, as referenced by one young boy being renamed Samuel Schumaker (the individual who founded Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania).⁴⁷ In some cases, when large shipments of individuals landed on the shores of Liberia, the settlers gave them long necklace-like nametags, both so that they could internalize their new identity and so that Amero-Liberians could remember who was who.⁴⁸ While this renaming process may have been instituted with good intentions, it further robbed these newly-arrived individuals of their previous identity. Each African may have internally held on to memories of their previous life, but every other member of society imposed a new name and life upon them without their say, highlighting a lack of freedom of identity forced upon these individuals.

43 John Seys reporting to Issac Toucey, 16 October 1860, cited in Fett, *Recaptured Africans*, 172.

44 Diary of a Liberian Officer on 24 September, 1860, cited in Fett, *Recaptured Africans*, 173.

45 Fett, *Recaptured Africans*, 137.

46 Fett, *Recaptured Africans*, 137-139.

47 *Ibid.*, 174.

48 Diary of a Liberian Officer on 24 September, 1860, cited in Fett, *Recaptured Africans*, 175.

Furthermore, one of the principal goals of the ACS and the settlers who apprenticed recaptured Africans was to instill a belief in Christianity in them, furthering the notion of forced identity. Indeed, most sources that intended to accentuate how well recaptured Africans were doing in their new home focused on their church attendance, an aspect of life in Liberia imperative to proving one's moral goodness. Christian ideals permeated Liberian society, and an important part of each recaptured slave's apprenticeship was to internalize Christian beliefs to better assimilate into the republic's culture. For example, a report from 1858 discussed this ideal in length, and argued that recaptured Africans were only being apprenticed to "humane and religious citizens," emphasizing that only individuals of good religious standing had the proper qualities to house the new emigrants.⁴⁹ This report highlighted how important a belief in Christianity was to the Amero-Liberians, as well as to the American government sponsoring these individuals, underscoring the idea that having any other belief was not an option. Alexander Crummell furthered this idea, stating that in Palmas, a town made up of primarily recaptured slaves, there was "not... a single relic of their heathenism," showing a western bias against African ideals, as well as a focus on indoctrinating Africans into a western system of beliefs.⁵⁰

This concentration on Christianity and a forced western identity represented another layer of the indefinite boundaries of freedom for recaptured Africans. While it could be argued that this focus on western beliefs had good intentions, perhaps as an attempt to better assimilate these individuals and make them feel included, in many ways it was indicative of a western cultural superiority complex the American emigrants wanted to instill upon Africans. In this period, most western individuals, even black individuals, felt that African people were inherently lesser, and thus needed to understand and be influenced by western culture to become "civilized." By forcing aspects of western culture onto recaptured Africans, the Amero-Liberians felt they were doing a good deed, helping to redeem Africa as a whole. Fett pointed out that Liberian missionaries even tended to focus on female Africans, as they hoped instilling them with Christian values, and then encouraging them to marry and procreate, would somehow increase the population of redeemed African people and lead to a Christianized—and therefore "civilized"—continent.⁵¹ But, perhaps more pertinent in a discussion of the ambiguity surrounding freedom, the forced adoption of western ideals further undermined African individuals' sense of identity and being, encouraging them to essentially forget who they were before they arrived in Liberia. Forcibly changing their name, language, religion, and cultural habits—and discouraging deviations from western ideals, like "relics of heathenism"—certainly subverted each African's sense of self and understanding of their former life.⁵² The Liberian settlers essentially forced Africans to abandon their cultural identity and adopt a new, somehow "better" one, highlighting a lack of individual liberty and showing the strange cultural position in which the Africans found themselves simply by trying to live in their new home.

49 "The Recaptured Africans: The Benevolent Policy of the Government Towards Them: Liberia to be Their Home," *The African Repository*, vol. 34 (1858): 1.

50 "Recaptured Africans in Liberia." 29.

51 Fett, *Recaptured Africans*, 163.

52 "Recaptured Africans in Liberia." 29.

53 American Colonization Society, "Forty-Seventh Annual Report of the American Colonization Society," 6.

54 Worcester, "Colony of Liberia," 1.

Finally, the forced apprenticeships most recaptured Africans endured perhaps most obviously exhibited the way their existence showed the ambiguity of the notion of freedom. It would be difficult to not see the striking similarities between the apprenticeship system and the institution of slavery for which these individuals were originally destined. While New World slavery represented a much more difficult and arduous existence, complete with violence and eternal servitude, the two systems of labor were comparable in many facets. Both arose from a profitable industry in which the few making money desired to avoid contributing to the actual labor process. Both benefited from a population ripped from their homes, unfamiliar with the language and alienated to the point where they had no other option but to participate. And, significantly, both led to a great fortune for the producers at the expense of the unpaid labor of their workers. Liberia's main source of revenue was derived from their production of staple goods, like sugar, coffee, or cotton, and the country, as well as the Amero-Liberians themselves, benefited greatly from the free labor of recaptured Africans. For instance, the Amero-Liberian discussed earlier, who emphasized how proficient Africans were at chopping wood, was described as "one of the largest sugar growers on the St. Paul's," and he himself noted that his "entire farming operations" were run by—and therefore successful because of—African apprentices.⁵³ Similarly, the report from the *Western Recorder* emphasized the great prosperity of individuals stemming from their use of recaptured Africans, highlighting two individuals, "Francis Devanney" and "Mr. Warring," who had made small fortunes from their apprentices, Devanney creating a property worth \$20,000 and Warring selling over \$70,000 worth of goods.⁵⁴ While these apprentices may have received valuable work experience, they certainly did not receive the monetary compensation of their supervisors, and if they did not survive their experience as a laborer, they received no compensation of any kind. As a whole, while the system of apprenticeship was obviously a preferable alternative to the harsh realities of slavery, the fact that it resembled the institution at all bolstered the idea that recaptured Africans existed in a space between liberty and enslavement. They had little choice in their occupation and were forced into the primary laboring class of the republic (something which would have happened anyway had they not been recaptured), and they helped the people who took responsibility for them become very wealthy in the process. The connection between enslavement and apprenticeship showed how un-free these individuals actually were, and furthered the idea that simply arriving in Liberia did not make Africans free people.

Conclusion: Context, Freedom, and Slavery Today

While the history of this group of individuals is interesting and significant in certain ways, it is important not to overstate the influence that recaptured Africans had on Liberian society; the Africa Squadron only managed to disembark about 6,000 individuals in the republic, a fairly small number in comparison to the emancipated blacks emigrating from the United States. Even

during the latter years of operation, between 1858 and 1861 when the Africa Squadron's efforts hit their peak, recaptured Africans only represented about thirty-two percent of the population.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, this unique group of individuals signified the chasm between two states of being—free and enslaved—and showed that the notion of liberation was (and still is) difficult to define. Their experience as recaptured slaves highlighted that freedom was not necessarily as simple as avoiding plantation slavery. The Africa Squadron altered each of these Africans' lives, but it would be false to assert that they changed each for the better. A fair percentage of these humans still perished travelling to Liberia, and those who survived the journey did not instantly ascend to some fabled social status that made them undeniably "free." While in many cases they had more opportunities than slaves who did not get recaptured—such as a right to housing, voting, and marriage, among other privileges—they were not granted liberty in every aspect of life. These Africans entered a pseudo-western landscape, superimposed onto the African continent, and they felt the influence of a western superiority complex at many stages of their existence. Amero-Liberians and the ACS officers living in Liberia still viewed these human beings as inherently lesser, like precursors to civilized individuals, destined to labor for the more sophisticated, western people. Thus, the Africans who landed in Liberia lost their homes, their names, their languages, and their religions, and were forced into the laboring class for at least a few years, proving a lack of individual freedom within the context of their "liberated" state.

As a whole, the sources bolstered this notion of the indefinite boundaries of freedom. One of the more troublesome aspects of researching recaptured Africans was the lack of sources from the Africans themselves; there was no documentation from any of the individuals, so the sources used in this work only provide an external point of view of their experience. The primary sources that were available—such as the ACS reports, newspaper articles, and first-hand accounts of Amero-Liberians and Americans—all attempted to prove that these Africans had achieved a free state in their new life, yet reading these pieces from the modern perspective highlighted the notion that these people were not necessarily free, but simply westernized. The documents proudly emphasized the way Africans were forced to embrace western values and detailed the exploitation of free African labor, because in most of the authors' views, becoming a part of western civilization was freedom, even if one was in the lowest class. The Africans who adopted western

spiritual beliefs, language, and societal constructs became bright spots in an otherwise "dark and savage" continent, and the Americans who read about them likely hoped their existence would help redeem the rest of landmass, as insinuated by the missionaries focused on female Africans mentioned previously.⁵⁶ However, this western view of freedom furthered the ambiguity surrounding the term itself. If one believed that survival and an embrace of western ideals meant liberation, then these Africans clearly achieved freedom. But for those individuals who believed freedom meant something more—a right to live by one's own choosing, allowed to work, worship, and speak or think according to one's own beliefs—then most of the recaptured Africans who landed in Liberia did not come close to achieving liberation.

Additionally, in terms of current significance, recaptured Africans show the indefinite nature of freedom and enslavement, and help to remind a modern citizen that the dangers of slavery and forced labor did not end with the closing of the Atlantic Slave Trade. Even in the United States, the nation responsible for landing these individuals in Liberia, slavery continued to thrive until 1865 and the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment. Further, the decision of the United States and other nations to outlaw and condemn slavery did not end the institution. In 2012, the International Labour Organization published a report estimating that the population of forced laborers had reached approximately twenty-one million people, with individuals being exploited worldwide.⁵⁷ In this sense, slavery and instances of people forcibly working for the benefit of others continues, and the story of recaptured Africans helps an individual living in today's world to recognize instances of the deprivation of freedom all across the globe.

In essence, the history of recaptured Africans in Liberia not only showed the efforts of Americans and Amero-Liberians yearning to help halt a perceived evil and rescue needy individuals, but also revealed the realities of how those efforts affected those needing support. If one were to examine a spectrum with liberation and enslavement on opposite ends, these individuals and their life in Liberia would exist in the middle, exposing an "in-between" state of existence and highlighting the notion that true freedom is difficult to define. By understanding their significance and their collective history, one can truly see the indefinite boundaries of the term "freedom," and also recognize the ambiguity surrounding such a ubiquitous term.

55 Fett, *Recaptured Africans*, 165.

56 Fett, *Recaptured Africans*, 163.

57 International Labour Organization, "ILO Global Estimate of Forced Labour: Results and Methodology," 2012, 13.



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Loud Money: a Mural Shouting Students' Concerns

by Paige Watts

Nina Chanel Abney created Loud Money, the basketball court mural, in partnership with a UNC-Chapel Hill studio art course in 2018. The class provided ideas for the topic and design to Abney, making the piece a fully collaborative experience. Loud Money, in a colorful and iconographic style, depicts the relationship between racial inequality and UNC's Confederate monument 'Silent Sam'. The imagery is analyzed by examining each section of the mural and its specific iconography. Then, the environment of UNC Chapel Hill is assessed, providing reason for the mural's topic and message, as well as possible incentives for the University's funding of the critical artwork. Combined, these topics stress the importance and contemporary relevance of the mural.

The mural Loud Money depicts a person of color screaming for money to stop being funded to 'Silent Sam', which is ignored; this speaks to many years of disregard to people of color for their comfort and safety in the United States, especially in the South, and the historical promotion of white supremacist values and an anti-black history. The artist Abney channels her artistic resistance, as well as those of UNC students, to criticize the University's neglect of students of color on campus through an intense visual medium.

Keywords: Nina Chanel Abney, Mural, UNC-Chapel Hill, Confederate monument, Arts Everywhere Day

Introduction

In early 2018, UNC Chapel Hill and Duke University elected Nina Chanel Abney as the Nannerl O. Keohane Distinguished Visiting Professor. As a result of this position, UNC commissioned Abney to create a large public mural on campus. UNC's Arts Everywhere Campaign absorbed the installation as part of their initiative, later revealing the mural Loud Money (2018)¹ on the basketball court of Morrison Dormitory in April of that year. The mural, created in partnership with UNC's class ARTS 290, attacks issues of race and the Confederate monument Silent Sam at UNC through clear, colorful iconographic imagery.



Nina Chanel Abney (b. 1982), Loud Money, 2018, paint on basketball court, UNC Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Morrison Dormitory.

¹ Nina Chanel Abney, *Loud Money*, 2018, paint on basketball court, UNC Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

I. Loud Money (2018)

Abney, in her first all-court mural, chose to divide *Loud Money* into thirds, with the composition intended to be seen from the outdoor walkways ascending up the sides of Morrison Dormitory. The mural integrates the lines typically painted on basketball courts for games, such as the free throw and half court lines, into the design to balance the court's utility and artistic composition. Abney scattered various symbols across each section, such as hearts, X's, and hands.

The left third of the mural, on the front court, portrays a black silhouette of a person's face with an eye as the only distinctive feature. In the area in front of the free throw line is a large heart while behind the free throw line are two sets of hands. A small, green speech bubble floats approximately where the face's brain should be along with small red triangles. In front of the face's eye is a large, pink X. A large speech emerges from the silhouettes mouth, saying "STOP" and mimicking a STOP street sign, which fills the court's center circle.

A large dollar sign sits under the "STOP" speech bubble, similar to a stop sign, and acts as the half-court line; three X's as well as various numbers surround the monetary symbol. The dollar sign has two hands guiding a large blue heart to the right side of the court. The far-right section depicts various blocks

of many colors, as well as the year “1913”. The heart, directed by the hands on the dollar sign, moves towards the year and the block that accompanies it.

The entire mural references monetary contributions to conservative issues at UNC-Chapel Hill, like the support of Confederate monuments, as opposed to providing support and funds to black students that these monuments effect. Abney likely used a black silhouette to make the race ‘black’ undeniable to the viewer; in previous works she used skin colors ranging from beige to dark brown, but through this choice she acknowledges the race’s name as opposed to its appearance. Interestingly, a black silhouette with a green speech bubble in the top left corner, also serves as Abney’s logo on her studio website.²

At the free-throw line are two sets of hands, possibly referencing hands raised to voice their opinions or hands up in a “Hands Up, Don’t Shoot”³ fashion. The top left corner contains a small speech bubble with various triangles, like broken glass, referencing a shattered mindset of the oppressed. In front of the free-throw line is a large heart, which can be interpreted as the love in the minds of black people being ignored. Further cementing this point, Abney placed X’s in the middle section which, as in earlier works, she used to represent the silencing of oppressed voices.⁴

In *Loud Money*, the large dollar sign actively ignores the black person shouting “STOP” by facing away; the partial overlap of the “STOP” and the dollar sign shows how the person’s words attempt to overpower the money, yet it fails. Despite calls from the silhouette, the personified dollar sign gives a heart to the “1913” section, referencing the Confederate monument Silent Sam on UNC’s campus; the hands hold a golden semicircle that glows around the bottom half of the heart, while the top half moves to the “1913,” as if the heart radiates wealth given to the monument’s institution.

Along with the mural, Abney created a sign that surrounds one of the light posts around the court. At the end of the description the sign reads:

Drawing on the history of the UNC-Chapel Hill campus, she [Abney] reimagines the layout of a traditional basketball court. Shapes, colors, and forms intermingle to convey a dissociative story about the Antebellum South’s influence on contemporary popular culture and American capitalism.

Although Abney is the accredited artist, a studio art class at UNC Chapel Hill, ARTS 290, helped design and paint the mural. When interviewed by the Rubenstein Arts Center, Abney

described her experience designing and painting Loud Money: the ARTS 290 class presented various issues regarding UNC Chapel Hill, helped Abney pick out specific imagery, design a concept, and paint the mural. As a result of this collaboration, Abney recalled that “[Loud Money] responds to Silent Sam from the student body perspective.”⁵ Unlike the previous basketball court she designed in Memphis, Tennessee, Abney painted along with the students to work together until the end of production.⁶

Brian Garner, a former associate professor at UNC Chapel Hill, acted as the leader of ARTS 290. In interviews, he made it clear that ‘collaboration’ acted as one of the most important themes in the mural’s creation: Nina met with the class 8 times over the semester to design the mural’s concept and speak with the students, which Garner described as “Nina’s art. Students’ voice.” The class painted the majority of the mural, gathered supplies, worked with environmental regulations, then painted on-and-off until Loud Money was complete. The class also planned the unveiling party on Arts Everywhere Day, which included custom posters, photo areas, and a meet-and-greet with Abney.⁷

The mural’s design was conceived on a computer, like many of Abney’s murals, then divided into a grid for easier painting by the students; they mapped out the court using a key “just like paint by number.”⁸ The paint was ordered by the students of ARTS 290 and custom mixed to match their design concept. The industrial flooring paint took several layers to cover the court and by the end they used about 45 gallons.⁹

UNC Chapel Hill and the Arts Everywhere Initiative chose to fund a public mural so the piece would be more accessible than art at a museum or gallery, which takes both effort and time to deliberately visit. They chose a location on campus, therefore further integrating the art into UNC. Initially, the mural was to be located on a building on campus, but ultimately the basketball court was chosen as it allowed for a larger mural and it better integrates the piece into the active lives of students.¹⁰

As mentioned above, the politically charged subject matter was chosen by students while also approved by various committees before Loud Money’s creation. According to Garner, UNC did not give specific guidelines regarding the mural’s topic except the condition that The Carolina Performing Arts, Arts Everywhere, Student Representatives, and Student Housing must approve the design sketched by Abney. In an effort to appease the committees, Abney presented various sketches and compromised on some aspects. Overall, Garner regarded the mural as a success; he explained that, “I think it was a good project with many people asking and questioning its meaning. As good art should do.”¹¹

2 Nina Chanel Abney Studio, <https://ninachanel.com/>.

3 A slogan and phrase adopted in 2014 after the shooting of Michael Brown, a young, innocent black man by a white police officer. The slogan is used at protests against police brutality and has been adopted by the Black Lives Matter Movement.

4 Marshall Price, *Nina Chanel Abney: Royal Flush* (Nasher Museum of Art, Durham, North Carolina, 2017): 51.

5 Annie Kornack, “Nina Chanel Abney on New Work, Instagram, and Her UNC Mural,” *Rubenstein Arts Center*, 2018.

6 Ibid.

7 Brian Garner (previous associate professor at UNC Chapel Hill), interviewed by Paige Watts, email, 2018.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Brian Garner (previous associate professor at UNC Chapel Hill), interviewed by Paige Watts, email, 2018.

11 Ibid.

II. Nina Chanel Abney

Nina Chanel Abney, an African American woman from Illinois, received her Bachelor of Fine Arts at Augustana College, in addition to studying computer science. After entering the workforce for a period, she enrolled at the Parsons School of Design to receive her Master of Fine Arts in 2007. To her surprise, she was the only student on color in her graduating class; this inspired her painting *Class of 2007* (Fig. 1).¹² In this composition, Abney portrayed her 18 classmates as incarcerated black individuals while she stood as a white prison guard. This piece set the precedent for Abney's subject matter that still continues in her career: racial injustice. Abney cites her inspiration for *Class of 2007*, her most noteworthy early artwork criticizing race, as Adrian Piper's calling cards (Fig. 2).¹³ Adrian Piper, an African American feminist who oftentimes passed as a white person, would hand out satirical, yet provoking, cards that acknowledged her blackness to the recipient after they made a racist comment to Piper.¹⁴



Figure 1: Nina Chanel Abney (b. 1982), *Class of 2007*, 2007, acrylic on canvas, 114 x 183 inches. "Royal Flush" traveling exhibition.

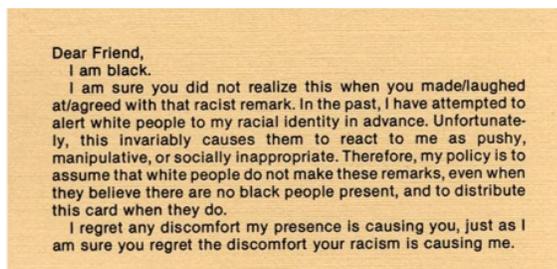


Figure 2: Adrian Piper (b. 1948), *My Calling Card*, 1990, print on paper.

Abney's obvious confrontation with race in her artworks also stems from the impact of works like Robert Colescott's *George Washington Carver Crossing the Delaware: Page of an*

American History Textbook (Fig. 3).¹⁵ This piece, inspired by Emanuel Leutze's *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, replaces all white figures with racially offensive depictions of African Americans which blatantly played into racial caricatures. Abney absorbed this notion of satirical representations of social issues as seen in many of her early works. By addressing humor in her pieces, while offensive to some, Abney creates a more accessible platform for viewers to receive her ideas.¹⁶

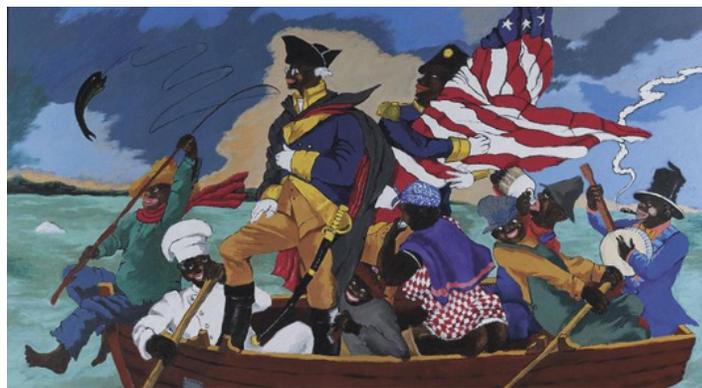


Figure 3: Robert H. Colescott (1925-2009), *George Washington Carver Crossing the Delaware: Page from an American History Textbook*, 1975, oil on canvas, 84 x 108 inches, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle.

Abney notes that Stuart Davis played an extremely influential role in the development of her later styles. Davis, a modernist of the early mid-20th century, used vivid cutout-like shapes in a sequence to evoke a message or scene. This pop-cubist¹⁷ imagery was adopted by Abney in 2012, and then progressively more in her later years, as seen in the mural *Loud Money*. The mural, like her later works, is sprinkled with various shapes and common symbols which relate to Davis's pop-cubist style. Abney chose to adopt this style in order to appeal to a mass audience, as pop art does, so that many people could understand the overall message of her pieces. Abney explained that while in her earlier works she tried to depict people more realistically, as she progressed, she realized that through simplistic forms she achieved the same effects.¹⁸

Given her education in computer sciences, Abney began to integrate social media, computer compositions, and emojis into her works. For example, the hearts and face of *Loud Money* are reminiscent of emojis, short for 'emotional icons,' sent over messages. Even the speech bubbles, seen in the top left corner and at the center of the court, may reference the bubbles seen in text messaging when a person types; the green bubble is shown blank as if typing, therefore thinking of what to say, while at the

12 Nina Chanel Abney, "Class of 2007" in *Nina Chanel Abney: Royal Flush*, by Marshall N. Price (Durham: Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University), page 20-21.

13 Adrian Piper, "My Calling Card" in *Nina Chanel Abney: Royal Flush*, by Marshall N. Price (Durham: Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University), page 19.

14 Price, *Nina Chanel Abney*, 19.

15 Robert H. Colescott, "George Washington Carver Crossing the Delaware: Page from an American History Textbook" in *Nina Chanel Abney: Royal Flush*, by Marshall N. Price (Durham: Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University), page 26.

16 Price, *Nina Chanel Abney*, 19.

17 An early type of Pop Art characterized by bold shapes and colors as the main elements in the artworks.

18 Price, *Nina Chanel Abney*, 46.

center the “STOP” bubble shows the message finally said by the silhouette. When interviewed, Abney stated, “Over the last few years, I have been fascinated by emojis and the idea that one symbol can take on so many different meanings.”¹⁹

Abney’s large-scale paintings, like *I Dread to Think* (Fig. 4), usually consist of chaotic scenes with a multitude of figures and symbols.²⁰ She recalls that she oftentimes does not plan her paintings specifically; she begins with a subject then intuitively layers figures and symbols until she has a “sort of feeling where, like, stop.”²¹ Abney cites Picasso’s *Guernica* (1937), a scene depicting the view after a bombing in Spain, as her inspiration for her chaotic, politically-driven, large-scale painted scenes.²² The creation of these great, complicated scenes has led to her success as a mural painter.



Figure 4: Nina Chanel Abney (b. 1982), *I Dread to Think* (part 3 of 3), 2012, acrylic on canvas, 76 x 252 inches.

Abney’s mural career did not begin in Chapel Hill. One of her earliest installations, in 2014, was created in Sao Paulo, Brazil as part of her larger exhibition *If You Say So...* which addressed racial inequality, especially towards blacks, in the nation.²³ This well-received exhibition then led to a 25-foot-long temporary, site-specific mural entitled *Run Run* (Fig. 5) at the Monique Meloche gallery.²⁴ This combination of painting and collage, like her piece in Brazil, uses her colorful, iconographic style to address race relations in the location of its creation. In the composition Abney uses silhouettes almost identical to the one depicted in *Loud Money*, as well as many other similar symbols like scattered hearts, X’s, and numbers.



Figure 5: Nina Chanel Abney (b. 1982), *Run Run*, 2015, mural on wall (temporary), 25 x 60 feet, Chicago, Illinois, Monique Meloche Gallery.

Since *Run Run*, Abney has created temporary murals in Durham, North Carolina;²⁵ Paris, France;²⁶ Portland, Oregon;²⁷ Bentonville, Arkansas;²⁸ and Brooklyn, New York.²⁹ In addition, Abney painted a basketball court mural in Memphis, Tennessee (Fig. 6); this untitled work uses repeated silhouettes and symbols to brighten Chichasaw Park.³⁰ By depicting faces of various races, Abney addresses basketball’s broad appeal and unifying aspects. While the imagery is similar to those seen in *Loud Money*, Abney chose to only paint certain sections of the court created by lines already present for games.³¹



Figure 6: Nina Chanel Abney (b. 1982), *Untitled*, year unknown, industrial flooring paint on basketball court, Memphis, Tennessee, Chichasaw Park.

19 Price, *Nina Chanel Abney*, 51.

20 Nina Chanel Abney, “I Dread to Think (part 3 of 3)” in *Nina Chanel Abney: Royal Flush*, by Marshall N. Price (Durham: Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University), page 44-45.

21 *Ibid.*, 74.

22 Price, *Nina Chanel Abney*, 75.

23 “Nina Chanel Abney: If You Say So...” *Project For Empty Space*, 2015.

24 Nina Chanel Abney, “Run Run” *Monique Meloche Gallery*, June 13-August 23, 2015. <http://moniquemeloche.com/onthewall/nina-chanel-abney/>.

25 Nina Chanel Abney, *Untitled*, 2017, acrylic latex and spray paint on wall, Durham, North Carolina, Nasher Museum of Art.

26 “Nina Chanel Abney Hot to Trot. Not.” *Palais de Tokyo*, 2018.

27 “Celebrating Four Years of ‘Forest For the Trees’ Mural Fest,” *Regional Arts & Culture Council*, 2016.

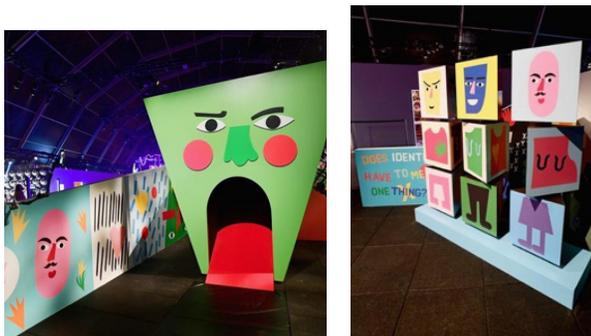
28 Linda DeBerry, “New Artwork Looks Back at You.” *Crystal Bridges: Museum of American Art*, 2017.

29 Nina Chanel Abney, *Untitled*, 2015, mural on wall, Coney Island, Brooklyn, New York.

30 Nina Chanel Abney, “Untitled,” *Hayo*, October 20, 2017. <http://hayo.co/artistic-basketball-court-murals-livening-up-north-americas-communities/>.

31 Rose Huet, “Artistic Basketball Court Murals Livening Up North America’s Communities,” *Hayo*, 2017.

Abney integrates artistic contemplation and playfulness through her transformation of everyday spaces, beautifying utility. For example, Abney now puts her designs on skateboards, cell phone cases, and clothing. In a more expanded blend of art and usefulness, Abney created an inclusive adult playground in Los Angeles, California in 2017; called *Fair* (Figs. 7 and 8), this two-week long exhibition, in partnership with Google Pixel, challenged adults to embrace their playful side through slides, swings, and toys based on giant depictions of her colorful iconography most common in her works.³²



Figures 7 and 8: Nina Chanel Abney (b. 1982), *Fair*, 2017, functional playground, Los, Angeles, California, 29Rooms.

III. Mural Precedents

The first wave of modern muralism occurred during the Renaissance, as seen in frescoes by Michelangelo, Raphael, and others. The most prominent rebirth of muralism occurred in 1920s Mexico, termed Mexican Muralism. During this period *Los Tres Grandes* (The Three Great Ones) dominated the artistic field: Diego Rivera, Jose Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros. These three artists, through government support and private commissions, revitalized fresco murals in public areas like government buildings, universities, and churches. The artists used their platform to challenge the academic model for art while oftentimes addressing issues of racial inequality, political corruption, and Mexican identity. While these murals exist primarily in Mexico, *Los Tres Grandes* also expanded their works to the United States.³³

Although various American institutions sought out *Los Tres Grandes* for murals, the murals created still exist as Mexican artworks. George Biddle, an American artist who studied in Mexico, started the widespread movement of American muralism during the 1930s. In 1933, during the Great Depression, Biddle wrote to his friend President Franklin D. Roosevelt about his

idea to institute a school of mural painting in order to improve American artistic culture while stimulating the economy. Due to the enthusiastic response by President FDR, the government began sponsoring muralism in the United States. The program was extremely widespread and successful; within four years of the program's institution, the United States Treasury had spent more on the arts than all other previous presidential administrations combined. This nationwide program set the precedent for muralism across the United States.³⁴

The tradition of specifically African American murals began in 1967. As part of the Black Art Movement, a coalition of various African American artists created the *Wall of Respect* (1967), an outdoor mural in a historically impoverished Chicago neighborhood, measuring 20 by 60 feet, displaying over 50 important black people, such as Malcolm X. The coalition, called AFRICOBRA (African Commune for Bad Relevant Artists) included a group of visual artists, musicians, and writers.³⁵ *Wall of Respect* initiated a wave of murals in African American neighborhoods, with an estimate of 1,500 being painted over the next 8 years, and over 200 created in Chicago, Illinois alone. This set the precedent for racially and politically charged murals across the United States for many decades to come.³⁶

Loud Money exists as part of a larger nationwide movement towards beautifying basketball courts. In 2014, Daniel Peterson founded Project Backboard: a nonprofit organization that renovates run-down basketball courts across the United States in an effort to beautiful poverty-stricken areas.³⁷ This organization contacted Abney to design her untitled basketball court in Memphis, Tennessee, which she designed on a computer while the organization painted her design.³⁸ Although UNC-Chapel Hill, not Project Backboard, hired Abney for the mural *Loud Money*, the movement Peterson created clearly had an impact on the mural's creation.

IV. UNC Chapel Hill's Relationship with Arts

Loud Money's dedication took place April 6th, 2018, on UNC Chapel Hill's Arts Everywhere Day. This day, as well as the Arts Everywhere Initiative, was created by UNC Chancellor Carol Folt in an effort to highlight the arts; the day includes various performances, painted pianos across campus, collaborations with non-art scholastic departments, and more.³⁹

Despite this initiative, students and faculty from the UNC Art Department protested at Chancellor Folt's office later that month in the first art-student-led protest at UNC. Along with their chants, "Revolt Against Folt!", the group presented a 16-point list of demands to the administration in regards to the art department.

32 "Nina Chanel Abney Created An Inclusive Playground For Adults," *Into*, December 8, 2017. <https://www.intomore.com/culture/Nina-Chanel-Abney-Crated-An-Inclusive-Playground-For-Adults>.

33 Desmond Rochfort, *Mexican Muralists: Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros* (San Francisco, California: Chronicle Books, 1993): 33, 83.

34 Marcia Mathews, "George Biddle's Contribution to Federal Art" (Washington D.C., Historical Society of Washington, D.C. 1973), 493–95.

35 Crystal A. Britton, *African American Art: The Long Struggle* (New York City, New York: SMITHMARK Publishers, 1996): 77–78.

36 Ibid.

37 Natalie Dahr, "A Brighter Future for Run-Down Basketball Courts," *City Lab*, 2018.

38 Alexxa Gotthardt, "Artists Are Turning Neglected Basketball Courts into Giant Works of Art," *Artsy*, 2017.

39 Rebecca Fiely, "Arts Everywhere Day Aims to Connect Academics and Arts for Students and the Community," *Daily Tar Heel*, 2018.

They demanded that their department building be repaired after months of leaking damage, that overall funding be increased, and that the Confederate Monument Silent Sam be removed. Overall, they criticized the administration for falsely advertising their relationship to the arts; they claimed that UNC used Arts Everywhere Day to persuade people that they were heavily investing in the art department. Hong-An Truong, an arts faculty member who attended the rally, stated, “The campaign really pointed out the hypocrisy of the university.”⁴⁰

Although ARTS 290 collaborated with Abney, and therefore Arts Everywhere, in the mural, this was one of the only instances when the Art Department was involved in the initiative. Arts faculty expressed frustration that they were not asked to participate in the event; they claimed instead that the initiative acted more as a fundraising strategy than a true promotion of the arts on campus.⁴¹ Considering this, it makes sense that UNC chose to fund the creation of a public mural as a year-round publicity piece to give the impression of a flourishing art department at UNC-Chapel Hill. To further present inclusivity, UNC chose to fund Abney, a woman of color, to paint a mural which actively addresses issues of race and Silent Sam. Did UNC actively choose these factors in order to avoid harder questions of the issues of art funding and Silent Sam on campus? Or is the mural a wholehearted attempt to address these problems?

V. Silent Sam and Confederate Monuments

Confederate monuments in the Southern United States, put up from the Civil War’s end in 1865 to 1980, were erected to honor the Confederate soldiers while symbolizing the South’s collective values. These monuments differ in their representational style and locations, ranging from cemeteries to college campuses. Interestingly, the vast majority of Confederate monuments were erected from 1900 to 1918: during one of the United States’ most intense periods of the Jim Crow era.⁴² Private institutions, not the United States Government, primarily funded the monuments’ creations. The United Daughters of the Confederacy was one of the most common contributors to these monuments across the American South.⁴³

Considering this, one may not be shocked to learn that UNC Chapel Hill’s Confederate monument, called Silent Sam, was erected by the United Daughters of the Confederacy in 1913, 48 years after the end of the Civil War. On the plaques of the monument, attached to stone under a bronze statue of a soldier figure, the inscription specified who funded the monument and their reasoning: to honor those who participated in Confederate Army during the Civil War.⁴⁴ However, Silent Sam’s institution

clearly had other connotations. At the monument’s dedication and unveiling, The United Daughters of the Confederacy chose Julian Carr, a white supremacist and endorser of the Ku Klux Klan, to be the key speaker. Carr spoke of the brave confederates who fought while also recounting:

100 yards from where we stand, less than 90 days perhaps after my return from Appomattox, I horse-whipped a negro wench, until her skirts hung in shreds, because upon the streets of this quiet village she had publicly insulted and maligned a Southern lady.⁴⁵

Due to current acknowledgement of the racist and white supremacist connotations around Silent Sam, contemporary UNC-Chapel Hill students and surrounding citizens called for the monument’s removal. Protests of Silent Sam have persisted since the 1960s as a result of the Civil Rights Movement. Former UNC Student Body President Houston Summers, recounting after vandalization of the monument in 2015, urged UNC to further contextualize the statue to remind the public that North Carolina no longer supports slavery or the suppression of blacks. Although students believe North Carolina does not entirely support these values, students like Jeremy McKellar, president of UNC’s Black Student Movement in 2015, still maintain that action must be taken in order to increase inclusivity on campus. While some support Silent Sam’s removal from campus, others maintain that that monument symbolizes Southern pride and heritage while respecting its history.⁴⁶

Efforts to decrease symbols of white supremacy at UNC-Chapel Hill have not gone unnoticed. For example, the UNC Board of Trustees recently worked towards contextualization by changing the name of Saunders Hall to Carolina Hall. The classroom building was funded by the family of William Saunders, a nineteenth century Ku Klux Klan leader, and displayed his name until 2015. Trustee Alston Garner recounted, “We’re not changing history. We’re not rewriting it. We’re shining a big bright light on it.”⁴⁷ The Board’s efforts for contextualization extended into Carolina Hall, where a small exhibit gives a brief history of the building and acknowledges its past.⁴⁸ However, many claim the renaming to Carolina Hall is not enough; activists pushed for UNC-Chapel Hill to rename Saunders Hall after Zora Neale Hurston, an African-American female scholar and author who audited classed at the University prior to its desegregation. UNC-Chapel Hill instead chose the name Carolina Hall to maintain neutrality, yet many claim this is an act of erasure of the University’s past as well as student

40 Jane Stancill, “‘Revolt against Folt!’ Students March on UNC Chancellor’s Office, Demanding Arts Money,” *News & Observer*, Apr. 23, 2018.

41 Ibid.

42 The Jim Crow era existed from the 1880s to 1960s. This period consisted of many extremely anti-black laws and social institutions which hindered equality for black Americans.

43 John Winberry, “‘Lest We Forget’: The Confederate Monument and the Southern Townscape,” *Southeastern Geographer* 23, no. 2 (1983), 107-110.

44 “Confederate Monument, UNC (Chapel Hill),” Commemorative Landscapes, DocSouth.

45 Ibid.

46 Stephanie Lamm, “Narratives about Silent Sam Collide,” *Daily Tar Heel*, July 9, 2015.

47 Jane Stancill, “UNC-Chapel Hill Trustees to Rename Saunders Hall ‘Carolina Hall,’” *News & Observer*, May 28, 2015.

48 Ibid.

activism.⁴⁹

Despite long standing calls for dismantling and/or contextualization of Silent Sam, UNC-Chapel Hill and the State of North Carolina have refused to alter the monument in the slightest. However, on August 20th, 2018, Silent Sam was torn down by protestors.⁵⁰ The unlawful destruction of the monument, which occurred after years of unacknowledged anger and pleas for action, has yet to be fully handled by UNC-Chapel Hill. After months of waiting, the administration released on December 3rd, 2018 their plan for Silent Sam: UNC will build a \$5.3 million building, with approximately \$800,000 in maintenance costs each year, in order to protect the monument. This notion clearly exemplifies the themes evoked in *Loud Money*; while students protest, like the demonstration held in response on December 3rd, the administration ignores their calls to remove the monument and gives millions to the institution of Silent Sam.⁵¹ This decision is also interesting considering the Art Department's lack of funding: this is an example of the monetary imbalance at UNC-Chapel Hill, where donors and the University prioritize certain areas as opposed to others. The issue of the Confederate monument continues to be debated and dealt with UNC's campus, with solutions constantly changing and steady disapproval from all sides of the political spectrum.

Conclusion

Nina Chanel Abney's dynamic, yet simple, representation of issues at UNC-Chapel Hill uses an everyday location and colorful palette to effectively communicate with its intended audience in *Loud Money*. As the mural faces towards the balconies of Morrison dormitory, residing students can glance over and think critically of UNC's relationship with students of color, those in power, and connection to its Confederate past. However, as it exists on the southern part of campus along with dorms holding primarily underclassmen, this alienates certain groups that do not frequent this section of the University. While the black silhouette calls for the money to stop funding Silent Sam, the money ignores their pleas, as seen in the UNC Administration's decision on December 3rd, 2018. During a period of an intense political climate and increased racial tensions in the United States, it is refreshing that UNC funded such a critical artwork on campus, further promoting student activism. However, this is not enough to address the issues of racial inequality and the Confederate past of UNC-Chapel Hill, and further action must be taken.

49 Jane Stancill, "Fake 'Hurston Hall' plaque appears at UNC's renamed 'Carolina Hall,'" *News & Observer*, March 30, 2017.

50 Zachary Kosnitzky, "When Rioters Tore down UNC's Confederate Monument Silent Sam, I Saw Mob Rule Triumph," *USA Today*, Sept. 4, 2018.

51 Jane Stancill, "UNC Officials Recommend \$5.3 Million New Building on Campus for Silent Sam," *News & Observer*, Dec. 3, 2018.

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Changes in Nutrition Environment Predict Changes in Child Diet Quality in Family Child Care Homes

by Mikayla Bowen

Family child care homes (FCCHs) are the second most common form of non-parental child care, yet tend to have limited nutrition regulations and high rates of obesity. Prior research indicates that the nutrition environments of FCCHs tend to be poor, but it is unclear how interventions on the various components of the environment can actually impact child diet quality. The current study uses data from the Keys intervention, a large double-blind randomized controlled trial which included 166 FCCH providers and 496 children aged 1.5-4 years, and which targeted provider health, nutrition and physical activity environments, and business practices. Nutrition environment is observed and quantified by the Environment and Policy Assessment and Observation (EPAO) tool, and child diet quality is observed and collected via the Diet Observation in Child Care (DOCC), quantified by the Healthy Eating Index-2010 (HEI). This study uses baseline and follow-up data to examine how changes in the nutrition environment can impact changes in child diet quality through the creation of linear regression models. In the intervention group, although changes in overall nutrition environment were not predictive, changes in the feeding environment sub-component were significantly predictive of changes in diet quality. This relationship strengthened when controlling for baseline diet quality. Overall, other aspects of the nutrition environment such as feeding environment are important for improving child diet quality rather than only improving foods provided.

Introduction

Establishing healthy nutrition habits is important for the maintenance of healthy weight in young children. As the prevalence of childhood obesity has been rising in recent decades,¹ our increased knowledge of the adverse consequences associated with this health condition has underscored the importance of prevention.² The consequences of childhood obesity are profound, including adverse effects on children's physical health, social and emotional wellbeing, and academic performance.^{3,4} Other chronic health conditions that are associated with childhood obesity include disorders of the metabolic, cardiovascular, orthopedic, and neurological systems.³ Furthermore, obesity in childhood is predictive of obesity in adulthood, and a greater risk for type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and several cancers.⁵⁻⁷

Early childhood has been identified as a critical period to establish nutrition habits that promote lifelong health in children.⁸ During this important developmental stage, many U.S. children are

enrolled in child care programs. It is estimated that over half of children (60%) under the age of six who are not yet in kindergarten are enrolled in some form of non-parental care program for an average of 30 hours per week.⁹ The family child care home (FCCH) is the second most common type of non-relative child care program in the U.S.⁹ Family child care homes are typically operated by an individual, the provider, who is most often female and cares for children of multiple ages simultaneously out of her/his own home.¹⁰ Importantly, FCCHs tend to serve predominantly children from lower-income families who are at a greater risk for obesity.^{10,11} The FCCH environment, including the quality of foods and beverages provided, nutrition practices, and nutrition policies, could greatly influence children's dietary intakes and weight outcomes.¹²

According to CACFP standards, meals and snacks served should include a variety of vegetables and fruit, more whole grains, and less added sugar and saturated fat.¹³ Standard recommendations also include that providers engage in practices that support

healthful behaviors, and have written policies supporting quality nutrition in the FCCH.¹⁴ Such aspects of the nutrition environment are important, however, the few studies that have examined the nutrition environments and foods provided at FCCHs have found the need for major improvements.^{15–20} Specifically, low-fat milk, whole grains, and low-fat meat tend to be served infrequently, while 100% fruit juice tends to be served often.^{16,20} Additionally, unhealthy foods are commonly used for celebrations.²⁰ FCCHs also tend to have poor feeding environment, foods provided, and feeding practices.^{17,18} Further, few FCCHs have written policies regarding nutrition and regular nutrition education for providers.^{16–20}

Benjamin-Neelon and colleagues conducted an observational study in 166 FCCHs in North Carolina at the baseline of the Keys to Family Child Care Homes intervention. The current study also uses data from the Keys intervention, but including post-intervention data as well. The study by Benjamin-Neelon found that the provision of higher-quality foods and beverages, presence of nutrition policies, and the seeking of professional development around nutrition by providers were associated with improved quality in children's dietary intakes.¹² Despite these associations, research shows that the seeking of professional development opportunities around nutrition is a particularly weak area for FCCH providers.¹⁶ In a recent center-based study in Australia, Seward and colleagues demonstrated that intervening on nutrition environment, including menu and meal services, could have positive benefits on children's diet quality.²¹ Further research is needed in FCCHs to explore how changes in the nutrition environment could impact the quality of children's dietary intakes.

This study uses data from Keys to Healthy Family Child Care Homes, a randomized controlled trial to promote healthy dietary intakes and physical activity behaviors in preschool-aged children while in FCCHs.²² Results from the Keys study showed that between baseline and post-intervention, there were significant improvements in the overall nutrition environment of FCCHs in the intervention arm.²³ Given this context, the purpose of the current study is to explore the Keys study data to understand how the improvements in the overall nutrition environment of FCCHs in the intervention arm could potentially impact the diet quality of foods and beverages consumed by preschool-aged children at the FCCHs. In addition, the study explores the impact of changes in sub-components of the overall nutrition environment (e.g., foods provided, beverages provided, feeding environment) on the diet quality of foods/beverages consumed by preschool-aged children.

Specific Aims

Aim 1: Using data from the intervention arm of the Keys study, determine whether changes in the overall nutrition environment between baseline and post-intervention are associated with changes in the diet quality of foods and beverages consumed by preschool-aged children.

Hypothesis: Positive improvements from baseline to post-intervention observed in the diet quality of foods and beverages consumed by children at FCCHs will be positively associated with changes in their overall nutrition environment scores.

Aim 2: Explore the impact of changes in the sub-components of the overall nutrition environment on the diet quality of foods/beverages consumed by preschool-aged children.

Methods

Study Design

This study uses data from Keys to Healthy Family Child Care Homes (Keys).²² Keys was a nine-month cluster-randomized controlled trial that was conducted between 2013 and 2016 in North Carolina. The intervention was three-fold, to improve: FCCH providers' dietary and physical activity behaviors; the FCCH nutrition and physical activity environment; and providers' business practices.^{22,24} All procedures used in the Keys study were approved by Institutional Review Boards at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the Duke University Medical Center and the study is registered at ClinicalTrials.gov (NCT01814215).

Participant Recruitment

Participating FCCHs were from counties in Central North Carolina (NC) that have higher than average rates of obesity for children ages 2-4, and lower than average income compared to other counties in the state.²² Potential FCCHs were identified from a public database available through NC Division of Child Development.²⁵ Information about the study was disseminated to providers through community partners who had close working relationships with the FCCHs (e.g., North Carolina Partnerships for Children).^{26,27} Invitations were sent to potential FCCHs by postal mail and email. Study staff then followed up with providers by telephone to provide additional information about the study, answer providers' questions and screen them for eligibility. Eligible FCCHs were those that had at least two children aged 1.5-4 years enrolled, provided at least one meal and one snack daily, were open on a year-round basis, and had been in business for two years with no plans to close in the following year. Informed consent was obtained from providers and parents of children enrolled at the FCCHs during home visits by the study staff. In all, 166 FCCHs/providers and 496 preschool-aged children participated in the Keys Study.²

Randomization and Delivery of the Keys Intervention

After baseline measures were taken, family child care homes were stratified based on provider weight (normal, overweight, or obese) to ensure that weight status was equally distributed between the study arms. FCCHs were then randomly assigned to the intervention arm or an attention control arm using a computerized block randomization approach (SAS 9.3 Cary, NC). Providers in the intervention arm received three modules: Healthy You; Healthy Home; and Healthy Business. The Healthy You module provided strategies to support healthier lifestyles with FCCH providers including promoting healthy dietary intakes, physical activity behaviors, to allow for positive role modeling behaviors. The Healthy Home module helped providers to create home environments that support healthful dietary intakes and physical activity behaviors in the children in their care. The Healthy Business module focused on promoting sustainable practices to support a thriving FCCH business. Each module was delivered over a three-month period (9-months total) via a training workshop, home visit, and three follow-up telephone calls or emails from a health coach^{22,28} that was trained in motivational interviewing and adult learning principles.^{29,30}

The attention-control arm received the Healthy Business module. They participated in three training workshops that

focused on record keeping, contracts and policies, and marketing. The business modules for the control arm were structured similar to that to the intervention, however, the control arm did not receive a home visit, and instead received another telephone call from coaches for support.²²

Providers in the intervention and control arm received \$75 for completing baseline measures. At post-intervention, they received \$125 and Continuing Education Units (CEU) for completing the follow-up measurements.²² At the end of the study, all participants received educational toolkits with items that were useful for the FCCH including pedometers and books.²²

Data Collection

Measures were collected from all providers at baseline and post-intervention during two-day visits to each FCCH by trained data collectors who were blinded to the FCCHs arm assignment. Data collectors arrived at the FCCH before the first meal of the day and departed from the FCCH after all children had left the FCCHs at the end of the day (~6PM). Several components of the FCCH were assessed during each visit including: i) provisions, practices, policies around nutrition and physical activity at the FCCH to describe the general environment, using the Environment and Policy Assessment and Observation (EPAO) tool;³¹ ii) the types and amounts foods and beverages served and consumed by preschool-aged children, using the Dietary Observation in Child Care (DOCC) protocol;³² iii) weight status of providers and children, via measured weight, height, and waist circumference;²² and iv) the demographic characteristics of providers and their FCCHs, with a brief survey. The current study uses data from all four measures.

Assessment of the Overall Quality of FCCHs Nutrition Environments

Provision, practices, and policies around nutrition and physical activity were assessed using a modified version of the Environment and Policy Assessment and Observation (EPAO), to describe the overall quality of the FCCH environment.³¹ The modified EPAO for FCCHs contains 145-items and has been shown to be a reliable and valid tool to assess the quality of FCCH nutrition and physical activity environments.³¹

To complete the EPAO, data collectors were trained and certified (4 hours each) against a “gold standard observer” approved by the research team.¹² The data collectors conducted observations across two full days at each FCCH. The observations began before the first meal of the day and continued until the children left for the day.¹² On the modified EPAO, data collectors recorded details about foods and beverages provided (e.g., food groups represented, quality of food preparation, availability of water, type of milk consumed, and consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages) at breakfast, lunch, and the afternoon snack. Further, observation included provider practices around nutrition and characteristics of the general nutrition environment (e.g., role modeling practices, surrounding materials depicting healthy or unhealthy eating behaviors, meal serving styles, and mealtime interactions between provider and children). In addition, the data collectors conducted a review of policy documents to verify the presence of nutrition and physical activity policies at the FCCHs.

For the current study, items on the EPAO were scored in terms of how well they met the best practice recommendation for nutrition and physical activity in FCCHs. The overall nutrition

score is based on 38 nutrition best practices and calculated through a multi-step process. First, these 38 best nutrition practices were scored from 0-3, where 0 indicated minimally acceptable practice and 3 indicated full compliance. Then these 38 best practices were categorized and averaged into 7 sub-components, including foods provided, beverages provided, feeding environment, feeding practices, menu variety, education and professional development, and nutrition policy. These sub-components were then summed to determine the overall nutrition score, with potential scores ranging from 0-21, where higher scores indicated higher quality nutrition environments. This overall nutrition score is based on seven nutrition sub-components, each ranging from 0-3. EPAO scoring breakdown is included in Table 1.

Table 1. Scoring for Environment and Policy Assessment and Observation Tool

	Example Best Practices	Score Range
Overall Nutrition EPAO		0-21
Foods Provided	Whole fruit served; dark green, orange, yellow vegetables served; meat was not fried/pre-fried; snacks not high-salt or high-fat; whole grains served	0-3
Beverages Provided	Water available inside and outside in a pitcher/cooler with cups; sugary drinks not served; skim milk served; milk not flavored	0-3
Feeding Environment	Meal served family-style; TV not on during meals; Provider ate same food as children; Enthusiastic role modeling by provider; Healthy eating materials (e.g. books, posters)	0-3
Feeding Practices	Provider asked before removing child's plate; Provider asked child if hungry before serving seconds; Provider used authoritative feeding; Food not used as a reward or bribe	0-3
Menu Variety	Lunch menu cycle at least 3 weeks long before meals repeat	0-3

Education and Professional Development	Planned nutrition lesson during the day; Provider received training in the last 12 months with at least 2 different nutrition topics; Parents received nutrition-related workshop and handouts in the last year	0-3
Nutrition Policy	Presence of written nutrition policies in compliance with best practices	0-3

Assessment of Children’s Dietary Intakes

Foods and beverages consumed by children were observed and recorded on the Diet Observation in Child Care (DOCC) protocol.³² Using this tool, data collectors observed all meals and snacks provided to children, and captured food served, wasted, exchanged, and left over at the end of each meal and snack for each child enrolled in the study. For this study, the DOCC protocol was modified so that data collectors could differentiate between food brought from home versus foods served at the FCCH.²² If a child is absent for the day, and at least one meal and snack are not observed, data collectors returned for another visit to observe and collect dietary intake data on that child.¹² If a child was no longer in the home at follow-up, data for that child was excluded. The DOCC protocol requires that a data collector observe up to 3 children;³² thus, one data collector was sufficient for most FCCHs. In situations where there were more than 3 children enrolled in the study at a FCCH, the study had two data collectors conduct the dietary observations.¹² Food and beverage records from the data collected were entered into the Nutrition Data System for Research (NDSR, University of Minnesota, 2016) to estimate the total calories and amounts of food groups and nutrients consumed by children daily. These output from NDSR were used to calculate a Healthy Eating Index (HEI) score using the HEI-2010 algorithm.³³

The Healthy Eating Index-2010 assesses the diet quality of foods and beverages consumed in terms of compliance with the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.³⁴ The HEI-2010 is scored on a range of 0 to 100, with higher scores indicating greater compliance with the nutrition guidelines.³³ The HEI-2010 is comprised of 12 sub-components, nine of which represent food categories that should be consumed in adequate amounts (i.e., total fruit, whole fruit, total vegetables, greens and beans, whole grains, dairy, total protein in foods, seafood and plant proteins and fatty acids),. Three HEI-2010 sub-components represent food categories that should be consumed in moderation (i.e., refined grains, sodium, and empty calories).³³ The HEI-2010 sub-components and scoring are shown in in Table 2.

Table 2. Scoring Criteria for the Healthy Eating Index-2010

Healthy Eating Index-2010 Sub-Components	Maximum Attainable Score	Criteria for Attaining the Maximum Sub-component score	Criteria for Meeting the Minimum Sub-Component Score
Adequacy Components			
Total Fruit	5	≥ 0.8 cup equivalent per 1000 kcal	No fruit
Whole Fruit	5	≥ 0.4 cup equivalent per 1000 kcal	No whole fruit
Total Vegetables	5	≥ 1.1 cup equivalents per 1000 kcal	No vegetables
Greens and Beans	5	≥ 0.2 cup equivalent per 1000 kcal	No dark green vegetables or beans and peas
Whole Grains	10	≥ 1.5 oz equivalents per 1000 kcal	No whole grains
Dairy	10	≥ 1.3 cup equivalents per 1000 kcal	No dairy
Total Protein in Foods	5	≥ 2.5 oz equivalents per 1000 kcal	No protein foods
Seafood and Plant Proteins	5	≥ 0.8 oz equivalent per 1000 kcal	No seafood or plant proteins
Fatty Acids	10	(PUFAs + MUFAs) / SFAs > 2.5	(PUFAs + MUFAs) / SFAs ≤ 1.2
Moderation Components			
Refined Grains	10	≤ 1.8 oz equivalents per 1000 kcal	≥ 4.3 oz equivalents per 1000 kcal
Sodium	10	≤ 1.1 g per 1000 kcal	≥ 2.0 g per 1000 kcal

Empty Calories	20	$\leq 19\%$ of energy	$\geq 50\%$ of energy
Total Healthy Eating Index-2010 Score	100		

Assessment of Children's Anthropometrics and FCCHs Demographic Characteristics

Child anthropometrics including body mass index were collected at the observation days at baseline and follow up. Children's height and weight were measured in the standing position for children who were able, and recumbently for 6 children who were not able to stand. Height was measured to the nearest 1/8 inch and weight was measured to the nearest 0.1 pound. Height and weight were used to calculate body mass index (kg/m^2). Child demographics were collected via a survey completed by parents of participating children and included information such as the child's birthdate, sex, and race. FCCH demographics were collected using a survey completed by the provider including information such as provider sex, age, race, education, FCCH quality rating, and CACFP enrollment.²²

Data Analysis

All statistical analyses were performed in RStudio 1.1.463 (Boston, MA). Mean, standard deviation, and percentages were calculated to describe demographic characteristics of children, FCCHs, and providers. Variables were examined for normality. Nutrition EPAO scores, EPAO sub-components, and HEI scores were determined approximately normal and fit for analysis. To conduct aim 1 analysis, a linear regression model clustered by FCCH was created which used change in overall nutrition EPAO score as a predictor variable for the prediction of change in child HEI score. Child age, sex, and BMI, along with FCCH star rating were controlled for. This model was compared against a null model without the overall nutrition EPAO change score variable. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was conducted comparing the model against its null to see if change in overall nutrition EPAO significantly predicts change in HEI. Analysis was completed separately among intervention and control groups.

Aim 2 analysis was conducted very similarly to that of aim 1, except instead of overall nutrition EPAO being used as the predictor variable, 5 individual linear regression models clustered by FCCH were created using each EPAO sub-component change score. Subcomponents for menu variety and nutrition policy were not included in analysis because these change scores were 0. Each of the 5 models were tested against the null model without that predictor using an ANOVA test.

Analyses for aims 1 and 2 were repeated controlling for baseline child HEI score in addition to child age, sex, BMI, and FCCH star rating. For the predictors found to be significant in the intervention group, the sub-component was broken down another level into its sub-component best practices. A paired t-test was performed for each of these sub-component scores between baseline and follow-up to determine if changes were significant. For ANOVA and paired t-tests, statistical significance was set at p-value < 0.05.

Results

Table 3 describes the demographic characteristics of participating FCCHs, providers, and children enrolled in this study. A total of 496 children from 166 FCCHs participated, of which 83 FCCHs were randomly assigned to the intervention arm, and another 83 FCCHs were in the attention-control arm. The majority of FCCHs had a star rating between 3 to 5 stars (92%) that is defined by staff education and program standards, and that rates each FCCH on a scale from 1-5, with 5 being the highest star rating.³⁵ The majority of FCCHs also participated in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (91%), the federally-regulated feeding program for child care programs in the U.S. All providers were female, 74% were Black/African-American, and their mean age was 49.3 ± 9.1 years old. 75% of providers in the study had a earned an Associate degree or higher. Of the sample of children, 50% were female, with a mean age of 35.7 ± 11.4 months. Sixty-three percent (63%) of the children were Black/African American whereas 27% were white. On average, the children had a body mass index of $16.83 \pm 1.88 \text{ kg}/\text{m}^2$. These demographic characteristics did not differ between the intervention and control arm at baseline.

Table 4 compares the intervention and control arms to describe changes in the overall nutrition environment and its sub-components at baseline and post-intervention, as measured using the EPAO. At baseline, mean EPAO scores were fairly low, and there were no significant differences between intervention and control. Mean EPAO score for intervention FCCHs improved from 9.30 ± 1.70 to 9.42 ± 1.77 . Mean EPAO score for control FCCHs stayed relatively stable, changing from 9.09 ± 1.83 to 9.06 ± 1.73 . The difference in mean change scores was significant between arms ($p=0.040$). This led to the development of aim 1 to examine the impact of nutrition environment improvement on child diet quality. Detailed breakdown of the EPAO sub-components is included in Table 4.

Table 5 describes changes in the total HEI-2010 score and its respective sub-components in the intervention and control arm, between baseline and post-intervention. Compared to the recommendation of at least 80, the overall HEI score was generally low at baseline for both intervention and control groups (mean=61.10 and 60.96, respectively). There was no significant difference between the intervention arm and control arm on baseline child HEI and its sub-component scores. In the intervention group, total HEI improved from 61.10 to 64.35. In the control group, total HEI decreased slightly from 60.96 to 59.85. The difference in mean change scores was significant in intervention group compared to control group. Improvement in the intervention group was significant compared to change in the control group ($p<0.001$).

Table 3. Baseline Characteristics of Participating Children, Providers, and Family Child Care Homes

	Total Sample
Children	n=496
Age (months, mean (SD))	35.7 (11.4)
Female	250 (50%)
Race/ethnicity	
Black or African American	314 (63%)
White	135 (27%)
Other	47 (10%)
Hispanic or Latino	20 (4%)
Days per week in child care (mean (SD))	4.9 (0.7)
FCCH Providers	n=166
Age (years, mean (SD))	49 (9)
Race/ethnicity	
Black or African American	123 (74%)
White	30 (18%)
Other	13 (8%)
Hispanic or Latino	8 (5%)
Education	
High school diploma or GED	41 (25%)
Associate’s degree or 60 hrs college credit	82 (49%)
Bachelor’s degree or greater	42 (25%)
FCCH Programs	n=166
Star Rating ¹	
1 or 2 stars	13 (8%)
3 stars	40 (24%)
4 stars	68 (41%)
5 stars	45 (27%)
Accepts CACFP ² Subsidy	151 (91%)

¹Star Rating is a North Carolina program that assesses the quality of the child care program. Ratings can range between 1 and 5 stars, with more stars equating to higher quality care.

²CACFP refers to the Child and Adult Care Food Program, a federally funded program that reimburses participating child care programs for providing eligible meals and snacks served to low-income and other children in their care.

FCCH, Family Child Care Home; GED, General Education Development; CACFP, Child and Adult Food Program

Table 4. Baseline and Follow-up EPAO Scores for Intervention and Control Arms

	Intervention Arm		Control Arm	
	Baseline Mean (SD) ¹	Post-intervention Mean (SD) ¹	Baseline Mean (SD) ¹	Post-intervention Mean (SD) ¹
Overall Nutrition environment score	9.30 (1.70)	9.42 (1.77)	9.09 (1.83)	9.06 (1.73)
Foods Provided	2.15 (0.27)	2.13 (0.28)	2.05 (0.26)	2.05 (0.27)
Beverages Provided	2.01 (0.28)	2.10 (0.26)	1.95 (0.31)	1.95 (0.27)
Feeding Environment	1.45 (0.20)	1.49 (0.23)	1.36 (0.22)	1.37 (0.20)
Feeding Practices	1.43 (0.26)	1.37 (0.26)	1.43 (0.28)	1.33 (0.27)
Menu Variety	0.64 (1.20)	0.65 (1.21)	0.79 (1.30)	0.82 (1.32)
Education and Professional Development	0.68 (0.35)	0.75 (0.32)	0.69 (0.33)	0.67 (0.32)
Nutrition Policy	0.94 (0.70)	0.94 (0.72)	0.86 (0.59)	0.89 (0.58)

¹Bolded values were significant between arms (p-value < 0.05)

Table 5. Comparison by Baseline and Control Arms for Healthy Eating Index

	Intervention Arm		Control Arm	
	Baseline Mean (SD) ¹	Post-intervention Mean (SD) ¹	Baseline Mean (SD) ¹	Post-intervention Mean (SD) ¹
Total HEI-2010 score	61.10 (11.16)	64.35 (11.95)	60.96 (11.86)	59.85 (11.64)
Adequacy Components of HEI-2010				
Total Fruit	4.46 (1.18)	4.38 (1.17)	4.47 (1.03)	4.30 (1.19)
Whole Fruit	4.59 (1.16)	4.71 (0.97)	4.69 (0.96)	4.60 (1.08)
Total Vegetables	2.01 (1.40)	1.84 (1.24)	1.89 (1.22)	2.08 (1.36)
Greens and Beans	1.24 (1.93)	1.14 (1.88)	0.98 (1.78)	1.16 (1.87)
Whole Grains	3.65 (3.34)	4.89 (3.82)	3.58 (3.41)	3.57 (3.50)
Dairy	8.94 (2.13)	9.05 (2.08)	9.34 (1.84)	9.33 (1.86)
Total Protein in Foods	3.61 (1.54)	3.41 (1.77)	3.60 (1.58)	3.31 (1.74)
Seafood and Plant Proteins	1.57 (2.19)	1.79 (2.25)	1.72 (2.24)	1.57 (2.21)
Fatty Acids	4.70 (3.45)	4.56 (3.63)	4.47 (3.42)	4.30 (3.51)
Moderation Components of HEI-2010				
Refined Grains	5.24 (3.70)	6.20 (3.50)	5.47 (3.40)	4.43 (3.27)
Sodium	4.58 (3.21)	5.05 (3.21)	5.35 (2.85)	4.43 (3.15)
Empty Calories	16.7 (4.20)	17.34 (3.66)	16.40 (4.26)	16.78 (3.94)

Bolded values were significant between arms (p-value < 0.05)

Table 6 describes the results from each individual statistical model created where each EPAO sub-component was used as the predictor, respectively. The beta (β) value represents the slope corresponding to the predictor variable. For example, for feeding

environment, an increase of one point predicted an increase in 10.75 points for child HEI score. By running an ANOVA, the test signifies whether this prediction is actually significant. The statistical models created were linear mixed-effects models clustered by FCCH, separated among intervention and control groups, were created, controlling for child age, sex, BMI, and FCCH star rating. Menu variety and nutrition policy sub-components were excluded because there was no change in these sub-components for any of the FCCHs. These models were compared against the null model without the EPAO score predictor variable to determine if the EPAO score or sub-component was significantly predictive of the HEI change. There were positive improvements in the overall nutrition environment following the intervention, but this was not associated with improvements in the overall diet quality of foods and beverages consumed by children as measured using the HEI-2010. However, when sub-components of the overall nutrition environment were analyzed, it was found that improvements in the feeding environment of FCCHs was positively associated with the changes in overall diet quality of foods and beverages consumed by children. That is, for each one-point improvement in feeding environment, we observed a 10.75-point improvement in diet quality (p=0.018) in the intervention group. Among the control group, each one-point improvement in the beverages provided was associated with a 11.22-point improvement in diet quality (p=0.034). No other sub-components of the overall nutrition environment were associated with changes in diet quality.

Table 6. Change in Nutrition EPAO and Sub-Components Predicting Change in Child HEI

Individual Model Predictor Variable (Change Score)	Intervention Arm		Control Arm	
	β (slope) of predictor in model	ANOVA p-value ¹	β (slope) of predictor in model	ANOVA p-value ¹
Overall nutrition environment score	1.19	0.452	3.12	0.257
Foods Provided	3.48	0.428	3.70	0.546
Beverages Provided	-3.00	0.423	11.22	0.034
Feeding Environment	10.75	0.018	-4.29	0.540
Feeding Practices	2.85	0.481	-2.01	0.723
Education and Professional Development	-4.86	0.365	5.51	0.484

¹Bolded values were significant (p-value < 0.05)

In the same set-up as Table 6, Table 7 describes similar data calculated using the same method of comparison of each model against a null without the predictor, except with one important distinction. Each individual model created using each predictor also controls for baseline child HEI score. Therefore, each individual model in this second set indicates whether these relationships hold even when accounting for variability in baseline HEI. Among the intervention group, change in feeding environment was significantly predictive of change in HEI score (p=0.001). For the control group, change in beverages provided was significantly predictive of change in HEI score (p=0.022).

Table 7. Change in Nutrition EPAO and Sub-Components Predicting Change in Child HEI Controlling for Baseline HEI

Predictor Variable (Change Score)	Intervention		Control	
	β (slope) of predictor in model	ANOVA p-value ¹	β (slope) of predictor in model	ANOVA p-value ¹
Overall nutrition environment score	2.04	0.177	3.76	0.064
Foods Provided	1.03	0.809	3.31	0.474
Beverages Provided	-2.24	0.536	9.15	0.022
Feeding Environment	14.00	0.001	-1.28	0.810
Feeding Practices	5.02	0.194	1.86	0.666
Education and Professional Development	-1.27	0.810	4.72	0.428

¹Bolded values were significant (p-value < 0.05)

To further investigate aspects of the feeding environment of FCCHs in the intervention arm that could be driving its significant impact on changes in the diet quality of foods and beverages consumed by children, the change scores within feeding environment in the intervention arm were analyzed (Figure 1, and Table 7). The only significant changes were in provider behavior related to the consumption of unhealthy foods, and the presence of healthy eating materials (e.g., posters, books) in the FCCH. Providers in the intervention arm had an increased presence of healthy eating materials (increase of 0.21 out of 3, p=0.025). In addition, providers in the intervention arm had a trend of eating the same food as children (increase of 0.17 out of 3, p=0.075). However, somewhat surprisingly, intervention providers consumed unhealthy foods more often at meals. (decrease in score by 0.17 out of 3, p=0.015).

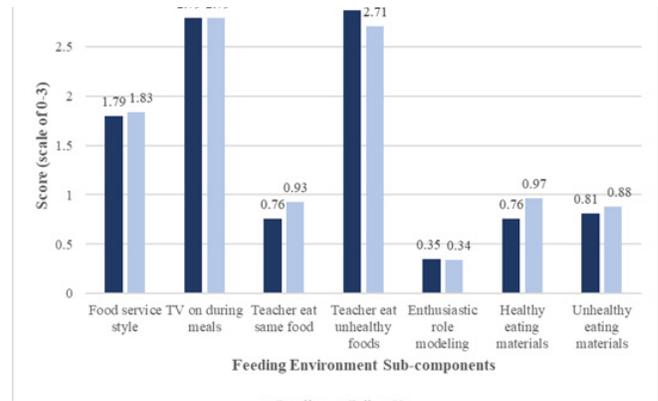


Figure 1. Comparison of Baseline and Post-Intervention Scores of Feeding Environment Sub-Components in the Intervention Arm

Table 8. Comparison of Baseline and Post-Intervention Scores of Feeding Environment Sub-Components in Intervention Arm

	Baseline Mean (SD)	Post-intervention Mean (SD)	Difference in mean change (95% CI)	P-value from paired t-test ¹
Food service style	1.79 (0.37)	1.83 (0.38)	0.04 (-0.06, 0.14)	0.457
TV on during meals	2.79 (0.41)	2.79 (0.51)	-0.01 (-0.13, 0.12)	0.917
Teacher eating same foods as children	0.76 (0.74)	0.93 (0.76)	0.17 (-0.02, 0.36)	0.075
Teacher eating unhealthy foods	2.87 (0.41)	2.71 (0.58)	-0.17 (-0.30, -0.03)	0.015
Enthusiastic role modeling	0.35 (0.50)	0.34 (0.50)	-0.01 (-0.13, 0.12)	0.921
Healthy eating materials	0.76 (0.57)	0.97 (0.58)	0.21 (0.03, 0.40)	0.025
Unhealthy eating materials	0.81 (0.57)	0.88 (0.65)	0.06 (-0.129, 0.26)	0.511

¹Bolded values were significant (p-value < 0.05)

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to determine whether changes in the overall nutrition environment or its sub-components in FCCHs could predict changes in child diet quality. Contrary to the hypothesis, change in overall nutrition environment score does not predict changes in feeding environment. However, when sub-components of the overall nutrition environment were examined, the feeding environment sub-components score was found to potentially be driving the changes observed in child diet quality in the intervention arm. Specifically, within the feeding environment subcomponents, providers in the intervention arm had more healthy eating materials (e.g. books, posters) in their FCCH, and surprisingly ate more unhealthy foods during meals. There was also a trend towards providers eating the same foods as children more often. This indicates that the feeding environment, in particular, the provision of healthy eating materials, may be potential areas to target in future interventions.

Although change in overall nutrition environment was not found to predict change in child diet quality, change in the sub-component feeding environment was found to predict change in child diet quality in the intervention group. Interestingly, this differs from the findings by Benjamin-Neelon and colleagues, that overall EPAO score and HEI score were associated at baseline, but that feeding environment sub-component and HEI score were not.¹² However, the current study takes into account the effect of the Keys intervention which specifically targeted mealtime environment. The feeding environment sub-component primarily captures provider role modeling practices, serving style, and mealtime ambiance including physical surroundings. Therefore, targeting feeding environment was an effective approach for the Keys intervention since improvement of feeding environment is associated with improvement of diet quality.

This finding that feeding environment effectively improved child diet quality will be useful going forward when designing cost-effective interventions to improve child diet quality. Cost of providing healthier foods has been found to be a significant barrier to improving nutritional adequacy of menus in child care centers and FCCHs.^{36,37} Therefore, identifying ways to limit costs is imperative for improving nutrition in child care.

Aspects of the feeding environment were further examined to see what could be driving improvements in diet quality within the intervention arm. In the intervention group, the presence of healthy eating materials improved significantly. This sub-component includes materials such as books, posters, and pictures which depict healthy eating behaviors. In addition, there was a increase in providers eating the same food as children which approached significance, a helpful opportunity for role modeling.¹² These two areas may be important targets for interventions; however, this latter finding is only a trend overall among the intervention group. Further investigation using statistical models is needed to determine if increasing healthy eating materials actually predicts improvement in diet quality.

It was surprising that providers in the intervention group ate unhealthy foods more often at meals at follow up than at baseline. However, the mean score representing compliance with best practice started off high at baseline and remained close to the best practice. Therefore, at follow-up, providers were still not eating many unhealthy foods, meaning that this decrease likely has little

negative influence compared to other weaker areas of the nutrition environment. Further, overall provider HEI scores increased at follow up, indicating that even if providers ate slightly more unhealthy foods, their overall diet quality improved.²³

The positive association between improvements in feeding environment and improvements in HEI was strengthened when controlling for baseline HEI. Therefore, improvements in diet quality are predicted by improvements in feeding environment in response to the intervention, even when accounting for differences in initial diet quality. Further research is necessary to investigate how those of various diet qualities at baseline may respond differently to interventions. For now, it is useful to know that baseline diet quality is an impactful measure in studying intervention effect.

A previous study by Benjamin-Neelon et al., using the baseline sample from Keys, found foods provided, nutrition policy, and nutrition education to be associated with HEI.¹² That study was similar to the current one in that both are using EPAO and child HEI data from Keys. However, the paper by Benjamin-Neelon used only baseline data, whereas the current study takes into account the intervention effect by looking at both baseline and follow-up scores. Results from the current study did not show changes in foods provided and nutrition education to significantly predict changes in diet quality. Nutrition policy could not be examined in the current study for comparison since there was no change in this score. Differences in this study could be explained by the distinctive difference between examining baseline associations and examining change scores in a linear regression. It is possible for one variable's change to not predict change in another, even if they are associated at baseline, especially if there is a confounder or mediator present. By taking into account both baseline and follow-up data, we are able to see how an intervention can affect this relationship between environment and diet quality. Even though the foods provided are associated with diet quality, changing foods provided alone does not necessarily predict change in diet quality. Children will not necessarily eat what is put in front of them without changing attitudes and beliefs surrounding the food, so intervening on the environment is very important as well as ensuring that foods provided are high quality.

In the control arm, changes in the beverages provided predicted improvements in diet quality. Though this result is somewhat unexpected, providers assigned to the control arm did have a general awareness of the purpose of the Keys study, so it is possible that they modified their beverages provided as a relatively simple, healthy improvement. In addition, the control group spent the entire 9-month duration of the study learning about business practices; it is possible that one method providers used to save money was to provide more water and less store-bought beverages with added sugars, an economical and healthy decision.

The majority (91%) of FCCHs in the Keys study participated in CACFP, a program with relatively high feeding standards. According to a previous study by Erinoshio et al. in 134 FCCHs in Mississippi, participation in CACFP is associated with healthier nutrition environment.³⁸ Even so, nutrition environment and diet quality were able to be improved in these settings with high CACFP participation in the current study. Therefore, those without such standards would likely also see an even greater benefit when intervening on the environment.

One limitation of this study is that conclusions cannot be made regarding whether changes in menu variety and nutrition policy

can predict changes in diet quality because there were no changes in these scores. In particular, nutrition policy seems to be a weak area for FCCHs. One survey showed that less than 55% of FCCHs have a written policy regarding nutrition.²⁰ As mentioned before, the study by Benjamin-Neelon and colleagues using baseline data from Keys found nutrition policy to be associated with child HEI,¹² but that doesn't necessarily mean change in policy would predict change in child HEI. In addition, another weakness of this study is that each observational assessment of environment and diet quality was conducted over two full days, which may not be indicative of usual behaviors. Specifically, behaviors such as foods served and mealtime practices may have been altered from the norm since the provider knew they were being observed. Further, this study only takes into account nutrition environment and dietary intake in the FCCH, whereas nutrition environment at home may influence general dietary patterns of the children as well through formation of beliefs about certain foods.

Strengths of this study include that this is a large randomized-controlled trial with high quality, objective measures. Diet quality and environment were observed by trained data collectors using accurate, effective measures. Furthermore, this study is the first known to investigate change scores in nutrition environment and the corresponding impact on child diet quality in FCCHs.

One of the primary targets of the Keys intervention was the mealtime environment.²² This is an important target for the intervention because serving nutritious food is important for achieving a high quality diet, but serving meals in a healthy environment is important as well to promote positive attitudes surrounding healthy eating practices. Children cannot eat healthy food if it is not put in front of them, but they will not necessarily eat healthy food just because it is there. The nutrition environment helps to form their attitudes and beliefs on healthy eating behaviors.

Going forward, the next steps of this study would include the exploration of mediational pathways to determine what is mediating the association between feeding environment and diet quality in the intervention group. In addition, looking further into the feeding environment would be useful to potentially reveal which specific sub-components can predict changes in HEI to elucidate which changes may be most important for improving diet quality. This way, cost-effective interventions can be designed to maximize improvement in diet quality.

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Characterization of Retinal Blood Angiogenesis Phenotype of the Adrenomedullin Signaling Axis

by Danica Dy

Several signaling pathways play important roles in regulating angiogenesis - the formation of new blood vessels from pre-existing ones. The Notch cell-to-cell signalling pathway is critical in the extensive organization, growth, and patterning of blood vessels. Adrenomedullin (AM) is a multifunctional peptide-ligand, which when associated with a receptor activity-modifying protein (RAMP2), transduces its signal through the calcitonin receptor-like receptor (gene: *Calcr1*, protein: CLR). This AM/CLR signaling has been identified to play a role in vascular development, permeability, and vasodilation. Furthermore, atypical chemokine receptor 3 (ACKR3), a decoy receptor structurally similar to the CLR receptor, regulates ligand bioavailability by sequestering AM, preventing the formation of the AM/CLR complex, thus impacting lymphangiogenesis and angiogenesis - the development of lymph and blood vessels. Incongruent with most other physiological regions, the retina is a site where blood vessels can be found independent of lymphatic vasculature; making mouse retina models robust tools for in vivo angiogenesis research. In this study, we examined mice with experimental genotypes *Admhi/hi*, *Admhi/+*, *Ackr3+/-*, *Ackr3 -/-*, and *Calcr1+/-* compared them to wild-type (WT) genotypes *Adm+/+*, *Ackr3+/+*, and *Calcr1+/+* using quantitative comparison of tip cells, filopodia, expansion, and branching of retinal blood vessels. Our data reveals dramatic differences in the angiogenic front of P3 pups of the experimental genotypes compared to the wild-type retinas. This study focuses on delineating the crosstalk between the AM, ACKR3, and the Notch signaling pathways in regulating developmental blood angiogenesis.

Introduction

Angiogenesis is the process by which new blood vessels develop from pre-existing vasculature, the network of blood vessels (1). Abnormalities in factors that control this pathway contribute to diseases including hypertension, ischemia and cancer. Therefore, understanding the signaling pathway of angiogenesis aids in advancing the development of novel drugs and therapies. Proangiogenic signals such as vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) control the development, growth and regeneration of blood vessels, while the regulation of sprouting and proliferation of endothelial cells, cells lining the interior surface of blood vessels, is governed by intrinsic signaling mediated by the Notch pathway (2). At birth, the vascularization of retinas in mice begins with a network of endothelial cells known as the vascular plexus emerging from the optic disc and continuing for approximately 1 week with outward growth toward the distal edge of the retina. An underlying layer of astrocytes secretes VEGF,

which acts as a substrate for endothelial cell migration (1) Delta-like ligand 4 (DLL4) is a transmembrane Notch protein which activates the Notch pathway by down regulating the expression of VEGF resulting in suppression of endothelial cell sprouting and reduced tip cell phenotype in stalk and endothelial cells (1).

Conversely, Jagged1 (JAG1) is a Notch ligand that acts as a positive regulator of tip cell formation which acts by modulating the DLL4-Notch signaling axis. Jag1 antagonizes DLL4 causing the down regulation of DLL4-Notch signaling thus preventing stalk cells from activating the Notch pathway (2). JAG1 sustains elevated levels of VEGF, therefore leading to tip cell proliferation. Tip cells are a specialized subset of endothelial cells found at the end of nascent vascular sprouts which, in response to proangiogenic factor VEGF, mediate vessel development and patterning. Tip cells are characterized by plasma-membrane projections known as filopodia which act as antennae that probe the local environment and translate signals to directed motility. Filopodia formation is a critical initial step in the guidance and motility of tip cells (1).

Adrenomedullin (AM) is a multifunctional peptide-ligand categorized under the calcitonin superfamily of peptides that circulates in plasma; its expression is broadly distributed throughout most organs and highly expressed in endothelial cells. This ligand, identified as a potent vasodilator, transduces its signal through binding to a G-protein coupled receptor (GPCR), calcitonin-receptor like receptor (Calcr, gene; CLR, protein). The ligand-binding affinity of CLR is changed by its interaction with receptor activity-modifying proteins (RAMPs). CLR heterodimerizes with co-receptor RAMP2 and confers preferential AM binding (3,4). Levels of cellular cAMP increase upon AM binding, activating cAMP-dependent protein kinase in endothelial cells (4). Previous studies conducted have shown that *Calcr*^{-/-} phenocopy *Adm*^{-/-} mice, with embryonic lethality resulting from reduced heart size, thin vascular walls, and severe hydrops fetalis (4); demonstrating the essential role AM and CLR play in angiogenesis.

Another GPCR, atypical chemokine receptor 3 (formerly known as CXCR7, Gene: *Ackr3*, protein: ACKR3) is structurally similar to CLR and scavenges ligands such as AM from CLR or chemokine receptor ligand 12 (CXCL12) from chemokine receptor (CXCR4), thereby acting as a decoy receptor. The signaling of GPCR pathways are tempered by the bioavailability of ligands, regulated by decoy receptors which act promiscuously as molecular sinks to sequester ligands from forming complexes with their respective receptors through binding, internalization and degradation of the ligand. ACKR3 is capable of binding multiple ligands, thus regulating levels in endothelial cells. Furthermore, cardiac and lymphatic development is governed by titrating the bioavailability of AM ligand through ACKR3 acting as its decoy receptor (10).

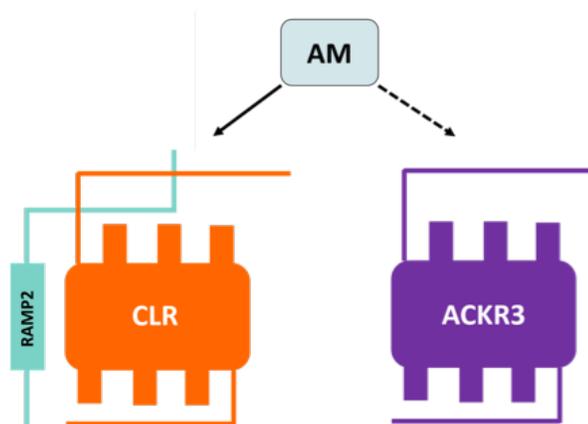


Figure 1: Regulation of AM/CLR complex with decoy receptor ACKR3

The precise role of this AM signaling axis with respect to its crosstalk with its decoy receptor in retinal angiogenesis has yet to be determined. The objective of this project was to determine how retinal angiogenesis is affected by Adrenomedullin in acting on the CLR or ACKR3 receptors through comparative quantitative analysis between wild-type, heterozygotes, and null-genotypes of P3 pups. Wild-type refers to the typical form of the phenotype found in nature, heterozygotes possess two different alleles, or versions, of a gene, and the gene is non-functional null-genotypes.

Materials and Methods

The study investigating the role of the Adrenomedullin signaling axis with respect to its crosstalk with the decoy receptor,

ACKR3, in retinal angiogenesis involved utilizing various protocols and techniques including animal breeding, genotyping and polymerized chain reaction, dissection of pup retinas, isolectin IB4 antibody staining of blood vasculature, whole mount preparation and statistical analysis. Genetically engineered animals that either lacked a single allele or expressed a knockout phenotype for the *Calcr* or *Ackr3* genes, or presented an overexpression of the *Adm* gene, specifically in endothelial cells were tested against wild-type phenotypes of each respective gene model in this comparative study analyzing angiogenesis.

Study Approval

All procedures involving animals were approved by the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. Live animals were handled by Dr. Reema Davis.

Transgenic mice

Mice (*Mus musculus*) with *Calcr*^{+/+} and *Calcr*^{-/-} phenotypes were generated by crossing *Calcr*^{+/+} mice (11) to yield wild-type pups and pups with the deletion of one allele of the *Calcr* gene. *Calcr*^{-/-} knockout pups expressed embryonic lethality and could not be used in this study. Expression of the *Adm* gene was studied in *Adm*^{+/+}, *Adm*^{hi/+}, and *Adm*^{hi/hi} mice, which were generating by crossbreeding *Adm*^{hi/+} parents (12). Finally, atypical chemokine receptor 3 (ACKR3) heterozygotes, *Ackr3*^{+/-} (13) were crossed to generate *Ackr3*^{+/+}, *Ackr3*^{+/-} and *Ackr3*^{-/-} phenotypes. Postnatal day 3 (P3) pup retinas were utilized for this study.

Male	Female	Pup (P3-P4)
<i>Calcr</i> ^{+/-}	<i>Calcr</i> ^{+/-}	<i>Calcr</i> ^{+/+} , <i>Calcr</i> ^{+/-}
<i>Ackr3</i> ^{+/-}	<i>Ackr3</i> ^{+/-}	<i>Ackr3</i> ^{+/+} , <i>Ackr3</i> ^{+/-} , <i>Ackr3</i> ^{-/-}
<i>Adm</i> ^{hi/+}	<i>Adm</i> ^{hi/+}	<i>Adm</i> ^{hi/hi} , <i>Adm</i> ^{hi/+} , <i>Adm</i> ^{+/+}

Figure 2: Transgenic mouse breeding chart

Genotyping

Tail clips were obtained for each animal upon dissection, which were used for genotyping. DNA was extracted by adding 300µL of DNA isolation buffer (100mM Tris, 5mM 0.5 EDTA, 0.2% SDS, 200mM NaCl and H₂O) and 7.5µL of Proteinase K to the tissue samples, followed by incubation at 57 °C for 48 hours. Samples were washed with 600µL of 100% ethanol and centrifuged at 10 000 rpm for 2 minutes. In order to amplify the DNA copies of the gene of interest, primers were added to samples in polymerized chain reaction (PCR). The following format presented as 5'-XXXXXXXX-3' represents the specific sequence of complementary nucleotide bases of the primer, with the 5' and 3' phosphate and hydroxyl groups on either side. Primers used for genotyping for the wild-type *Calcr* were 5'-GCGGAGCATATTCAATCACAAG-3' and 5'-GAAATGTGCTGTATGTTCAAGC-3'. The knockout *Calcr* genotype was done using 5'-GACGAGTTCTTCTGAGGGGA-3'. The AM WT allele was done using 5'-GGATGTGCCCTCTCCACTACTCTG-3' and 5'-TCCTCGCTAGGTTTTGGAAAGTTC-3', and the AM hi allele was done using 5'-CCCACATTCGTGTCAAACGCTAC-3' and 5'-TTTATTAGGAAAGGACAGTGGGAGTG-3'. Finally, genotyping for *Ackr3* allele was done using

5'-GTCACCTTGGTTCGCTCTCCTCAAG-3' and 5'-CCCATTGCAACATGCACGTGTC-3'. Gel imaging was conducted on 1% EtBr agarose gel and imaged using the GenSys software.

Retina Isolation

The eyes were enucleated and fixed in a solution of 2% paraformaldehyde (PFA) for 20 minutes. Retinas were isolated based on the protocol from Claybon et al. 2011 (5). Briefly, the eyes were transferred to a dish containing 1X phosphate buffered solution (PBS) and cut along the cornea-scleral divide using spring scissors and straight forceps. The cornea, lens, and its associated vitreous tissue were removed. The inner translucent retinal cup was separated from the surrounding outer layer. Spring scissors were carefully aligned to make a straight cut from the corneo-scleral divide to toward the optic nerve head. The same single cut toward the optic nerve head was made three more times such that all four cuts were approximately 90 ° from one another, forming a four-petal retina.

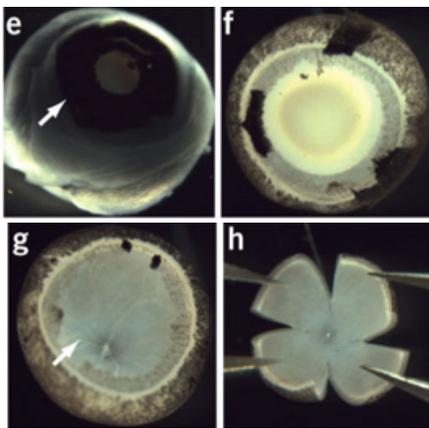


Figure 3: Retina isolation

*Adapted for Claybon et al., 2011 and Pitu;escu et al. 2010

Retinal whole-mount preparation and staining

Immunofluorescence retina whole-mount staining was performed based on the protocol from Halin et al. 2016 (6). Briefly, four-petal retinas were fixed in 2% PFA/PBS for 2 hours at room temperature then washed three times with 0.3% Triton-X/PBS wash buffer on a 3D-rotating table for 20 minutes each. Unspecific binding sites were blocked by incubating the retinas at room temperature for 2 hours in 0.3% Triton-X-100/PBS, containing 0.3% bovine serum albumin (BSA) and 5% Donkey serum, Sigma, cat.no. D9663 Immunomix blocking solution. Retinas were incubated with BS-I isolectin B4 FITC conjugated antibody (Sigma, L2895) in Immunomix blocking solution overnight at 4 °C on a 3D-rotating table. Tissue samples were then washed four times for fifteen minutes each with wash buffer (10% TritonX with 1X PBS) and then twice for ten minutes each with PBS.

Each respective slide was labeled with the animal genotype. Prolong Gold (Life Technologies, P36934) was added onto the slide in a rectangular shape and spread to create an even layer of glycerol, using the pipette tip. The lower arm of 15 ° forceps was slipped below the stained retina and gently transferred from the plate containing 1X PBS to the slide. A cover glass was positioned and carefully lowered; allowing the glycerol to pull to cover slide

over the sample. The perimeter of the cover slide was painted with clear nail polish to adhere and seal the cover glass to the slide. The whole-mount slide was then left to harden at 4 °C.

Imaging

Imaging of the tissue was conducted by Dr. Reema Davis of the Caron Lab based on the protocol from Davis et al. 2017 (7). As specified in the protocol, whole-mount fluorescent-stained retina images were captured using a Leica M205FA fluorescent stereoscope with QImaging Micropublisher 5.0 RTV color CCD camera. ImageJ (NIH) was used to pseudocolor the images.

Statistical Analysis

A total of 24 pups for *Calcr1* genotypes (12 WT, 10 heterozygotes), 11 of *Ackr3* genotypes (4 WT, 6 heterozygotes, 1 knockout), and of 27 *Adm* genotypes (5 WT, 18 heterozygotes, 4 *Adm^{hi/hi}*) were used in this study. Angiogenesis in the retinas of P3 pups was quantitatively analyzed by comparing tip cells and filopodia counts and ratios of the vascular region area to the total area of the most completely visible retina cup using ImageJ. The ImageJ multi-point tool was used to quantify the ends of the hair-like projections, filopodia, for 10X images of each animal. Some animals had multiple 10X images that were quantified and recorded. The same quantitative protocol was performed in analyzing the tip cells; the cells at the tips of vascular sprouts from where multiple filopodia may branch from.

The average counts for filopodia and tip cells were calculated for each animal and each genotype. These values were then plotted on a graphs of *CLR*, *AM*, and *ACKR3*. Significance was determined by 2-tailed, type 2 Student's t test, with P values of less than 0.05 considered significant. The P values were calculated and compared between *Calcr1^{+/+}* and *Calcr1^{+/-}* for *CLR* mice, between *Adm^{+/+}* and *Adm^{hi/+}*, and *Adm^{+/-}* and *Adm^{hi/hi}*, and *Adm^{hi/+}* and *Adm^{hi/hi}* for *AM* mice, and between *Ackr3^{+/+}* and *Ackr3^{+/-}*, *Ackr3^{+/+}* and *Ackr3^{-/-}*, and *Ackr3^{+/-}* and *Ackr3^{-/-}* for *ACKR3* mice; therefore, a two-tailed t test was appropriate.

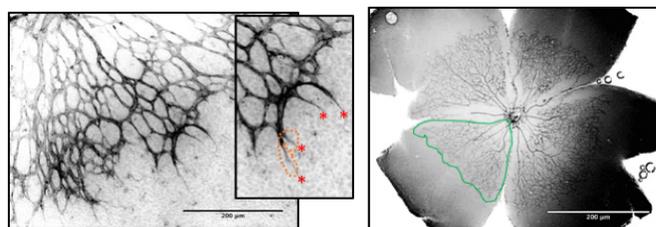
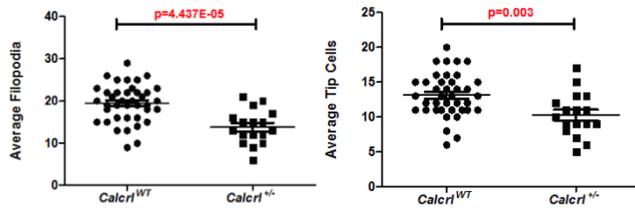
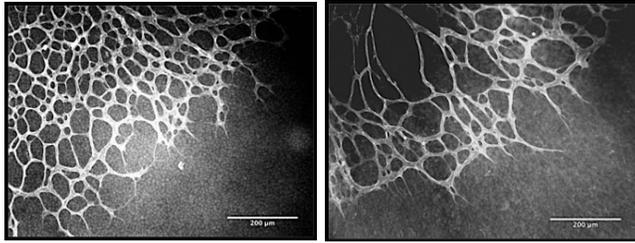


Figure 4: Image processing for quantitative analysis of angiogenesis

Analysis of the vasculature of the retina cup was performed by comparing the averaged ratios of the area of the vascular regions on the most completely visible petal on a 2X image. The scale of the 2X image was calibrated to the Nikon camera scale bar units using the straight ImageJ tool. The freehand selection tool on ImageJ was then used to draw a border around and calculate the area of the vascular area of the most completely visible retina petal. The same procedure was then conducted for the entire area of the petal. Ratios for the vascular area to the area of the whole petal were calculated and outlier values were removed using GraphPad Outlier software. Statistical significance was calculated between the ratios as they were for the filopodia and tip cell counts.

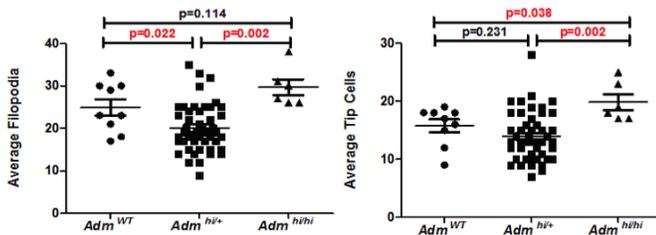
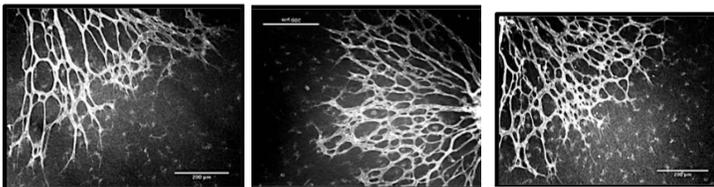
Results

Deletion of *Calcr1* gene reduces retinal angiogenesis



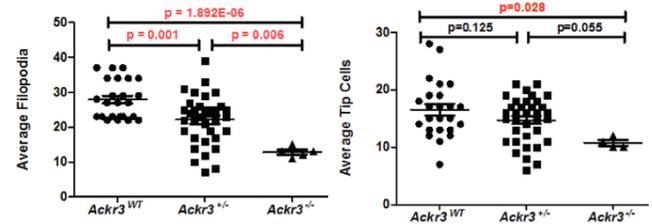
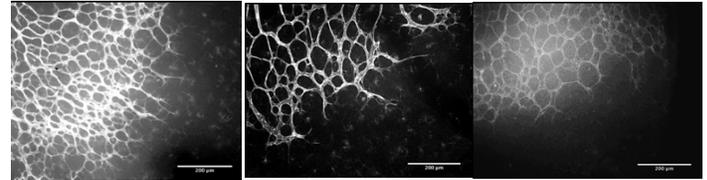
Previous studies have shown that CLR is essential to the process of angiogenesis (4). Therefore, expected results for the deletion of one allele of the *Calcr1* gene would be a decline in growth and development of the vasculature. In this study, *Calcr1*^{+/-} retinas appeared to have sparse branching of vessels proximal to the optic disc, as compared to the dense vascular network seen in the *Calcr1*^{+/+} retinas (Figure 5). Furthermore, significantly reduced filopodia and tip cell counts were observed in the heterozygotes as compared to the wild-type phenotype (Figure 6).

Overexpression of *Adm* gene increases angiogenesis



The Adrenomedullin ligand is known to induce angiogenesis upon binding to the CLR-RAMP2 receptor complex(1). Increased bioavailability of the ligand to bind to receptors would be expected to increase angiogenesis. Overexpression of one allele of the *Adm* gene in *Adm*^{hi/+} retinas appears to express increased branching of vessels and a more condensed vascular network than *Adm*^{WT}. When both alleles of the gene were overexpressed in *Adm*^{hi/hi}, even greater and more condensed vascular branching became evident (Figure 7). Upon conducting quantitative analysis, the retinas of *Adm*^{hi/+} pups expressed significantly higher tip cell and filopodia counts than the *Adm*^{WT} pups and the *Adm*^{hi/hi} genotype expressed even greater significantly increased counts for filopodia and tip cells (Figure 8).

Deletion of *Ackr3* allele reduces angiogenesis and arrests growth in knockouts



ACKR3 has been identified as a decoy receptor which sequesters AM ligand away from CLR, inhibiting the formation of the ligand-receptor complex which signals for angiogenesis (1). Deletion of the decoy receptor would therefore yield expected results of increased levels of angiogenesis. Interestingly, *Ackr3*^{+/-} retinas were sparsely branched and appeared to present reduced branching and vessel migration when compared to *Ackr3*^{+/+} retinas, while *Ackr3*^{-/-} knockouts presented arrested growth (Figure 9). Quantification of the data showed that angiogenesis in *Ackr3*^{+/-} retinas presented significantly reduced filopodia and tip cell counts as compared to *Ackr3*^{WT} retinas and *Ackr3*^{-/-} retinas presenting significantly reduced tip cell counts compared to the wild-type phenotype.

Statistically trending results in ratio analysis of vascular area of retina petals

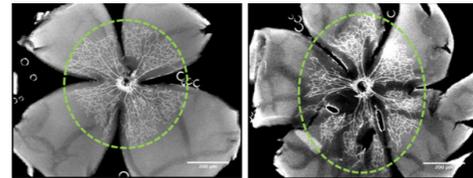


Figure 11: 2X images of P3 retina cups with migration front of vascular region highlighted

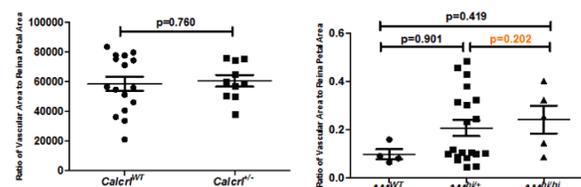
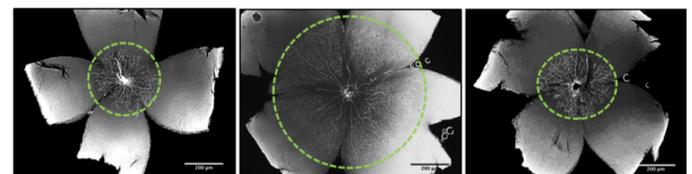


Figure 12: Averaged ratios of vascular area to total area of most visible retina petal

Further analysis of angiogenesis conducted by measuring the vascular area from the optic disc to the migration front of retina petals yielded a statistically trending phenotypic difference. In *Clr* retinas, vascular area between the *Calcr1^{+/+}* and *Calcr1^{+/-}* appear comparable and the heterozygote presents sparse vascular branching while the wild-types present a more uniform and condensed network of vessels (Figure 11). In analyzing the other gene model, *Adm^{hi/+}* appeared to present increased migration and vascular area; quantitative comparison to *Adm^{hi/hi}* yielded a p-value approaching statistical significance (Figure 12).

Discussion

Through this study, a comparative phenotypic characterization of 3 independent models that encode proteins involved in the Adrenomedullin signaling axis was performed.

As expected, analysis of the *Calcr1* pups resulted in reduced angiogenesis and sparse branching upon deleting one allele of the gene. *CLR* knockout mice have been known to phenocopy *AM* knockout mice (4), expressing embryonic lethality due to cardiovascular and vascular development complications.

Similarly, since knockout mice for the *Adm* gene represent reduced angiogenesis to the point of lethality, overexpression of the gene was expected to increase angiogenesis; the observations collected in this study supported the expected results for the *Adm* gene model. According to previous studies, genetic overexpression of the *AM* ligand in *Adm^{hi/hi}* results in cardiac enlargement as a result of increased levels of the peptide-ligand forming a *CLR/AM* signaling complex which transduces increased angiogenesis and inhibition of vascular permeability(3).

Since the *ACKR3* decoy receptor acts to sequester *AM* binding, *Ackr3^{-/-}* mice are expected to phenocopy *Adm^{hi/hi}*. Contradictory to expected results, the outcomes from this study presented reduced angiogenesis in *Ackr3^{+/-}* retinas as compared to *Ackr3^{+/+}* and arrested growth was expressed in *Ackr3^{-/-}*. Although the causative factor for these results is unknown, research has shown that the G-protein coupled receptor chemokine receptor 4 (*CXCR4*) is enriched in tip cells while *ACKR3* is enriched in stalk cells. *CXCR4* is expressed on the surface of endothelial progenitor cells. The ligand stromal-cell derived factor-1 alpha (*SDF-1 α*) regulates angiogenesis by transducing its signal through the *CXCR4* and *ACKR3* receptors(8). While *ACKR3* regulates the levels of ligands in endothelial cells, *CXCR4* is involved in pathogenic angiogenesis; inhibition of this receptor results in a significant decrease in filopodia. The *SDF-1 α* ligand binds to *CXCR4* and promotes migration of endothelial cells and endothelial tube formation. The *SDF-1 α /CXCR4* signaling system has been shown to cause defects in retinal tip cell morphology and attenuation of intercellular connections between tip cells (1,8). Furthermore, neonatal retinal progenitor cells (*RPCs*) are known to migrate to tissues with higher *SDF-1 α* concentrations during retinogenesis and neovascularization. In short, *CXCR4* expression is increased with increased exposure to *SDF-1 α* (9). Hence, a gradient-induced cellular response to ligand bioavailability may be responsible for the growth and patterning of retina vascular development. Beyond the factor of a chemotactic gradient, the unexpected outcomes in the decoy receptor gene model may be a result of crosstalk between different signaling axis, as the loss of a decoy receptor would affect multiple pathways including *AM*, *CXCR7*, *CXCR11*, and *Notch*.

Statistically trending results for the ratio of vascular area to total

retina area for a single petal may approach statistical significance by increasing the number of animals analyzed. Phenotypic variability in angiogenesis analysis may also be attributed to in utero crowding causing growth restriction in addition to variable development of retinal blood vessels due to minor age differences of the animals at the time of dissection. These marginal differences should be resolved by increasing the number of animals included in the study. Although the exact mechanism of the Adrenomedullin signaling axis with respect to its crosstalk with the decoy receptor *ACKR3* has yet to be determined, the research being conducted is significant in a broad range of clinical applications including the effects of vasodilation on reducing heart rate and blood pressure and other cardiovascular diseases, *RAMP* targeted signaling to treat migraines and compromising tumor growth to slow or arrest cancer progression.

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Hypoxia-Inducible Factor 1-alpha Upregulated during Sepsis, Involved in Inflammation

by Emily Reichert

Sepsis is an inflammatory response to infection that is one of the major causes of death among patients in intensive care units. Septic patients first experience hyperinflammation followed by immunosuppression, or a “shutting down” of the immune response. It is during this immunosuppressive stage when patients are most vulnerable to opportunistic infection and have the highest mortality rates. The gene hypoxia-inducible factor 1-alpha is best known for its role in allowing tumors to adapt and survive under hypoxic conditions, but recent literature has suggested hypoxia-inducible genes may also help regulate the inflammatory response. Therefore, using methods such as RT-qPCR and Western Blot, I quantified mRNA and protein expression of HIF-1A during different key phases of sepsis in an endothelial cell line. Targeting which genes stimulate or repress inflammation during sepsis is crucial to developing effective, phase-specific therapies.

Keywords: Sepsis, Inflammation, Hypoxia Inducible Factor 1-alpha, mRNA and Protein Expression

Introduction

Sepsis, a systemic inflammatory response to infection, affects over 750,000 people each year in the U.S [1]. Sepsis and septic shock are the top causes of death in non-coronary intensive care units, with estimated mortality rates of 20-30% [1,2]. Sepsis occurs when a bacterial infection causes a dysregulated and life-threatening immune response, and those most at risk are those with compromised immune systems such as the elderly, post-surgical patients, and those with chronic illnesses like cancer or AIDS. Sepsis is initially characterized by an uncontrolled hyperinflammatory stage, an acute response by the body to fight off infection [3]. It then transitions into a postacute hypoinflammatory stage in which the immune response shuts down and the body can no longer defend itself against the initial infection or secondary invaders [3]. Treatments focused on controlling the initial hyperinflammatory stage may only exacerbate later immunosuppression, and it is during the anti-inflammatory response that the majority of sepsis-related deaths occur [4]. Despite pressure to aid the 210,000 Americans dying of sepsis each year, 25 recently developed therapies proved ineffective in trial [4].

An understanding of the pathophysiology, or what occurs in the body during sepsis, is critical to developing phase-specific therapies. Endotoxin (i.e. bacterial toxin) triggers the immune response and activates macrophage cells, which in turn release

pro-inflammatory cytokines to recruit leukocytes (i.e. white blood cells) to the initial site of infection [5]. During inflammation, leukocytes in the microvasculature adhere to endothelial cells for transport to infected tissue. Leukocyte adhesion can be quantified by the expression of adhesive biomarkers: these include selectins such as E-selectin for the endothelium and integrins such as CD11 for leukocytes [5]. However, an exaggerated inflammatory response may damage healthy tissue, and to compensate the body soon phases into an anti-inflammatory response of endotoxin tolerance [5,3]. Many patients with sepsis experience prolonged organ failure and vulnerability to opportunistic infection as cytokine release and leukocyte adhesion in the microvasculature declines [6].

It has been shown in macrophage cells that the transition to endotoxin tolerance occurs and is metabolically driven [6]. Increased activity of the NAD-dependent deacetylases sirtuin-1 (SIRT1) and sirtuin-2 (SIRT2) characterize the transition [6,2]. Treatment during late sepsis with EX-527, a chemical probe that is highly specific in inhibiting SIRT1, was proven to restore a microvascular immune response in vivo in septic mice by increasing leukocyte adhesion [6]. Additionally, knocking out the SIRT2 gene increased leukocyte adhesion, while overexpressing SIRT2 decreased the activity of immune cells and caused endotoxin tolerance [7]. While studies have shown that endothelial cells also experience endotoxin tolerance through suppressed expression of selectins, the underlying mechanisms

by which this tolerance occurs are not well understood [6].

A gene with a relatively unknown effect on sepsis and the inflammatory response is HIF1A. HIF1A encodes for hypoxia inducible factor 1- α , a transcriptional regulator that alters gene expression in the presence of chronic hypoxia [8]. HIF1A is most well-known for importance in cancer research, as it allows tumor cells to adapt and grow under hypoxic conditions, typical of solid tumors [9]. Under non-hypoxic conditions, HIF1A is usually ubiquitinated and degraded [8]. However, evidence suggests the body responds similarly to inflammation and hypoxia. The presence of pro-inflammatory cytokines (such as TNF- α) and of bacteria have both been shown to increase HIF1A activity in the absence of hypoxia as a stress-response mechanism [10,11]. Upon activation, HIF1A translocates to the nucleus and binds to HIF1A, creating a unit known as hypoxia response element (HRE) [10]. HRE then binds to DNA and activates target genes involved in metabolism, erythropoietin production, cell viability, etc. [10].

With LPS-induced activation and a connection to the inflammatory response, HIF1A has recently come of interest to researchers studying sepsis and endotoxin tolerance. Initial publications, however, have been contradictory. Some studies show HIF1A to have pro-inflammatory effects, claiming its stabilization in macrophages increases production of TNF- α [11]. This side of the literature also argues that HIF1A is crucial for energy production in myeloid cells, and without it leukocyte aggregation and invasion decline, reducing inflammation [12]. Other research argues HIF1A is immunosuppressive and involved in the transition to endotoxin tolerance. In monocytes treated with LPS, HIF1A was shown to upregulate IRAKM, a regulator that impairs responsiveness to endotoxin [13]. This suggests HIF1A may reprogram monocytes to an immunosuppressed phenotype [13]. The alternative I.1 isoform of HIF1A was also found to be immunosuppressive in T-cells, as its genetic deletion increased pro-inflammatory cytokine production, decreased bacterial load, and improved survival in septic mice with endotoxin tolerance [14]. Despite varying results, all initial studies agree on the conclusion that HIF1A is relevant to sepsis and involved in the inflammatory response.

The metabolic pathway leading to endotoxin tolerance in endothelial cells is not well studied, and the relevance of HIF1A to endotoxin tolerance is still relatively unknown. Therefore, in this project I studied the expression and activity of HIF1A in endothelial cells with LPS-induced sepsis. LPS is endotoxin that triggers the immune response. Preliminary experimentation was necessary to determine optimal conditions for a sepsis model in bEnd.3 cells (endothelial cells from mouse brain tissue). A desirable sepsis model infects cells and increases expression of genes involved in the inflammatory response but does not cause significant cell death. I first determined in a cell line the optimum 1) cell density 2) lipopolysaccharide treatment concentration and 3) time point after LPS treatment to collect cell lysate. I then investigated the expression of HIF1A mRNA and the activity of the HIF1A protein at multiple time points after LPS treatment in endothelial cells to study the relevance of HIF1A to endotoxin tolerance. If HIF1A expression and/or activity of HIF1A change significantly throughout the duration of sepsis in the given cell model, this suggests an important role of HIF1A in septic inflammation requiring further study.

Methods

Cell Culture

bEnd.3 (ATCC® CRL-2299) cells were obtained from the ATCC. Cells were incubated at 37°C and 5% CO₂. Dulbecco's Modified Eagle Medium (DMEM) was used for cell culture with added heat-inactivated fetal bovine serum (10%), streptomycin (100 mg/mL), and penicillin (100 units/mL). 0.05% Trypsin-EDTA with phenol red (Gibco® 25300054) was used for dissociation monolayer during subculture since endothelial cells are adherent. Only cells from generations 2-10 were used for experimentation to ensure optimal cell responsiveness to treatment. For RNA collection, cell samples were seeded onto 24-well plates with 1 mL DMEM/well. For protein collection, cells were seeded onto 35 mm dishes with 2 mL DMEM/dish since western blot requires more cells. All cell samples were grown overnight before LPS treatment.

LPS Treatment

To imitate sepsis in endothelial cells, DMEM was aspirated from cells and replaced with lipopolysaccharide stock (200 ng/mL) added directly to medium. LPS releases endotoxin, infecting cells and initiating the inflammatory response. LPS treatment was performed at the desired time point before cell lysate collection.

RNA extraction/isolation

Cell lysate was collected and total RNA extracted at the set time point after LPS treatment with TRI Reagent® (Molecular Research Center, Cincinnati, OH, USA). BCP (100 μ L) was applied to each sample as a phase separating reagent, and samples were vortexed and spun down at 4°C (15 minutes, 13.2 RPM) to isolate RNA. 200 μ L of isolated RNA was transferred to new tubes. RNA samples were treated with isopropanol (400 μ L) and tRNA (5 μ L) to increase RNA concentration and precipitate RNA out of the aqueous phase. Samples were spun down at 4°C (15 minutes, 13.2 RPM) to isolate RNA pellets. Pellets were washed in 70% ethanol (800 μ L) and then treated with RSV solution (20 μ L) for RNA pellet dissolution. RNA concentrations were measured using a NanoDrop 1000 and standardized to 100 ng/ μ L with RSV solution so that only mRNA expression would differ between samples. RNA samples were stored at 4°C.

RT-qPCR

Quantitative real-time polymerase chain reaction was performed using SensiFAST Probe Lo-ROX One-Step Kit (Bioline, BIO-78005). The SensiFAST reaction mixture was prepared per kit instructions along with TaqMan primer/probes for GAPDH or E-selectin (3 μ L) purchased from Invitrogen (Grand Island, NY, USA). RNase inhibitor was used to prevent RNA degradation and reverse transcriptase was needed to transcribe RNA samples into complementary DNA. Kit reagents and RNA samples were vortexed and spun down prior to use to mix well and eliminate air bubbles. 5.3 μ L of the SensiFAST reaction mixture was then added to 4.7 μ L of diluted RNA sample (1:50) in a 96-well PCR plate. mRNA expression was normalized to GAPDH RNA levels. GAPDH is a housekeeping gene often used for control since it is generally strongly expressed in all samples. mRNA quantification was calculated using the $\Delta\Delta$ comparative threshold formula. All samples were run in quadruplicate to allow statistical calculation of mean and standard error values.

Protein isolation

Cells were divided into treatment groups with or without Mg-132, a proteasome inhibitor added to prevent degradation of HIF1A. It is unclear whether adding Mg-132 is necessary to stabilize HIF1A and develop a strong protein signal. MG-132 was always added at a density of 1 $\mu\text{L}/\text{mL}$. Cells in the +Mg-132 group were treated 1 hour prior to lysis with Mg-132 from Sigma Aldrich. At the set time point, DMEM was aspirated from cells and cells were washed in PBS (\pm MG-132) to rinse off protein from fetal bovine serum in medium. Cell dishes were then treated with lysis buffer (200 μL) with added Complete mini protease and phosphatase inhibitor cocktails from Roche (\pm MG-132) to prevent degradation of protein lysates. Lysates were scraped from dishes and pipetted into micro centrifuge tubes that were heated (100°C, 10 minutes) to denature protein. Protein lysate was stored at -80°C.

Protein Quantification

Protein concentrations were determined using the microplate protocol for a Bio Rad DC™ Protein Assay. Standard solutions of known protein concentration were prepared using bovine serum albumin and ranged from 0-5 mg/mL protein. Concentrations were standardized to the same values so that only protein levels differed between samples.

Western Blot

Immunoblotting was used to measure protein levels as previously described in the literature [2], using the housekeeping gene GAPDH as a loading control. Running buffer was prepared with 900 mL ultrapure water and 100 mL Tris-Glycine SDS Running Buffer (10x). Transfer buffer was prepared with 1400 mL ultrapure water, 200 mL Tris-Glycine SDS Transfer Buffer (10x), and 400 mL methanol. Gels were run in duplicate to account for potential loading errors. Stained membranes were washed with TBS (3x, 5 minutes) before antibody incubation and signal development. Membranes were blocked with 5% milk solution to prevent antibodies from binding to non-specific sites. Blots were incubated in primary antibodies against HIF1A (NB100-479, 1:1000, NOVUS Biologicals, Littleton, CO, USA) and GAPDH (sc-32233, 1:1000, Santa Cruz Biotechnology, USA) that bind to proteins of interest overnight. Blots were next incubated in Alexa Fluor 680-conjugated secondary antibodies (A21109 and A11357, 1:5000, Invitrogen, Eugene, OR, USA) specific to the species of the primary antibody. Signal was developed and images were taken to quantify protein level using a Li-COR Odyssey Infrared Imager system (Li-COR Biosciences).

Statistics

All quantitative data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel (2010). Mean and SE functions were used for experimental groups with sample size ≥ 3 . For comparison between experimental groups, a one-way ANOVA test with Tukey post hoc comparison was used to determine significance. A Tukey post hoc comparison allows for the average result of an experimental group to be individually tested for a difference that is statistically significant from other experimental groups. Statistical significance was defined as $p < 0.05$.

Results

bEnd.3 cells grow optimally for sepsis model at density 2.0 x 10⁵ cells/ml

To study the optimal cell concentration for a sepsis model, bEnd.3 cells were seeded onto a 24-well plate to study concentrations of 0.5, 1.0, 2.0, 4.0, 6.0, and 8.0 x 10⁵ cells/ml. The optimal cell density was defined as the density with the highest E-selectin mRNA expression. E-selectin is an important adhesive biomarker in the endothelium [5]. It is indicative of which cell density will result in the highest expression of genes relevant to sepsis and inflammation. Cells were treated with LPS at a concentration of 200 ng/ml and cell lysate was collected 3 hours after LPS stimulation. Results of this experiment are shown in Figure 1. E-selectin mRNA data resulted in a curve that reached maximum expression at 2.0 x 10⁵ cells/ml. E-selectin expression for 2.0 x 10⁵ cells/ml was significantly higher than for treatment groups 0, 6.0, and 8.0 x 10⁵ cells/ml ($p < 0.05$). At 8.0 x 10⁵ cells/ml significant cell death was observed. Although not significant from 1.0 and 4.0 x 10⁵ cells/ml ($p < 0.05$), 2.0 x 10⁵ cells/ml was used as the optimal density for a sepsis model in further experimentation with the bEnd.3 cell line. E-selectin trends toward its maximum expression around this density.

LPS treatment most effective for bEnd.3 model of sepsis at concentration 100 ng/ml

To find the optimal LPS treatment concentration for a sepsis model, bEnd.3 cells were seeded onto a 24-well plate and grown overnight. LPS concentrations of 0, 50, 100, 200, 400, and 800 ng/ml were studied. The optimal LPS concentration for treatment was defined as the concentration that produced the highest E-selectin mRNA expression. Cell lysate was collected 3 hours after LPS stimulation. Results of this experiment are shown in Figure 2. The data shows E-selectin mRNA expression to increase dramatically and then decrease slightly with increasing LPS concentration. 100 ng LPS/ml was the optimal concentration for imitating sepsis in bEnd.3 cells, though it did not vary significantly from 200 ng/ml ($p < 0.05$). Further experiments were adjusted to treat bEnd.3 cells with 100 ng/ml LPS.

Inflammatory response peaks 4 h post-LPS treatment in bEnd.3 cell line

bEnd.3 cells were seeded onto 35 mm dishes and grown overnight. They were then treated with LPS (100 ng/ml). Cell lysate was collected 0, 1, 4, 6, 16, and 24 hours post-LPS treatment to determine when the inflammatory response and E-selectin mRNA expression peak. Results of this experiment are shown in Figure 3. E-selectin mRNA expression increases significantly at 4 h post-LPS treatment ($p < 0.05$). E-selectin expression was relatively low at 0, 1, 16, and 24 hours. Lysate collection 4 h post-LPS treatment was determined best to study hyperinflammation in further experiments with septic bEnd.3 cells – inflammation peaked at this time point. Collection at 24 h was determined effective for studying the immunosuppressed phase of sepsis since it did not vary significantly from the control group with no LPS treatment. 4 and 24 h time points post-LPS treatment have been used in other cell experiments described in the literature to study hyperinflammation and immunosuppression, verifying accuracy of results [2].

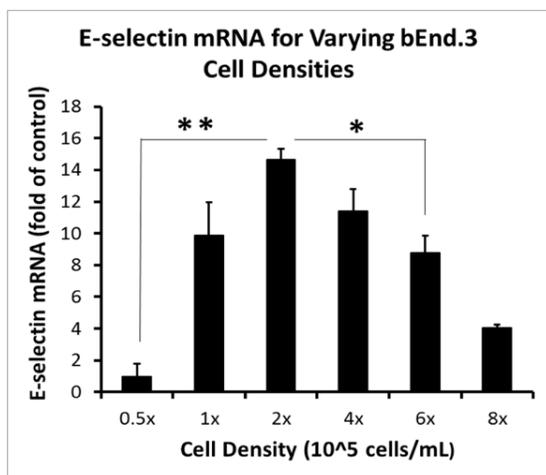


Figure 1. Optimal bEnd.3 cell density was determined testing densities of 0.5, 1.0, 2.0, 4.0, 6.0, and 8.0 x 10⁵ cells/mL and comparing E-selectin mRNA expression. 2.0 x 10⁵ cells/mL was determined the optimal cell density for further experimentation. Cells were grown overnight and then treated with 200 ng/mL LPS. Cell lysate was collected 3 hours after LPS stimulation. RT-qPCR was performed with SensiFAST Probe Lo-ROX One-Step Kit. E-selectin mRNA expression was quantified as a fold of GAPDH expression. *p < 0.05 and **p < 0.01 vs. control using Tukey-Kramer post-hoc comparison.

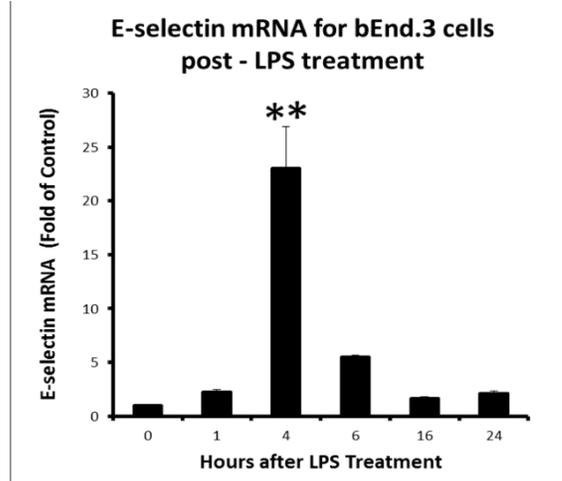


Figure 3. The optimal time point at which to collect cell lysate from bEnd.3 cells after LPS stimulation was tested using RT-qPCR with SensiFAST Probe Lo-ROX One-Step Kit. Studied time points were 0, 1, 4, 6, 16, and 24 h after treatment. At 4 h post-LPS treatment, E-selectin mRNA expression peaked dramatically, representing hyperinflammation. Cells were grown at 2.0 x 10⁵ cells/mL overnight and then treated with 100 ng/mL LPS. E-selectin mRNA expression was quantified as a fold of GAPDH expression. **p < 0.01 vs. control using Tukey-Kramer post-hoc comparison.

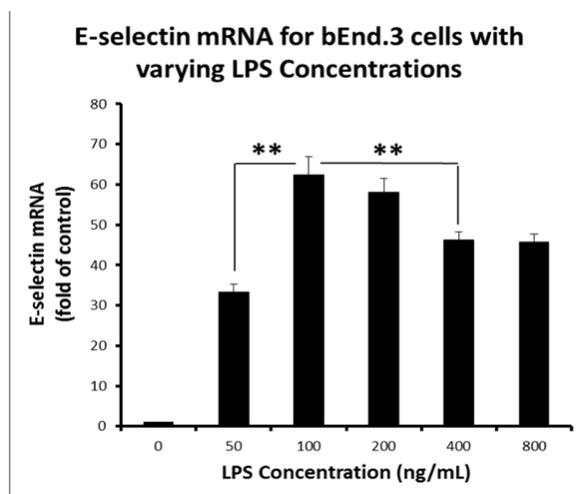


Figure 2. LPS concentrations of 0, 50, 100, 200, 400, and 800 ng/ml were studied to determine the optimal LPS concentration to treat bEnd.3 cells. 100 ng/mL was determined the best treatment concentration for further experimentation. Cell lysate was collected 3 hours after LPS stimulation. Prior to LPS treatment cells were grown overnight at 2.0 x 10⁵ cells/mL. RT-qPCR was performed with SensiFAST Probe Lo-ROX One-Step Kit. E-selectin mRNA expression was quantified as a fold of GAPDH expression. **p < 0.01 vs. control using Tukey-Kramer post-hoc comparison.

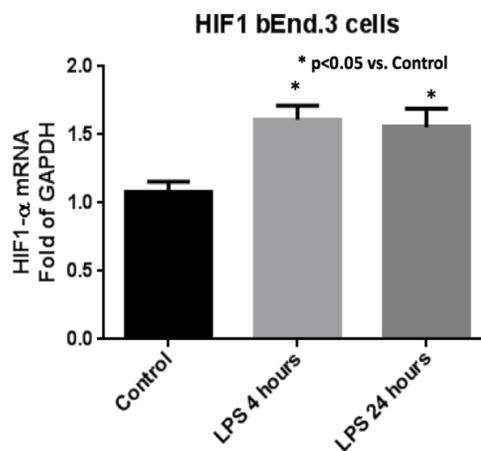


Figure 4. The expression of HIF-1 mRNA in septic bEnd.3 cells increased significantly 4 h post-LPS treatment, during hyperinflammation. HIF-1 mRNA levels remained significantly elevated at 24 h post-LPS treatment during immunosuppression. Cells were grown overnight at 2.0 x 10⁵ cells/mL and treated with 100 ng/mL LPS. RT-qPCR with SensiFAST Probe Lo-ROX One-Step Kit was used to measure mRNA expression. HIF-1 mRNA was quantified as a fold of GAPDH expression. *p < 0.05 vs. control using Tukey's post-hoc analysis.

HIF1A mRNA expression in bEnd.3 cells increases significantly during both inflammatory stages of sepsis

The expression of HIF1A mRNA was studied using the optimal cell density, LPS concentration, and lysate collection times for a bEnd.3 sepsis model. Results of this experiment are shown in **Figure 4**. HIF1A mRNA expression increased significantly at 4 h compared to the control (no LPS treatment) and remained significantly elevated even 24h after sepsis was induced ($p < 0.05$). Of note, results show HIF1A mRNA expression increased during both the hyper- and hypo-inflammatory phases of sepsis in a bEnd.3 cell line.

HIF1A protein expression fluctuates at significant time points in bEnd.3 cell sepsis model

Protein expression was analyzed using western blot, first preparing protein samples using the optimal cell density, LPS concentration, and lysate collection time points for a bEnd.3 sepsis model. Half of samples were treated with MG-132 prior to lysis to test whether adding this compound is necessary to prevent degradation of HIF1A. Results of this experiment are shown in **Figure 5**. Although HIF1A protein expression appears to fluctuate during sepsis vs. the control, GAPDH, results remain unclear. Without MG-132, HIF1A protein expression increased at 4h (vs. 0h control) and increased again dramatically at 24h. With added MG-132, protein levels increased dramatically at 4h (vs. 0h control) and then declined by 24h. It was found that treating cells with MG-132 is unnecessary. HIF1A protein signal in the -MG-132 group at 24 h was still strong, indicating no protein degradation.

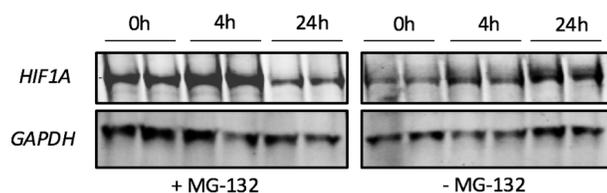


Figure 5. Cells treated with and without MG-132 (to prevent potential protein degradation) were tested at 0, 4, and 24h after the onset of sepsis for HIF1A protein expression. Results between the 2 treatment groups vary. With added MG-132, HIF1A protein levels peaked at 4h and then declined. Without MG-132, protein levels increased at 4h and again at 24h. GAPDH was used as a control. Cells were grown overnight at 2.0×10^5 cells/mL and then treated with 200 ng/mL LPS. Protein was isolated and quantified with a Bio Rad Protein DC™ Protein Assay. Gel electrophoresis and western blot were performed to separate and identify proteins, and images were developed with a Li-COR Odyssey Infrared Imager System.

Discussion

Preliminary results of this study defined the optimal conditions for modeling sepsis in bEnd.3 cells. E-selectin mRNA expression was strongest at an intermediate cell density (2.0×10^5 cells/mL), intermediate LPS concentration (100 ng/mL), and early time point after LPS exposure (4h). These conditions, eliciting the strongest hyperinflammatory response in bEnd.3 cells, were required for study of HIF1A mRNA and protein expression during sepsis. These results have helpful further implications. The developed bEnd.3 sepsis model can be used for future experiments studying any genes or proteins potentially significant to septic inflammation in the endothelium.

Using the developed sepsis model allowed for study of the gene of interest, HIF1A. The results of this study suggest that HIF1A is involved in septic inflammation in the endothelium, agreeing with prior studies that all attributed HIF1A with an important role in sepsis [11,12,13,14]. As shown in Figure 4, HIF1A mRNA expression significantly increased ($p < 0.05$) during the hyperinflammatory stage of sepsis and remained elevated during hypoinflammation in bEnd.3 cells. For mRNA expression, the pattern of HIF1A is clear in that it goes up and stays up throughout both phases of sepsis. The study of HIF-1 α protein expression during sepsis was less conclusive (Figure 5). The strongest HIF-1 α protein signal differed (4h vs. 24h) between the 2 treatment groups (\pm MG-132). It can be concluded in both groups that HIF-1 α protein signal does trend upward initially during hyperinflammation (4h). It then declines at 24h in the +MG-132 group. Since no protein degradation occurred without MG-132 treatment, MG-132 treatment was concluded unnecessary. Further repetition of the experiment without MG-132 treatment is required to determine the exact trend in HIF-1 α protein expression during sepsis in the endothelium.

HIF1A mRNA expression was proven to increase significantly ($p < 0.05$) during both hyper- and hypoinflammation while HIF-1 α protein expression appeared to initially trend upward in septic bEnd.3 cells. Put together, these results do not settle debate of whether HIF1A has pro- or anti-inflammatory effects. Current data suggests HIF1A may play a critical role during both hyper- and hypoinflammation. It is more likely, however, that HIF-1 α has a specific function in regulating inflammation, just like SIRT1 and SIRT2 [6,7].

Further studies are needed to solve remaining questions. Experiments comparing E-selectin mRNA expression in endothelial cells with a wildtype, knocked out, and/or overexpressed HIF1A gene could determine the effect of HIF1A on inflammation. For example, the compound PX-478 is known to inhibit HIF1A. Quantifying leukocyte adhesion in bEnd.3 cells with PX-478 treatment (vs. wildtype control) could determine if HIF1A enhances or suppresses the immune response. This discovery could have very beneficial future implications. If the exact effect of HIF1A on inflammation is known, therapies manipulating this protein could potentially be developed as a way to reactivate the immune response during the highly-fatal anti-inflammatory stage of sepsis.

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Purification of Fluorescent Fusion Proteins for the Generation of a Standard Used to Quantify Proteins Comprising a DNA/Protein Complex

by Charlotte Smith

A scientific method to accurately and reproducibly quantify the number of proteins comprising a DNA/protein complex is needed to enhance the understanding of underlying biological mechanisms. To fulfill this demand, a standardized scale to quantify protein numbers is being developed that both improves the accuracy of results and provides versatility by allowing for the study of multiple different proteins. The work herein describes the design, cloning, and protein purification via nickel affinity chromatography of three different fluorescent Lac-I fusion proteins that bind to a single LacO₁ operator sequence. After anisotropy testing, this will allow for future detailed studies of DNA/protein interactions in in vitro systems.

Keywords: Protein Purification, Fluorescence, Lactose Operon Repressor (LacI), Nickel Affinity Chromatography, Anisotropy

Background

The Lac Repressor-DNA complex provides a method for studying protein/DNA interactions. As one of the most well-studied regulatory systems, the DNA/protein complex comprised of the Lac repressor protein (LacI) and its Lac Operator sequence (LacO) have known binding affinities, stoichiometries, and crystal structures that have been solved.^{1, 2} Additionally, several LacI proteins exist that exhibit altered capabilities of binding to the Lac Operator sequence.³ Consequently, LacI/LacO complexes serve as an excellent model system to develop and test methods of quantifying the number of proteins binding to a specific DNA sequence.

Introduction

The work presented here aims to create a scale that will improve the accuracy and reproducibility of quantifying the number of proteins present in an in vitro protein/DNA complex at single molecule resolution. Fluorescence is a popular method

of protein visualization, and fluorescent proteins can be fused to a specific protein of interest, such as the Lac repressor. These fusion proteins emit photons (fluorescence) upon excitation with a laser at a specific wavelength of light. By exciting the fluorescent fusion protein, we can quantify the total amount of emitted fluorescence and 'visualize' proteins.

Unfortunately, there is no universal ratio to correlate the amount of total fluorescence measured to the number of fluorescent proteins present in the complex. Unlike standardized measurements, fluorescence intensity is measured in arbitrary units. The observed intensity can vary from instrument to instrument and depends on experimental parameters, such as laser power, optical setup, and the microscope objective employed to magnify the samples.

To standardize the accuracy and reproducibility of protein quantification using fluorescent fusion proteins, a model protein/DNA system involving the Lac Operator sequence (LacO) and Lac Repressor protein (LacI) was selected. Using a mutant version of LacI (LacI-I12) this model system capitalizes on the binding stoichiometry of the LacO₁ operator site which accommodates two

LacI-I12 proteins per LacO₁ repeat⁴. Because fluorescent proteins bleach in a stochastic fashion, it is possible to count the number of proteins present in a DNA/protein complex using quantitative photo-bleaching image analysis techniques to identify the loss of total fluorescence over time. This approach effectively results in a stepwise gradual loss of fluorescence over time, allowing the number of steps to be counted and compared to the expected number of proteins bound to a known number of LacO₁ repeats. These data will be subsequently used to create a standardized scale for the determination of the number of proteins bound to a specific DNA sequence.

Through molecular cloning, a plasmid encoding a protein named LacI** was modified to generate different fluorescent LacI-I12 fusion proteins, to allow for the simultaneous analysis of the stoichiometry of multiple different proteins in a heterogeneous protein/DNA complex. Therefore, this work describes the design, cloning, and purification of a fluorescent LacI fusion protein that can be used to determine *in vitro* stoichiometry of LacI/LacO complexes as a representative protein/DNA complex. Additionally, variants of this fusion protein were made using the fluorescent proteins GFP, mNeonGreen, and mKate2.

Methods

Plasmid Design

A plasmid was designed that generates a Fluorescent LacI-I12 fusion protein upon the addition of L-arabinose. The LacI-I12 plasmid design originates from the pBAD-LacI** plasmid, pAT123 (Addgene plasmid #40943, Watertown, MA). The plasmid contains the β -lactamase gene (AmpR), rendering it resistant to the drug ampicillin which can be used for selection. It also contains an araBAD promoter that induces the expression of the LacI fusion protein when L-arabinose is added to the culture medium. The plasmid also features a 6xHis tag, which is a unit of six repeating Histidine amino acids used to isolate the protein via Ni-affinity chromatography. Three versions of this plasmid have been generated using different fluorophore fusion proteins: pBAD-mKate2-LacI-N-Term-6xHis, pBAD-GFP-LacI-N-Term-6xHis, and pBAD-mNeonGreen-LacI-N-Term-6xHis.

Furthermore, the pBAD-LacI plasmids contain the LacI** mutant with an eleven-amino acid deletion that prevents tetramerization and an insertion of two Gly amino acids at position 56 and 57 of the amino acid chain. This is important to avoid as the DNA structure of LacO is altered when bound to a LacI protein that contains a tetramerization domain.⁵ However, several other genetic mutations decrease its interaction with the operator sequence. As this protein's utility for *in vitro* experiments depends on its ability to bind to LacO, it is imperative that this protein binds quickly and specifically to the DNA sequence of interest. A previous report has shown that the insertion of more than two glycines in the hinge region "exhibited a decrease of ~100 fold in binding affinity of the LacI protein for the O₁ operator"⁶ The LacI** mutant current has three glycine amino acids in this region (Asp⁵³ Lys⁵⁴ Gly⁵⁵ Gly⁵⁶ Gly⁵⁷). Therefore, the additional glycines and an aspartic acid were removed from the LacI** mutant to revert its sequence back to that of the wild type sequence for that region (Gly⁵³ Lys⁵⁴ Gln⁵⁵). An additional increase in binding affinity of the LacI fusion protein for the LacO operator sequence was observed due to the presence of a P3Y mutation in the LacI-I12 mutant.³

Plasmid Cloning and Selection

Site-directed mutagenesis (SDM) primers were designed to correct the glycine mutations in the original pBAD-LacI plasmids (Figure 1) using the QuikChange II XL Site-Directed Mutagenesis Kit according to the manufacturer's instructions (Agilent Technologies, Santa Clara, CA). The plasmids were transformed into *Escherichia coli* (E. coli) BL21DE3 competent cells and plated onto ampicillin selection plates. Single colonies obtained from Luria broth (LB) +100 μ g/ μ l ampicillin agar plates were selected and sequenced to confirm that the plasmids contained the desired LacI-I12 mutant.

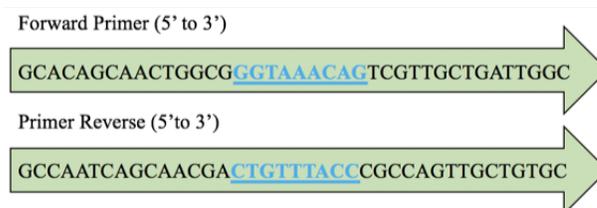


Figure 1. Complementary SDM primers used for mutagenesis, designed as recommended by the manufacturer. The forward and reverse primers were designed to remove glycine repeats from LacI** and convert the sequence to the LacI-I12 mutant. $T_m = 84.01^\circ\text{C}$ was calculated following the manufacturer's instructions. The blue region of primer sequence indicates the base pair deletions. The black region indicates the primer sequence matching the template DNA.

Protein Purification and Analysis

Upon sequence confirmation, *E. coli* cells were grown in LB (+100 μ g/ μ l ampicillin) media. The culture was induced with 20% sterile L-arabinose (Fisher Scientific, Hampton, NH) to a final concentration of 0.05% to express the fluorescent LacI-I12 fusion protein. Cells were lysed on ice with 60 mM imidazole/300 mM NaCl/50 mM sodium monobasic phosphate, pH 8.0 lysis buffer for 30 minutes and subsequently digested with 10 μ g/ml RNase A (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO), 5 μ g/ml DNase I (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO) at approximately 0°C for 15 minutes. The fluorescent LacI-I12 fusion protein lysate was incubated with a 50% Ni-NTA bead slurry (Genesee Scientific, San Diego, CA) with gentle agitation for 1 hour at 4°C . (Figure 2).

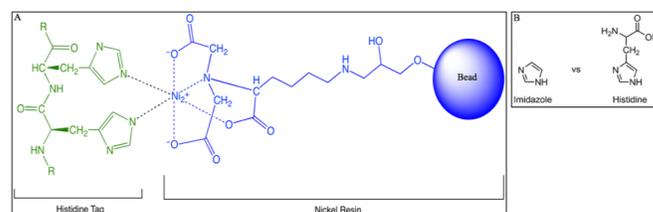


Figure 2A. Structure of Nickel-NTA Resin interacting with two Histidine amino acids. The Ni²⁺ metal ion is coordinating with two nitrogen atoms from the imidazole ring of adjacent Histidine amino acids in order to bind the 6xHis-tag protein to the resin.⁷

Figure 2B. Imidazole is a histidine analog. This structural similarity allows the nitrogen atom on the imidazole ring to competitively bind to the Nickel ion, eluting the 6xHis-tag protein.⁸

The fractions obtained by protein purification were analyzed using a 10% SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE) gel. Two gels were run for each protein purification. The first was

analyzed using Coomassie Blue Staining, allowing the visualization of individual protein bands present in each fraction. The gel was incubated overnight on a shaker in staining solution (0.1% Coomassie Brilliant Blue R250, 10% acetic acid, 50% ethanol, 40% H₂O-Fisher Scientific, Hampton, NH). The gel was destained by soaking for three hours in destaining solution (10% acetic acid, 50% ethanol, 40% H₂O), changing the solvent at least three times.

For the Western immunoblot experiment, the second gel containing the separated proteins was transferred via electrophoresis onto a nitrocellulose membrane in 1x transfer buffer (25 mM Tris, 190 mM glycine, 20% methanol-Fisher Scientific, Hampton, NH). The membrane was blocked in blocking buffer (5% Blocking Agent in 1x TBST buffer-recipe below- Bio-Rad Laboratories, Hercules, CA) at 4°C for one hour. An <-His-Tag primary antibody (Catalog #70796-3UG, Merck Group, Darmstadt, Germany) was used at a 1:1000 dilution overnight. The membrane was rinsed three times for fifteen minutes with 1x TBST buffer (20 mM Tris, 150 mM NaCl, 0.1% Tween 20, pH 7.5-Fisher Scientific, Hampton, NH), covered in foil and incubated in a Goat <-mouse Cy5 secondary antibody solution according to the manufacturer's instruction (Catalog #PA45010V, Abcam, Cambridge, MA) for 1 hour at room temperature. The membrane was re-rinsed once for fifteen minutes with 1x TBST buffer and imaged with an Amersham Typhoon fluorescence imager (PMT = 500V with Cy5, Amersham Biosciences, Little Chalfont, United Kingdom).

Results

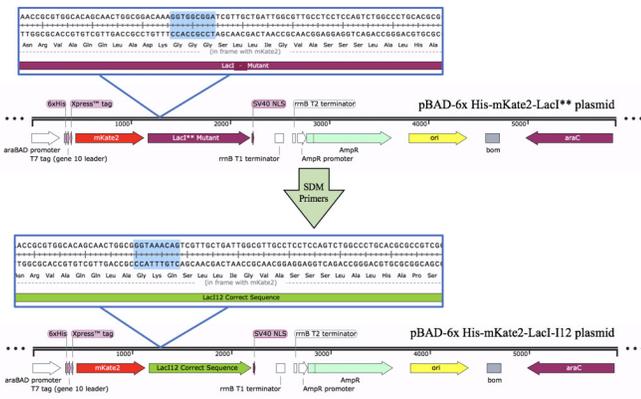


Figure 3. Diagram of results of SDM. Displayed in its linear form, the pBAD-6xHis-mKate2-LacI** plasmid is shown with an inset of the sequencing results of a section of the LacI** mutant protein. After SDM with forward and reserve primers, the pBAD-6xHis-mKate2-LacI-I12 plasmid is shown with an inset of the LacI-I12 mutant following SDM. The blue highlighted region in both insets show the area of interest that was modified within the LacI protein. Sequencing confirmed that the SDM was successful.

The sequencing results indicate that the the SDM reaction was successful. As shown in Figure 3, the amino acids glycine, lysine and glutamine were substituted for the three glycine repeats in LacI** and removed the aspartic acid residue to increase LacI / LacO binding affinity. The mKate2, GFP, and mNeonGreen LacI fusion proteins were all sequenced and contained the desired mutations.

As seen in Figure 4A, the Coomassie-stained gel exhibiting the fractions obtained from the protein purification revealed a band at approximately 70 kDa in elution fractions 1 and 2. Elution fraction 2 was selected over elution 1 as it contained the highest relative abundance of the target protein (58% vs 70%, respectively). Figure 4B indicates that similar results were apparent using a Western immunoblotting technique and an anti-His tag antibody, confirming that the protein band observed in the Coomassie Gel was at the same size as the band observed in the Western Blot with the His-Tag antibody.

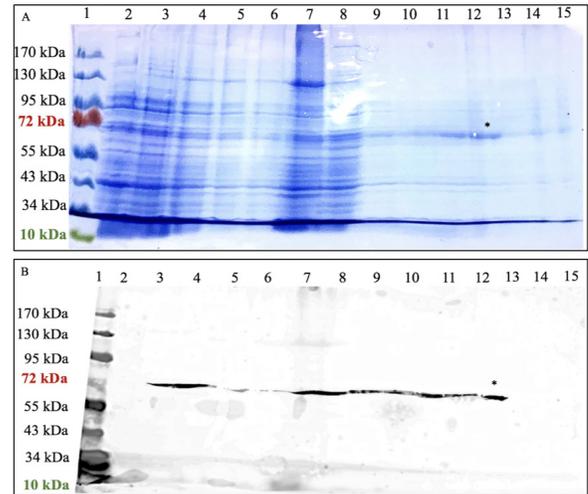


Figure 4A Coomassie-stained gel of 6xHisTag-mNeonGreen-LacI-I12 fusion protein purification. Lanes: (1) EZ-Run™ Pre-stained Rec Protein Ladder (Fisher Scientific, Hampton, NH); (2) Pre-induced culture; (3) Induced culture (two hours); (4) Induced culture (four hours); (5) Flow-through from Ni-NTA column from previous protein purification; (6) clarified cell lysate; (7) cell pellet; (8) Flow-through; (9) Wash 1 and 2 with 10 mL of 60mM imidazole buffer; (10) Wash 3 and 4; (11) Elution 1 with 2 mL of 250mM imidazole buffer; (12) Elution 2; (13) Elution 3; (14) Elution 4; (15) Elution 5. The protein has a predicted size of 70 kDa. 6xHisTag-mNeonGreen-LacI-I12 fusion protein was successful eluted in elution 2. This fraction was comprised of approximately 70% mNeonGreen-LacI-I12 (*).

Figure 4B Immunoblot of 6xHisTag-mNeonGreen-LacI-I12 fusion protein purification. The same lanes as numbered in Figure 4A. The protein was resolved by SDS-PAGE and immunoblotted with anti-His-tag antibody. The desired protein has a predicated size of 70 kDa. The protein band in Elution 2 was successfully identified as the 6xHisTag-mNeonGreen-LacI-I12 fusion protein.

Discussion

From the sequencing results presented in Figure 3 and the protein purification results shown in Figure 4, the mNeonGreen LacI-I12 fusion protein was purified at an acceptable level of purity. The purified protein has a size of approximately 70 kDa, which is consistent with its predicted size based on its primary amino acid sequence. As shown in Figure 4A, the Elution fraction 2 is comprised of approximately 70% mNeonGreen-LacI fusion protein. This is acceptable for the intended use of the protein in vitro for several reasons: 1.) it is unlikely that the low levels of other proteins observed in this elution by Coomassie staining are fluorescent and thus any potential interference with the intended

fluorescent experiments such as single molecule Total Internal Reflection Fluorescence (TIRF) microscopy would be minimal, and 2) the western immunoblot data shown in Figure 4B shows that a single specific His-tagged protein band is present at 70 kDa, thus confirming the identity of the 6xHis mNeonGreen LacI-I12 fusion protein. Similar results were obtained for both the mKate2 and GFP LacI-I12 fusion proteins.

Future Directions

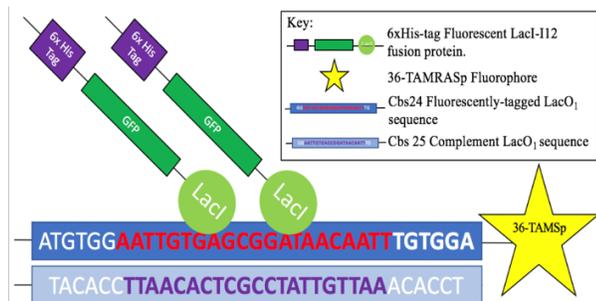


Figure 5. Diagram of the proposed anisotropy experiment to determine binding affinity of 6xHis Fluorescent LacI-I12 fusion protein to LacO₁ operon sequence. Anisotropy probe consists of 2 oligonucleotides featuring a 21-base pair LacO₁ sequence (in red) and a TAMRA fluorophore with 6 base pairs on either side to allow ample space for protein binding. Two 6xHis Fluorescent LacI-I12 fusion protein can bind to one LacO₁ operon sequence.

Anisotropy probes containing a single LacO repeat have been designed to compare the binding affinity of the purified LacI-I12 fusion protein with that of the LacI** mutant (Figure 5). The equilibrium association constant (K_a) will be used to define the binding affinity of the GFP-LacI-I12 fusion protein for the LacO repeat ligand. These data will be analyzed by fluorescence polarization from levels of rotational diffusion in relation to protein concentration to generate binding association curves and calculate K_a . Controls will include a protein that does not bind to LacO₁ and a comparison using purified GFP-LacI** fusion protein.

Additionally, the LacI-I12 fusion protein will be subjected to single molecule TIRF microscopy studies using a similar probe containing a LacO sequence labeled with a Cy5 fluorophore. Single molecule DNA/protein complexes will be imaged and quantitative photo bleaching analysis methods will be employed to determine the number of LacI-I12 proteins bound to the LacO repeat substrate.

Conclusion

The development and purification of the mKate2, GFP, and mNeonGreen fluorescent LacI-12 fusion proteins provides exciting possibilities for protein quantification techniques. As previously discussed, this model system will be used to validate proposed methods of fluorescence-based protein quantification at single molecule resolution. Once confirmed, this method can be applied to increase the accuracy and versatility of future research examining DNA/protein interactions in *in vitro* systems.

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