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BRIDGEWATER
STATE UNIVERSITY

The Undergraduate Review

A JOURNAL OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AND CREATIVE SCHOLARSHIP



Filigree earrings, made from brass wires and gold plating



Elegant Filigree Set crafted from sterling silver featuring floral patterns



Delicate Ring created from sterling silver with a coat of gold plating, featuring a central gemstone



Luxurious Rope Chain formed from sterling silver with a coat of gold plating, featuring a series of intertwined metal segments

The Undergraduate Review

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About The Cover

Beyond Simple: Exploring Intricate Jewelry Techniques

Merna Elnesr

Mentor: Prof. Preston Saunders (Art and Art History)

Cover images (left to right): Filigree earrings, made from brass wires and finished with a lustrous gold plating, featuring flowing swirl lines and assorted beads to accentuate their beauty.

Elegant Filigree Set, crafted from sterling silver, featuring intricate lace-like floral patterns that exemplify fine artistry.

Luxurious Rope Chain, formed from sterling silver and finished with a coat of gold plating, featuring a series of intertwined metal segments that mimic the spiral appearance of a rope.

Delicate Ring, created from sterling silver and finished with a coat of gold plating, featuring a central gemstone that's framed by unique geometric details.

Artist Statement

Seemingly simple yet intricate jewelry pieces were what sparked my research passion. However, my love for delicate and detailed jewelry collided with the realization that crafting such elegance posed challenges. Undeterred, I embarked on the journey to explore and answer how simple and complex can be merged into one entity.

This project aimed to explore and create intricate jewelry using diverse techniques. My journey began with wax casting, where I refined my wax carving skills by meticulously crafting fine, detailed rings. Upon completing the casting process, I started learning more about filigree, what it was, and its techniques. Simultaneously, I forged jump rings and chains to attach them to my filigree and casting creations.

Expanding further, I ventured into designing various chain types, bringing beautiful bracelets and necklaces to life. Toward the conclusion of my summer-long Adrian Tinsley Program (ATP) project, I ended up creating thirteen rings, two pendants, five pairs of earrings, three bracelets, and a complete jewelry set. These outcomes stimulated me to bring life into more creations as my journey advances.

Throughout this journey, I faced notable challenges, particularly in mastering filigree and fine-chain building

techniques. However, these challenges inspired me to craft jewelry pieces that are a reflection of my hard work. This experience has not only unlocked new skills in precision and patience but also advanced my existing ones in creativity and handcraftsmanship.



MERNA ELNESR

Studio Art, Metalsmithing/Jewelry Making & Painting Concentration

Merna Elnesr is a senior at BSU, graduating in May 2024. She is majoring in Studio Art with concentrations in Metalsmithing/Jewelry Making and Painting, and she is minoring in Asian Studies. In Summer 2023, Merna was awarded an Adrian Tinsley Program (ATP) grant to design and create several pieces of jewelry, with the mentorship of Prof. Preston Saunders (Art and Art History). Her artwork, characterized by intricate details and delicacy, draws inspiration from nature, reflecting her deep connection to the environment. Merna's creative works extend beyond visual arts to include writing poems and stories as a form of self-expression. Her work was featured in BSU's 2023 Student Art Exhibition. She plans to present her work at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) in 2024. She aspires to become a skilled jeweler, crafting pieces with distinct and captivating stories.

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Investigating the KshB V246S Mutation in the KshAB Protein Complex Found in *Mycobacterium Tuberculosis*

MALIKA CRUICKSHANK

Abstract

This research centered on studying the interactions between the KshA and KshB subunits of the 3-ketosteroid-9 α hydroxylase (KshAB) protein complex found in *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (*M. tuberculosis*). Interactions between the two protein subunits were computationally explored using the protein docking program ClusPro and a location in the KshB subunit at Val 246 was found to be in proximity with nearby amino acids in the KshA subunit. This was determined to be a possible location for docking the protein complex. Val 246 of KshB was mutated into a serine residue to explore changes in the electron transfer pathway upon disruption of this interaction. The V246S KshB protein was successfully overexpressed in *E. coli* cells and purified by Ni-NTA chromatography. Initial enzyme kinetic analysis of the mutated protein complex is now underway. Future research will allow a deeper investigation into whether this mutation will inhibit the flow of electrons from the KshB subunit to the KshA subunit. The long-term goal is to design small molecules that can inhibit the electron flow in the native protein complex that would serve as antibiotics against *M. tuberculosis* infection. unit. The long-term goal is to design small molecules that can inhibit the electron flow in the

native protein complex that would serve as antibiotics against *M. tuberculosis* infection.

Introduction

According to the Centers for Disease Control¹ in 2020, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, more commonly known as the bacterium that causes the disease tuberculosis or TB, was the leading infectious disease killer in the world despite being preventable and treatable, killing approximately 1.6 billion people per year. TB is a lung disease commonly believed to be spread from kissing, shaking hands, or any other form of contact with another person, but that's not the case, an infected individual would have to cough, sing, or speak to an uninfected person for it to spread². There are also two forms of tuberculosis called tuberculosis disease, or the active form, and the latent infection. An individual with a latent infection typically isn't even aware that they have the bacteria in them since it doesn't cause any noticeable impacts on their day-to-day life. Patients with tuberculosis disease, however, have been found in higher concentrations in developing countries with weaker healthcare systems since it's harder to access the drugs to control the disease. While the disease is treatable using specific antibiotic drug regimens, if not taken properly, the

bacteria can become resistant to the drugs and evolve into MDR (multi-drug resistant) or XDR (extensively drug-resistant) cases^{3,4}. Most people believe that tuberculosis is no longer a prominent disease since the coverage of it is typically eclipsed by the annual flu virus as well as more recently the COVID-19 pandemic⁵, but it still has very high case numbers regardless of the treatments available for it. Since patients with an MDR or XDR condition are limited in their treatment options, there is a huge need for new antibiotics against bacterial infections like TB.

The 3-ketosteroid-9 α -hydroxylase (KshAB) protein complex studied in this project hydroxylates the 9-position of steroid rings during the breakdown of steroids for energy in pathogenic bacteria (Figure 1a).⁶ It is comprised of two subunits referred to as

the hydroxylation reaction occurs. Each KshB subunit possesses an iron-sulfur cluster which is used to transfer the electrons from KshB to the iron-sulfur cluster in one subunit of KshA, which then transfers the electrons to the enzyme active site at the non-heme iron center of another subunit of KshA (Figure 1b).⁷ For efficient transfer of electrons between the iron-sulfur clusters, they must be 10-15 Å apart. This distance is expected for the entire protein complex when the KshA-KshB comes together, but the structure of the complex is not currently known.⁴ two configurations are believed to be the most likely of how the KshA and KshB dock and pass electrons from one subunit to the next subunit, however, the one that made the most sense with the docking program was utilized in this experiment (Figure 1b).

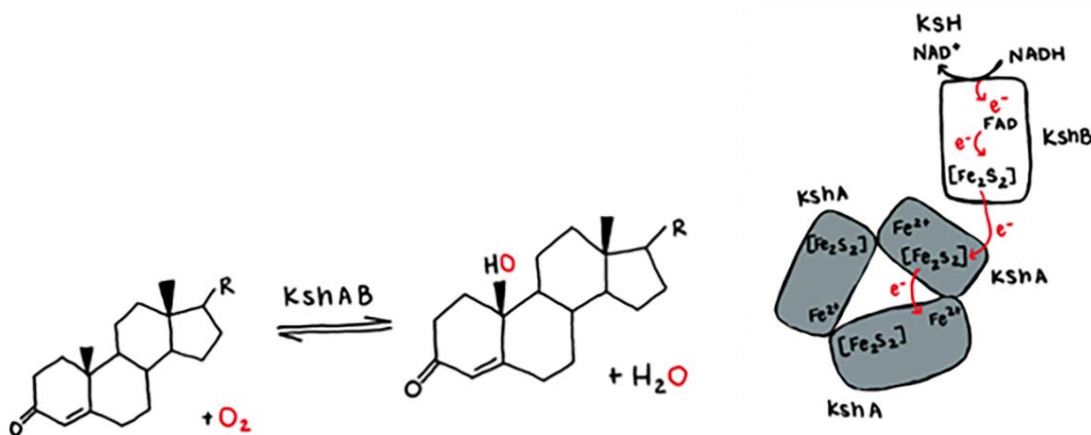


Figure 1: a) The hydroxylation of the KshAB protein complex. b) The proposed configuration of the protein complex demonstrates KshB converting NADH to NAD⁺ and using that electron to activate the KshA subunit.⁶

KshA – the oxygenase component that does the hydroxylation reaction – and KshB – the reductase component which transfers electrons to KshA. KshA is isolated as a trimer, where each monomer contains an iron-sulfur cluster and a non-heme iron center where

This project aims to identify and investigate potential binding sites between the KshA and KshB subunits of the protein complex KshAB. This work initially used computer programs such as ClusPro⁸⁻¹¹ for protein docking and Chimera and Pymol to visualize the protein

structure to identify possible locations where KshA and KshB interact. Subsequent work examined a mutation in the KshB subunit to investigate its impacts on the rate of electron transfer due to the mutation.

Methods

Protein Docking

The ClusPro Server was used to dock structures of KshA and KshB subunits. The KshA structure was obtained from the Protein Data Bank file 4QCK, while the KshB structure was determined based on a homology model from the Protein Data Bank file 2PIA from phthalate dioxygenase reductase constructed with the Phyre2¹³ server. Files of the KshA and KshB subunits were uploaded as the receptor and the ligand, respectively. The program allowed for modifications in docking parameters. After docking the proteins in ClusPro, distance measurements and investigation of possible amino acids to mutate were performed using the programs Pymol and Chimera programs. This protein docking process was repeated iteratively until a reasonable electron transfer distance was obtained (10-15 Å) and a particular amino acid was chosen to perform site-directed mutagenesis.

Site-Directed Mutagenesis

DNA primers for the KshB V246S mutation, shown below, were ordered from Invitrogen, and a Quik-Change II Site-Directed Mutagenesis kit was ordered from Agilent Technologies.

KshB_V246S Primer Sequence:

GCACAGCAGGTTTCATATTGAATCGTTTAAAGCCTGGAAAGCGA

KshB_V246S Reverse Compliment Primer Sequence:

TCGCTTTCAGGCTTTTAAACGATTCAATATGAACCTGCTGTGC

The protocol for site-directed mutagenesis was

adapted from the protocol included with the mutagenesis kit. The DNA primers created to reflect this change from V246S as well as the kit reagents were thawed out and diluted before the mutagenesis reaction and centrifuged down to ensure homogeneity. All the reagents were added into PCR tubes in the volumes indicated in (Table 1) for thermal cycling (Polymerase Chain Reaction) reaction. The thermal cycling (PCR) reaction ran in three segments to amplify this specific DNA segment being studied to a large enough amount for it to be studied in detail.

Segment 1: 95 °C for 30 sec (1 cycle)

Segment 2: 95 °C for 30 sec, 55 °C for 1 min, 68 °C for 6 min (18 cycles)

Segment 3: Hold at 4° C for infinity

10 µL of this undigested PCR reaction was saved from each sample to be run in a DNA gel before *DpnI* restriction enzyme was added to the remainder of each reaction to digest the methylated DNA to ensure that only the mutated DNA is left and incubated at 37 °C. XL-1 Blue Supercompetent cells, pUC18 control plasmid, and NZY+ broth were all thawed out and aliquoted appropriately during this hour. 1µL of the *DpnI* digest reaction was added to ¾ of the aliquoted cells while 1 µL of pUC18 control plasmid was added to ¼ of the aliquoted cells, flicked to combine the cells with the DNA, and incubated on ice. The cells were then heat shocked at 42 °C before being placed on ice to incubate again. NZY+ broth was added to each reaction and incubated with shaking to heat up the reaction before they were able to be plated.

Using the LB Amp plates, the pUC18 control reaction and pWhitescript reactions were appropriately aliquoted and the mutagenesis (V246S) reaction was appropriately aliquoted on LB Kan plates before being incubated overnight. The following morning

Reagent	1. pWhitescript Control	2. KshB_V246S	3. KshB_V246S
10X Reaction Buffer	5 μ L	5 μ L	5 μ L
DNA Template	2 μ L	2 μ L	2 μ L
Primer #1	1.25 μ L	1.25 μ L	1.25 μ L
Primer #2	1.25 μ L	1.25 μ L	1.25 μ L
dNTP Mix	1 μ L	1 μ L	1 μ L
Nuclease Free Water (PCR H ₂ O)	38.5 μ L	40.5 μ L	40.5 μ L
Pfu Ultra HF DNA Polymerase	1 μ L	1 μ L	1 μ L
Total Volume	50 μ L	52 μ L	52 μ L

Table 1: The amount of each reagent used to prepare the pWhitescript control and the KshB_V246S PCR products.

showed growth on both the control plates (pUC18 and pWhitescript) as well as the mutagenesis plates, which indicated a successful mutation from the valine residue to a serine residue.

A DNA gel was used to run the samples that contain DNA and stained them so they can be run through an imager and to provide confirmation of what the sample contained. A combination of agarose and 1X Tris-Acetate Ethylenediamine Tetraacetic Acid (TAE) buffer in a flask were swirled to combine before being placed in the microwave to fully dissolve. An SYBR-safe dye was also added to that flask and swirled to combine before the mixture was poured into a gel tray. Once the gel solidified, a good comb was placed to create wells for the samples to sit in. The gel was run

for 1 hour at 100 V and imaged on the molecular imager. The procedure for the mutagenesis of the KshB at position V246 created the basis of the in vitro lab work done in this study.

Protein Expression

Expression of KshA:

KshA plasmids were transformed into BL21-DE3 *E. coli* competent cells by adding 1 μ L of a plasmid to 50 μ L competent cells before being incubated on ice, heat shocked, and then incubated once again. SOC media was added into the cell-plasmid mixture and incubated with shaking to transform the KshA DNA into the BL21 cells. Lastly, the cells were plated onto LB-Kan plates and placed in an incubator overnight.

The following morning, there was growth on all the LB-Kan plates. Those colonies were used to prepare starter cultures by using a Bunsen burner and a sterile loop to scoop up isolated colonies from the plates and mix them into centrifuge tubes filled with LB media. This experiment produced five centrifuge tubes of inoculated media that were left to shake overnight in an incubator.

The inoculated starter cultures were taken out the next morning and mineral stock solution was added to each of the five pre-made flasks of LB media. A solution of kanamycin dissolved in PCR water was also added into the flasks before they were placed into incubators at 37 °C with shaking and checked in one-hour intervals to measure the absorbance (600 nm) using a PerkinElmer Lambda Bio+ Spectrophotometer (Table 3). The media was further inoculated using Isopropyl (beta)-D-1-thiogalactopyranoside (IPTG) after reaching an OD (absorbance) of 0.800 before being left in the incubator to shake overnight at 25 °C.

The five flasks of inoculated media were removed from the incubator the following morning. Once placed in centrifuge bottles and balanced, the media was spun down to receive a collective mass of 15.014 g of cells that were tan with rust-colored streaks as residue from the excess iron present in the mineral stock solution. The supernatant liquid was removed from the centrifuge bottles so the pellet could be scraped up with a spatula and transferred to a beaker to determine the collective weight of the pellets. Allocating one mL of resuspension buffer for one g of the pellet, approximately 20 mL of buffer was used in tandem with an autopipette to resuspend the cells in liquid for storage at -80°C.

Expression of KshB-V246S:

Starter cultures were produced by sterile

inoculation of LB-Kan media with colonies from KshB_V246S mutagenesis plates where the starter cultures were grown overnight at 37 °C. The next day, the starter colonies were centrifuged down to get pelleted cells, and the supernatant was dumped into a waste beaker. The pelleted cells were resuspended with a resuspension buffer containing RNase and then transferred into a microcentrifuge tube. A lysis solution was added to the microcentrifuge tube and inverted a few times to mix the solution before being incubated for five minutes. A neutralization solution was added to the microcentrifuge tube and inverted a few times to thoroughly combine the mixture until a solid white precipitate was left on the surface of the tube. Once combined, the mixture was centrifuged at 14000 rpm which transferred the precipitate to the sides of the microcentrifuge tube. The supernatant liquid was then transferred to a spin column and spun down in the centrifuge before a wash solution was added to the mixture twice and centrifuged down. The spin column was transferred into a microcentrifuge tube before an elution buffer was added to the column and allowed to incubate for two minutes. The eluted plasmid was collected into the microcentrifuge tube after being spun down for 2 minutes and subsequently stored in the freezer.

For immediate usage, the KshB-V246S plasmid was transformed into *E. coli* BL21-DE3 competent cells. Two samples of the KshB-V246S plasmid and two samples of BL21-DE3 cells were thawed on ice before the plasmid was added to each of the aliquots of cells. The plasmid-cell mixture was incubated on ice before getting heat shocked at 42°C and incubated on the ice again. The mixture was given SOC media while being incubated with shaking at 37°C before being plated on LB Kan plates.

The starter cultures were prepared after thawing out one sample of kanamycin and having LB media prepared from the day before and allowing it to reach room temperature overnight. The LB media was portioned into 10 mL stocks in centrifuge tubes (5 total) with an additional 10 μ L aliquot of kanamycin. With a sterile loop and Bunsen burner, the loop was sterilized in the flame and cooled until it reached room temperature to scoop up isolated colonies and mixed into the media. This process was repeated until all the centrifuge tubes had one colony in them or became inoculated. Both inoculated centrifuge tubes were incubated with shaking at 37°C overnight.

The inoculated starter cultures were removed from the incubator the following morning and mineral stock solution was added to each of the two flasks of LB media. Kanamycin was weighed out and dissolved in PCR water, so the solution could be added to each of the two flasks. The flasks were placed into 37 °C incubators with shaking for 30-minute – 1-hour intervals and the absorbance at 600 nm was measured (Table 8) using a PerkinElmer Lambda Bio+ Spectrophotometer. After the media reached an OD of 0.800, it was inoculated with IPTG and allowed to shake overnight at 30 °C.

For better long-term storage of the plasmid, the decision was to store the KshB_V246 plasmid in DH5 α cells. Two samples of the KshB_V246S plasmid and two samples of DH5 α cells were thawed on ice before the plasmid was added to each of the aliquots of cells. The plasmid-cell mixture was incubated on ice before getting heat shocked at 42°C and incubated on the ice again for another 5 minutes. The mixture was given SOC media while being incubated with shaking at 37°C and being plated on LB Kan plates in 100 μ L, 200 μ L, and 500 μ L volumes.

Since the DH5 α cells are better for long-term storage, the transformation of the mutated cells into the new cell type warranted a new plasmid as well. The starter colonies were centrifuged down to get pelleted cells and the supernatant was dumped into a waste beaker. The pelleted cells were resuspended with a resuspension buffer containing RNase and then transferred into a microcentrifuge tube. A lysis solution was added to the microcentrifuge tube and inverted a few times to mix the solution before being incubated. A neutralization solution was added to the microcentrifuge tube and inverted a few times to thoroughly combine the mixture until a solid white precipitate was left on the surface of the tube. Once combined, the mixture was centrifuged at 14000 rpm which transferred the precipitate to the sides of the microcentrifuge tube. The supernatant liquid was then transferred to a spin column and spun down in the centrifuge before a wash solution was added to the mixture twice and centrifuged down. The spin column was transferred into a microcentrifuge tube before an elution buffer was added to the column and allowed to incubate. The eluted plasmid was collected into the microcentrifuge tube after being spun down and subsequently stored in the freezer. The purified KshA and KshB served as pure samples of both subunits to ensure that any observed changes in the flow of the electrons could be attributed to the mutagenesis and not any impurities surrounding the protein.

Protein Purification

Purification of KshA:

1 mM phenylmethane sulfonyl fluoride (PMSF) and 0.3 mg/mL lysozyme were added to thawed KshA resuspended cells, and the mixture was incubated

on ice before being sonicated on ice for 6 cycles (30 seconds on/5 min off). The sonicated cells were then centrifuged at 18000 rpm for 30 minutes to separate the supernatant liquid from the cell debris that formed a pellet at the bottom of the bottle and the supernatant liquid was run through the Ni-NTA column with 20 mM potassium phosphate pH 8.0, using a step gradient of imidazole concentrations from 10 mM imidazole in the equilibration buffer, 25 mM imidazole in the wash buffer, and 250 mM imidazole in the elution buffer. Samples were concentrated with 10K centrifuge concentrators.

An SDS-PAGE was run on the Ni-NTA purified fractions. The samples were prepared by combining the KshA purification fractions (sample, wash, and elution) with SDS 2X buffer, centrifuged down before the samples were then heat shocked at 85 °C and added to the wells. Using a 1 mg/mL bovine serum albumin (BSA) stock solution, BSA dye reagent, and deionized water, the concentration of the KshA protein was determined through a Bradford Assay.

Purification of KshB-V246S:

The thawed cells were incubated with PMSF and lysozyme as with KshA and sonicated and centrifuged as with KshA. The cell extract was then loaded on a Ni-NTA column using Fast Protein Liquid Chromatography (FPLC) which was used to purify the KshA subunit with the same buffers as for KshA. The resulting KshB V246S mutation fractions were used in an SDS PAGE to ensure the isolation of the correct protein.

Enzyme Kinetics

The rate of NADH oxidation of the KshAB protein complex was measured by time-dependent UV-vis spectroscopy at 340 nm. The system contained the KshA

protein and a separately purified KshB-R286A protein with the following substrates, co-substrates, and buffer:

Reagents	Reference	Trial 1-3
0.16 μ M KshA	N/A	0.32 μ L
1.6 μ M R286D	N/A	1.6 μ L
100 μ M NADH	100 μ L	100 μ L
20 μ M Tris HCl	888.08 μ L	858.08 μ L
40 μ M Formestane	10 μ L	40 μ L

Table 2: *The composition of the reference solution and the solution containing both subunits.*

The initial slopes of the kinetic traces at 340 nm are used to determine the rate of enzymatic activity and electron transfer within the protein complex.

Results and Discussion

Protein Docking

The KshA and KshB subunits both contain an iron-sulfur cluster in which KshB takes an electron from NADH and passes it through the iron-sulfur cluster to reach KshA (Figure 1). When using Pymol, the specific distance that we were aiming to measure revolved around the distance between the iron-sulfur clusters in the subunits and ideally would be 10-15 Å in length to be the most probable distance for electrons to travel. The original docking model had a distance of 42.9 Å between the KshA and KshB subunits (Figure 2a). After several rounds of protein docking using ClusPro, there were two probable models with one presenting a distance of 14.4 Å (Figure 2b) and the

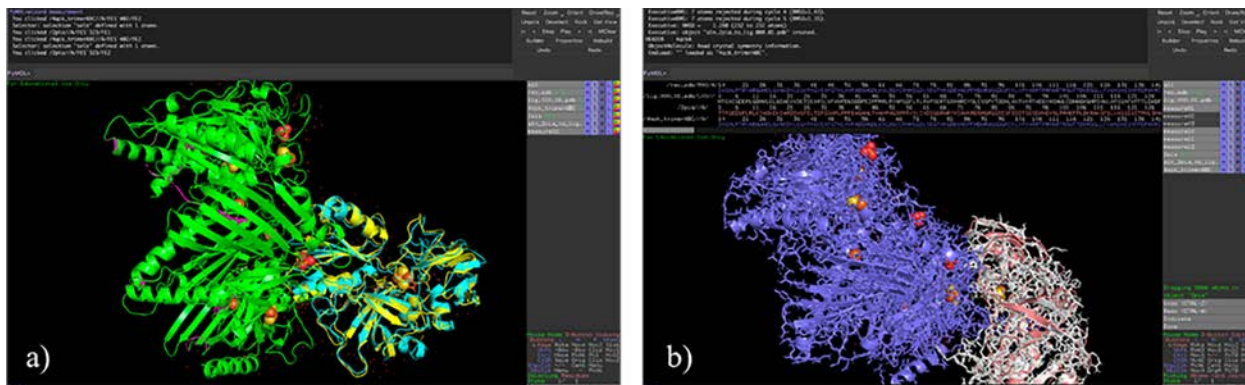


Figure 2: Comparison images of the (a) original docked KshAB complex interacting with one chain of the KshA subunit at 42.9 Å and (b) the more plausible KshAB complex at 14.4 Å.

other with a distance of 15.1 Å (Figure 3a). Ultimately, the model with a distance of 15.1 Å had more potential sites of interaction between the KshA and KshB, so all of the future mutations were done to this specific model.

There is one configuration of docking that seems most likely for the transfer of electrons from the KshB subunit to the KshA subunit (Figure 3b). There is a valine residue located at position 246 that was selected as a potential spot for mutation in this protein complex (Figure

3a). Valine 246 is a nonpolar residue located in the KshB subunit that is interacting with an arginine residue at position 106 in the KshA subunit, which is a positively charged amino acid. After several rounds of digital mutation, the valine residue could be mutated to a serine residue, which is polar, to observe any changes that may occur in the way that the bonding occurs in that position 246. Serine was selected because it was the only digital mutation that would have been of significant impact

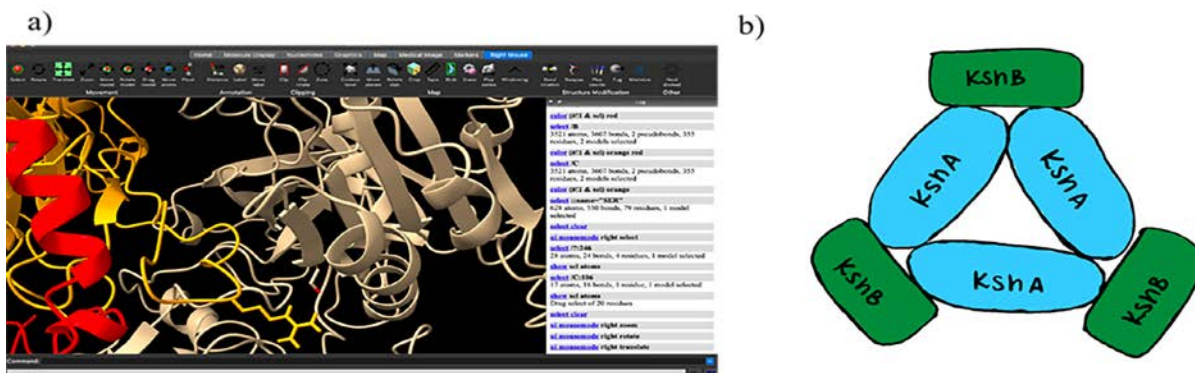


Figure 3: a) Screenshot of the Chimera interface. Chains A, B, and C of KshA have been highlighted in different colors. The yellow residue branching out of the KshA (Arg 106) is the nearest interaction to the tan residue branching out of the KshB (Ser 246). (b) The most likely possibility of the binding site in the KshAB protein complex.

without completely denaturing the surrounding proteins or being of the same nonpolar nature. This mutation would be changing the interaction from nonpolar to polar. The rest of this study focuses on how this mutation and the change in polarity will impact the protein complex’s ability to transfer electrons and provide more characterizing information about what this mutation would do.

Site-Directed Mutagenesis

Several rounds of mutagenesis were required to successfully incorporate the mutation to V246S, but ultimately successful mutagenesis was conducted. A DNA gel was run on the undigested PCR samples of the mutagenesis. The loading scheme was as follows:

1. Ladder (sample and 6X loading dye)
2. Empty
3. KshB_V246S PCR sample (sample and 6X loading dye)
4. KshB_V246S PCR sample (sample and 6X loading dye)
5. Empty
6. PCR Control sample (sample and 6X loading dye)

The site-directed mutagenesis was successful at changing the DNA sequence of KshB to introduce a serine at position 246 instead of a valine. Subsequent steps will determine if this mutation had the desired effect on protein function.

Protein Expression

Expression of KshA:

The KshA protein was expressed in *E. coli* BL21-DE3 competent cells. The time course of cell growth was observed in Table 3 with an optical density of cells being used as a metric for when to add the IPTG reagent to

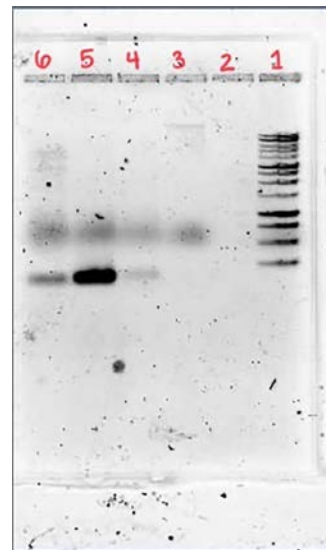


Figure 4: The DNA gel from the KshB_V246S mutagenesis shows that in comparison to the ladder, the KshB protein is present in the middle of the gel and that this mutation should be successful. of the KshB (Ser 246). (b) The most likely possibility of the binding site in the KshAB protein complex.

TIME	CONC.				
	Flask #1	Flask #2	Flask #3	Flask #4	Flask #5
11:08 AM	0.068	0.058	0.046	0.075	0.089
11:47 AM	0.114	0.161	0.103	0.112	0.086
12:59 PM	0.369	0.327	0.301	0.324	0.201
2:02 PM	1.865	1.030	1.026	0.993	0.608
2:13 PM	•	•	•	-	0.669
2:28 PM	•	•	•	-	0.742

Table 3: The progress for the absorbance at 600 nm of the inoculated media after several hours.

induce expression of the KshA protein.

Expression of KshB-V246S:

The KshB-V246S protein in *E. coli* BL21-DE3 competent cells. The time course of cell growth was observed in Table 4 with an optical density of cells being used as a metric for when to add the IPTG reagent to induce expression of the KshB-V246S protein.

Protein Purification

Purification of KshA:

Ni-NTA chromatography was used to purify KshA and an SDS-PAGE was run on the Ni-NTA purified fractions. The samples were added to the wells with the following loading scheme:

Well Number	Sample Type
2	Standard
4	Sample Fraction
7	Wash Fraction #1
9	Wash Fraction #2
11	Elution Fraction #1
13	Elution Fraction #2
15	Elution Fraction #3

The image below depicts the loading scheme starting with the standard on the left side and ending with the elution fraction #3. The green band indicates the region KshA is expected to appear in. The protein concentration of the KshA protein was determined through a Bradford assay using the following standard sequence shown in the table below (Table 5).

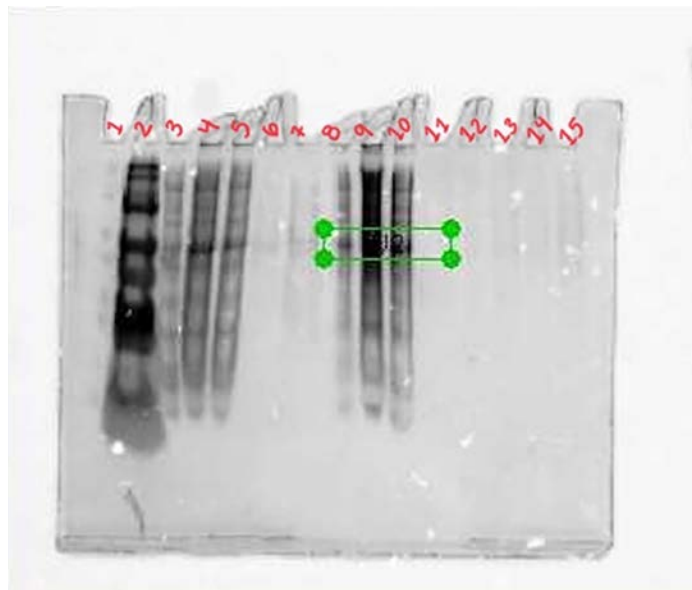


Figure 5: SDS-PAGE of purified KshA. The standard (lane 2) shows clear bands of the standard protein, while lanes 8-10 show a band (indicated by the green box) where the KshA is expected to show up.

TIME	CONC.	
	1 L Flask	500 µL Flask
10:21 AM	-	0.163
11:26 AM	0.074	0.228
12:39 PM	0.250	1.033
1:39 PM	1.203	-

Table 4: The progress for the absorbance at 600 nm of the inoculated media after several hours.

These steps all show that the *E. coli* bacteria could uptake and grow the wild-type and mutated plasmids expressing the protein of interest.

Deionized (DI) Water	800 μ L	798 μ L	796 μ L	794 μ L	792 μ L	790 μ L
BSA Stock	0 μ L	2 μ L	4 μ L	6 μ L	8 μ L	10 μ L
BSA Reagent	200 μ L	200 μ L	200 μ L	200 μ L	200 μ L	200 μ L
Total Volume	1000 μ L	1000 μ L	1000 μ L	1000 μ L	1000 μ L	1000 μ L
Absorbance	0.000	0.072	0.363	0.372	0.408	0.685

Table 5: The amount of each reagent used to prepare the standard curve used to calculate the concentration of the KshA protein.

The standard curve of the BSA standard stock solution produced the following graph (Figure 6) which was then used to calculate the concentration of the KshA of 0.110 mg/mL.

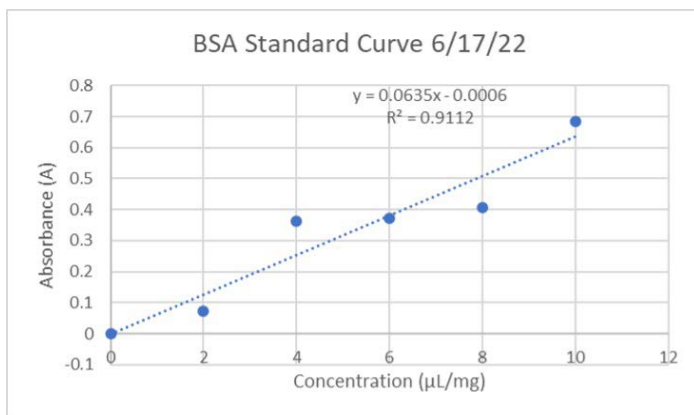


Figure 6: The graph plotting the absorbance versus concentration for the standard protein concentration as well as the R^2 value and resulting equation

Expression of KshB-V246S:

The KshB-V246S protein was isolated via Ni-NTA chromatography, and an SDS-PAGE was done to confirm the relative size and purity of the protein complex. The

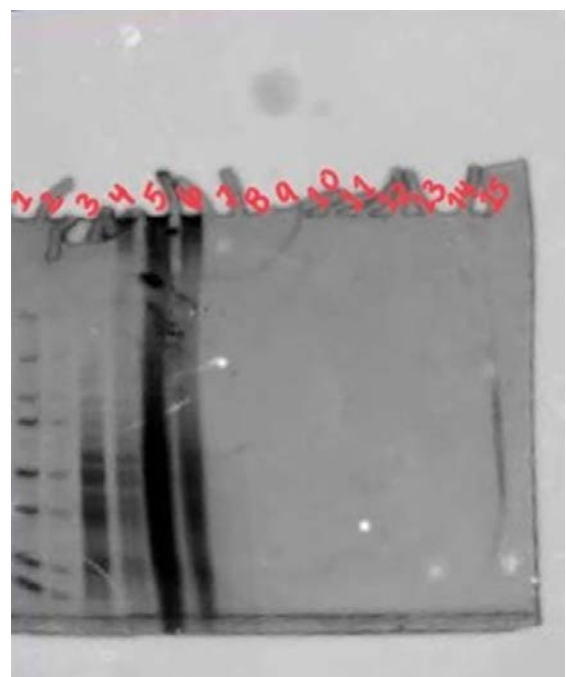


Figure 7: The SDS-PAGE of purified KshB V246S. The standard (lane 1, left side) shows clear bands of the standard protein, while lanes 3-7 show bands of where the KshB is expected to be.

protein purification separated the proteins of interest from the cell extract and then SDS-PAGE and Bradford's assays were used to measure the purity and quantity of

each protein produced.

Enzyme Kinetics

Initial analysis of enzyme kinetics was conducted using a previously mutated sample of KshB with a mutation at position 286 where arginine was made into an aspartic acid (R286D). As shown in Figure 1, NADH becomes NAD⁺ once the KshB subunit takes the electron from the compound and uses the electron to transfer to the KshA subunit through both of their iron-sulfur clusters. The KshA subunit then transfers that electron to the enzyme's active site.

By varying the concentration of the substrate (Table 2), the degradation of NADH becomes easily observable and that information can give more context to the function of the protein. The raw data (Figure 8) shows the degradation of the NADH plotted by the decreasing absorbance on the y-axis and the time span of 15 minutes (600 seconds) on the x-axis.

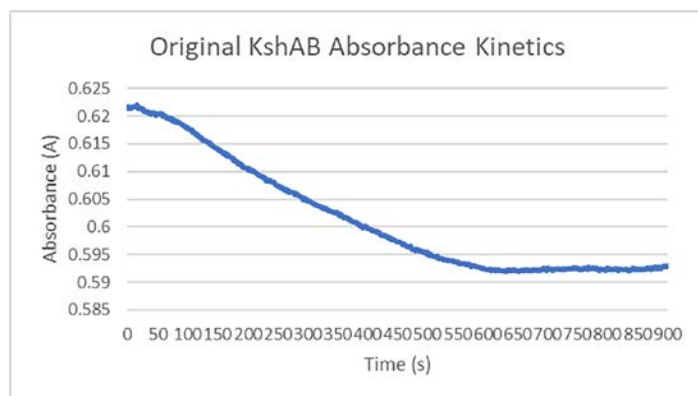


Figure 8: The degradation of NADH (absorbance) over the span of 600 seconds.

The modified graph of degradation of NADH in the protein complex (Figure 9) shows how quickly the NADH degraded within the first 300 seconds to provide

an R² value of 0.9946, which can be used to assess the correlation between the speed of the absorbance over time at different concentrations.

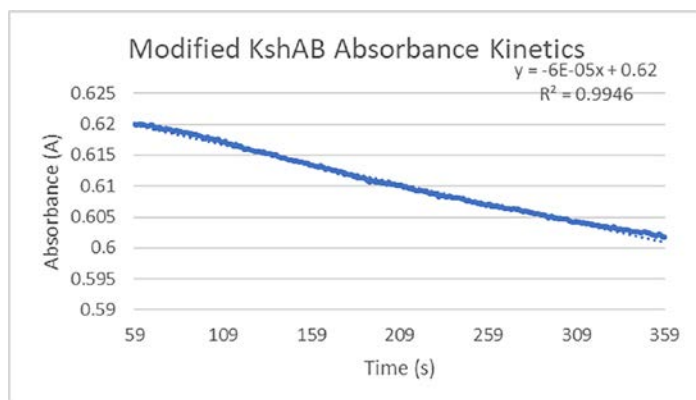


Figure 9: The plot of absorbance of the NADH present in the complex over the first 350 seconds of the experiment.

These kinetic assays allow us to determine the rate of the hydroxylation reaction in the enzyme complex. Future work will be able to study the KshA-KshB_V246S mutant complex in more detail to determine how the electron transfer is altered in the complex. This information will help guide additional studies on the location of the KshA-KshB binding site.

Conclusions and Outlook

This project has allowed for the development of the V246S mutation in the KshB subunit that is being tested in combination with KshA and NADH to inhibit the flow of electrons within the protein complex. This development, if successful, will be the backbone for developing a single treatment for tuberculosis to replace the current standard of taking multiple treatments, which can be costly in terms of the medication's price and how much time is needed to take these medications. In terms

of multi-drug resistant and extensively drug-resistant cases of tuberculosis, this would be a novel drug in hopes of reducing the amount of maintenance required to continuously treat the disease.

With the remaining amount of time in the semester, I expect to be able to continue this research project through a Bradford assay on the resulting fractions to be able to figure out the concentration of the V246S-KshB protein. Once I've purified and concentrated the protein, I can then begin observing the enzyme kinetics by varying the concentration of the steroid substrate and analyzing them by plotting the data to perform a Michaelis-Menten kinetic analysis and determine K_M , V_{max} , and k_{cat} for this system and conditions. If successful, this research could be used to develop one singular treatment for tuberculosis that would replace the need for multiple drugs, reducing the out-of-pocket cost of infected individuals and their family members and reducing the amount of time spent taking those medications every day.

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MALIKA CRUICKSHANK

Chemistry, Professional Chemistry Concentration

Malika Cruickshank graduated in 2023 with a degree in Chemistry, concentration in Professional Chemistry, and two minors, in Mathematics and Psychology. Her research took place over the course of three years under the mentorship of Dr. Sarah R. Soltau (Chemical Sciences) and with the support of multiple grants, including the Adrian Tinsley Program summer research grant and the SEISMIC grant through the National Science Foundation. Malika presented variations of this research at the 2022 National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) and at BSU's Adrian Tinsley Program (ATP) Symposium. She plans to pursue an MD/DO to practice pediatric surgery.

Use Of Social Media During The Covid-19 Pandemic Of 2020

ALIYA GONCALVES ALMEIDA

Abstract

Nowadays billions of people use social media platforms as a way to keep in touch with family and friends, fill spare time, find content, find inspiration for things to do and buy, share, and discuss opinions with others; the list goes on. This project focused on and investigated the use of social media during the years, in particular during quarantine/lockdown. Utilizing the public source data, I explored several research questions including how many hours people spent on social media, the popularity of social media apps, as well as what age group uses social media platforms (teenagers, young adults, adults). After data cleaning, the data visualization followed, and multiple dashboards were created using Tableau; the data analysis was mainly completed in R. The findings and analysis results were also presented in this research.

KEYWORDS: Social Media, Pandemic, Covid-19, data analysis

Introduction

What is social media? Social media is a web-based technology where you can interact, communicate, and connect with people all over the world. On this platform, users can create, exchange, and share content such

as videos, pictures, music, news, and so on. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, social media played a crucial role, in connecting people, giving information, keeping them creative, entertained, and keeping them informed about the newest discoveries linked to the virus. Some of the most used social media sites were TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. With the lockdowns, these social media platforms were used to enable online social engagement and communication among people who were physically separated. People were also interacting electronically with friends, family, and coworkers using Zoom, Teams, and Google Meet to help with minimizing feelings of loneliness and isolation. People took advantage of these platforms to do video conferences, workshops, etc. Not to forget that these exact platforms were the ones used for online classes and remote work.

However, social media also provided some problems during the pandemic, such as the spreading of false information and conspiracy theories related to Covid-19. With that, the platforms had to do something about it, by deleting posts and accounts that were spreading false information. Social media was also used to promote and organize social justice movements, such as the worldwide Black Lives Matter protests.

During a challenging quarantine/pandemic, social media significantly influenced public debate and served as a channel for communication and connection.

Methodology

I first started with data collection. Then I proceeded to analyze social media usage data during the early days of covid lockdown in India. With this public source data from Kaggle, I explored the number of hours that people spent on different social media apps, the social media apps that are most used, and the age group that uses the platforms more. Our study focused on about 600 responses from people during those times. The data has about 33 or more variables from the form responses, such as name, email, sex, lockdown zone category, the average hours that people sleep, the amount of time people exercise per day, the type of exercise, skills that people acquired during the lockdown, the time spent on social media, and video streaming, the social media apps, video streaming app, and TV channels that they used the most. The age group is between 10 to over 60 years old, which is divided into 6 age groups, 10-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, and 60+. However, when I did the chi-square independent test I divided the age into 3 groups, < 21 y/o, 21-30 y/o, and > 30 y/o.

After coming up with some research questions, I had to clean the data. By cleaning the data, I had to check for errors, such as missing values, duplicate entries, and incorrect data formats as well as revising and structuring the data. This process was really important because it helped me get the data ready so I could concentrate more intently and accurately on the analysis and visualization. It was a good method to maintain the data organized

The next step was data visualization. Since the data was clean, I created some graphs, and charts then interactive dashboards to have a better understanding of the data. Then I proceed with the Chi-square independence test. The Chi-square independence test was used in this study to evaluate the association between the independent and dependent variables using categorical data. It was used because it is a common statistical technique for assessing the relationship between the two categorical variables along with being appropriate for data analysis when the variables of interest are not assumed to have a normal distribution. To run the test, I used R (programming language) where the outcomes were interpreted based on the calculated Chi-square statistic and associated p-value.

Analysis Results

In this section on analysis, I'll go over the findings of our statistical research on how people from India used social media during the pandemic. The data gathered facts on how much time each age group spent on social media, as well as which social media platforms they used and video streaming services they used the most. Some of the results discussed were related to the chi-square independent test between the time spent on social media apps and age groups, along with the chi-square independent test between the top 3 social media apps used and age groups.

With the chi-square independent test, I explored the relationship between the usage of social media and the various age groups. The outcomes of this analysis are shown in Table 1, as well as Graph 1 and Graph 2.

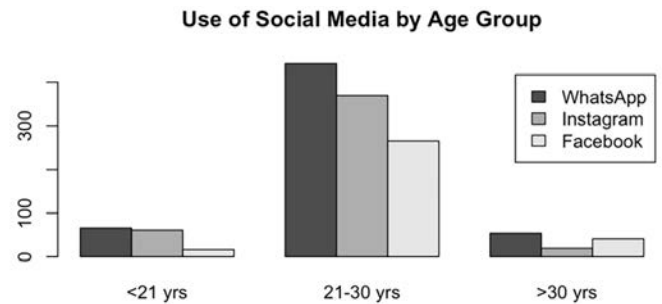
Variable I	Variable II	χ^2 test statistic	p-value
Social Media App	Age	31.546	0.0002*
Video streaming	Age	16.149	0.0028*
TV Channels	Age	293.35	< 0.00001*
Time spent on social media	Age	218.7	< 0.00002*

Table 1: Chi-Square Independent Test between Social Media and Age Group

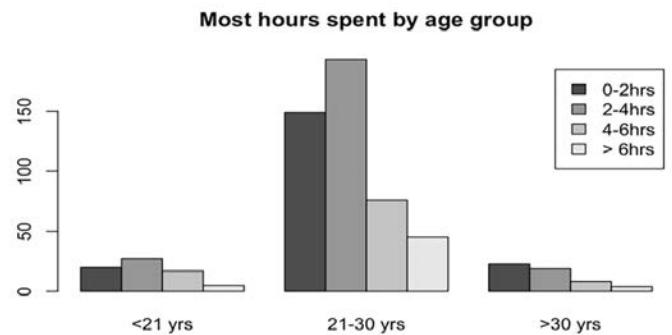
The chi-square test statistic of 31.546 indicated that there is a statistically significant correlation between the age group and the social media apps (Graph 1) with a very low p-value of 0.0002*, it was highly unlikely that the relationship was found between the social media apps use and age group occurred by chance. Since there was a significant relationship between the two variables, we could reject the null hypothesis (i.e., that there is no association between the two variables). In addition, Graph 1 revealed that the top 3 social media apps are: WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. People under 30 years old used WhatsApp and Instagram more, while people older than 30 years old used WhatsApp and Facebook more compared to others.

The statistical test result of 218.7 showed that there was a strong and significant association between the time spent on social media and age group (Graph 2). The correlation between these variables was significant because the very low p-value of <0.00002* indicated that it was highly unlikely that this relationship came up by

chance. However, to properly comprehend the nature and underlying causes of this relationship, additional research or analysis may be required. It's crucial to keep in mind that statistical relationships do not always imply causality. Graph 2 also showed that the age group between 21 to 30 years old spent more time on social media compared to the other age groups, younger and older. The age group 21-30 years spent about 2 to 4 hours on social media per day.

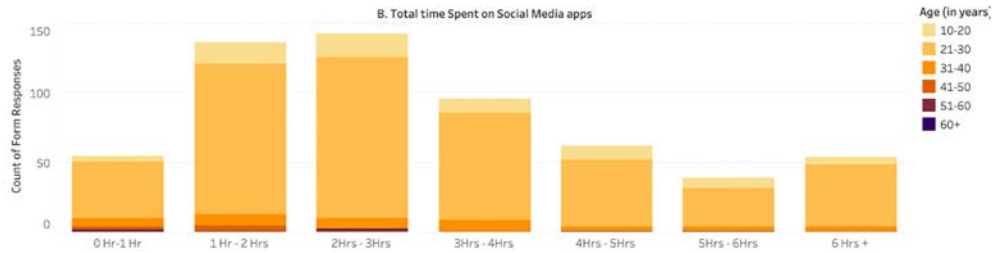


Graph 1: Top 3 Social Media App Vs Age Group

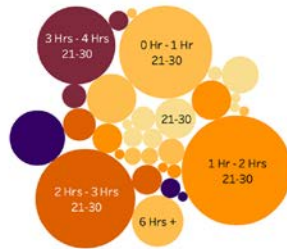


Graph 2: Time Spent Vs Age Group

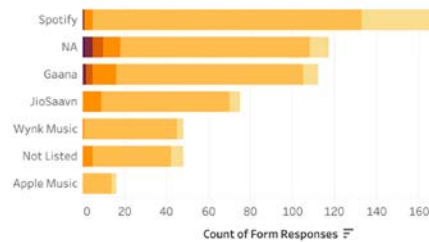
As for other observations from Dashboard 1, it can be concluded that between 2-3 hours was the most time spent on social media apps, especially by 21-30 years old. Also, that same age group spent about 1 hour to 3 hours on a video streaming app. Spotify was the top 1 app used for music streaming. Graph 3 displayed that the top



Time Spent On Video Streaming App



Music Streaming



Dashboard 1

3 video streaming apps among the different age groups were YouTube, Netflix, and Amazon Prime.

Conclusion

In conclusion, social media became a fundamental component of daily life during the pandemic in India, especially when it comes to reconnecting with people who are geographically separated as a result of lockdowns and social isolation measures. In this project, the data from Kaggle was analyzed to see how much time people of different ages spent on social media platforms, with 21 to 30 years old spending more time than the younger or older ones. WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook were revealed to be the most frequently used social media platforms. This project also suggested strong evidence between age and the amount of time spent on social media which was presented by the chi-square independence test. It showed that the association was highly unlikely to have happened

by accident due to its extremely low p-values. Age and social media usage do not correlate directly, indicating that other factors might potentially affect how people use social media. These results helped us understand how different age groups use social media, but further study is interesting to understand the underlying causes and implications of this association. Social media was a useful tool for keeping people in touch, entertained, and informed during that time.

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ALIYA GONCALVES ALMEIDA

Mathematics

Aliya Goncalves Almeida moved from the Cape Verde Islands in the summer of 2018 to follow her dream of attending college in the United States. In May of 2023, this was accomplished as she graduated from Bridgewater State University, earning a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and a minor in Computer Science. Aliya is taking her passion for academic excellence to the next level, currently attending Bridgewater State University to pursue her Master's Degree in Computer Science. She also concluded her honors thesis under the mentorship of Dr. Wanchuzi Yu, Associate Professor of Statistics in the Mathematics Department. During the Summer of 2023, Aliya interned at BitSight, an industry leader driving innovation in the cybersecurity industry.

Strategies for Increasing Long-Term Language Comprehension in English Learners Abstract

APRYL DANWAH

Abstract

The current literature on young English learners identifies that these students often struggle academically in comparison to English-speaking students, revealing a significant need for teaching strategies geared toward English learners. Previous research also shows that English learners require additional resources and strategies to promote their comprehension and retention of information. In this article, effective strategies for increasing long-term language comprehension in English learners will be explored across science, social studies, and math content areas with consideration to memory research. The purpose of this article is to convey the importance of comprehension strategies for English learners and to describe the themes between the best teaching practices in science, social studies, and math. English learners show increased language and content comprehension when teachers' lessons incorporate strategies that address and account for their academic challenges. This article concludes with the implications of this research on English learner education and recommendations for future research.

Keywords: English Learners, Long Term Comprehension, Memory, and Language Comprehension.

Introduction

Across the country, approximately 5 million children and adolescents are considered ELs, making up 10 percent of K-12 public school students (Mavrogordato et al., 2021). In schools, the term English learner (EL) or English language learner (ELL) refers to students with limited English language proficiency and whose first language is not English. ELs represent a growing population of culturally and linguistically diverse students in public schools in the United States. In the classroom, ELs face many academic challenges that their English-speaking counterparts do not face, which is in part shown through the tendency for ELs, on average, to earn lower scores than English speakers on academic tests (Valentino & Reardon, 2015). The clear achievement gap between ELs and other students calls for greater attention to identifying the strategies, methods, and language programs that are most effective for EL instruction. Along with the growing population of English learners in schools across the United States, there is a critical need for forming connections between recent research on ELs and the current state of EL education.

This article is separated into the following sections: introduction, multidisciplinary challenges and supports, science, social studies, math, implications,

recommendations for future research, and conclusion. The section on multidisciplinary challenges and supports will describe common challenges ELs face in all subjects and the current teaching methods used to support ELs. An understanding of the multidisciplinary challenges faced by ELs and the supports already available is needed to conclude how EL instruction can improve, especially regarding students' English language comprehension. In the following sections on science, social studies, and math, findings of relevant research specific to EL education in each of the content areas will be presented and discussed in conjunction with the available literature on memory and cognition. Additionally, frequently cited strategies and teaching methods for effectively increasing comprehension in ELs will be outlined in each content area section. The significance of this research on educational practice, the development of EL instruction, and teachers will be provided in the implications section. Lastly, suggestions for future studies based on the gaps in the literature and a further explanation of the importance of this research will be included in the recommendations for future research and conclusion sections.

Multidisciplinary Challenges and Supports

English learners face challenges related to academic language and background knowledge across all content areas introduced at the elementary school level. These challenges can be especially hard to overcome in content areas other than English because the focus of the instruction is taken off explicit English language learning. Thus far, most of the relevant research on EL education has been done through the lens of English Language Arts (ELA), mainly due to the strong focus this subject has on English instruction. The lack of literature on direct English

language instruction in content areas has inspired this research on strategies for increasing long-term language comprehension in ELs and will be further addressed in the following sections on science, social studies, and math. Academic language refers to the language needed for students to be successful in school, which includes content-specific vocabulary, unfamiliar uses of everyday words, and the sophisticated language of textbooks and assessments (DeLuca, 2010). Compared to social English, the type of language used in everyday conversations characterized by simple sentences and widely used vocabulary, academic language takes much longer to develop (Barrow, 2014). Although ELs may quickly develop social English, they likely continue to lack the academic language needed to comprehend textbooks, assignment directions, and test questions until years later (Barrow, 2014).

Another challenge for ELs that includes and expands upon issues with academic language is the absence of the prior knowledge authors often assume all students have. In many cases, students need to have a certain level of background knowledge to understand subject-specific textbooks and articles. Comprehension of a text can be significantly diminished when the student has little to no relevant background knowledge for the text to activate, indicating that there is value in teaching the necessary background information beforehand or finding ways to activate the prior knowledge ELs do possess (Hwang & Duke, 2020). Furthermore, the challenges of learning an academic language, reading comprehension, and building background knowledge can be reduced as teachers target these problems in their instruction of ELs.

In support of developing academic language and promoting reading comprehension in ELs, extensive

vocabulary instruction is commonly implemented in the classroom. Relevant literature has established a positive correlation between vocabulary instruction and reading comprehension, partly explained by acknowledging that ELs are less likely to use context clues to decipher the definition of new words since several words in the text may be unfamiliar to them (Hunt & Feng, 2016). Directly teaching unfamiliar words is an effective strategy for increasing word knowledge, which is supported by Hunt and Feng's (2016) findings that elementary school ELs scored significantly higher on a posttest of vocabulary knowledge after receiving direct vocabulary instruction through read-aloud.

While teaching vocabulary has been effective in increasing student comprehension, research suggests that the way students are grouped during instruction also has an impact on their learning. Small group instruction (SGI) where a few students have additional instruction from the teacher has been correlated with academic and social benefits for students (Mavrogordato et al., 2021). One study exemplifies this by showing that students who received SGI on reading performed better on a test of reading comprehension than students who did not (Ardasheva et al., 2019). The literature specific to SGI with ELs does support the notion that this differentiated teaching method is beneficial to ELs as well. A study done with Spanish-speaking ELs revealed that students were more engaged in class work when in SGI than in whole-class instruction (Brooks & Thurston, 2010). Evidently, the environment of small groups is beneficial for student learning, regardless of English proficiency.

Other studies reveal that heterogeneous/mixed-ability SGI, or grouping of ELs and non-ELs together, is beneficial to students because it allows for peer modeling,

the formation of personal connections, and academic peer discussions (Ardasheva et al., 2019; Dussling, 2020). Much more research is needed to identify the effectiveness of SGI in each content area, but research has shown that SGI improves English learners' literacy and numeracy skills (Ardasheva et al., 2019; Dussling, 2020; Mavrogordato et al., 2021). During lessons, vocabulary instruction, background knowledge, and small group instruction have been shown to support language comprehension. However, establishing additional comprehension strategies specific to the challenges in each content area is needed to fully support ELs.

Science

A review of the literature specific to EL instruction in science revealed best practices and effective comprehension strategies that both include and expand upon those presented in the section on multidisciplinary challenges and supports. Commonalities between the best practices outlined in the literature can be parsed out into the following overarching ideas: direct and meaningful vocabulary instruction, utilization and activation of students' background knowledge, the opportunity for hands-on science learning and repeated practice, and the use of visuals. These teaching methods are not separate from each other and the research highlights that they are all elements of effective science lessons. In this section, a discussion of the difficulties ELs face in science, the importance of vocabulary instruction, inquiry-based learning, and connections to memory research will be offered.

The literature surrounding teaching science to English learners acknowledges that the nature of science content presents many challenges for students. A portion

of these challenges can be attributed to the fact that language instruction is often not a focus during science lessons (Lee & Paz, 2021). ELs struggle with science texts because of unfamiliar terms, difficult or abstract concepts, and complex sentence structures that can overwhelm students and disrupt their comprehension of the material (Estrella et al., 2018; Flaggella-Luby et al., 2016). Without additional instruction or building of background knowledge, ELs may lack the content-specific vocabulary needed for comprehension of science assignments, articles, and tests (Wessels, 2013). Science is especially difficult for all students due to the notion that many everyday words take on new meanings when used in a science context, as well as the need to learn new subject-specific strategies such as hypothesis testing and data table construction (Flaggella-Luby et al., 2016; Wessels, 2013). The challenges presented above communicate the additional support and scaffolding that ELs require during science instruction, especially surrounding vocabulary and reading comprehension.

Direct vocabulary instruction is one common thread connecting most of the existing research on effective methods of teaching science to ELs. The vocabulary strategies mentioned in the literature seek to help students form meaningful connections to the words and understand the relationship between vocabulary and science concepts (Wessels, 2013). A vocabulary foldable is a strategy for organizing vocabulary where students use paper to create one organizer with flaps or sections for each word (Wessels, 2013). As students' progress through their science lesson, they can add drawings and write notes that utilize their prior knowledge, helping them form personal connections to the material, and encode information more elaborately, which is also helpful for

comprehension and memory formation (Rinne et al., 2010; Wessels, 2013). Another strategy that encourages the activation of student background knowledge and the identification of the relationships between concepts is science journals/notebooks (Lindquist & Loynachan, 2016). The use of scientific journals in the classroom to aid hands-on science learning helps develop writing skills, academic language use, and science-specific skills such as creating data tables (Lindquist & Loynachan, 2016). Teachers can use science journals to assess comprehension and retention of information through students' writing. The strategies presented in this paragraph help students to comprehend complex science concepts and vocabulary using methods that especially assist in long-term memory formation.

A large portion of the research on science instruction for ELs references using hands-on learning, or an inquiry-based approach, to teach ELs. A meta-analysis of the research concluded that inquiry instruction is related to increased science learning in ELs (Estrella et al., 2018). However, studies show that the effectiveness of inquiry instruction may rely on students' literacy skills. The research suggests that ELs may not be successful in primarily self-guided explorative classrooms because they lack relevant prior knowledge and/or cannot communicate their findings, proposing that solely using inquiry instruction is more suited for higher grades (Estrella et al., 2018). The findings of a longitudinal study with ELs done by Tong et al. suggest that literacy intervention is important when paired with inquiry-based science instruction because it prepares older students for science-centered instruction (2014). It is also inferred that success in science in later grades is a product of the long-term retention of skills developed in elementary

school. Hands-on science learning further creates personal connections and contributes to ELs' formation of episodic memory, or their memory of events, which is cited in memory research as influential in student recall of content information presented during the memorable event ((Fandakova & Bunge, 2016; Markant et al., 2016). Furthermore, previous literature exemplifies that long-term comprehension of language and literacy skills plays a distinct role in ELs' science learning and conceptual understanding. Many of the struggles ELs face in comprehending science content can also be applied to social studies content, leading to some overlap ineffective strategies.

Social Studies

Even though research on content area instruction for ELs is limited, there is an even greater lack of literature that focuses specifically on social studies instruction. The available research reveals some overlap with interdisciplinary supports and the best practices for science instruction. Direct vocabulary instruction with visual aids is one of the effective comprehension strategies presented in the literature that was also identified as an important teaching practice in science instruction. Along with direct vocabulary instruction, the following practices characterize the effective strategies described in the subject-specific research: activating background knowledge, increasing engagement and motivation for reading, and the organization of main ideas or concepts. This section will describe the common challenges for ELs in social studies lessons and the teaching practices that have been implicated in the development of student comprehension in this subject.

Much like in science, social studies texts can

be difficult for ELs to understand because of unfamiliar vocabulary and a lack of critical background knowledge. Additionally, social studies texts are decontextualized and make use of the passive voice, which is a challenge for ELs because it is different from conversational language (Brown, 2007). The wording and syntax of the sentences have the potential to confuse ELs and lead to misinterpretation of important ideas within the text, including timelines (Brown, 2007). More broadly, most ELs come from other countries and/or cultures that they do possess a rich background knowledge of, but this knowledge is underutilized in classrooms and is not helpful for readings that assume readers' knowledge of U.S specific information (Weisman & Hansen). Previous research addresses that another challenge of social studies instruction is engaging students in lessons, especially because students may perceive the content as boring and removed from their everyday lives (Barber et al., 2015). Given these challenges, the research on strategies for improved comprehension in social studies highlights vocabulary learning, forming connections between ideas, and increasing engagement.

Strategies that visually show the relationship between concepts and main ideas are linked to improvements in reading comprehension (Brown, 2007). Graphic organizers such as Venn diagrams, t-charts, and content maps are a traditional way to organize main ideas and vocabulary (Weisman & Hansen, 2007). Options for scaffolding in social studies lessons include using guiding questions and providing ELs with an outline of the text before reading (Brown, 2007). When introducing vocabulary, ELs benefit from direct instruction with visual aids and chances for repeated exposure and practice with the words (Weisman & Hansen, 2007). A study that looked

at building comprehension in social studies lessons through media, graphic organizers, and vocabulary instruction revealed that students who received this intervention performed better in assessments of comprehension and vocabulary than students who did not receive the intervention (Vaughn et al., 2010). The results of this study support the overall findings of the literature regarding the effectiveness of graphic organizers and direct vocabulary instruction in content area instruction.

In addition to opportunities for visualizing vocabulary and social studies content, research suggests that the level of engagement is influential in student learning. A study aimed at investigating reading comprehension in social studies used an intervention approach named USHER, which stands for United States History for Engaged Reading (Barber, 2015). The intervention incorporated a teaching model focused on supporting student motivation for reading and scaffolding comprehension strategies. After the intervention, ELs showed a significant increase on a test of reading comprehension, increased reading self-efficacy beliefs, and teacher support was revealed as a predictive factor in behavioral and emotional engagement changes (Barber, 2015). Engagement and interest in social studies may also be fostered by connecting new information to students' experiences and conveying meaning with pictures, charts, or real objects (Weisman & Hansen, 2007). Memory research cites that the formation of episodic memory and overall memory consolidation is partly facilitated through personal connections and emotional arousal, further implicating student interest in the lesson and utilization of prior knowledge as effective strategies for long-term comprehension (Shing & Brod, 2016). Overall, long-term retention and comprehension of social

studies concepts are supported by the efforts of teaching methods to organize concepts, explain vocabulary, promote participation, and form connections to students' perceived realities. Some of the teaching methods found to be effective in social studies can be translated to fit the nature of math content, while others are not relevant to the unique challenges ELs face in the subject.

Math

Research on math instruction for ELs has increased in recent years, leading to a more established, yet still limited body of literature on the effective strategies for math instruction. A common comprehension strategy stated in the available literature was direct instruction on how to comprehend and solve word problems. Other teaching strategies that were found effective for increasing comprehension in ELs are the use of visuals, peer discussions, and hands-on learning to make abstract concepts more concrete. Additional effective practices mentioned involved supporting the efficient functioning of students' working memory, direct vocabulary instruction, addressing common errors, and conducting frequent checks for understanding. This section will review the specific difficulties ELs frequently face during math instruction and elaborate on the teaching methods that lead to greater language and content comprehension in math lessons.

Several of the challenges ELs face in math overlap with what has already been stated in the social studies and science sections. However, there are difficulties with vocabulary and language comprehension that are largely specific to math content. For example, science and social studies instruction may incorporate words that take on a new meaning different from the everyday language in

the context of that content area, but, in math, several words have multiple meanings within the context of the subject itself as well (Arizmendi et al., 2021; Swanson et al., 2021). Likewise, previous literature recognizes that there is a 'language of math' that students must learn to be successful in the subject, demonstrated in part by the concept that mathematical symbols hold meaning and can be verbalized in numerous ways (Arizmendi et al., 2021; Swanson et al., 2021). Another challenge presented by math content is the common use of word problems, which first require ELs to comprehend the academic language contained within the problem and then proceed with mathematical calculations (Barrow, 2014). Based on the challenges continually referenced in the relevant literature, direct instruction of language comprehension skills and vocabulary is necessary for math instruction, despite misconceptions that language does not influence math learning.

Most of the teaching practices agreed upon throughout the research on EL instruction in math center on vocabulary development and conceptual understanding. Explicit vocabulary instruction using visuals, language modeling, and methods conducive to schema development such as chunking, a strategy of teaching words alongside other related vocabulary, is recommended in the literature (Barrow, 2014; Arizmendi et al., 2021; Merritt et al., 2017). In addition to vocabulary development, the research presents a discussion of ways to increase comprehension of math concepts through strategies for making abstract concepts more concrete, specifically using gestures, pictures or diagrams, real-life objects, hands-on activities, and opportunities for peer discussions (Barrow, 2014; Merritt et al., 2017). One study observed teaching practices in two fifth-grade classrooms

with high-achieving ELs, finding that both teachers consistently focused on building vocabulary, providing multiple representations of math concepts, explicitly teaching learning strategies, addressing common errors, and conducting checks for understanding (Merritt et al., 2017). The results of this study imply that math-based vocabulary instruction, among other strategies, is essential to the long-term comprehension of language needed for high achievement in math.

As an extension of math vocabulary development, considerable attention has been given to the relationship between comprehension and word problems. The use of word problems in classrooms has been shown to increase students' frequency and accuracy of spoken content-specific vocabulary (Valley, 2019). Another study showed that DSM (Dynamic Strategic Math) intervention resulted in a significant increase in word problem-solving accuracy among Latino ELs and a sustained accuracy in the lessons following the intervention (Orosco, 2014). The DSM intervention involved connecting concepts and vocabulary to everyday words, building knowledge for solving word problems, time for math discussion and practice, and scaffolding (Orosco, 2014). Findings of previous research like this study conclude that word problem-solving abilities both depend on and impact comprehension of math vocabulary and concepts.

Relatively recently, research has emerged on working memory in relation to math problem-solving. The research proposes that besides language barriers, ELs may score lower than monolingual English speakers because of the high demands for processing multiple pieces of information at once, heightened by the cognitive load of multiple meanings in math vocabulary (Swanson et al., 2021). The study used a longitudinal

research design and found that growth in the executive components of working memory related to math problem-solving (Swanson et al., 2021). Recent research on this topic suggests that working memory functions do affect ELs' performance on math problems and their potential to comprehend complex information during math instruction. Given the described findings, it can be inferred that activating background knowledge allows for improved memory processing because it accesses information in students' mental schemas (in long-term memory), lightening the cognitive load on working memory. Continuing to integrate memory research into considerations for educational practice for ELs will help to evolve our understanding of supports for long-term comprehension of the language across all disciplines taught at the elementary school level.

Implications

The effective teaching practices revealed within the relevant literature and outlined in this paper are significant to the future of EL instruction and the countless factors involved in their education. Educators are likely to feel more supported and confident in teaching ELs once they are aware of which strategies have been most effective with students. The focus of this article on instruction in content areas besides English is particularly useful for supporting teachers who are unsure how to incorporate language instruction into subjects like math or science. Furthermore, the success of lesson plans and modifications for English learners can benefit from teachers adopting effective strategies and teaching methods that best fit the students in their classroom.

English proficiency in English learners will also be positively impacted as they receive more support

in comprehending English across all subject areas. Additionally, ELs may feel more comfortable and included in the classroom by having more opportunities to speak with peers and having teachers directly address their academic challenges. English learners' mental health may improve as their classroom environment becomes more inclusive to their specific needs and they are encouraged to both learn from and educate their classmates. Especially amidst the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, effective teaching strategies backed by research are needed to ensure the academic success and mental well-being of ELs and all students.

Beyond the day-to-day impact on English learners' classroom experiences, the effective practices for long-term comprehension presented by the literature also provide implications for English learners' test performance. The themes and teaching methods mentioned in the sections on math, science, and social studies focus on how long-term language comprehension and retention of content can be increased in students. Therefore, by being exposed to the strategies mentioned, students will be better equipped to recall what they learned while taking a test or other assessment. Comprehension of the test directions and questions may improve as well because of the attention to English instruction that ELs would receive during all lessons. Scores on standardized testing could likewise be positively impacted and there is potential for the achievement gap between English learners and English-speaking students to begin to shrink. If the evolving challenges for ELs and the current research continue to inform the development of best teaching practices, then the classroom environment will become a space more conducive to the academic success of both monolingual students and English learners.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several avenues for future research would be useful to form a greater understanding of how to best support the education of young English learners. These avenues for additional research on ELs include, but are not limited to the following:

- Further exploration of the instruction of ELs in the subject areas besides English, especially in math and social studies. The current research on content area instruction for ELs is limited and there is even less research on social studies and math than there is on science instruction. More research in this area would aid in establishing the differences and similarities between the effective practices in each content area.
- Studying the relationship between memory strategies and teaching strategies geared at increasing comprehension in ELs. There is a surplus of articles that identify the impact of memory and cognition on student learning, but memory research is rarely integrated into the literature on effective EL instruction. Studies that test long-term memory formation in students will potentially propel the development of effective comprehension strategies for English learners.
- The effect of different grouping methods and language programs on the effectiveness and use of comprehension strategies. Certain types of language programs for ELs will include some instruction in the students' first language and others are intended for English-only instruction, which proposes that language comprehension strategies may vary depending on the language program. Likewise, some classrooms may be grouped with only ELs or a majority of ELs, possibly influencing best

practices due to the differences in homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping.

- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on English learners' social-emotional learning and instruction. The pandemic has greatly impacted students by shifting instruction to an online delivery model and/or highly unfamiliar in-person experience. Research on this topic would be useful for evaluating effective practices for EL instruction and studying social-emotional factors in an online or hybrid academic environment.

Conclusion

Clearly, there needs to be much more research on how to best instruct English learners in all subjects, but especially in science, math, and social studies. However, the available literature does identify that effective comprehension strategies share the foundation of providing explicit English language instruction and encouraging meaningful connections. Considering the research on memory and cognition in learning can help contextualize the effectiveness of strategies for long-term comprehension of language and content, as well as inform future strategies.

There is also a need for more guidance in how teachers can create and adjust lesson plans to account for their English learner students. The themes found between effective teaching methods and comprehension strategies outlined in this article help create natural guidelines for teachers to use in crafting lesson plans that best support English learners. In pursuit of an equitable, enjoyable, and successful education for English learners, educators must attend to their students' long-term comprehension and strive to ensure students are

receiving appropriate English instruction in every subject. Investing in the improvement of EL education is ultimately investing in the future of the country and its economy as ELs and multilingual speakers begin to account for more and more of the American population.

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Apryl Danwah graduated with a double major in Elementary Education and Psychology. This article, along with lesson plans and a Google site, was written in the completion of her honors thesis. Her thesis was completed during the Spring 2022 semester under the mentorship of Dr. Jacquelynne Boivin (Elementary & Early Childhood Education). After graduating, Apryl plans to pursue a master's degree in Elementary Education at BSU before teaching at an elementary school. She also hopes to later pursue a Ph.D. in Education or a career in psychology after several years of teaching.

Exploring Inmate Health in Prison: Health Issues, Interventions, and Suggestions to Improve Care

JENNA HEALY

Introduction

The United States has the highest number of prisoners per capita at 639 people per 100,000₈. There has been a fivefold increase in the number of inmates in the United States prison systems since 1970₄₄, and this may be a major contributor to the corrections healthcare system having trouble keeping up with this growth compared to the general population of the United States.

According to the World Health Organization, the United States has documented higher mortality rates than many other developed countries. Rates of conditions such as cardiovascular disease have decreased everywhere, but much less in the United States. In addition, the United States had the second-leading mortality from noncommunicable diseases and fourth highest from communicable diseases (see Appendix 1). The Bureau of Justice Statistics found that in 2019, 89% of deaths in state prisons were from any sort of illness, chronic or infectious₄₅. There is also a high rate of psychiatric conditions, respiratory diseases, diabetes, and other endocrine disorders, genitourinary disease, congenital anomalies, infectious diseases, and perinatal conditions in the United States₁₀. The United States has the lowest life expectancy compared to the United Kingdom and Australia which have similar healthcare expenditures for a developed country (see Appendix 2).

The United States government and the state prison systems spend similar percentages of their budget, around 18%₁₀, on healthcare yet the prevalence of different conditions and access to treatment is different. This paper will discuss health issues prevalent among inmates compared to the United States adult population, medical interventions currently available for each issue, suggestions to improve access and care, and an interview with a former prison nurse discussing her experience.

Common Health Issues Among Inmates and Interventions

Chronic Disease

Nearly 60% of all Americans live with some sort of chronic disease₁₃. These conditions such as cardiovascular disease are becoming the leading cause of death among inmates₂. Cardiovascular disease can be much more common in inmates due to the higher rate of cigarette smoking and high levels of salt in the food provided₂ (see Figure 1). Researchers analyzed the nutrient content of the food being provided in state prisons and found that there was twice the recommended amount of salt and a high level of carbohydrates in each meal. The pre-packaged snacks that are available for inmates to purchase are also often high in sugar, fat, and salt₂. These nutritional deficits can lead to obesity, which

is a comorbidity to many chronic diseases. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 695,547 people in the United States died from heart disease in 2021, leading it to be the top cause of death for the general population. Asthma is also much more commonly seen in prisons than in the rest of U.S. adults. As of 2016, 16.7% of people in state prisons were diagnosed with asthma while only 8% of U.S adults were diagnosed. Asthma may be more prevalent in these incarcerated populations due

to substandard living environments, tobacco exposure, lack of access to providers, and lower socioeconomic status of inmates 40. The rate of Hepatitis B is also three times as high as in those not imprisoned³⁷ due to a higher rate of blood-borne pathogen transmission. Hepatitis B can be both acute and chronic, with chronic Hepatitis B lasting six months or more. See Figure 2 for chronic disease prevalence between people in state prisons and the general United States population.

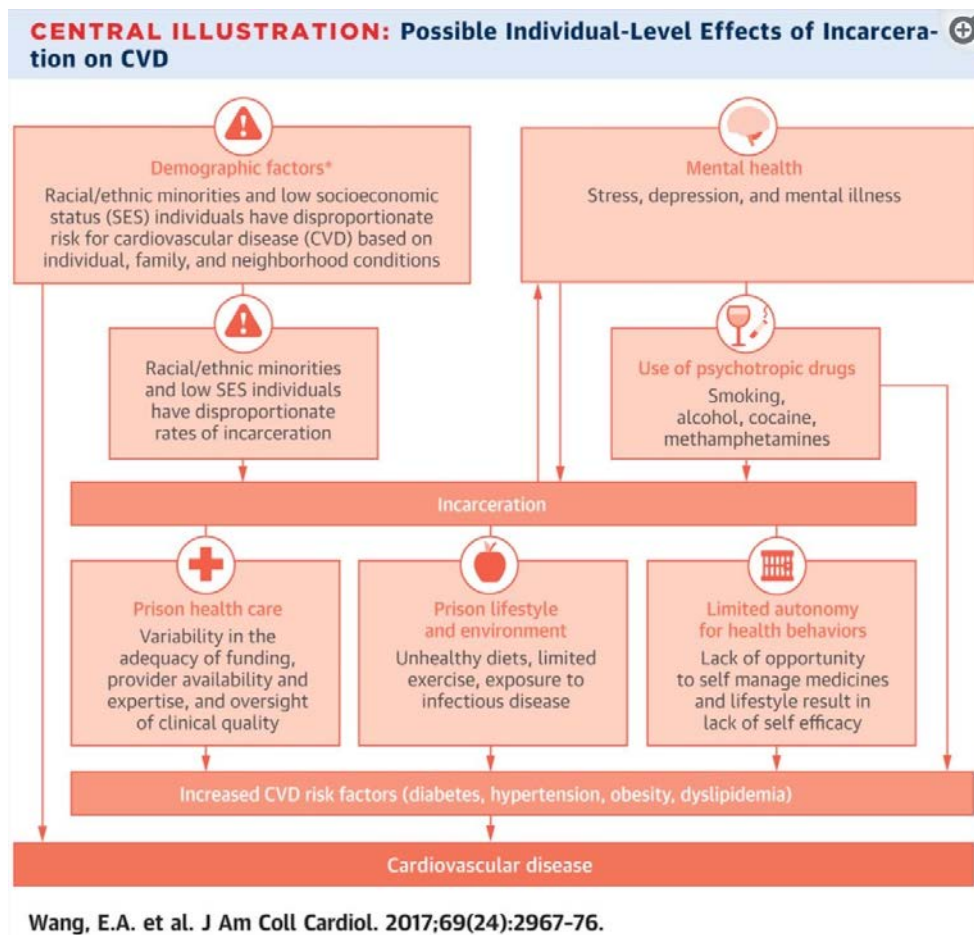


Figure 1: Effects of Incarceration on Cardiovascular Disease

Note: From "Cardiovascular Disease in Incarcerated Populations"; by E.A. Wang., N Redmond, C.R. Dennison Himmelfarb, B. Pettit, M. Stern, J. Chen, S. Shero, E. Iturriaga, P. Sorlie & A.V. Diez Roux. Journal of the American College of Cardiology. Copyright 2017 by the American College of Cardiology Foundation. 49

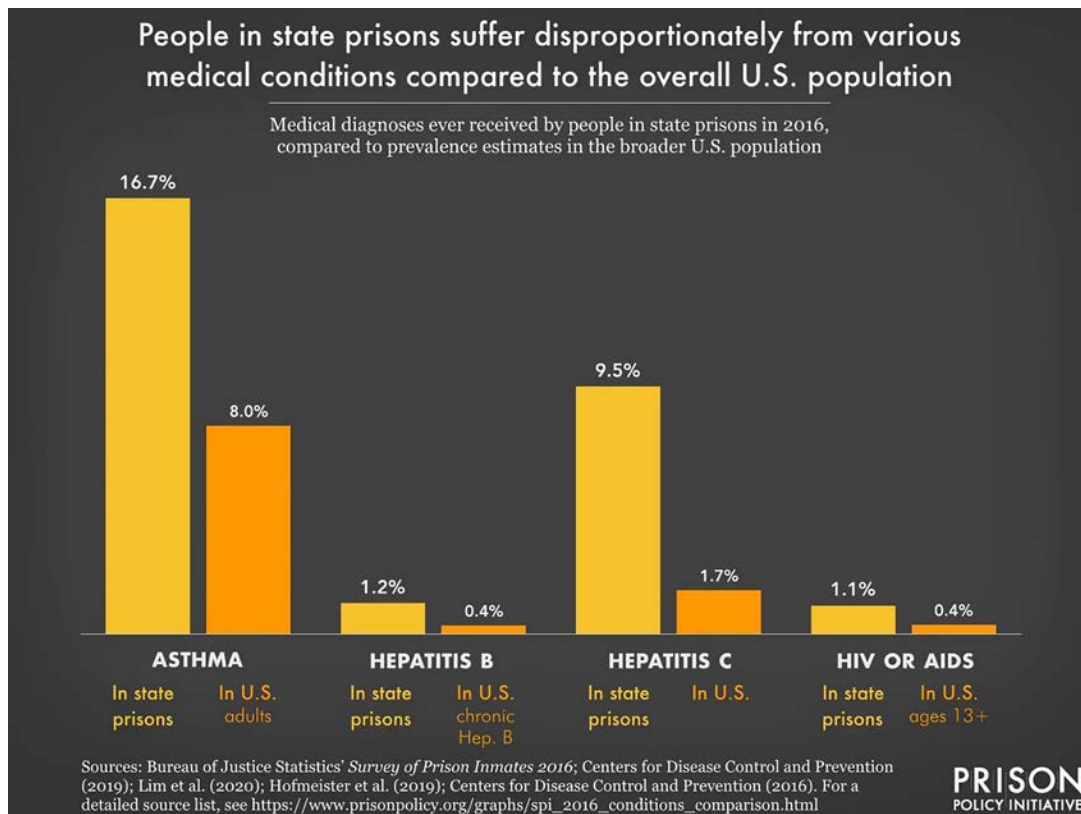


Figure 2: Prevalence of Chronic Diseases in Incarcerated Populations Compared to U.S. Adult Population

Note. From “Chronic Punishment: The unmet health needs of people in state prisons”, by L. Wang. Prison Policy Initiative. Copyright 2022 by Prison Policy Initiative.

Interventions

The federal guidelines say that tuberculosis screening, vaccinations, audiograms for those at risk, colorectal cancer screening for those 50-74, and blood pressure screening for at-risk groups should be conducted annually. Every two years females between the ages of 50-74 should receive a breast cancer screening, and labs should be screened every 3-5 years⁴¹. Regarding medications inmates had before incarceration, daily medications must be approved by a provider before being administered. This approval can often take weeks after intake and outside medications from home are often not

allowed to be dispensed³⁹.

Substance Use Disorder

Another common chronic disease is substance use disorder. Male inmates have a slightly greater prevalence of alcohol dependence than the public but have up to ten times the prevalence of drug dependence². Female inmates also have a much greater prevalence of drug and alcohol dependence than male inmates. They tend to have up to four times the prevalence of alcohol dependence and thirteen times the prevalence of drug dependence². According to the National Institute of

Drug Abuse, 65% of the prison population has an active substance use disorder while another 20% don't meet the clinical criteria but were under the influence at the time of their crime₁₄. This rate is much higher than the national statistic of 11.7% throughout the United States₃₅.

Interventions

Medication-assisted treatments such as methadone and buprenorphine are effective at treating opioid withdrawal symptoms and preventing relapse for many people⁴. Combining these types of medications with therapeutic interventions has proven to be the most effective way to prevent relapse⁵. Facilitating continued treatment of substance use disorders is also vital to the prevention of relapse once released. It must be ensured that an individual has the support they need from being in a highly structured environment to being on their own. Without any type of support after incarceration, individuals are very likely to relapse. According to one cross-sectional study, 18% relapsed their illicit drug use and 23% relapsed with alcohol use soon after release when given no resources post-release₁₉.

Mental Health

Mental health is a major chronic issue that must be dealt with once incarcerated. A systematic review found that psychiatric illnesses in inmates are two to four times higher than in the general population and antisocial personality disorder is ten times higher₂. According to the chart below, a majority of state prison inmates had a history of mental illness₁₆. Suicide is also a major cause of death in prisons, accounting for nearly half of the deaths while in custody₂. Properly treating mental illness is so crucial because these figures continue to increase. From

2001 to 2019, the number of suicides increased by 85% in state prisons, 61% in federal prisons, and 13% in local jails₁₅. The general population had a rate of 22 deaths by suicide per 100,000 in 2019 while state prison inmates had 25 deaths per 100,000₄₅. See Table 1 for the prevalence of mental health problems among prison and jail inmates from the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Interventions

Prisons are constitutionally obligated to provide mental healthcare, as concluded in *Bowring v. Godwin* 551 F.2d 44, 1977 and *Estelle v. Gamble* 429 U.S. 97, 1976. It is also required by law that there is assessment and screening, treatment beyond seclusion and observation, provision by mental health professionals, record keeping, safe provision of psychotropic medications, and suicide prevention efforts. Although these resources are supposed to be readily available to those who need them, only approximately 10% of inmates receive any mental health care and 30% of those with serious diagnoses such as schizophrenia don't receive medication or psychotherapy₂₆.

Communicable Diseases

Infectious diseases are very common in these crowded settings. Infection control is often minimal, and it can take a long time to be able to receive treatment. Respiratory illnesses such as tuberculosis, influenza, or COVID-19 can spread very quickly due to the inability to properly isolate infected inmates. Proximity, poor diet, hygiene, and lack of awareness of infection status also contribute to an outbreak₂. A survey of prison inmates in 2016 concluded that 17% of all state prisoners have an infectious disease₄₆.

Table 2. Prevalence of mental health problems among prison and jail inmates

Mental health problem	State prison inmates		Federal prison inmates		Local jail inmates	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Any mental health problem*	705,600	56.2%	70,200	44.8%	479,900	64.2%
History and symptoms	219,700	17.5	13,900	8.9	127,800	17.1
History only	85,400	6.8	7,500	4.8	26,200	3.5
Symptoms only	396,700	31.6	48,100	30.7	322,900	43.2
No mental health problem	549,900	43.8%	86,500	55.2%	267,600	35.8%

Note: Number of inmates was estimated based on the June 30, 2005 custody population in State prisons (1,255,514), Federal prisons (156,643, excluding 19,311 inmates held in private facilities), and local jails (747,529).

*Details do not add to totals due to rounding. Includes State prisoners, Federal prisoners, and local jail inmates who reported an impairment due to a mental problem.

Table 1: Prevalence of Mental Health Problems Among Prison and Jail Inmates

From "Mental Health Problems of Prison and Jail Inmates", by D.J. James and L.E. Glaze. Bureau of Justice Statistics. Copyright 2006 by the U.S. Department of Justice. ¹⁶

Blood-borne pathogens can also be spread very quickly throughout prisons and jails. The high rate of substance use disorder in these settings means that many inmates may be using intravenous drugs, and with this comes sharing needles. Infections such as HIV and Hepatitis B and C are common due to a lack of clean needles, unprotected sex, and infected tattoo needles. Within the general population, there has only been 2% of people who have contracted acute hepatitis C compared to up to 70% of inmates, especially those who use intravenous drugs ⁴⁷. That rate of other sexually transmitted infections is almost twice as prevalent than the general population, according to Table 2.

Interventions

HIV and Other STIs

The most popular programs that have been implement-

ed are HIV prevention programs. Education and primary prevention are the best solutions to help stop the transmission and progression of disease ². This has been used regarding HIV through continued education, condom distribution, and needle and syringe exchange programs ⁴. Educating prisoners on the stigma of sexual assault can also be effective in reducing HIV and other sexually transmitted infections' mortality and morbidity. Reducing this stigma may allow inmates to seek medical attention faster, which in turn can reduce these rates ⁴. For those who have tested positive for HIV, it is required by law that antiretrovirals are available to slow or prevent the progression of symptoms ¹⁸.

Influenza-like Illness (ILI)

Annual influenza and COVID-19 vaccine series are supposed to be offered to inmates in all prisons before the

TABLE 1**Prevalence of ever having a chronic condition or infectious disease among state and federal prisoners and the general population (standardized), 2011–12**

Chronic condition/infectious disease	State and federal prisoners		General population ^a	
	Percent	Standard error	Percent	Standard error
Ever had a chronic condition ^b	43.9%**	1.5%	31.0%	0.3%
Cancer	3.5	0.4	/	:
High blood pressure/hypertension	30.2**	1.2	18.1	0.3
Stroke-related problems	1.8**	0.3	0.7	0.1
Diabetes/high blood sugar	9.0**	0.8	6.5	0.2
Heart-related problems ^c	9.8**	1.0	2.9	0.1
Kidney-related problems	6.1	0.7	/	:
Arthritis/rheumatism	15.0	0.9	/	:
Asthma	14.9**	0.9	10.2	0.2
Cirrhosis of the liver	1.8**	0.3	0.2	--
Ever had an infectious disease ^d	21.0%**	1.3%	4.8%	0.2%
Tuberculosis	6.0**	0.6	0.5	0.1
Hepatitis ^e	10.9**	1.0	1.1	0.1
Hepatitis B	2.7	0.4	/	:
Hepatitis C	9.8	1.0	/	:
STDs ^f	6.0**	0.5	3.4	0.1
HIV/AIDS	1.3%**	0.3%	0.4%	0.1%

*Comparison group.

**Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

--Less than 0.05%.

: Not calculated.

/Not collected in the NSDUH.

^aGeneral population estimates were standardized to match the prison population by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin.^bIncludes only conditions measured by both the NIS and NSDUH. In the NSDUH, persons were asked if a doctor or other medical professional had ever told them that they had high blood pressure, a stroke, diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or cirrhosis of the liver.^cFor state and federal prisoners, heart-related problems could include angina; arrhythmia; arteriosclerosis; heart attack; coronary, congenital, or rheumatic heart disease; heart valve damage; tachycardia; or other type of heart problem.^dExcludes HIV or AIDS due to unknown or missing data. Only those tested reported results.^eIncludes hepatitis B and C for the prison population and all types of hepatitis for the general population.^fExcludes HIV or AIDS.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Inmate Survey (NIS), 2011–12; and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 2009–2012.

Table 2: Prevalence of Chronic and Infectious Disease in State and Federal Prisoners Compared to the United States General Population

Note: From "Medical Problems of State and Federal Prisoners and Jail Inmates, 2011–12" by L.M. Maruschak, M. Berzofsky, and J. Unangst. Copyright 2015 by the U.S. Department of Justice.

possibility of an outbreak₂₀. In addition to vaccine protocols, hand washing stations are available and encouraged to be used by inmates and staff. Tuberculosis also has a much higher prevalence in these facilities due to the inability to properly diagnose and isolate infected inmates. Those who are experiencing symptoms of active tuberculosis are advised to be placed in a negative pressure room and conduct two-step testing along with a chest x-ray₂₀. Personal protective equipment, or PPE, is often unavailable to inmates due to safety concerns.

Gynecological and Obstetrical Health

The number of women being incarcerated is increasing at a rate that is 50% greater than men since 1980₂₁. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, approximately 6-10% of incarcerated women are pregnant, and this could be due to the often little access to contraceptives for homeless and low-income women. A cohort of Rhode Island inmates found that only 28% of sexually active female inmates used birth control consistently and 83.6% had unplanned

Figure 3***World Health Organization Recommendations to Reduce HIV Transmission***

1. Prison authorities in jurisdictions where condoms are currently not provided should introduce condom distribution programs and expand the implementation to scale as soon as possible.
2. Condoms should be made easily and discreetly accessible to prisoners so that they can pick them up at various locations in the prison, without having to ask for them and without being seen by others.
3. Together with condoms, water-based lubricant should also be provided since it reduces the probability of condom breakage and/or rectal tearing, both of which contribute to the risk of HIV transmission.
4. Education and informational activities for prisoners and staff should precede the introduction of condom distribution programs, which should be carefully prepared.
5. Female prisoners should have access to condoms as well as dental dams.

Note: From “Health Interventions in prison: a literature review”, by A. Schwitters. *Consolidated Guidelines on HIV Prevention, Diagnosis, Treatment and Care for Key Populations – 2016 Update*. Copyright 2016 by the World Health Organization. ⁴

pregnancies²¹. According to the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, 99% of sexually active women within the general population have been on birth control within their lifetime, with 87.5% having a long-lasting and reversible method. For those in the general population that have had unintended pregnancies, this figure is only 49% of pregnancies⁴⁸ compared to the 83.6% found in the Rhode Island study.

Gynecological issues are also prevalent in incarcerated women. A systematic review found that there was a higher prevalence of cervical dysplasia and cancer in women involved with corrections²². The time from receiving abnormal pap smear results and follow-up testing was also found to be much longer than for those not incarcerated. When a colposcopy [cervical biopsy] is not available on-site, it took an average of 65.5-84 days depending on the type of cells found from abnormal results to follow up testing. On-site testing yielded slightly better results with

follow-up testing occurring 42.5- 75 days after abnormal result²². Non-incarcerated women had an average of 60 days between an abnormal result and colposcopy³⁶.

Interventions

Since unplanned pregnancies are prevalent within corrections, abortion is available to those who would like to choose to terminate their pregnancy. This varies greatly depending on access to transportation and abortion laws state-by-state. Prenatal programs have also been put in place in some facilities due to the high-stress environment leading to poorer outcomes such as maternal depression, preterm delivery, and low birth weights. These programs hope to aid in health education, nutrition counseling, fitness, and support from medical professionals. Examples of these programs include Motherhood Behind Bars in Georgia and Infants at Risk in Michigan²⁴.

Routine gynecological cancer screening is also available while incarcerated. Pap smears are available every 1-5 years depending on the policies within different states. The age for when these become available also varies by state. Many states also don't follow physician guidelines of starting pap smear testing by age 23₂₅. Colposcopy biopsies are also available but often take longer to schedule and complete than they would in a typical outpatient office₂₂.

Suggestions to Improve Care

Improved Primary Care

The primary care that is received while incarcerated is often the only primary care available to these populations since many don't receive non-emergency care once released. There is a severe shortage of providers willing to work in these prisons due to the exceedingly high staff-to-patient ratios and below-average salary₃₁. To hire more staff, salaries should be competitive, and better benefits should be offered. Suggestions to improve care would include extended care hours so that patients were not rushed with the provider, an increased number of nurses working so that medication passes can be completed promptly, and more support in finding medical care post-release.

Mental Healthcare

Mental healthcare in prisons has improved over the years, but the reality of what is available is much different than what has been required by law. Many patients report that the mental health assessments they receive lack any kind of empathy or compassion. Some also reported being "overlooked" when trying to receive their psychiatric medications (26). In addition, crisis interven-

tion was also reported to only be available during business hours, with correctional officers left to de-escalate these moments of crisis. One inmate recalls their experience with improper psychiatric care and its detrimental result in Figure 3₂₆.

To remedy some of the mental healthcare problems in the United States' justice system, the most import-

Testimony of Suicide Attempt in Prison by Inmate

“ See these scars right here? I had slashed my wrists because I was feeling depressed and stuff... [the correctional officers] put you in a safety cell butt naked. They strip you and all that. Then they're supposed to slide you a garment...It velcros so you can't hang yourself with it. ... They put me in there. I had blood all over me. I was in horrible shape and [the correctional officer] didn't give me a garment for the whole night. ... He came around and was going, "Oh, poor baby [in a baby voice]," which just makes it worse. The thing is, right before the psych staff came in the morning, he slid in [a garment] ...If you're someone that is already traumatized, it makes it a thousand times worse...it's like a very hostile environment and it's scary, because you know you can't win...It's a very powerless feeling, and scary.”

Figure 3

Note: From "It's Not Like Therapy": Patient-inmate perspectives on jail psychiatric services", by L. Jacobs and S.N.J. Giordano. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*.

ant factor is time. According to a 2018 study, "Ideal medication management, described as accessible and timely (particularly at initial assessment), could help manage

psychiatric symptoms”²⁶. Inmates should have enough time to be properly diagnosed by a mental healthcare provider and be able to discuss their medication and psychotherapy options. Facility staff should also have improved training on how to manage crisis interventions and what signs of suicidal ideations are. Caseworkers are also recommended to be more readily available to those who will soon be released so that they can have a plan to manage their mental health on their own and connect them with resources for housing, food, healthcare, and support.

Communicable Disease Prevention

The prevention of communicable diseases and viruses could be improved by providing more supplies within these facilities. Whether it's sexually transmitted infections or the spread of viruses such as influenza, these could be mitigated by providing supplies to inmates. The rate of sexually transmitted infections could be reduced if condoms were readily available. When used correctly, condoms have a 98% effectiveness at preventing the transfer of bodily fluids, in turn reducing the risk of transmission. If consistent use could be established, this would greatly decrease the above-average rate of sexually transmitted infections in prisons. The transmission of HIV from both sex and intravenous drug use could also be decreased by providing high-risk individuals with pre-exposure prophylaxis medication known as PrEP. Providers are currently prohibited from prescribing this medication in these facilities.⁶ According to the Centers for Disease Control, PrEP can prevent HIV transmission by 99% when taken as prescribed.

Airborne and droplet virus transmission could also be mitigated by providing basic hygiene supplies. Improving access to hand washing stations is one of the

best ways to prevent transmission of infection, helping eliminate the virus before it can spread. Another way to prevent the spread of illness is providing vaccinations to all inmates such as influenza and COVID-19 vaccines before an outbreak can happen. Establishing immunity reduces the risk of serious illness or contracting illness at all, which in turn reduces the need for isolation.

Gynecological and Obstetrical Care

Inmates are provided with very little prenatal and postpartum care and annual exams have been reported to be aggressive and quick. Approximately 6-10% of female inmates are pregnant at the time of admission, with many discovering this as they are being admitted.²¹ Many pregnancies in prison result in miscarriage or preterm birth, with rates exceeding 22% and 10%, respectively.²⁷ High-stress environments can contribute to these above-average statistics, and providing adequate, compassionate care to mothers and fetus is crucial to maintaining the health of both. Many state prison systems have increased rates of miscarriage, premature birth, and cesarean sections than among the general population.²⁷ Birth in prison can also be a traumatic event emotionally and physically for the mother and baby. Many women have been recorded saying they cried that they are in labor and were ignored, leading them to give birth alone in a cell. A 26-year-old woman in Denver County Jail reported to correctional officers that she was in labor and was told to “wait and see” until she gave birth alone five hours later.⁴² In addition to this, more than a dozen states have no laws saying that women are not to be shackled in labor. In a 2018 study of hospital nurses, 82.9% reported that their incarcerated patients were shackled “sometimes to all the time”²⁸. After birth, mothers are typically allowed 24 hours

with their newborn, after which the child is placed with a relative or into foster care²⁹. Pregnancy, birth, and postpartum care can be improved through increased monitoring during pregnancy, labor, and postpartum as well as improved efforts to reunite inmates with their children after release.

It is often difficult for female inmates to receive the proper healthcare they need in an acceptable amount of time. Procedures such as pelvic exams and pap smears are invasive procedures that are often done in an “assembly line” and feel “degrading”³⁰. Facilities should provide more time for in-depth evaluation and be provided with more sensitivity training since they are interacting with this vulnerable population.

A Look into Inmate Healthcare: An Interview with Tiffany O’Keefe, RN

Interview questions are located in Appendix 3

In addition to the information mentioned above, registered nurse Tiffany O’Keefe shared her testimony of what it was like working with inmates in a minimum-security prison. She was employed at the former Massachusetts Correctional Institution in Plymouth, now known as the Massachusetts Alcohol and Substance Abuse Center, for three and a half years. This state prison housed inmates and civilly committed male patients who were deemed a danger to themselves based on their substance use. This facility focused on opioid treatment programs, mental health services, and inpatient detox.

Tiffany’s typical day would change depending on what role she was assigned to that day. As a charge nurse in the detox unit, she would assess men on the Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment scale, take vital signs, document her assessments, and accompany the attend-

ing provider on the exams each morning. She would also work on a unit with medically cleared patients who were completing the rest of their sentences or were committed for a certain period. She would oversee the sick [call] line as well as administer medications for those receiving medication-assisted treatment. If she was not assigned to either of those positions, she would complete medication passes and administer insulin to those who need it.

There were multiple health issues she would see most often and specific protocols on how to treat them. Due to the high number of intravenous drug users, abscesses were very common. The treatment protocol for this would be to drain the abscess and place the patient on an antibiotic. For alcoholics, cirrhosis was the most common health issue. The protocol for this was to weigh patients daily to monitor if they were retaining fluid. If needed, those needing a paracentesis to drain the fluid from their abdomen would have to make an appointment and leave the facility to receive this treatment. According to Tiffany, the facility could handle most medical issues they saw such as full wound care and supervised detox. The only service that was not available on site was a dentist, which was only available to transport once a week.

Since she worked here throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, they often had outbreaks of this infection. Living in a communal space did not allow for much isolation once infected and they were not allowed to have alcohol-based sanitizers due to the nature of the patients they had. The most they were able to do was disinfect surfaces often with alcohol-free sanitizer.

Suicide was also reported to have occurred more than once during her employment at this facility. The protocol for this was standard throughout the Department of Corrections. Security would have to cut the patient down

and medical staff would administer basic life support from there. If they were breathing and had a pulse, they would be placed in a cervical collar and monitored until emergency medical services arrived to transport them to the nearest hospital. If the suicide attempt included cutting, they would apply pressure and tourniquets until help arrived.

Mental health treatment was a priority in her facility. There were several mental health counselors working at a time, and all patients had to be evaluated in their first 48 hours at the facility. Depending on their evaluation, they may be referred to a psychiatrist who was on-site three days a week. There were also crisis counselors available if a patient was deemed to be in crisis and needed to be immediately seen. This treatment was especially important to the patients here because most of them had been committed against their will and forced to detox. While medications such as methadone, Subutex, and Vivitrol were administered to make them more comfortable, they still took a toll on the patients mentally.

She felt her patients were adequately supported with nursing care available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, and a provider on site from 7 am to 11 pm. While not an everyday occurrence, serious injuries besides suicide attempts did occur. Patients would fight each other or harm themselves, whether it be by accident or intentionally. She also reported that some patients would have heart attacks and be sent out to a hospital for a higher level of care. There was sometimes a wait for medical transport due to the isolated location of this facility, but it was rare that this wait would affect their medical outcome.

Tiffany's suggestions to improve her patients' medical care came down to the equipment that was provided to them. They were not provided cardiac monitors,

which can be very important for those experiencing detox or if they were having a medical emergency. In her words, "I think to make things better, newer equipment would make a huge difference".

Based on Tiffany's description, this facility sounds like they are using evidence-based interventions. They are using medication-assisted treatment and psychotherapy to manage substance use disorder in their patients. They are also providing proper medical treatment to those who need it.

Conclusion

Health issues for inmates are just like any other person who is not incarcerated and should be treated as such. Research into healthcare conditions for inmates revealed how many inmates receive substandard care compared to what is recommended by medical providers. In addition, tests are often conducted much less often than guidelines state since it is up to the discretion of the local government. Many inmates feel under-supported and that their concerns are not taken seriously, as detailed by the woman who gave birth alone in Denver County Jail and the personal testimony of the man who felt mistreated after a suicide attempt.

Similarly, to certain demographics having certain health issues more common among them, inmates are the same way. Conditions such as substance use disorder and sexually transmitted infections are more common among inmates due to environmental and behavioral factors. These patterns can also be seen in the interview with Tiffany O'Keefe. Inmates in the facility she worked commonly had the same physical and mental health issues due to these factors. Establishing an enforceable baseline of evidence-based interventions at a federal level for all

prisons to put into place could improve the health of this vulnerable population across the United States, not just in certain facilities.

Appendix 1:

Mortality Rate for Noncommunicable and Communicable Diseases in United States vs. Other Developed Countries

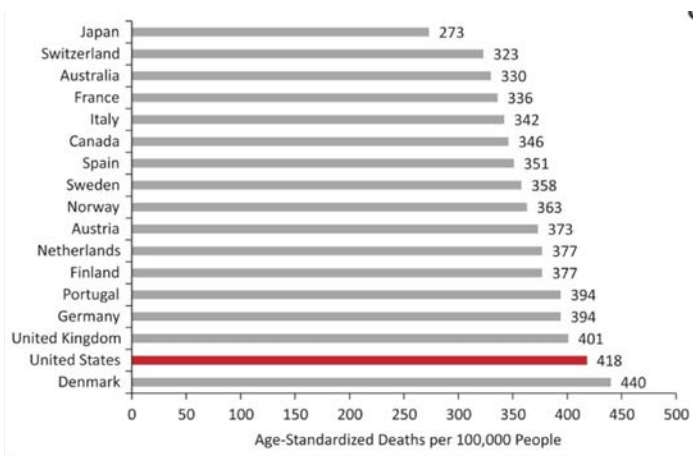


FIGURE 1-1 Mortality from noncommunicable diseases in 17 peer countries, 2008
SOURCE: Data from World Health Organization (2011a, Table 3).

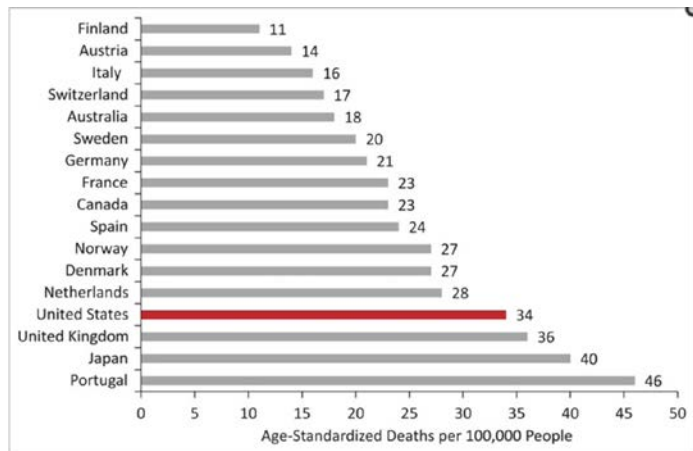
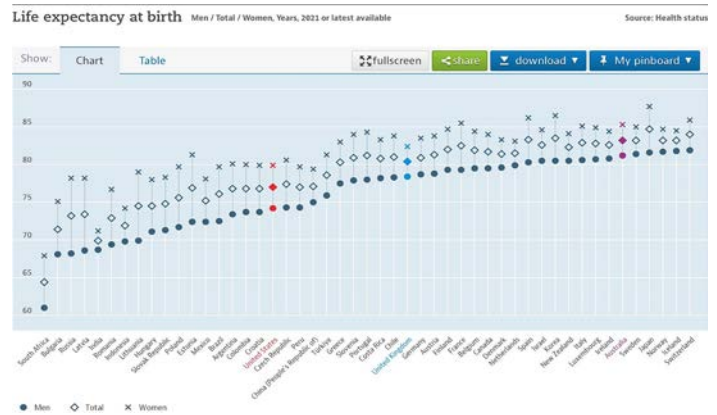


FIGURE 1-2 Mortality from communicable diseases in 17 peer countries, 2008
SOURCE: Data from World Health Organization (2011a, Table 3).

Note: From “U.S. Health in International Perspective: Shorter Lives, Poorer Health”, by SH. Woolf and L. Aron. *National Research Council and Institute of Medicine*. Copyright 2013 by National Academy of Sciences.¹⁰

Appendix 2:

OECD Life Expectancy at Birth, by Country 2021



Appendix 3:

1. What prison were you formerly employed at? How long did you work there?
2. What would your typical workday look like?
3. Discuss what health issues would you see most often.
4. What treatments were available to you? If treatments were not available, could you please provide an example of what you would do?
5. Please discuss the medical support available to inmates.
6. Describe the protocol for serious injuries. How often would this occur? How long does a hospital transfer take? In your opinion, what’s the impact on patient outcomes?
7. Describe what mental health treatment looks like in your former facility.

8. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in prisons, have you witnessed any attempts and please describe the procedures that follow these incidents.

9. Talk about the substance abuse disorder that you witnessed while working at the prison. Describe the treatment protocols.

10. Discuss what communicable diseases were common and what interventions were used to stop the spread of disease.

11. Discuss what chronic diseases besides substance use disorder were common. How were they treated?

12. Insulin and diabetic supplies are often difficult to obtain outside of prisons, please discuss how an inmate would be able to keep their diabetes under control while incarcerated.

13. What would be your recommendations to improve medical treatment there?

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JENNA HEALY

Public Health

Jenna Healy recently graduated with a Bachelor of Science with Departmental Honors in Public Health and a Biology minor. Mentored by Dr. Angela Bailey, Assistant Professor of Health, and Kinesiology, she completed her honors thesis during the 2022-2023 academic year. Growing up in the age of the internet and social media, Jenna was able to listen to the stories of former inmates from across the country and discuss their personal experiences with the prison healthcare systems. These stories inspired her to learn more about the issues with the prison healthcare system and to detail interventions that are currently available while offering suggestions to improve them. Jenna will be attending the University of Massachusetts, Amherst to earn her Master of Public Health in Epidemiology starting in Fall 2023.

The Role of Multi-Sensory Learning in Elementary Classrooms on Student Development

AMANDA ROMAINE

Abstract

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to examine the role of multi-sensory learning in the development of elementary-age students. Through the role of day-long classroom observations and educator interviews, firsthand information was gathered related to how this teaching style is presented within the classroom, and how this method is beneficial for students. Through this research and analysis, the enhancement of developmental domains can be seen through different academic disciplines. These interviews and observations also provided insight into resources for educators for the future implementation of this strategy in the classroom.

Keywords: multi-sensory learning, elementary-age students, developmental domains, academic disciplines

Multi-sensory learning is an approach to teaching students that engages them by activating more than one of their senses. This teaching and learning approach serves as a way for children to engage with the curriculum in a variety of ways, which can support retention and comprehension of the subject matter being presented. By allowing students to explore learning through different senses, they can understand what method is best suited for them, which can guide differentiated instruction in the classroom. This can assist in the overall academic

achievement and development of students. The role of multi-sensory learning on student development is being explored to analyze and examine the role in which this teaching style has in the classroom, and how learning through a variety of senses and methods can enhance their development in the cognitive, social-emotional, physical, communicative, and sensory domains.

Literature Review

ELA (English Language Arts)

Multi-sensory learning, reading achievement, and spelling achievement are often studied together. Recent research has been centered around the development and enhancement of test scores and overall retention and usage of reading, spelling, and writing skills. Schlesinger and Schlesinger (2017) found that multi-sensory teaching methods allowed for better letter-naming skills and sound production, reading, and spelling when student work was compared to those who did not receive this method of instruction. A sensory-rich classroom setting in which multi-sensory learning is utilized allows for the language and communication skills of the students to flourish and develop, increasing their overall retention of grammar rules and improving their phrasing while they speak (Suanda et al., 2016). Measures have also shown

that this multi-sensory learning environment increases the test scores of students' grapheme-to-phoneme correspondence (Kast et al., 2011). Labat and colleagues (2015) discovered that teaching the alphabetic principle while engaging multiple senses allowed for an increase in test scores, as well as better encoding of the principle after testing.

Math

It is common for educators to utilize manipulatives for a hands-on approach to teaching math concepts to elementary school students. Research within the past twenty years has shifted towards the infusion of manipulatives that are both physically present in the classroom, and the use of manipulatives that are on technological platforms. These varying platforms for manipulatives are centered around the engagement of students, as well as ensuring mastery and standards are met in the classroom. Rains and colleagues (2008) found that virtual and physical manipulatives in a mathematics lesson produce greater achievement of mathematical concepts in elementary students compared to the students who did not receive this multi-sensory approach in both physical and virtual manipulatives. The rise of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) and STEAM (same as STEM but with Art included) curricula began in 2001, and this infusion of hands-on lessons and activities allows students to become more engaged in these subject materials. Teachers who used a STEAM curriculum were able to utilize virtual reality and infusion of technology to teach their students, and it was found that students were more likely to meet lesson outcomes and standards due to this integration of multi-sensory engagement (Taljaard, 2016).

Technology

Being able to use technology in the classroom allows for the enhancement of the learning experience through a multi-sensory approach and allows for pieces of technology to promote relaxation, communication, and relationships among students and teachers in the classroom. Upon comparing the learning of blending and segmenting words on iPads or physical cards, it was found that both modalities provide adequate comprehension of the material and are both sufficient outlets for multi-sensory learning for second-grade students (Lee, 2016). Touch technology and haptic-based software allowed students to learn about the characteristics of different planets using visuals and auditory feedback from the devices to enhance their comprehension of the characteristics (Darrah, 2012). Especially during the pandemic, virtual learning has become increasingly prominent for students of all ages. Pacheco-Guffrey (2020) found that the use of apps such as Google Tour, Google Maps, and Google Art and Culture: Hidden World can be beneficial to providing virtual field trips for students that give them experiences of the world around them, as well as engage them in a fun and exciting platform that captivates them and encourages their desire to learn.

Science

When teaching concepts in science, it can be beneficial to utilize a hands-on approach for elementary students. When students were engaged in teaching concepts about earth and space in a multi-sensory approach, it was found that students scored significantly better on a posttest, their understanding of these concepts increased, and the rate of misconceptions about earth and space decreased (Bulunuz & Jarrett,

2009). The science curriculum often relies on the use of experiments based on hypotheses and theories that allow elementary students to learn more about the scientific world that surrounds them. Kok Siang and colleagues (2013) found that science experiments in the classroom allow students to work with the curriculum hands-on, as well as practice skills centered around discussion, responding, and reflecting on the coursework. Bevans and colleagues (2012) found that fifth-grade students who took a field trip to a farm to learn about scientific concepts such as compost, plant parts, and produce were able to touch and harvest their vegetables, allowing them to learn about the food around them, which enhanced their understanding of these scientific concepts. Hettwer (2011) found that by tasting vegetables, students were able to draw connections to scientific concepts such as the water cycle and the movement of water through different soil and rock layers.

Learning Disabilities

Multi-sensory learning has been a standard component in classrooms that contain children with learning disabilities (Ho, 2001). By stimulating senses and reinforcing memory through scaffolding and interactive media devices, students with a language or processing disorder could enhance their speaking, reading, and writing capacities and their ability to express and emote (Gkeka et al., 2020). For students with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities (PIMD), it was found that they were able to enhance their sensory processing and contextual understanding following the intervention of the multi-sensory teaching approach (van der Putten et al., 2011). Fine (2016) discovered that students who were on a 504 or IEP benefited from using occupational therapy

equipment such as a trampoline, squeeze machine, swings, or tactile boxes, as it promoted fewer behavior outbreaks, and enhanced their focus and engagement.

Educators

Education coursework is a prerequisite to getting a teaching license in the United States (US). Throughout this coursework, engaging in lessons that promote awareness and understanding of multi-sensory learning within a classroom allows them to see the significance firsthand and promote the use of this teaching strategy, while also working to eliminate false beliefs and knowledge and provide a strong foundation that these educators can then apply to their classroom. Stephenson and Carter (2011) found through teacher interviews that a multi-sensory intervention allows educators to monitor and evaluate the progress of their students effectively and efficiently. Teachers who implement a multi-sensory teaching style were able to find the preferred method and modality of their classes, and this allowed teachers to plan and prepare lessons and classroom activities based on the information they gathered (van der Putten et al., 2011). When the staff at elementary schools were trained in multi-sensory teaching and storytelling, they found that they felt prepared and well-equipped to work with students, both with and without learning disabilities (Penne et al., 2012). Preece and Zhao (2015), discovered that the use of multi-sensory storytelling and teaching allowed teachers to have a better grasp on curriculum standards and goals, as well as enhance the design and delivery of their lessons for their classes.

Methods

Introduction

This section delineates the process by which the research was conducted. Throughout this methods section, the subsections provide information on a) the participants, b) the data collection procedures and timelines, and c) the analysis procedure of the data.

Participants

To gather participants, emails were sent to every elementary educator in four school districts in Southeastern Massachusetts- over 300 teachers in total. These emails were gathered through the staff directories located on the school district's website. Of these four districts, three districts responded, which will be referred to as districts A, B, or C to keep the anonymity of the participants. All the demographics of these districts were found on Massachusetts School and District Profiles.

District A

Massachusetts School and District Profiles (n.d.) describe district A as a public school district with 2,376 students, serving preschool through 12th grade. There are 5 schools in this district, 3 of which are elementary schools. The school in which I did my research district A has 275 students, with 86.5% of the students being white. This schoolhouses students from kindergarten through third grade. Within this population, 51.6% are high-needs students, 37.5% of students come from low-income families, and 24.4% of students have some sort of disability. In this school, 2.5% of students have English not be their first language, and 2.5% of students are English language learners.

District B

Massachusetts School and District Profiles (n.d.) describe district B as a public school district with 2,459 students, serving students ranging from preschool through 12th grade. There are 5 schools in this district, 3 of which are elementary schools. The school in which I did my research in District B has 345 students, and 71.3% of these students are white. In this school, 40.6% of the students are high-needs students, 27.8% come from low-income families, and 17.7% of students have some sort of disability. 11.6% of the students in this school have a first language that is not English, and 5.2% of the students are English language learners.

District C

Massachusetts School and District Profiles (n.d.) describe district C as a public school district with 3,437 students, serving preschool through 12th grade. There are 5 school districts in this district, of which 2 are elementary schools. The school in District C where I did my research has 718 students, with 76.5% of the students being white. This school hosts students who are in preschool through second grade. In this school, 13.6% of the students have some sort of disability, 23.4% of students come from low-income families, and 33.6% of students have high needs. In this population, 7.2% of the students have a first language that is not English, and 4.7% of the students are English language learners.

Data Collection Procedures

Following the initial review of previous literature regarding development and multi-sensory learning, emails to educators were sent inviting them to take part in the study. Ten teachers responded, however, five were

selected for the study. These five educators were chosen to ensure five different grade levels and classroom types were observed, as well as drawn across the three different school districts. Once consent from the educator was received, a parental consent letter for the students was sent to the educator so the students could bring it home for their parents or guardian. Once consent was received, interviews and observations with the educator and their classroom were scheduled. Both the interview and observation protocol were crafted by me to cater to the significance of multi-sensory learning in the classroom and the role this plays in students' development in different domains. The interview and observation protocol content is discussed in the results section. Following the data collection, the data that were gathered from these classrooms were compiled and analyzed. Information on this analysis of the protocols is discussed in a subsequent section.

Data Analysis Procedure

To begin the analysis process, all the interview response questions were compiled into a single document, having each teacher being a designated color. After transferring and color-coding this data, themes, and similarities within each of the questions were extracted, picking out commonalities, as well as ideas that may overlap with one another. Also, responses that may stray from the patterns extracted were noted, as well as questions with minimal or no similarity across the respondents to identify factors that led to outliers or inconsistent data.

After working through the interview questions, a similar procedure to the observation protocol was done. The observations were color-coded and compiled onto a

single document, just as was done with the interviews. Then, themes and similarities among the observations were picked out. Along with the similarities, information that strayed from the patterns was taken note of to identify outliers within the data set.

Results

Introduction

In this section, the a) interview protocol and b) observation protocol was examined and analyzed. Each protocol analysis had the collected data set synthesized, and commonalities and themes were extracted among the answers or observations. This allowed for insight into the role of multi-sensory learning within the classroom and the role it plays in the domains of development for elementary-age students.

Observation Data Analysis

Within the five classrooms, I observed that $\frac{3}{5}$ of the classrooms had 4 instances of multi-sensory learning. One of the other classrooms had 5 cases, which was very close to the typical number of instances I observed; however, the final classroom had 7 cases, which was far different from the other classrooms. The information for the observation compiled data can be seen in Table 1, which provides a breakdown of the frequencies of academic subjects and developmental domains.

As seen in Table 1, the activation of the visual sense was the most common of the four senses being observed (visual, haptic, kinesthetic, and auditory). Despite this similarity, the quantity in which this sense was activated varied. None of the classrooms had the same number of activations, as they ranged from being activated between three to nine times. Two of

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5
Number of times multi-sensory learning was recognized	4	7	4	5	4
Sense(s) that were most frequently activated	Visual (8) Haptic (8) Auditory (8)	Visual (6)	Visual (3) Kinesthetic (3)	Visual (9)	Visual (5)
Sense(s) that were activated least frequently	Kinesthetic (0)	Kinesthetic (3)	Auditory (2) Haptic (2)	Kinesthetic (1)	Kinesthetic (1)
Academic subject(s) that used multi-sensory learning most frequently	Math (4)	ELA (3)	ELA (2)	ELA (3)	ELA (2)
Academic subject(s) that used multi-sensory learning least frequently	All other subjects; only saw the math specialist	Math (1)	Math (1)	Math (2)	Math (1) History (1)
The domain(s) of development that were activated	Cognitive (4) Sensory (4)	Cognitive (6) Sensory (4) Physical (4) Communication (6) Social-emotional (2)	Cognitive (3) Sensory (2) Physical (4) Communication (2) Social-emotional (1)	Cognitive (10) Sensory (3) Physical (3) Communication (1) Social-emotional (3)	Cognitive (5) Sensory (3) Physical (3) Communication (1) Social-emotional (2)

Table 1: Compiled Observation Data.

these classrooms had more than one sense being most frequently activated. Classroom 1 had visual, auditory, and haptic all activated 8 times, and classroom 3 had visual and kinesthetic activated 3 times each.

The sense that was activated the least frequently

of the four was kinesthetic. Of the five classrooms, 4 of them activated the kinesthetic sense the least. Classroom 3 had kinesthetic be one of the most activated senses, as this and visual were each activated three times. This classroom had auditory and tactile be the least active,

being observed two times.

In $\frac{4}{5}$ of the classrooms, ELA was the most frequent academic subject in which multi-sensory learning was used. Of these four classrooms, two of them had two ELA activities, and the other two had three ELA activities. Classroom 1 was the math specialist, so this classroom was an outlier in this piece of the observation, as this teacher only had math activities.

Besides classroom 1, all the other classrooms had math as the least frequent academic subject used in the classroom. Of the four classrooms that had math seen the least, three of them had one math activity, and the last had two math activities. Classroom 5 had one history activity, and this was the only classroom in which history was observed.

Table 2 describes the frequency of the different developmental domains within the classroom. This provided an insight into the domains that were most prominent, as well as least prominent within the five classrooms.

activated 14 times. The communication domain was the fourth most prominent domain, being activated 10 times. The domain that was activated the least was the social-emotional developmental domain, being activated eight times.

Interview Data Analysis

For the five sections of the interview, there were patterns visible in each section across the five educators. This first section of the interview gave insight into classroom demographics and the typical structure of the classroom.

Through this series of questions, it was found that 3 of the 5 classrooms had 21 students in their classroom. In all five classrooms, the students receive speech therapy, and in most of the classrooms, the students receive occupational therapy. Many classrooms have students on educational plans, and a few of the classrooms have students who go to counseling services. All the teachers said that they use a variety of different

Cognitive	Sensory	Physical	Communication	Social-Emotional
28	16	14	10	8

Table 2: Frequency of Each Developmental Domain

As can be seen in Table 2, of the developmental domains (cognitive, social-emotional, sensory, physical, and communication), the cognitive domain had the highest frequency, being observed 28 times across the five classrooms. The second most prominent domain was the sensory domain, being observed 16 times. The third most prominent domain was the physical domain, being

methods for their students, and some of the most common strategies that were mentioned were using hands-on manipulatives, whiteboards, or working in small groups. 4 of the 5 teachers agreed that having whole group lectures and simply having students listen to them talk has been the least effective strategy for their students. The teacher from classroom 2 stated that in whole group

lectures, “[the student’s] attention does not last long enough, especially because they are all at different paces and levels”.

The second section of the interview was centered around personal teaching strategies and philosophies. It was found that 4 of the 5 teachers agreed that the most effective method varies depending on the lesson they are teaching or the student they are working with, and the one teacher who specified that they believe using manipulatives was the best approach was the math specialist. This teacher stated that “using the CRA (Concrete Representational Abstract) approach ensures that students can understand difficult concepts”. All the teachers believe that encouraging students to feel and work through their emotions, as well as allowing them to share stories about their lives and their families has been an effective tool in fostering relationships. 3 of these 5 teachers work to integrate students who are in special education programs with their general education counterparts, whether that be during a lesson or when working with other students. The other two classes had different methods of integration such as small group work and remembering the students' given accommodations. Across the five classrooms, the most common pieces of technology that were in classrooms were Chromebooks or laptops ($\frac{4}{5}$), smart boards or Promethean boards ($\frac{4}{5}$), or iPads ($\frac{2}{5}$). The only classroom teacher that did not use technology was the math specialist, as they focused more on concrete manipulatives due to the short nature of their time with students. Three of these teachers believe that having high expectations for their students, as well as encouraging and promoting positive behavior is effective in managing class behavior. Two of the educators specified that their behavior management strategy varies

depending on the students they are working with. In class 5, the teacher stated that they “implement various behavior management strategies that specifically relate to the needs of their students”.

Next, educators were asked about the developmental patterns and strategies that they see and implement in their classrooms. The educators each explained that they use a different method to plan, therefore showcasing no commonality within this question. Two of these teachers believe that all the domains are important in childhood development. Still, all the educators touched upon the cognitive and social-emotional domains in their responses. Two of these teachers believe that all the domains can be achieved, and two of them emphasized that the physical domain can be difficult to address due to the time and space constraints of a classroom. The fifth teacher expressed the sensory domain as being the hardest to work towards due to the different sensory needs of children in the classroom. 4 of these 5 teachers found that their time in college focused more on historical theories and practices of educational beliefs rather than practical teaching strategies, and therefore their experiences are somewhat different than what they have experienced in the field.

The educators were then interviewed on the teaching and learning strategy of multi-sensory learning and the role in which this style plays in their classroom. All five of these teachers explained that they knew that multi-sensory learning relates to engaging senses using hands-on approaches, as well as using visuals and sensory input to assist in learning. Similarly, all these teachers found that during their time in school, if this method was talked about at all, it was during their time getting their master’s degrees. Three of the educators discussed that they used

tactile pieces for sensory learning within their classrooms. The other two educators expressed that they worked to target more than one sense in their classroom, as every student has different needs. $\frac{4}{5}$ of the teachers believe that this method of teaching could be used as a behavior management strategy because it keeps the students engaged and interested in their learning, and the fifth educator explained that they feel this method supports students in their learning and prevents them from getting overwhelmed or angry at the work they are completing. As mentioned in the behavior management question, $\frac{4}{5}$ of the teachers feel as though this method keeps students engaged, as well as enhances their cognition and review of elements of their learning. In class 4, the teacher stated that “since students are more engaged with the material, they are less likely to misbehave”. For the downsides of this method, each teacher had a different answer, however, all the educators only came up with one reason after reflecting on the method.

Finally, the educators were asked about their thoughts regarding the use of multi-sensory learning as a developmental tool within the classroom. Through these questions, it was found that $\frac{4}{5}$ of the educators believed that most, if not all, of the domains of development, can be targeted using multi-sensory learning. The fifth educator centered their response around the social-emotional, cognitive, and sensory domains due to their classroom dynamic and structure. All the teachers believe that this method keeps their students engaged and allows for the presentation of the curriculum in a variety of different ways that help students remember and understand the material. $\frac{2}{5}$ of the teachers believe that no domain cannot be addressed in the classroom. Two other educators expressed different ways this method could

hinder development, such as this method not being as applicable as students get older, and one said that it could hinder learning if the student is not receptive to change or different presentation of course material. $\frac{3}{5}$ of the educators explained that they use this method in math and ELA lessons, and the other two highlighted that they use it to teach strategies and skills to their students that they can use outside of the classroom. All five of these teachers expressed that they are in favor and support of this type of teaching and learning.

The findings and implications of the study's results are discussed in the following section.

Discussion

Introduction

This section highlights the a) implications of the research, b) diminishing biases, limitations, and future research, and c) main recommendations for educators. These implications were drawn from the data that was collected and analyzed throughout the study. The patterns and information allow for analysis of the role of multi-sensory learning on the developmental domains of elementary-age students and allow for future research and recommendations to be addressed.

Findings and Implications

Through the observation and interview protocols of this study, the role of multi-sensory learning within student development was examined. The observations and interviews that were conducted allowed for the different domains of development to be measured and analyzed and gave insight into the prominence and significance of these domains during a crucial period of development.

The interview protocol allowed insight into the demographics, teaching styles, and developmental milestones which elementary educators work to enhance in their classrooms. The findings through these interviews showed patterns and similarities among teachers. These findings supported the research question because teachers across the board supported the use of multi-sensory learning and advocated for this teaching method to enhance the domains of development in their students. These teachers struggled to find many issues or hindrances that can be caused by using multi-sensory learning and provided strong evidence for the importance of engaging the senses in the learning process.

The observation protocol showcased patterns and data that demonstrated the variety of approaches in which this teaching style could be implemented, as well as provided information related to the frequency of different developmental domains and academic subjects that were activated and stimulated.

Despite every educator activating domains and using this teaching style, from the data that was collected, the math specialist was the outlier in the data set due to the nature of their role in the classroom. Regardless of being an outlier in their data, this educator still provided valuable insight into how an elementary specialist can utilize multi-sensory learning and foster the growth of different developmental and academic domains.

These findings provide beneficial information and resources that can apply to parents, educators, administrators, or any person working with elementary-age students. The research allows educators to see the benefit of using this multi-sensory learning in their classroom, as well as understand different approaches and platforms in which they can utilize this teaching and

learning method. From an administrative standpoint, understanding the significance and benefits of this teaching style can encourage the administration to choose a curriculum that infuses multi-sensory practices as a part of the typical classroom routine and provides their teachers with proper training and resources to execute this teaching method. Anyone working with elementary students can benefit from understanding and learning about this teaching model because they can get a deeper understanding of the content which the child is learning throughout the school day, as well as how they are learning it, and could also allow for infusion of practice activities at home that will engage multiple senses to enrich the learning outside of the classroom.

Diminishing Bias, Limitations, and Future Research

Within this study, there were limitations in terms of the sample that was gathered, as well as biases that were diminished due to not letting them impact the research.

For this study, there was a small sample size due to the time constraint of completing this research study in one semester. Having only 5 educators due to this constraint, grades 4, 5, and 6 were not able to be interviewed and observed, as well as any other type of specialist besides math. The small sample size and limited demographics could encourage future research to branch out to larger sample sizes or a more diverse population. Future research with more diverse populations in different regions could provide valuable information regarding the role multi-sensory learning plays in the role of elementary students' development. Future research could work to be geared towards these upper elementary grades as well as different specialists such as a reading specialist or a speech-language pathologist.

A potential bias that was eliminated within this study was my familiarity with District A. I am an alumnus of this school district and have a parent who works in the district as well. With that, I live and have grown up surrounding the other districts, as these districts are all neighboring one another. Although this could have served as a bias, I did not allow my previous knowledge of this school district to interfere with the protocol which I followed.

Main Recommendations for Educators

The main takeaways and recommendations from this study are related to the implications and practice of this teaching method. Below is a brief bulleted list of recommendations for educators from the takeaways of this study.

- Do not be afraid to experiment to find out what works for your class and what does not, as not every method of learning is the same for every child.
- Allow students to reuse manipulatives or tactile pieces that they use for learning, as when students were already familiar with the materials, they understood how to use them and could apply these pieces to this new lesson.
- Communicate with fellow teachers or staff regarding implementation, as this ensures teachers can collaborate on a lesson and combine their ideas to make it more diverse and engage more senses than if they had planned the lesson on their own.
- Evaluate your classroom to see what your students need, because each classroom and each student has their own needs and are at different

places and levels for their academic needs, as well as their different developmental stages.

These recommendations and strategies can allow educators to practice multi-sensory teaching effectively and confidently within their classroom to enhance the developmental and academic domains of their students to foster a rich environment for learning and growing.

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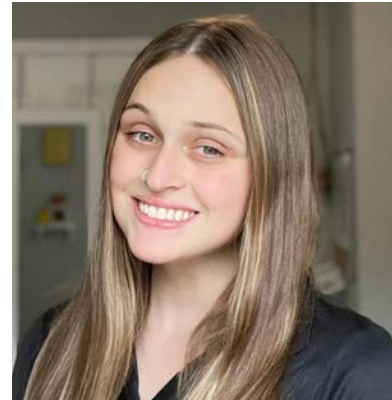
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Multilingual Students' Language Learning in U.S. Classrooms

MONIQUE SANTOS

Abstract

Over time, the United States education system has shown inequality within its teaching methods, particularly in English classrooms in grades K-12. Despite the increase in diversity and English language learners in public schools, multicultural students have personally endured various forms of oppression in classrooms. This research examined classroom settings from the perspectives of people who experienced K-12 education in both their birth country of Brazil and the United States. This study also included research from library databases, online sources, and writings by scholars who have argued for critical pedagogy. The aim was to provide an enhanced understanding of the characteristics of the United States educational system specifically within K-12 English classrooms. Although everyone's circumstances and environments are different, prejudice and ignorance toward other cultures and languages are quite similar and very present throughout the education system. With changing demographics of students, it is important to be aware of our diverse classrooms and who we are teaching in order to prepare our children to think critically in a complex world. In an attempt to find ways to create an improved and more inclusive learning environment for everyone, this examination focused on the following

questions: how language acquisition impacts learning, how we learn what we learn, and what can be changed in the classroom.

Definitions

Critical Pedagogy: an outlook on education that is meant to encourage students to question and criticize the power structure around them.

English Language Learner (ELs): typically, a student whose first language is not English, therefore, they are unable to communicate and understand English effectively until they learn it.

Multicultural: refers to someone or something that has various cultures, ethnicities, and nationalities involved.

Language Acquisition: the way that humans obtain the ability to interpret, understand, and use language in their everyday lives to communicate with words, sentences, and stories.

Introduction

In the United States of America, a country where there is no official language, those who are bilingual or multilingual deal with being forced to learn English with little to no sympathy for the difficulties this type of learning can be. These people are the product

of oppression in a country where pedagogy is aimed towards a specific type of person, which happens to be based on a white, heterosexual patriarchal system. In institutions such as schools, this specific group has the ability to control which beliefs, ideologies, values, and practices to use; therefore, the dominant culture persists and leads the subordinate cultures to an oppressive state. In the United States K-12 English Language Arts (ELA) classrooms specifically, multicultural students experience themes of oppression due to being English language learners (ELLs) rather than being native English speakers. This research provides first-hand experiences from Brazilian and American-educated people. The three Brazilian/American interviewees (participants A-C) answered questions pertaining to the comparison of their learning experiences in both Brazil and the United States of America. From the series of questions asked, the differences in experience with both language learning and classroom environment, the effects teachers caused, and the possible changes and improvements wished upon the American education system became clearer. Although students are what makes a classroom and are the cause of the education system's existence, educators tend to not cater to the student's needs and issues, especially minorities such as those for whom English is their second language. However, there are plenty of critical theories and ideologies that propose new, challenging, and thought-provoking ways to improve the USA's education system. Scholars such as Paulo Freire, Antonia Darder, and Geneva Gay administer a significant and challenging point of view to the norms that are set in place in US schools. These scholars challenge those in power, supply alternative concepts, and teaching styles, and inform their readers of the historic and current trends in the American

education system, specifically aiming their attention toward language acquisition. This type of information provided by scholars, students with first-hand experience, and other sources can make people more aware of what is being taught in the classroom, and how the dominant culture has been making the subordinate culture learn. Also, there are suggestions for what we can change through the help of the educators and students working together. Due to the powerful nature of language and how it is essential to human development, cultural beliefs, practices, and more, it is especially important to how these pedagogical theories can be incorporated in the classroom. Since language has a significant impact on our learning, the complexity of language needs a safe space for monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual students in the United States English language learning classrooms.

How Language Acquisition Impacts Learning

Despite how complex language can be, especially with there being so many kinds, ranging from Chinese to German to Portuguese to sign language to English and more, it is quite critical and valuable to our lives. One of the ways in which students can observe, interpret, and understand language is through the education system. An education system has an obligation to prepare students for their future selves in the “real world.” In the USA, English is the predominant language of schooling, even though the USA has never adopted an official language. Without English, the ability to converse with impactful dialogue and communication will be more difficult in the “real world” of the U.S. and in many other countries where English has exerted its hegemony. Starting from kindergarten, English classrooms in the U.S. are supposed to provide students with the information that

will allow them to be able to understand, interpret, and communicate their ideas, beliefs, and themselves through the use of writing, reading, dialogue, and other forms of communication.

Language is much more than just a form of communication, it is also a way for children to interact and understand concepts, themselves, and others on a deeper level. Language paves the way for “factual knowledge, social skills, moral development, or physical achievement” (Stephens). Without language, then there would be a lack of thoughts and ideas because language creates room for critical thinking skills due to its need for structure. As Paulo Freire writes in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, “Language cannot exist without thought and it cannot exist without a structure” (96). Besides language, another element of life and society that involves structure is culture, and culture needs language because humans need language. The connection between language and culture is quite significant and clear. They both are associated with how we interact with others, but culture is mostly based on traditions and family principles and then language helps us turn those aspects of our culture into behaviors. It is just as important to be aware of the ever-changing aspects of culture and language as it is important to learn about these parts of life. Both language and culture influence who we are, which makes it a significant factor in a classroom where students are developing physically and socially.

Since language and culture are significant, learning in a classroom setting where there is a diverse set of students in the most immigrated country is just as critical. According to Freire, the current state of education is suffering from narration sickness. This is when the teacher is the narrator, also known as the person in

complete control of the classroom, and leaves little to no room for students to have their voices heard. With this educational tactic, the teacher’s task is to “fill the students with the contents of [their] narration” (72), and then the students are expected to memorize the information given and not question it. However, not all teachers have this harmful mindset, and throughout time, it has been known that almost everyone has had a positive experience with a teacher who left an impactful mark on their life. Without this positive impact of the teachers from many educational experiences, including my participant’s experiences, they would likely not be where they are today with the amount of success and knowledge they have. Although some of these participants turned out lucky with parts of their educational experience, not every multicultural student gets those types of opportunities. Additionally, when asking the participants about the kind of impact their teachers had on their learning experience with English, each participant only named one to two teachers in their whole educational experience. Participant A’s and B’s teachers were from grades 4 and 6, whereas participant C’s teacher was from college but that is because they came to the States during their 20s. Some other stories of teacher experiences are shown throughout *Teaching Writing through the Immigrant Story* by Ostman, Tinberg, and Martinez. These stories prove that the persistent, dominant narrative leaves a negative view on immigrants by causing people to believe immigrants lack knowledge and the type of skills that would make them be seen as successful in the eyes of the dominant culture in the USA’s society. These immigrant stories all have very similar experiences in the fact that Hispanic immigrants are labeled as “illegal,” people who have come to “take American jobs” and “to change [American] language

and culture” (Ostman 47). This shows that the view on immigrants and others who are different from the dominant culture are viewed negatively and this is due to the fear of potential change towards the dominant culture no longer being in power. However, since critical thinking and care for different people and cultures are important to consider when it comes to comprehending and communicating with those around us, then the US’s education system should be changed accordingly. If these types of changes occur to the curriculum standards, then these negative views on immigrants will eventually change for the better.

How We Learn What We Learn

Literacy is an essential practice that is used in everyday English classrooms. The purpose of teaching literacy is to provide students with the ability to communicate well, improve their capacity to analyze situations and establish a deeper understanding of life in general. Reading and writing are just, if not more important than math, science, and other classes taught in typical public K-12 classrooms due to how they can also assist students with these other subjects and in life. However, not only does the way these educational aspects are learned differ between each student, but the way that reading and writing are taught shows how the U.S. education system aims its attention and care toward a privileged and often monolingual group of people. Therefore, the educational experience may lead to a divided classroom filled with advantaged and disadvantaged students. Despite there being no national curriculum in the United States, school districts still have requirements, recommendations, and a standard curriculum to be met. In other words, common core standards differ with each state having a different

curriculum based on the state’s governmental standards. All these standards vary depending on needs, location, environment, historical aspects, etc. For instance, students who live closer to the Mexican border will have more students who are either from Mexico or have ancestry from there, therefore, the historical aspects learned in those classrooms will differ from students in different areas of the states. We should be taught the local histories, but it’s not always done. In a growing number of states, if conservatives have their ways, no diversity would be taught at all. In fact, some school districts have banned teaching Mexican American history, such as the schools in Arizona, where “a judge has called the studies “biased, political, and emotionally charged” (Chen). While aspects of reading and writing are taught throughout the K-12 experience with the practice of spelling, grammar, reading, communication, analyzation, writing, and standardized tests that review the students’ skills, most curricula are focused on the students from the dominant culture. In fact, the problems that Latinos/Hispanics face in the classrooms in the South are all too common and one of the issues is due to the “lack of instructors that are trained in bilingual education” (Ostman 53).

Despite being known as one of the countries with a better educational system, the United States of America can still learn a thing or two from other countries and the way they instruct their students. Also, the United States is known for having more immigrants than any other country, yet “children do not learn about their environment from the perspective of their own reality but from the white wealthy view” (Darder 366). Although the USA is the most immigrated country, there are plenty of other countries where immigrants are part of the population such as Brazil. However, Brazil’s literacy rates compared to USA’s

are better based on recent studies from Zauderer and Global Data. In fact, the literacy statistics in Brazil reached 99.2 percent in 2021, whereas on average, U.S. adults are 79 percent literate. This means that more Brazilian citizens understand short, simple statements compared to Americans. Additionally, Brazil is just as diverse in race and multilingual as the USA is. Despite these statistics, with some upgrades, slowly but surely the literacy rate in the USA. can be better. The three interviewed participants in my study were from Brazil and moved to the United States during different parts of their lives. They all had interesting points to make about what they believe to be different in Brazilian education compared to American schools. During my interview process, participants A and B both believed that the learning style in Brazil is a bit more advanced than American education. According to the participants and the authors of "Study in Brazil: Language & Culture," it is compulsory for Brazilian students to learn English, and learning English is becoming more and more common. Younger Brazilians come to know and understand the basics of English, despite them not being fluent. Although English is learned among Brazilian students, it is not often spoken outside of the classroom. Nonetheless, Brazil is becoming more and more bilingual, further catching up with the times and changes in the levels of diversity.

Another reason why my participants believe Brazil is a bit more advanced is due to the number of reading materials and how there are reading sources from other countries, whereas "America acts like they're the center of the world" (Participants A & B). In these participants' experiences, they noticed that the American textbooks focused on the white patriarchic view rather than realizing and understanding that their classrooms

are full of diverse students who need and want exposure to their and other cultures in their learning experience. On the contrary, Brazilian teaching methods include the teachers listening to their students' want and they have "multimedia materials and communication systems [where their] courses always include a wide range of social and cultural aspects" (BrazilLink).

Teachers are known to be influential in many aspects of a student's life, especially involving their education and future goals, but some of the curriculum requirements can restrict how the teacher performs further impacting a student's learning abilities, especially multilingual students. As mentioned earlier in this research, when asking the interviewed participants about the impact their teachers had on their learning experience, all three had at least one teacher they encountered that positively affected their learning experience with English. For instance, participant B remembered at least two good teachers that used fun, creative methods to apply proper usage of language: one middle school teacher and the other was a high school. These creative methods included music and good, entertaining books, which helped keep the students, especially participant B intrigued. This is just an example of how many people have had an influential teacher in their life. Statistics prove that "88% of people say a teacher had a significant, positive impact on their life" (Tornio). Regardless of this fact, there are still some struggles for multilingual students. The lack of being able to see themselves in the enforced curriculum has been an issue historically and currently. Contrary to some popular beliefs, students learn better through connection than just taking notes. It is important to recognize the prior knowledge of students. "Students learn by connecting new knowledge with knowledge and

concepts that they already know” (“How Students Learn”). Therefore, multilingual students with distinct cultural backgrounds, traditions, beliefs, etc. can learn better by being able to connect some of their cultural differences to the concepts being learned in a classroom and they can offer some of that knowledge to teachers and often students. Darder mentions that success should not be considered an individual responsibility, which is a view that the hierarchical structure in America has. Students, teachers, parents, and others are responsible for working together to create a more accessible and welcoming classroom.

What We Can Change in The Classroom

While the United States education system has been around for a long time, there is plenty of room for more changes and improvements. One of the most recent factors is the Common Core Standards, which took place around 2009 and was created to enhance the student learning experience and prepare students for their future college and career lives. This curriculum includes the use of certain textbooks, teaching materials and manuals, resources, and standardized tests. With the English Language Arts standards in particular, the standards to be met involve the student being able to write about the topics that they are reading. During this time, when the curriculum was changing and developing, so was the number of English language learners (ELs) in the K-12 classrooms. In fact, from 2009-10- and 2014-15-time frame, there was an increase in English language learners “in more than half of the states” (“Our Nation's English Learners”). Since this time, ELs represent 10 percent of students in K-12 classrooms. Although most of these ELs consist of Hispanic and Latino heritage,

there are around 400 different languages present in the United States public schools, ranging from German to Portuguese to Arabic to Chinese and many more (“Our Nation's English Learners”). This leaves the question, what are the possible changes that can be made in the classroom for our diverse, multilingual students to be able to flourish just as well as native English speakers?

There are many approaches that a teacher can take in the classroom in order to connect with their students and to create a better learning environment for not only the student but also the teacher. Scholars such as Paulo Freire highlight the importance of communication between teachers and students. If teachers take on a more committed involvement early on and forward, then positive changes can take place. One of the ways for a teacher to practice this is by remembering what it was like when they were a student. Teachers need to learn from their students to connect with them on a deeper and more meaningful level. For a teacher to connect with their student in a more purposeful way, they should understand the value of communication and dialect by understanding cultural and linguistic differences. When interviewing multicultural, bilingual family members, I noticed some common traits between the two participants that arrived in the USA at an earlier age. For instance, they both attended Catholic and public schools at some point in their lives. Although these two types of schools were and still are distinct in their teaching habits and methods, there is a common practice, which is the dedicated focus on math and science subjects. This attention on math and science has led both participants to believe that English language arts is undervalued in American schools.

Despite the focus on math and science subjects, participants A and B were not discouraged by the United

States education system, but they still believe there are needed improvements and changes needed in K-12 English classes. When asked what improvements and changes they would like to see, their answers centered on the idea of teachers having more dedicated attention to writing and reading, such as reading aloud and in front of others so students can feel more comfortable with the language, using new, learned terms in a sentence, and practicing more writing. Changes like this can help students feel safer and not fear ridicule for not being able to understand and or speak as well as their English native speaking peers. Additionally, scholars such as Joe Kincheloe, who also uses Paulo Freire's ideas and other scholars in their research, offer the concept of critical pedagogy, which concerns itself with "transforming oppressive relations of power in a variety of domains that lead to human oppression" (Kincheloe 45), also known as challenging the norm and modifying the curricula in a way that "is aware of many different perspectives" (Kincheloe 173). If this concept, along with "other diverse ways of seeing and making meaning" (Kincheloe 172), is used in schools, then students and teachers alike will benefit from the meaningful, significant, newfound knowledge and skills that they will gain.

Communication holds a lot of power and meaning, but not when that communication is only one-sided, where the teacher is the only one allowed to communicate and the students are made to be quiet and compliant. Paulo Freire agrees when he states, "Only through communication can human life hold meaning" (Freire 77). Also, interactive communication allows room for critical thinking. Communication opens doors, and opportunities for love, humility, hope, and other kinds of positive aspects, therefore, making it necessary for

a classroom setting. One of the main ways teachers can learn to communicate with their students is by learning about students' preferences towards certain materials, activities, and resources. They can also learn about their student's diverse backgrounds since many cultures offer various learning styles along with their distinct languages. This engagement with students helps teachers differentiate their lessons to accommodate the strengths of their students.

Rather than keeping a border between the English language and the multiple languages a student can speak, there can be a possibility of mixing these languages and learning abilities into the curricula. During my interview process with the Brazilian and American participants, both participant A and B learned English through the assistance of tv and media rather than an actual educational setting. Luckily, these two participants were young and between the ages of 1-5 years old when they came to the United States with their families, which made it easier for them to learn another language. However, participant C learned English through the workforce and environment, making it much harder in the beginning, especially since they moved to the US in their 20s. In combination with having bilingual and multilingual students rely on outside resources, they need to be provided with rich educational practices. Although participant A and B were both raised in a setting that had some Portuguese language speakers, English was the dominant language, and there even came to a point where one of my interviewed participants forgot how to speak their native language. Now that they are older, they have re-learned the language. This would have likely not happened if the school system supported their students' linguistic and cultural differences. Despite there being some Portuguese speakers around the area, the

language is not the exact same as Brazilian Portuguese. Also, generally, English language learners' ability to learn other subjects is more impacted. Schools need to take on the responsibility of hiring teachers with skill and training that makes the teacher more accepting of their diverse students and help make English more accessible.

Another way teachers can connect with their students' diverse backgrounds and different learning styles is by offering updated textbooks that are not dominated by white European culture. While textbooks are a useful tool for teachers, they should include more representation and diversity in them. With the current state of the education system, teachers are and have been trying to create students that fit and adapt to the society and world that the oppressors created rather than give students more of a chance to be their true selves. This way of teaching is associated with the power dynamic in other aspects of the USA's lifestyle. This power is derived from the want for control over social structures and other parts that are an expression of the different habits, traditions, and practices of other cultures. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Paulo Freire mentions that this particular desire for control from the oppressors is due to their view of seeing the oppressed as things rather than as people. Due to this negative view, the oppressors "are fearful of changing the structure" (Freire 65) that they, their children, and their cultures benefit from. They do not want those that they believe to be less to overpower them and to become the oppressed. There are many instances of this power shown through the US education system. One way it is present is the apparent lack of diversity and inclusion shown through the required textbooks for public school curricula, further creating an excluded, unwelcoming environment for bilingual and multilingual

students. This is because of the over-representation of white authors, who create stories with more white characters and stories told from one perspective. Some evidence that proves this is "in the central text of the Core Knowledge curriculum that the NYE DOE recommends for Pre-K, 8 out of 10 stories are of European origin" (Hester). This is just one of the many examples that prove that the USA's curriculum and education system needs updating. According to scholars such as Darder, this connection between culture and power used in the classrooms needs to be challenged because of the harm it brings. If not, then students from the dominant culture (mainly consisting of European origin) will continually be placed at the top of the hierarchy, whereas those from the subordinate culture are placed at the bottom just simply existing in social and material inferiority. Some of the results of this power-driven mentality and fear of diversity and change have led to the banning of diverse books. "There were at least 2,532 individual instances of book banning tracked from July 2021 to June 2022...the vast majority of these titles were written by or about LGBTQ people or people of color" (Alfonseca).

Textbooks are not the only issue as there are plenty of other ideas and concepts that play a role. For instance, according to Freire, the banking concept of education benefits the oppressors' interests. This concept essentially revolves around the idea that men and women are objects, and it is an attempt to control both the actions and thoughts of students. In this method, the teacher deposits knowledge, and students are expected to learn by memorization.

However, to challenge the banking concept, critical pedagogy can be offered instead in a way to change the basic structure of American education. One of the major

tasks of this critical theory is to not only challenge the role schools play in student's political, cultural, and social lives but to also call out and reveal the reality of schools. This concept allows teachers to provide an environment where students are assisted in their learning and understanding and are no longer in an oppressive state of mind. For this to happen, students use their own voices to talk about their experiences and then they become more aware of their own thoughts, interpretations, and history. Some of the ways critical pedagogy can be practiced in the classroom are through the understanding of power dynamics, teachers practicing self-awareness of the type of control and influence they have, all kinds of knowledge being open for critique and examination by the students and the teachers, and so on. It has been well-proven that students from the dominant culture and who are raised in socially and economically achieving environments tend to score higher on the standardized exams that are enforced through the curriculum.

Conclusion

Although language is complex, it is a valuable characteristic that has been a part of our everyday lives since the beginning of time. The United States of America is known for many things, such as being the most immigrated country in the world and having one of the best education systems. These two factors help display the USA as a place for multicultural, bilingual, diverse, and unique people to come to feel welcomed and find a successful education. However, despite these facts, America's education system stays rooted in its old traditional values of viewing one culture as more dominant than the rest. Scholars such as Paulo Freire, Antonia Darder, and Geneva Gay, talk about the

struggles the oppressed face throughout their lives, especially through their education. They then dig deeper into pedagogy and offer solutions to the problems faced in USA's English classrooms. First-hand experiences are also considered from those who were born in Brazil, received some education there, then moved to the States and received further education. These experiences offer a reflection on the state of the USA's educational methods and offer renovation and revision, all of which are meant to strengthen the minds and hearts of students, which would then benefit the rest of society. Unfortunately, the current state of education in America forces multilingual students to work harder and smarter to get to their white counterparts' higher positions. Due to these oppressive states that multilingual and or bilingual students have and continue to face, they lack the educational experience that should be implemented for all kinds of students. However, with the assistance of self-aware teachers who enforce a better and improved curriculum that brings equal opportunities then all students will be able to flourish in many aspects and potentially increase America's literacy rates to reflect our good status in education compared to other countries in the process. Overall, this complex nature of language and culture can have a better space for students to be enlightened in USA's English language learning classrooms.

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How Can Consuming a Plant-Based Diet Reduce the Risk of Cardiovascular Disease in Postmenopausal Women?

REBECCA L. STACK

Abstract

Despite the fact that women suffer higher rates of cardiovascular events after menopause, there exists a significant underrepresentation of women—especially postmenopausal women—in cardiovascular clinical trials to date. Fortunately, current evidence reveals that cardiovascular events in the general population are largely preventable through modifiable lifestyle factors, with dietary intervention being one of the most important (Amiri et al., 2022). As the impact of whole-diet interventions on cardiovascular risk factors is further explored, it has been determined that a plant-based dietary pattern may favorably influence the prevention of cardiovascular events in postmenopausal women (Barańska et al., 2021). Evidence also reveals that certain phytochemicals which are provided in bulk by a plant-based diet, such as phytoestrogens, may be particularly beneficial to the health of the postmenopausal population (Barańska et al., 2021). This comprehensive literature review will attempt to evaluate exactly how a plant-based diet can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease in postmenopausal women by examining relevant clinical trials, identifying and explaining the beneficial effects of various cardioprotective phytochemicals, and considering how popular plant-based diets like the Mediterranean Diet

are conducive to heart health. As early as 2006, Chin-Hua Fu et al. established that a plant-based diet may be a natural and effective approach to reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease in postmenopausal women (Fu et al., 2006). This review concludes that more well-designed controlled clinical trials should be conducted with this population to achieve more conclusive results regarding the most effective diet for cardiovascular risk reduction in postmenopausal women.

Key Words: plant-based diet, cardiovascular disease, postmenopause, antioxidants, phytoestrogens, isoflavones, diet, intervention

Cardiovascular Disease Defined

What is cardiovascular disease and how can it be prevented?

Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) can be defined as a group of disorders of the heart and blood vessels such as coronary heart disease, congenital heart disease, and cerebrovascular disease (WHO, 2021). Despite the fact that cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death not only in the United States but across the globe, many people do not know that most CVDs can be prevented. One's risk of developing any of these CVDs can be reduced by addressing behavioral risk factors

such as tobacco use, physical inactivity, and alcohol abuse, as well as by eating more fruits and vegetables (WHO, 2021). Alongside these behavioral risk factors are other underlying determinants of CVD, such as poverty, stress, genetics, and population aging (WHO, 2021). Unfortunately, some populations are more at risk for developing CVD than others. Therefore, it is crucial to understand these risk factors as well as strategies for preventing CVDs.

Cardiovascular Disease and Postmenopause

What is the relationship between cardiovascular disease and postmenopause?

Chronic diseases are the leading causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide, and aging is one of the greatest risk factors (Amiri et al., 2022). Cardiovascular diseases are one category of chronic disease, and they affect both men and women. About 6.6 billion American women are affected by coronary artery disease (CAD) every year (Louis et al., 2019). As most women age, they experience physiological manifestations resulting from menopause which can lead to long-term chronic diseases such as CVD (Amiri et al., 2022). In fact, women tend to suffer higher rates of coronary artery disease after age 50 due to the hormonal changes brought on by menopause (Fu et al., 2006). Menopause typically occurs as a natural process in women and can be reflected by reduced secretion of progesterone and estrogen hormones (Amiri et al., 2022); however, women who have their ovaries surgically removed due to cancer, cysts, endometriosis, or other pathologies also experience the physiological effects of menopause. Unfortunately, even though menopause is a natural part of a woman's life and the consequent symptoms affect their health and quality

of life, the relationship between menopause and CVD has only recently gained momentum in the scientific literature (Amiri et al., 2022). In addition, most studies conducted thus far have only investigated the effects of supplements, nutrients, or isolated single foods on menopausal health issues in postmenopausal women rather than the impact of a whole diet on cardiovascular risk factors in this population (Amiri et al., 2022). What's more, the populations of such studies which evaluate the connection between diet and cardiovascular diseases are also predominantly male, whether they be human or animal subjects. This neglect has left a significant gap in our knowledge of gender differences in cardiovascular health as well as the effects of hormonal changes on heart health.

Cardiovascular Disease Risk Factors for Postmenopausal Women

For postmenopausal women, what are the risk factors for cardiovascular disease?

To elaborate further, menopause can be defined as the permanent cessation of menstrual cycles following the loss of ovarian follicular activity (Silva et al., 2021). As previously mentioned, women tend to suffer higher rates of coronary artery disease after age 50 due to the hormonal changes brought on by menopause. Epidemiological studies have reported that, compared to age-matched men and premenopausal women, postmenopausal women have higher arterial blood pressure, increased atherosclerosis, and disturbed activity of cardiac autonomic functions, each of which are risk factors for CVD (Fu et al., 2006). In women over 50 years of age, CVD accounts for over one-third of total deaths, making it the number one cause of morbidity

and mortality for this population (Barańska et al., 2021). Prior to menopause, cardiovascular disease is relatively infrequent. This suggests that female hormones and metabolism offer cardiovascular protection (Barańska et al., 2021). Therefore, it is important to note that the reduced risk of premenopausal women is associated with the cardioprotective properties of estrogen (Louis et al., 2019). Among other unpleasant side effects which women experience during natural menopause or after a bilateral ovariectomy, some more serious health effects caused by estrogen deficiency include various metabolic syndrome features, including accumulation of fat mass in the abdominal compartment, transition to a more atherogenic lipid profile, hyperinsulinemia, insulin resistance, and glucose intolerance (Barańska et al., 2021). Not only are these effects associated with an increased risk of coronary heart disease (CHD), but they are also related to an increased risk of stroke and other atherosclerotic vascular diseases, including peripheral arterial disease, atherosclerotic aortic disease, and carotid artery disease (Barańska et al., 2021) as well as osteoarthritis, diabetes, cancers, and chronic kidney diseases (Amiri et al., 2022). What's more, after a woman goes through menopause, plaque ruptures become more frequent every decade (Louis et al., 2019). A plaque rupture occurs when plaque, a buildup of cholesterol and other substances attached to the wall of a blood vessel, breaks off the vessel wall and enters the bloodstream. These ruptures are a common cause of coronary thrombosis, or blood clotting within the vessels of the heart, but, interestingly, they are less frequent in premenopausal women (Louis et al., 2019). Undoubtedly, menopause and its consequential effects must not be overlooked or underestimated.

Aside from the hormonal changes which women experience during menopause—a somewhat inescapable risk factor for CVD—, there are other lifestyle behaviors that can be modified and controlled to improve a woman's cardiovascular health outcome. Diet is arguably one of the most important of these factors. Diets that include large amounts of meat—especially red and processed meat—as well as other animal-based foods, such as eggs, are higher in dietary cholesterol intake and are consequently associated with a modestly higher risk of incident CVD and all-cause mortality (Chen et al., 2021). It has been reported that, compared to men, total cholesterol (TC), high-density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL-C), and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C) levels are better predictors of cardiovascular disease risk in women, so it is especially crucial for this population to be mindful of dietary cholesterol intake (Huang et al., 2014). Furthermore, data from the Nurse's Health Study—a series of prospective studies which examine epidemiology and the long-term effects of nutrition, hormones, and environment on health and disease development—shows that higher red meat consumption is associated with higher concentrations of C-reactive protein (CRP) in plasma, which is an established risk factor for cardiovascular disease (Wang et al., 2021). For postmenopausal women who already have hormone-related risk factors to be concerned about, it is prudent for this population to be mindful of the impact of modifiable risk factors such as diet on heart health.

Cardiovascular Disease and Diet

What are the effects of diet on cardiovascular health?

We are what we eat. In many ways, this familiar statement is true. Dietary cholesterol, which is derived only from animal products, tends to “stick around” in our

arteries with other fats, contributing to cardiovascular disease. Both unprocessed and processed red meats, including beef, pork, and lamb, are high in saturated fat, cholesterol, L-Carnitine, and phosphatidylcholine, which is found abundantly in eggs (Sikand et al., 2020). Each of the aforementioned substances is linked to an increased risk of CVD (Sikand et al., 2020). It should be noted that the more processed meat is, particularly if it is red processed meat, the stronger the CVD risk, and consuming processed meats frequently, or multiple times per week, also increases one's CVD risk (Sikand et al., 2020). One meta-analysis of 20 different studies and 1,218,380 participants examined processed and unprocessed red meat intake as they relate to coronary heart disease (CHD), and the authors determined that processed red meats are associated with a 42% increased risk of CHD per each 50-gram serving per day (Sikand et al., 2020). The 2019 American College of Cardiology (ACC) and American Heart Association Guideline on the Primary Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease cites studies to confirm the benefits of plant-based protein as opposed to animal-based protein, and they determined that choosing plant-based protein sources is a prudent method to minimize cholesterol intake (Sikand et al., 2020). Although some ongoing research has suggested that saturated fats may not be as detrimental to cardiovascular health as once thought, the American Heart Association still recommends eating foods with unsaturated fat when possible (Moll, 2022). Compared to the saturated fat found in meat, the unsaturated fats found in plant-based sources may be more conducive to health, helping to keep our hearts, hair, skin, and nails healthy, among other parts of the body (Ravisankar et al., 2015). For example, heart-healthy diets such as the Mediterranean Diet (MD), which

will be defined later in this review, are typically high in polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats (Sikand et al., 2020). Both monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs) and polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) are considered “good fats,” because consuming them in replace of saturated fats can improve cholesterol, decrease inflammation, and stabilize heart rhythms (Moll, 2022). The main difference between MUFAs and PUFAs is their molecular structure. MUFAs have only one carbon-to-carbon double bond in their molecular structure, while PUFAs have more than one double bond in their carbon structure (Moll, 2022). Monounsaturated fats are provided by plant foods such as peanut butter, avocados, and olives, and polyunsaturated fats can be obtained from similar foods such as seeds, nuts, and cooking oils (Moll, 2022). In essence, some foods possess greater nutritional value than others, and what we eat can either promote health or pollute it. It is a double-edged sword, but fortunately, the world has discovered that some of our leading causes of death and chronic diseases can be alleviated by a plant-based diet.

Postmenopause Dietary Intervention

What is the importance of diet during the postmenopausal period?

Food is medicine. Proper nutrition is a key factor to the good health of any individual; however, one can argue that it is especially important during certain stages of life, such as during the postmenopausal period when CVD risk rises. Nutritional habits concern all women, they can be modified, and they have a significant impact on both longevity and quality of life (Silva et al., 2021). As a modifiable lifestyle factor, diet is a crucial primary prevention method for cardiovascular events (Amiri et al., 2022). The Mediterranean Diet (MD) is a great example of

a plant-based diet that may help in the primary prevention of bone, metabolic, and cardiovascular diseases in the postmenopausal period (Silva et al., 2021). The MD revolves around the use of plant foods that have anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. This diet's focus on plant foods has been associated with a small but significant decrease in blood pressure, reduction of fat mass, and improvement in cholesterol levels—all three of which are conducive to heart health (Silva et al., 2021). In order to understand why plant foods are so beneficial to cardiovascular health, the various components of plant foods must also be examined. Evidence exists to support the cardiovascular benefits of specific plant compounds such as antioxidants, phytoestrogens, and isoflavones in postmenopausal populations.

The Plant-Based Diet Defined

What is a plant-based diet? What are some other similar diets?

In a world inundated by fad diets, strict regimens, and “quick fixes,” people seem to forget the simple instruction we are given as children: eat your fruits and vegetables! There is no doubt that fruits, vegetables, and other plant foods offer beneficial, and often vital, nutrients to the human body, and, as the western world has grown ever more conscious about health and longevity, plant-based diets have grown in popularity. Not to be confused with a completely vegan or whole-food plant-based diet, the original plant-based diet refers specifically to one's diet alone and may or may not include animal products and processed foods (Melina et al., 2016). By contrast, veganism is not simply a diet but a way of living in which one excludes all animal products from their diet and avoids all other forms of animal exploitation and cruelty

(Petre, 2022). The key distinction to be made between the original plant-based diet and a whole-food plant-based diet (WFPB diet) is that a WFPB diet not only emphasizes plant foods, but it also focuses on minimally processed foods (Kubala, 2018). A plant-based diet may include whole, or unprocessed, plant foods such as fresh kale, soybeans, and almonds, but it may also include minimally processed versions of plant foods such as peanut butter, tofu, and hummus. It may also include, in moderation, small amounts of meat, seafood, eggs, and dairy products (Melina et al., 2016). Any of the nine variations of a vegetarian diet may fall under the umbrella term of “plant-based” whether they include animal-based foods or not. For example, lacto-ovo-vegetarians avoid meat and fish, yet they choose to consume dairy and eggs.

The Plant-Based Diet Benefits

How might a plant-based diet be beneficial to cardiovascular health?

One may ponder: what are the effects of a plant-based diet on cardiovascular disease? This is a question that will be answered in depth later in this review; however, there are a few general reasons why one should adhere to the aforementioned advice to eat fruits and vegetables. To begin, plant foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, soy products, nuts, and seeds contain fiber, vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals which help to lower total cholesterol (TC) levels as well as “bad” cholesterol—low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C) (Melina et al., 2016). Furthermore, these plant foods also help to improve serum glucose control, or blood sugar, and consequently avoid the negative effects of hyperglycemia, or high blood sugar (Melina et al., 2016). Each of these factors, among others, ultimately contributes to the

reduction of many chronic diseases, including heart disease. It has been determined that those who eat fewer animal products and more plant foods, such as vegetarians and vegans, are at reduced risk of ischemic heart disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, certain types of cancer, and obesity (Melina et al., 2016). This review will further elaborate on how a plant-based diet may improve the cardiovascular health of postmenopausal women specifically later in the discussion.

Phytochemicals Defined

What are phytochemicals and how are they relevant to cardiovascular health?

Overall, the general consumption of fruits and vegetables is linked with various health benefits due to the many medicinal properties and extensive nutritional value of these foods (Altemimi et al., 2017), which is why many individuals have shifted their diet to be more plant-based. There are various bioactive compounds—nutrients and non-nutrients that can produce physiological effects beyond their classical nutritional properties (Betim et al., 2022)—found in plant foods that are nutritionally valuable. The term “phytochemicals” serves as an umbrella term for such compounds. Some subcategories include flavonoids and phenolic acids (Thiede et al., 2016). It is important to note that the phytochemicals found in fruits and vegetables may protect against free radical damage since they act as natural antioxidants (Altemimi et al., 2017). The National Institutes of Health (NIH) define free radicals as highly unstable molecules that are naturally formed when you exercise and when your body converts food into energy, but other environmental factors such as cigarette smoke, sunlight, and air pollution also promote the formation of free radicals (Chun et al., 2013). Antioxidants

are a type of bioactive compound that functions to inhibit or delay the oxidation of molecules and consequently help prevent the development of certain cancers (Altemimi et al., 2017). Some examples of plant foods that contain high concentrations of antioxidants include berries, nuts, and even dark chocolate (Raman, 2022). Recent research has declared that the consumption of various phytochemicals in the diet has numerous beneficial effects including, but not limited to, inhibition of lipid oxidation, lipid-lowering effects, hypoglycemic- and insulin-lowering effects, antioxidant activity, anti-inflammatory activity, and anti-proliferative or apoptotic cell death activity (Thiede et al., 2016).

Antioxidants Defined

What are antioxidants and how are they relevant to cardiovascular health?

As previously mentioned, antioxidants function to inhibit or delay the oxidation of molecules, which is important to prevent not only the development of cardiovascular diseases but also certain cancers and Alzheimer’s Disease, among others (Altemimi et al., 2017). Oxidation, or oxidative stress, is caused by free radicals in the body, and it can lead to cell damage which contributes to the development of CVD (Chun et al., 2013). Relevant research demonstrates that consuming antioxidants, preferably from plant foods such as fruits and vegetables, can counteract oxidative stress (Chun et al., 2013). This is vital for the postmenopausal population, because not only does decrease estrogen availability increase a woman’s risk of CVD, but it is also accompanied by increased oxidative stress (Bourgonje et al., 2020). One should note that estrogen itself is a naturally occurring antioxidant in the human body (Bourgonje et al., 2020). Furthermore,

oxidative stress typically increases with age (Bourgonje et al., 2020). Although current research studies have not yet concluded whether low estrogen levels have a pro-oxidant effect, high levels of estrogen provided by hormone replacement therapy in postmenopausal women may protect against age-related oxidative stress due to the antioxidant nature of estrogen (Bourgonje et al., 2020).

Antioxidants Literature Review

What are some of the best dietary sources of antioxidants and how do they function to improve cardiovascular health in women?

The various health benefits of plant-based diets, such as the Mediterranean Diet (MD), are noteworthy with respect to the postmenopausal period. The focus of the MD on plant foods encourages greater consumption of antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables along with reduced consumption of saturated animal fats, as compared to the typical Western diet. The significance of this key characteristic lies in the cardioprotective value of antioxidants and polyphenols. Evidence from observational studies and randomized trials which investigate nutrition in postmenopausal women explain that the polyphenols found in plant-based foods such as extra virgin olive oil, whole grain cereals, nuts, legumes, vegetables, red wine, and fruits have both antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties that have been observed to decrease LDL cholesterol as well as both systolic and diastolic blood pressure (Silva et al., 2021). The reductions in LDL cholesterol and blood pressure associated with MD are linked to reduced risk of CVD and death among various female populations, including postmenopausal women; however, more evidence is required to draw conclusions for the postmenopausal population (Silva

et al., 2021). Resveratrol (RVT) is just one powerful antioxidant found in many of the staple foods of the MD, including grapes and red wine (Khattar et al., 2022).

Phytoestrogens Defined

What are phytoestrogens and how are they relevant to cardiovascular health?

Phytoestrogens are a class of plant-derived compounds, or phytochemicals, that have pro-estrogenic effects (Louis et al., 2019). Collectively, phytochemicals from plant foods are beneficial to one's general health. However, there may be specific phytochemicals, such as phytoestrogens, that directly influence female health in the postmenopausal period. Soybeans are known to be particularly rich in phytoestrogens, and they have been associated with favorable metabolic effects on the cardiovascular system in postmenopausal women (Su et al., 2011). Phytoestrogens may be associated with a reduced risk of CVD due to the cardioprotective effects of estrogen; however, their effect is mostly dependent upon their bioavailability within the human body. Bioavailability can be defined as "the extent a substance...becomes completely available to its intended biological destination(s)" (NIH, 2021), which, once again, can largely determine the effectiveness of the substance in its reaction with the human body. One specific cardioprotective effect of high phytoestrogen intake that has been observed in postmenopausal women is decreased arterial stiffness which consequently decreases one's risk of experiencing cardiovascular events (Su et al., 2011).

Phytoestrogens Literature Review

What are the effects of individual phytoestrogens in reducing cardiovascular risk factors?

As previously stated, there may be specific phytochemicals that directly influence female health in the postmenopausal period. Resveratrol (RES), previously identified as an antioxidant, can also be categorized as a phytoestrogen and is found in plant foods such as grapes, peanuts, plums, and blueberries, as well as in foods derived from plants including wine and dark chocolate (Regan, 2022). Resveratrol has been classified as a phytoestrogen due to its capacity to bind to and modulate estrogen receptor signaling (Louis et al., 2019). In other words, it has estrogen-like properties and behaviors. Animal studies with rats have demonstrated promising results regarding the efficacy of resveratrol in reducing cardiovascular risk factors; however, further research must be completed with human subjects before any definite conclusions can be made about human health. In one study with both male and female rats, RES metabolism was more efficient in female liver microsomes, when compared with male liver microsomes (Louis et al., 2019), which may offer insight into potential sex-related differences in bioavailability. As applied to RES, sex-dependent bioavailability data is not currently available for humans, let alone women specifically. Thus far, male subjects have been preferred by researchers for animal studies to avoid any inaccuracies caused by cyclical hormonal fluctuations in females (Louis et al., 2019). This has created a bias that has finally been raised as a concern by the research community. There are a few existing studies with female animal subjects which have reported the beneficial effects of resveratrol, but research is still inadequate (Louis et al., 2019). Because of this lack

of research, few conclusions can be made regarding the bioavailability of RES in humans; yet “several clinical trials are underway testing [the] cardioprotective properties [of RES]” (Louis et al., 2019).

Although minimal, the research that exists to explore the beneficial effects of RES in humans is promising. Most published studies indicate that the bioavailability of RES in humans is low, so RES trial dosages are often exceedingly generous in hopes of increasing absorption; however, both low and high supplemental doses of RES in humans have been reported to be beneficial (Raj et al., 2021). To date, the appropriate dosage remains questionable. Furthermore, whether RES should be utilized strictly as an agent of primary prevention rather than tertiary is also controversial (Gal et al., 2021). Nevertheless, there have been a few instances thus far where “...the administration of RES in double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled clinical trials showed a decreased expression of endothelial cell ICAM, VCAM, and IL-8 as well as of inflammatory markers” (Carrizzo, et al., 2020). To clarify, RES successfully reduced the presence of the aforementioned molecules which stimulate plaque formation and consequently narrow the arteries. Thus, decreased expression of such molecules is beneficial to cardiovascular health. Another double-blinded, placebo-controlled, randomized clinical study of only three months demonstrated that resveratrol treatment in 40 post-MI patients including 26 men and 14 women was able to improve systolic function, and diastolic function as well as endothelial function, red blood cell deformability, LDLC and platelet aggregation (Raj et al., 2021), each of which is conducive to improved heart health. As we have established, human clinical trials concerning the effects of RES supplementation

on cardiovascular risk are few. Equivalent clinical trials with strictly female populations are even fewer, and those focused on postmenopausal women are close to none. In summation, the cardiovascular benefits of RES have not been entirely confirmed in humans, and the exact mechanisms of RES are still unclear and partly controversial (Gal et al., 2021); yet current evidence is promising.

Soy Protein and Isoflavones Literature Review

What are the cardiovascular benefits of soy protein as compared to animal protein on cardiovascular health in the postmenopausal population?

Isoflavones are another type of phytochemical, falling under the more specific category of “flavonoids.” Flavonoids make up the largest class of phytochemicals and possess certain cardioprotective functions such as improved endothelial function, decreased blood pressure, and improvements in lipid and insulin resistance (Thiede et al., 2016). Some of the best food sources of isoflavones include soybeans and soy-based products (Thiede et al. 2016). Soy-based products may include tofu and tempeh—which are especially popular in Eastern countries such as Taiwan (Su et al., 2011)—or other more processed meat alternatives. Not dissimilar to a plant-based diet, soy food, and its protein and isoflavone content has received widespread attention for their potential role in CVD risk improvement: In 1999, the FDA concluded that including soy protein in a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of CHD by decreasing blood cholesterol levels (Barańska et al., 2021). Furthermore, a review of “114 meta-analyses and systematic reviews indicates soy-derived isoflavones are particularly

beneficial for reducing cancer and CVD risk in women” (Wang et al., 2021).

In one systematic review which evaluated the impact of soy protein containing isoflavones and soy isoflavones extract on lipid profile in postmenopausal women, as compared with placebo or protein of milk, casein, or isolated soy protein with or without trace isoflavone content, the authors concluded that consuming soy and isoflavones may favorably influence the prevention of cardiovascular events in postmenopausal women due to its effects on lipid metabolism (Barańska et al., 2021). The same report conducted a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. Over 2,300 postmenopausal women took part in the analysis studies that this report evaluated, making these results more credible compared to other studies with very few participants. The meta-analysis demonstrated that consuming soy protein that contains isoflavones and soy isoflavone extract is associated with various cardioprotective changes including a significant decrease in serum total cholesterol (TC), increase of HDL cholesterol (HDL-C), albeit linked with insignificant reduction in LDL cholesterol (LDL-C) and triacylglycerol (TAG) (Barańska et al., 2021). When compared to the control group, these changes revealed that soy protein and/or isoflavones were more effective in changing the lipid profiles of older women (Barańska et al., 2021). Therefore, the consumption of soy should be promoted as part of a heart-healthy diet; for, the research suggests that the isoflavones within soy, or even soy isoflavone extract, have the ability to modulate an individual's lipid profile and consequently help to prevent cardiovascular events (Barańska et al., 2021). To conclude, this systematic review and meta-analysis clearly demonstrate that soy isoflavones significantly contribute to the correction of

lipid profiles in postmenopausal women; however, further studies based on greater amounts of research material as well as more specific doses of isoflavones are essential in determining how isoflavones can benefit lipid metabolism and consequently lower the risk of cardiovascular disease in postmenopausal women (Barańska et al., 2021).

Another narrative review reported similar results, concluding that higher isoflavone dietary intake may be associated with a lower risk of subclinical CVD (Silva et al., 2021). The review also supports that the beneficial effects of isoflavones can be attributed to their anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties; however, as the first systematic review discussed, this narrative review concludes that further research is warranted and the effects of isoflavones remain to be evaluated over a longer period of time (Silva et al., 2021).

In a 2021 prospective cohort study of 38 European American and African American omnivorous females matched by both age and BMI, the replacement of animal-based foods with soy-based foods led to an over 20% reduction in blood levels of C-reactive protein (CRP), which is an established risk factor for cardiovascular disease (Wang et al., 2021). This was measured by the enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA). The data from this study allowed researchers to conclude that adopting a vegetarian or plant-based diet may rapidly promote improvements in fatty acid metabolism, allowing the body to better oxidize fats for energy homeostasis rather than store them (Wang et al., 2021).

Whole Diet Interventions Literature Review

What are the benefits of whole diet interventions as opposed to individual phytochemicals on the cardiovascular health of postmenopausal women?

Thus far, it has been established that certain phytochemicals which exist in plant foods may play a promising role in the reduction of cardiovascular risk, particularly in postmenopausal women. With this, the importance of other dietary components along with one's diet as a whole should not be undervalued. As previously mentioned, the majority of studies conducted thus far have only investigated the effects of supplements, nutrients, or isolated single foods on menopausal health issues in postmenopausal women rather than the impact of a whole diet on cardiovascular risk factors in this population (Amiri et al., 2022). It is critical to also analyze how whole-diet interventions, especially plant-based diets, impact heart health.

The Vegetarian Diet vs. The Omnivore Diet

One 2006 study from the American Journal of Cardiology followed and compared 35 vegetarians and 35 omnivores, all of whom were healthy postmenopausal women without hormone replacement therapy (HRT). The authors hypothesized that a long-term vegetarian diet may positively influence cardiovascular functions in healthy postmenopausal women (Fu et al., 2006). The participants of the study, both vegetarian and omnivorous postmenopausal women, were recruited from the health checkup department of Tzu Chi Dalin General Hospital (Fu et al., 2006). In Chinese society, vegetarianism originates from the Buddhist's teaching of "no killing" and has been practiced for centuries (Fu et al., 2006). To reiterate, a vegetarian diet excludes all meat and fish but may include some animal products such as eggs and dairy products. An omnivorous diet includes both plant foods and animal-derived foods. The vegetarian subjects in this study had been vegetarian for 2 to 35 years, and they

did not eat any meat nor any fish due to their religious beliefs; however, some occasionally consumed eggs and milk (ovo-lactovegetarians) in small amounts (Fu et al., 2006). The 35 omnivores served as the age-matched control group. It is important to note that none of the women drank alcohol, smoked, or took drugs reported to influence cardiovascular function, so the effects observed should mainly be reflective of dietary factors (Fu et al., 2006). In addition, to rule out patients with existing systemic diseases, arrhythmias, and other pathologies, researchers recorded the complete medical history of each patient, took detailed screening questionnaires, performed physical and neurologic examinations, and did laboratory tests (Fu et al., 2006). The results of the study demonstrated that the vegetarian subjects, especially those who had been vegetarian for 2 or more years, had better baroreflex sensitivity, more optimal blood pressure, and favorable lipid concentrations compared to the omnivorous subjects (Fu et al., 2006). The vegetarians also had lower total cholesterol, lower LDL cholesterol, and lower fasting blood glucose levels than the omnivores (Fu et al., 2006). These findings are significant; the effects of vegetarian diets demonstrated in the study—reduced blood pressure, reduced cholesterol, improved baroreflex sensitivity—may serve as a natural and effective approach to reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease in postmenopausal women (Fu et al., 2006). Although this research study was conducted over a decade ago, the results are supported by more recent studies and provide insight into the mechanisms linking vegetarian diets and cardiovascular health. Nevertheless, additional exploration with respect to the relationship between whole diet interventions and the cardiovascular health of postmenopausal women is warranted.

The Mediterranean Diet

The Mediterranean Diet (MD) has become a very popular choice for those seeking to change their dietary habits as a way of improving their overall health—and for good reason. In terms of reducing the risk of CVD morbidity, mortality, and cardiovascular events, the MD is comparable to not only lifestyle interventions such as physical activity but also modern pharmacological and surgical interventions such as aspirin, antihypertensives, and statins (Hernández-Angeles et al., 2016). The Mediterranean Diet is high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, unsalted nuts and seeds, and olive oil. It is low to moderate in fish, skinless poultry, low-fat dairy products, and red wine (in individuals consuming alcohol) and low in red meat (Sikand et al., 2020). As previously noted, the focus of the MD on plant foods encourages greater consumption of antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables along with reduced consumption of saturated animal fats, as compared to the typical Western diet. In one meta-analysis study of randomized controlled trials, diets such as the MD which can be considered low-fat have been efficacious in lowering the concentrations of TC, HDL-C, and LDL-C, likely because low-fat vegetarian diets have been shown to improve both glycemic and lipid control, among other factors (Huang et al., 2014). Although the MD is considered “low-fat,” it is relatively high in beneficial fats such as MUFAs and PUFAs as well as polyphenols, flavonoids, phytosterols, and fiber—all of which contribute to reduced risk of CVD and diabetes (Sikand et al., 2020). With the knowledge we have regarding the impact of diet on cardiovascular health and the evidence which demonstrates the beneficial effects of the MD on cardiovascular disease markers, it is suggested that postmenopausal women—who are at

increased risk of cardiovascular disease—can benefit from the Mediterranean Diet as well as other plant-based diets that emphasize plant foods.

Conclusion

What does the evidence suggest overall about the importance of dietary intervention as it pertains to the cardiovascular health of postmenopausal women?

The opportunity for improving health by improving diet is great. There is an undeniable link between nutrition and health that must not be overlooked, especially when evidence exists to support the role of plant foods in disease prevention. When considering the cardiovascular health of postmenopausal women, diet should be a fundamental component of both prevention and treatment. Diet is an inseparable part of one's lifestyle, and it has the power to control the risk factors of cardiovascular disease (Amiri et al., 2022). The detrimental effects of menopause on cardiovascular health exemplify the need to pay exclusive attention to women and identify ideal treatment methods for both alleviating risk factors and reducing cardiovascular mortality within the postmenopausal population (Amiri et al., 2022). Literature confirms that modifying one's diet to include more plant foods and fewer animal products is a promising solution for not only postmenopausal women but also the general population (Amiri et al., 2022).

A common misconception surrounding plant-based diets is that they are not nutritionally adequate and cannot fully provide the micronutrients and macronutrients required by the human body. However, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) asserts that appropriately planned plant-based diets, including vegan diets, are healthful, nutritionally adequate, and may

provide health benefits for the prevention and treatment of certain diseases (Melina et al., 2016). The Academy also affirms that plant-based diets are appropriate for all stages of the life cycle, including pregnancy, lactation, infancy, childhood, adolescence, older adulthood, and for athletes (Melina et al., 2016). When properly followed, plant-based diets easily provide adequate quantities of plant proteins, vitamins, and minerals as well as beneficial phytochemicals such as plant sterols, polyphenols, and flavonoids (Daneshzad et al., 2021). As we have established, plant-based diets have the added benefit of being low in salt, fat, animal products, oils, processed foods, cholesterol, and sugar which help to prevent CVD and control CVD risk factors (Daneshzad et al., 2021).

What are some of the limitations of this research?

Unfortunately, concrete evidence regarding the effectiveness of plant-based diets on the cardiovascular disease risk of postmenopausal women remains limited thus far. The significant underrepresentation of women—especially postmenopausal women—in cardiovascular clinical trials to date is the chief foundational limitation preventing this research from advancing. This underrepresentation has been discussed for several years, and the evidence is clear that CVD is a major health issue for older women since the development of CVD is higher after menopause; yet the underrepresentation persists (Amiri et al., 2022). What's more, evidence has demonstrated that, compared to men, women suffer a more aggressive form of coronary artery disease and are more susceptible to death from CVD (Amiri et al., 2022).

More well-designed controlled clinical trials must be conducted with postmenopausal women in order to adequately capture the dietary patterns of different

subpopulations as well. As we have established, one's sex can be a significant risk factor for certain chronic diseases such as CVD. Race is yet another risk factor that must be taken into consideration. African Americans remain a particularly understudied population with regard to plant-based dietary patterns despite the disproportionate burden of CVD risk factors and outcomes they experience (Weston et al., 2022). A 2021 study that compared European American and African American omnivorous females found that African American women are at higher risk for developing obesity and its associated cardiometabolic diseases (Wang et al., 2021). Evidence is also limited amongst various Asian populations despite their extensive history of consuming diets rich in plant foods (Kim et al., 2020).

Alongside limitations regarding population, research methods can also be limiting. For example, it is nearly impossible to blind participants to diet, especially for whole diet interventions (Amiri et al., 2022). Knowing which diet they have been assigned could influence how well or how poorly a participant adheres to said diet. Also, small sample sizes or few subjects may result in insufficient statistical power, thus limiting definitive conclusions (Barańska et al., 2021). In addition, most studies exploring dietary interventions investigate general, low-fat diets while research on more promising diets such as plant-based diets and the Mediterranean Diet are lacking (Amiri et al., 2022). Finally, the variability of a plant-based diet is also somewhat problematic. Cardiovascular risk may vary by “healthiness” of different plant-based diets; so, increased specificity within research is essential (Kim et al., 2020). For example, those who exclusively consume plant foods may likely have different outcomes than those who regularly include varying amounts of

animal-based foods in their diet. Furthermore, some plant foods may be considered healthier than others. A recent 2022 cohort study from PLOS Medicine attempted to account for this variability by using sample-based scoring methods for scoring differing plant-based diets. The authors compared an overall plant-based diet (PDI), a healthy plant-based diet (hPDI), and an unhealthy plant-based diet (uPDI) (Weston et al., 2022). Breaking down a plant-based diet in this way offers unquestionably better insight; however, the terms “healthy” and “unhealthy” are arguably still too ambiguous. The overarching solution to these limitations is further research—more specifically, well-designed controlled clinical trials conducted with postmenopausal women of various regions.

Which diet is the “best” diet for the postmenopausal population?

There is no denying the fact that increasing one's consumption of plant foods can foster good health, and, as research advances, it is becoming clearer that many of the bioactive phytochemicals found in plants may be just as effective as some pharmacological therapies in the treatment of chronic disease, including cardiovascular disease. However, a “one-size-fits-all” diet may not exist. The limitations of the current evidence concerning the relationship between diet and heart health should be noted to improve future research and find the most relevant diet for postmenopausal women (Amiri et al., 2022). This review has established that plant-based diets are associated with a reduction of cardiovascular risk factors and incident CVD; however, there is significant variation in the “healthiness” of different plant-based diets which must be explored in order to make any conclusions about the ideal diet for postmenopausal women (Kim et

al., 2020). As we explore further, we may find that more personalized nutrition strategies may be necessary across population subgroups (Wang et al., 2021). One might begin by reducing their consumption of meat and processed foods and increasing their consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes.

Closing Remarks

This review concludes that more well-designed controlled clinical trials must be conducted with this population to achieve more conclusive results regarding the most effective diet for cardiovascular risk reduction in postmenopausal women. Despite the aforementioned limitations of current research, the available evidence is promising, and one should not underestimate the healing power of plants. As Thomas Edison declared: “The doctor of the future will no longer treat the human frame with drugs but will rather cure and prevent disease with nutrition” (Isaak et al., 2013).

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REBECCA L. STACK

Health Science

Rebecca L. Stack is a 2023 BSU graduate and Commonwealth Honors student who majored in Health Science and minored in Nutrition and Spanish. Mentored by Dr. Kathleen Laquale, Professor of Health and Kinesiology, Rebecca completed her honors thesis over the course of two semesters. Rebecca developed a strong passion for nutrition during her four years at Bridgewater State, specifically in the realm of plant-based nutrition. As an environmentalist, she felt a responsibility to shift to a plant-based diet during her freshman year, and her subsequent courses in Health Science and Nutrition only further inspired this shift. Fascinated by the power of plants, Rebecca believes that food is medicine, and she aims to inspire more individuals to take control of their health as a means to prevent and treat disease. Rebecca currently works as a dietary aide as she plans to further her education in Nutrition.

The Effects of Multilingual Learning on Social-Emotional and Cognitive Development in Children

JASMINE WON

Children worldwide learn multiple languages at a young age, especially if they do not live in a country with English as the dominant language. While teaching young children languages other than English has not been a common practice in the United States, research shows that this practice is growing, and there is increased awareness of cultural competence in teaching languages. This study aimed to discover the cognitive and social-emotional effects of learning an additional language at a young age. To examine this, 90 fifth-grade English Learner students were observed for 35 hours in an academic environment learning Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Additional observations were conducted of third, fourth, and fifth-grade English Learner students and heritage speakers in two public schools for 18 hours. These IRB-approved structured observations were conducted with guiding questions to ensure that data collection was relevant to the research. These additional observations were supplemented by interviews of English Learners and General Education teachers, who emphasized the importance of multiple language acquisition at a young age. Students with equivalent capabilities in their languages were faster than their peers to grasp concepts or ideas and articulate them and tended to be

more confident and engaged in the classroom. These observations, interviews, and prior research suggest a correlation between acquiring multiple languages and high social-emotional and cognitive engagement in the classroom.

Multilingualism is a term used to describe a situation where two or more languages are used. This paper's context is regarding either children who grew up speaking multiple languages or children who learn multiple languages in school. Multilingual learners can refer to English Language Learners (ELLs), children with immigrant status, children who grew up speaking multiple languages at home, children who learn multiple languages in school, or Dual Language Learners (DLLs). Bilingual learners fall under the category of multilingual learners but are limited to two languages. A native language is a person's first language learned (learned since birth) if it is the dominant language in the country, they have lived in for most of their lives. A heritage language is a person's language taught to them by their family but is not the dominant language in the country they have lived in for most of their lives (Polinsky, 2018).

In multiple studies, multilingual children have shown enhanced executive function compared to monolingual children (Kroll et al., 2012; Kwon et al., 2021;

Morales et al., 2013). In addition to better executive function and working memory, bilingual children have better inhibitory control (the ability to suppress responses to stimuli) than monolingual children (Bialystok & Martin, 2004). They demonstrate superior flexibility in cognitive thinking due to the acquisition of multiple languages (Marzecová et al., 2013); multilingual learners can acquire more languages easier than monolingual learners (Rezaei & Hashim, 2014); and have greater creativity skills as a result of their language skills (Fürst & Grin, 2018). Because multilingual children use different languages constantly, they unintentionally become more cognizant of metalinguistics. Additionally, from an early age, bilingual learners know when to code-switch and when to use each language individually, given cues from people around them.

Multilingual children tend to have greater empathy due to their acquisition of multiple languages and, thus also, cultures. In addition to the development of cultural empathy, multilingual learners develop cognitive empathy (the ability to take the mental viewpoint of another person, as opposed to the feeling of shared emotions (emotional empathy)) (Smith, 2006). Dewaele & Wei (2012) concluded that the frequent use of several languages was positively correlated with cognitive empathy. However, depending on their environment, multilingual children may have a more negative emotional development depending on their immigrant status and their control over their other languages. Regardless, different languages make individuals more aware of cultural impacts because social factors and location shape personality. Additionally, if the environment actively involves multilingual learning, there is a greater chance of positive social-emotional experiences and, thus, development.

Teachers may have different underlying expectations of multilingual children depending on the children's culture of origin. Overall, teachers consider multilingual students a challenge (Mitchell, 2013), resulting in a lack of will to teach them. Teachers tend to have more positive expectations for students who come from ethnic majorities compared to ethnic minorities (Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). This is not necessarily directly related to the children's language abilities, but to their outward appearance and underlying biases, teachers may have.

For teachers to be more accepting and open to their multilingual students, they must first be committed to the system they work in and have faith in their abilities to influence their students positively. The teacher's experiences with languages and multiculturalism shape this faith in one's abilities. If a teacher has a history like that of their students regarding languages, it can make the students feel much more comfortable and included in the classroom (Ingle, 2021).

Research Methodology

Method

This research collected and analyzed qualitative data (observations and interview responses). Observations were conducted using an observation guide and keeping the three research questions in mind. In the case of Group C in the STEM Program, the observer was directly involved with the students being observed as an assistant teacher. In-person interviews were conducted using the interview questions and prompting teachers to elaborate upon their responses. Online interviews were conducted using an online form that allowed teachers

to respond with as much or as little elaboration as they wished.

Context

This project was conducted through observations of multiple groups, interviews with English Learner (EL) teachers, and online interviews with general education teachers. Three different schools/programs were observed in the collection of this data.

The STEM Program occurred in a large interactive classroom with various hands-on activities and colorful informative decorations. It contained all monolingual “head” teachers, the majority monolingual assistant teachers, and teachers from the schools who attended the program. English was most often used in lessons with the students, although one lesson included written translated instructions. This program was observed for 35 hours.

For 18 hours, a mix of EL-only and mixed EL and heritage speaker classrooms were observed between the two elementary schools. Both elementary schools contained monolingual general education teachers and multilingual teachers for English Learners. Students were observed in both their general education and English-Learner-specific classrooms. School 1 students were observed for eight hours over three days. School 2 students were observed for ten hours over three days.

Participants

Observations were made of fifth-grade English Learners in lessons regarding STEM subjects. Additional observations, interviews with EL teachers, and online interviews with general education teachers were conducted in public elementary schools in the towns of

Schools 1 and 2.

The chosen students needed to fit the following criteria: they were classified as English Learners by the state school system and were in the grade level range of 3 to 5. The teachers chosen to be interviewed in person were teachers of English Learners for at least one year and the teachers of classes the researcher observed. There were three total, two from School 1 and one from School 2. The teachers interviewed online were general education teachers with experience with English Learners in their classroom for at least one year. There were three total, one from School 1 and two from School 2.

In the STEM Program, any assistant teachers who spoke the language that the students spoke did not communicate with them in that language. Teachers from the schools attending the program would sometimes use the dominantly spoken language to communicate with the EL students, either to clarify instructions or lesson points or to discipline. The students’ demographics ranged from group to group; the first two groups consisted of Mandarin and English speakers, while the third group consisted primarily of Brazilian Portuguese speakers. English levels also varied across the groups; the first group was primarily speakers at WIDA levels 4, 5, and 6, the second group had a variety of speakers, and the third group was mostly speakers at WIDA levels 1 and 2.

Students’ English levels varied considerably, although English-Learner-specific classes would group those of similar levels. In School 1, most EL students were Brazilian, although many students from other countries were also there. In School 2, there was more variety in the mix of English Learners, although there was still a large population of Brazilian Portuguese speakers.

Data Collection Tools

The specific research questions are:

1. How does learning an additional language at a young age affect a student's social-emotional development?
2. How does learning an additional language at a young age affect a student's cognitive development?
3. How prepared/willing are teachers to work with multilingual students?

Regarding the STEM Program, only one data collection method was used: classroom observations. During the week the researcher was an assistant teacher at the STEM Program, she conducted observations as a participant (assistant teacher). While teaching the students, she took note of the verbal and nonverbal reactions to learning new subjects in their non-heritage language as well as their social skills with other students and teachers. For example, a question from the observation guide regarding what facial expressions English Learners display while learning was expressed in the observation note "expressed frustration or confusion through facial expressions, frowning, pursed eyebrows." She also observed the teachers' and assistant teachers' interactions with the students. She took detailed notes of her observations throughout the day, which were then analyzed when placing them into results.

Two different data collection methods were used in person: classroom observations and interviews with EL teachers. Observations focused on verbal and nonverbal reactions to learning new subjects in the EL students' non-heritage languages and their social skills with other students and teachers. Teachers' interactions with the students were also observed. Detailed notes of the observations were made through the process and later analyzed when placing them into results.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed by filtering and contextualizing it with the research questions provided and with all information gathered from the literature review. Some outside factors were considered when analyzing. For example, for Group C of the STEM Program, the researcher played the role of an assistant teacher in her observations, unlike any other group. Therefore, she takes this different perspective into account in her analysis. Additionally, there are a variety of English language levels of the students, as well as their backgrounds. There is also a difference in schools and their education systems. All these outlying factors are recognized when analyzing the data.

Finally, the data was collected in two different forms: observations and interviews. This data is analyzed and contextualized with the same research questions and information from the literature review. However, the nature of each data form is considered in its analysis.

Results

Results are grouped and discussed based on each of the school contexts.

STEM Program Observation Data

At the STEM program, three different groups of students were observed, who will be referred to as Groups A, B, and C. Group C was observed for a total of 25 hours, as opposed to the 5 hours each that Groups A and B were observed because the interviewer was assistant teaching in that week. All levels (which will be referred to only as their level number) were assessed according to WIDA levels. Level 1 is Entering and Emerging (EE), level 3 is Developing (D), and levels 4 and 5 are Expanding and Bridging (EB) (Cammilleri et al., 2009).

	Group A	Group B	Group C
Level(s), Grade(s), & Languages	Majority WIDA levels 4 and 5 (EBs) Dual language school of Mandarin & English	Variety of English levels Dual language school of Mandarin & English	Majority WIDA levels 1 and 2 (EEs) Majority Brazilian immigrants (recent and older)
Engagement	Quick response time	EEs had difficulty paying attention; DEBs were engaged, Generally more involvement in physical activities that did not require much language	Higher engagement in projects not involving language, DEBs participated more & with more confidence than EEs
Interactions with Classmates	Spoke in English amongst peers	EEs spoke to one another in their heritage language or Mandarin, DEBs socialized in English	All who shared a heritage language spoke to one another using it
Interactions with Teachers	High levels of interaction, comfortable	DEBs were visibly more comfortable with teachers compared to EEs	DEBs were more open & social with teachers compared to EE peers

STEM Program

Social-Emotional Development

Group A tended to have a quick response time (compared to heritage English speakers); they could understand what the teachers were conveying. When talking amongst themselves, they used language heritage speakers use such as “like...” or “um...” They also used slang phrases from American cultures, such as “big boy,” “sheeeeeeee,” and “that’s Janet’s ‘tea.’” When there was miscommunication or confusion, students only expressed their frustration or confusion aloud after being called on. Instead, they expressed their confusion in facial expressions, which assistant teachers occasionally picked up on and clarified. Some students would raise their hands, but it was uncommon. Group B students

would socially interact using Mandarin if that were the stronger language to facilitate understanding best.

In Group C, there was most students with levels 1 and 2 (EEs), with a few exceptions either tested out of the English Learner program that year or would test out soon (based on social conversations with the students and their teacher). Regardless of their English levels, the students tended to speak to one another in their native language as it was easier for the EEs, and most of the class spoke Brazilian Portuguese (with three exceptions, all of whom had WIDA levels 4 or 5). Due to the number of EE English learners in the class, the teachers created an activity and printed out the instructions in the different languages of every student. When the students read the instructions

in their native language, they appeared to be happier and more engaged, understanding, and becoming more excited to do the activity that was translated as opposed to all others.

Cognitive Development

Group A students understood advanced words and phrases such as “context clues” and “function.” They had no difficulty telling stories, listening to one another, and thinking critically about one another’s contributions. They were consistently engaged with the teachers and assistant teachers and enjoyed volunteering answers as prompted.

In Group B, students with levels 1 and 2 (EEs) had difficulty paying attention (as evidenced by looking at anyone but the teachers, fidgeting, and a glazed-over expression on their faces). In comparison, students with levels 3 through 5 (DEBs) were fairly engaged. EEs would take more time to follow directions as they would need to check the board that displayed directions multiple times over. Several of the same DEBs would comment/volunteer (they appeared to enjoy being engaged and interacting), while EEs appeared to be bored or indifferent. DEBs would clarify directions in Mandarin to EEs if they were confused. All students tended to become more involved in physical activities/crafts that did not require much language, whether working together or individually. On the other hand, activities that required constant proficient language abilities had less student engagement if the group had most EEs unless they contained visuals that helped students follow along.

In Group C, better English speakers among the students would translate for their EE classmates during times of instruction or activities, making the class more

comprehensible for the EE students who were not fully aware of what was occurring without translation. More students in the class became engaged in projects that did not involve language as opposed to activities that did due to the difficulty of communicating in English. Students with intermediate or advanced English levels (DEBs) tended to participate more and with greater confidence than students with novice levels of English (EEs).

Interactions with Teachers

There were high levels of interaction between the Group A students and the teachers. However, if students’ cultures were mentioned, students would correct one another about cultural differences, not teachers. For example, a teacher asked if a student’s shirt with the word “Selena” and a woman’s face referred to Selena Gomez, to which the student shrugged. However, when a classmate asked the same question, the student clarified that it was Selena Quintanilla, not Selena Gomez. It also created an opportunity for conversation and connection between students and teachers.

Groups B and C had more limited interactions with teachers and assistant teachers, especially if their English levels were lower. However, when prompted, they enjoyed sharing words and phrases from their cultures with the assistant teachers as it showed them that the teachers themselves were willing to learn parts of another language.

Schools 1 and 2

In Schools 1 and 2, 15 groups were observed, although all mixed classrooms included students observed in EL-only classrooms. To maintain a measure of separation, the groups will be separated by school and

have similar labels if they contain the same students. For example, EL-only classrooms will be labeled with numbers, while mixed classrooms with the same EL students will be labeled with the number and an accompanying letter. Due to the information made accessible to the researcher, EL School 1 students are referred to as high-level (HL), mid-level (ML), or low-level (LL), and EL School 2 students will be referred to by their WIDA levels.

Both elementary schools use the “pull-out” method, meaning EL students get removed from their classroom for approximately 30 to 45 minutes daily for a focused lesson with the EL teacher. Therefore, the main groups will be the groups of EL students that were pulled out of their classrooms, and the associated groups will be the general classrooms. School 1 had eight groups (groups 1 through 5A) observed for eight hours. School 2 had seven groups (groups 6 through 9) observed for ten hours.

	Group 1	Group 1A	Group 2	Group 2A
Level(s), Grade(s), & Languages	HL & MLs 3rd grade	Group 1 & native Englishspeaking students	HL & MLs in EL-only classrooms	Group 2 & native English speaking students
Engagement	HL & MLs understood questions easily & gave rapid responses Showcased abilities to read effectively	EL students had the same response rate as NE peers No distinct academic difference between EL & NE students	Rapid response rate, even if not correct Unafraid to ask clarifying questions	Some difficulty with individual work
Interactions with Classmates	Helped peers when they were struggling	Interacted easily with peers, both academically & socially	Comfortable with peers, especially with shared cultures	Interact easily & well with NE classmates
Interactions with Teachers	Strong positive emotional bonds with teacher	Comfortable with general education teacher but not the same amount as with EL teacher	Happy & open with teachers	Comfortable with general education teacher

School 1 Observation Data

Social-Emotional Development

Group 1 students were generally excited to contribute, both in personal stories and academic settings. They primarily expressed their feelings aloud and spoke as often as they could. Even so, they were good at taking turns with one another. In Group 1A, EL students initially hesitated to participate but were willing to volunteer when encouraged. When partnered up or in groups, they worked well with classmates academically and socially (used math blocks together or excitedly interacted during coloring time).

Group 2 was a combination of two usually separate groups (and their EL teachers) working on a group project together. Students sometimes answered prompts in their heritage language and had the answer translated for them. When working in pairs, they would speak to one another in English and help each other spell out words. They would also help one another with pronunciation if a student was struggling. Students readily accepted help and asked for it when they needed it. In academic settings, students felt comfortable taking their time reading and pronouncing. In Group 2A, EL students communicated with one another in English and interacted with their NE classmates easily; for example, one showed an NE classmate how to do a part of a project on which the student needed clarification.

Group 3 consisted of high and mid-level English learners with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), so their English levels were high, and their general academic achievement was low. The students were eager to participate throughout the lesson; they would volunteer immediately before the beginning of a review card game. There was no hesitation in trying and making mistakes because they knew they would learn with their corrections (i.e., unafraid to be wrong in sounding out a

word sound by sound).

Group 4 students had various completion times for group assignments (one group finished very quickly, one took a medium amount of time, and one took an extended amount of time). Students worked well in pairs (if they were part of the same culture, they discussed answers in their native languages; if not, they discussed in English).

Group 5 students were comfortable with one another and socialized in English. When placed in a general education classroom (Group 5A), they tended to continue socializing with other EL students instead of their NE peers.

Cognitive Development

During the lesson, Group 1 students quickly remembered information from the reading they did earlier in the week. They showcased their abilities to read effectively with great joy, as emphasized by the teacher's positive reactions to their contributions. In Group 1A, HLs could read along at the same rate as their NE peers, while LLs struggled but still tried. The EL students participated the same amount as their NE peers, whether actively engaging in a lesson or repeating words with the class when prompted by the teacher. However, working with partners did help English Learners focus better on the task in class.

Group 2 students often participated, even if the answer they had needed to be corrected. Their clarifying questions lent insight into how they interpreted the lesson and allowed the teacher to adapt to better suit their line of thinking. In Group 2A, some EL students struggled with the independent work assigned to them, while others did well with it (this was similar to their NE peers).

Group 3 students benefited greatly from the mixture of IEP and English Learner aids; the combination allowed them to focus better and decrease academic frustration.

Group 4 students were very creative in defending their answers to ensure they got points in a review game. For example, students were asked to list four slow things, and one group presented a phone charger because it charges a device slowly, a thought that had not entered

the teacher’s nor the researcher’s mind (one heritage and one native English speaker, respectively).

Group 5 students took the average amount of time to come up with answers compared to one another. In the same review game that Group 4 did, a group also came up with the phone charger for the same reasons. They also thought of a leaf because it is slow when it falls off a tree. In Group 5A, EL students responded to questions easily and at the same speed as their NE classmates. During a

	Group 6	Group 6A	Group 7
Level(s), Grade(s), & Languages	5th grade level 1/2 student Brazilian Portuguese newcomer	Group 6, a level 3/4, & native English-speaking peer	4th & 5th grade Levels 3 and 4
Engagement	Responded quickly to questions given visual aids Allowed to respond in Portuguese Contributed thoughts confidently & easily	Responded quickly working individually with the teacher	Did not require much time to process & respond Fairly well-engaged throughout lesson No hesitation to ask questions Less advanced ELs relied on nonverbal communication more than more advanced ELs
Interactions with Classmates	N/A	Silent socialization	Easily interacted with one another. Would teach a peer if confused Primarily used English; sometimes used heritage languages
Interactions with Teachers	Comfortable with teacher	Cordial with teacher	Comfortable and happy with teacher

School 2 Observation Data

math lesson, when students were asked to show “5+1” on their fingers, one EL student showed three fingers on one hand and three on the other. The EL students generally appeared to pick up the lesson at the same time as most of their NE peers.

Interactions with Teachers

When interacting with the general education teacher, Group 1A students accepted aid readily and

showed the same air of respect that NE students showed.

Positive feedback from the teachers in Group 2 created trust, and respect was earned on both sides (teachers ensured students did not make fun of one another’s pronunciation). In Group 2A, EL students had no issues asking for help from the teacher, but they were not as familiar with them as their EL teacher. Because students constantly asked the teacher for help, it implied they were unsure about doing any work independently.

Group 7A	Group 8	Group 8A	Group 9
Level 3/4 student from Group 7 & native English-speaking peers 4th grade general education classroom	3rd & 4th grade Levels 3 and 4	Level 3/4 student from Group 8 & native English-speaking peers	2nd & 3rd grade Levels 2 and 3
Same amount of time to answer questions as compared to peers Same amount of engagement compared to NE peers	Did not take much time to process & respond	Took more time than NE peers in a vocabulary quiz Became more engaged in a lesson when provided visuals or hearing trigger words Eager to volunteer, especially in math	Responded in a reasonable timespan, especially with visual aids
Highly socially active	Worked comfortably & well with one another Communicated with one another in English Enjoyed volunteering to answer & remained thoroughly engaged throughout the lesson	Happily & comfortably interacted with peers.	Good at taking turns with one another Friendly with peers Socialized in English Excited to share their academic knowledge Easily slipped into a focus mode when given individual work
Comfortable and socially active with teacher	Enjoy pleasing the teacher & participating	Comfortable with both the general education teacher and English-speaking assistant teacher	Comfortable; happy to talk about their day

School 2 Observation Data

On the other hand, one EL student's work was shown as an example to the class, and they were very proud to have been chosen. This same student proved to be less focused in the EL class than in the mixed class.

Group 3 students were happy and comfortable with the teachers; they displayed total trust and confidence in them. Group 4 students were socially confident enough that they were willing to argue the validity of their answers to the teacher.

Group 5 students were also very comfortable interacting with the teacher; they hugged them when they were pulled out of their general education classroom. In Group 5A, they appeared significantly more comfortable with the EL teacher in the classroom with them. In the classroom, EL students seemed to be much quieter than other NE students and did not appear to actively engage with the story being read by the teacher (although neither did the majority of their peers).

Social-Emotional Development

Group 6 consisted of one fifth-grade level 1/2 (EE) student (their level was never specifically defined). This student is a Brazilian Portuguese student who arrived in the United States less than one year ago. They were very open in sharing their emotions, thoughts, and feelings through facial expressions, physical gestures, and verbalizations. In Group 6A's class, both EL students appeared to show confusion or distraction by putting their hands on their heads, fidgeting, and looking around. However, they verbally asked for elaboration on a topic or word in addition to using facial expressions.

When expressing emotion, Group 7 English Learners with more advanced English tended to rely on facial expressions more than their less advanced English

Learner peers. In Group 7A, the EL student was highly socially active with no visible hesitation to interact with their peers.

Group 8 students took turns well and supported one another when a student contributed the correct answer (for example, one student clapped when this occurred). They tended to express any thoughts or feelings aloud, although they sometimes used facial expressions to accompany the verbal expressions. The students loved volunteering to answer and were very engaged (they would raise their hands even when they did not know the answer). They were also eager to contribute when another classmate was struggling. In Group 8A, the EL student happily and comfortably interacted with their peers. They were helpful to their classmates (i.e., they picked up a peer's earbuds when they dropped them, and brought a classmate their lunchbox and water).

Group 9 students took turns well with each other and were, at minimum, friendly with everyone in the class. They spoke to one another in English and shared energy levels. Even when they were having trouble reading, they were not embarrassed, nor did they mind corrections.

Cognitive Development

The Group 6 student was eager to learn. They took criticism easily and corrected themselves when the teacher corrected them. During the lesson, they contributed additional thoughts confidently and easily and were unafraid to sound out words or speak, even if they lacked words. While in Group 6A's classroom, the high use of technology allowed for individual tasks, thus greatly aiding the EL students. However, the level 1/2 (EE) student did not fully understand verbal instructions without accompanying visuals (seen through the exit

ticket made by the general education teacher).

Group 7 students did not require much time to process and respond to questions prompted to them. A combination of languages was used in the classroom to help the less advanced EL students, as was a mix of technology. In Group 7A, the EL student engaged with the lesson as much as any other native English-speaking student. They took the same amount of time as any other student to answer questions and appeared to take instructions easily without confusion in their listening skills. Reading was a more difficult subject for them compared to math.

Group 8 students were highly engaged with the lesson, often jumping in to contribute their thinking or to elaborate on something presented. In Group 8A, while taking a vocabulary quiz, the EL student could begin before reading the sentences aloud as they did not immediately require this aid. They took more time than most of their peers in the class but were not the last to finish. Academically, they became more engaged in the lesson when provided visuals or hearing trigger words (i.e., “football fan,” “games on TV”). They were eager to volunteer when they were the first to answer a question, especially in math.

Group 9 students academically responded within a reasonable amount of time, especially when given visuals. Academically, they were excited to share the knowledge they had. When they were given an online assignment and a book, they easily slipped into focus mode, allowing them to work independently of one another.

Interactions with Teachers

The Group 6 student was extremely familiar with the teacher and had complete trust in them. They

benefited well from positive reinforcement but were also heavily intrinsically motivated. Group 6A EL students responded quickly when working with the teacher one-on-one. The EL students felt comfortable, if more cordial, working with their teacher; they were eager to learn and willing to take all constructive criticism and advice.

Group 7 students enjoyed pleasing the teacher and felt comfortable in the classroom. They did not hesitate to ask questions that came to mind that were accepted and expanded upon. Aid from the teacher was readily accepted while practicing (they would repeat a correction to ensure they cemented it in their minds). Students were well-engaged throughout the lesson (displayed by looking at the teacher and making eye contact). In Group 7A, the EL student had the same type of social-emotional interactions with their teacher and NE peers.

Group 8 students enjoyed pleasing the teacher and participating; they felt comfortable contributing in class and asking clarifying questions. In Group 8A, the student appeared happy interacting with the general education teacher and the assistant teacher in the classroom.

Group 9 students were generally comfortable with the teacher and often wished to take time before or during class to talk about their day or something they discovered recently.

In-Person and Online Interviews

In-person and online interviews were administered to teachers to gauge their perspective on English Learners and multilingual, multicultural education. Three EL teachers were interviewed in person (the teachers of the observed EL-only classes). Three general education

teachers responded to the online interview.

Summary of Interviews

According to teacher interviews, EL students may use more physical cues. However, those of equivalent levels in their languages interacted at similar social-emotional levels to their native English-speaking peers, demonstrating similar social-emotional development. Regarding cognitive development, EL students generally struggle more with reading and writing and may use drawings to aid them in their learning process. Additionally, their academic confidence in the classroom tends to be lower than that of their native English-speaking peers.

Across the board, teachers who have worked with English Learners support multilingual learning at a young age. They mention the benefits of multilingualism and how it could aid their students, especially when speaking of the integration of English Learners. They find that acquiring a language prevalent in the community (such as Brazilian Portuguese) can help native/heritage English speakers better connect with their newcomer/EL peers. It also has cognitive benefits and creates better opportunities in the future. Teachers of English Learners specifically believe that multilingualism at a young age helps students develop cultural awareness/competence, as well as allows students to think more creatively.

Limitations

This research was not controlled in any way (it consisted solely of qualitative data), so it is difficult to articulate the causation of one behavior or another. Additionally, there are various affective factors, including age, socioeconomic status, years of schooling, and other social

variables (experiences in school, home environment, personal background, etc.). These factors also could not be controlled for and thus must be considered with the results.

Conclusion

The observations conducted line up with previous literature, which indicates that multilingual students with relatively equivalent capacities in their languages are social-emotionally advanced and make cognitive connections easily as compared to monolingual students (Dewaele & Wei, 2012; Kroll et al., 2012; Kwon et al., 2021; Morales et al., 2013). However, it works against some conclusions from previous literature. Dewaele's (2019) conclusion that there is no correlation between multilingualism and higher levels of emotional intelligence is disrupted by the more advanced displays of social-emotional intelligence by the EL students observed. The observations and interviews emphasize the benefits of balanced language capabilities on social-emotional and cognitive development in children.

Students with equivalent capabilities in their languages easily interacted with peers and teachers, sometimes in multiple languages. Their cultural backgrounds, which were directly tied to their heritage/native language(s), allowed them to interact differently than a born and raised English-speaking student would. However, students with more novice capabilities in speaking English struggled to be as socially interactive and would get frustrated more quickly due to their lack of understanding. With teacher(s), EL students with equivalent capabilities in their languages remained comfortable, friendly, and respectful. They contributed a similar amount as their NE peers in-class lessons and

group activities and were comfortable accepting positive criticisms and corrections.

Students with equivalent capabilities in their languages were alert and engaged with the lessons and could come to reasonable conclusions based on their thinking processes. Students with novice English levels were likelier to appear bored or indifferent because of their lack of understanding. However, if they were engaged, they could make similar connections; they just could not articulate them in English. Students with more novice English levels would excitedly whisper the answer to their advanced English-level classmates when the question was translated, or they observed something that made sense. Additionally, some students with more novice speaking or listening comprehension levels in English proved to have more advanced writing skills, thus allowing them to demonstrate their knowledge in another format. In the EL-only, STEM-focused environment, students with advanced levels of English tended to understand the concepts taught to them quickly, displaying quick cognitive connections and flexibility (Marzecová et al., 2013) based solely on observations. Advanced EL students showed cognitive skills equivalent to their NE peers in mixed EL and NE classrooms. However, they tended to perform better in math than any other subject, evidenced by their responses to class questions, individual work, and teacher perspectives. Novice ELs displayed solid cognitive skills and engagement levels in EL-only classrooms, including critical thinking and clarifying questions.

Overwhelmingly, teachers who work with English Learners in any capacity believe students should learn an additional language to their heritage/native one at a young age. The teachers primarily learned their

languages in academic settings, languages they do not speak comfortably in their daily life, so they often note no difference in their personal view of the world. They do note that learning an additional language is difficult and helps them be more patient with their students. They do not report significant differences in the students' social-emotional or cognitive development compared to their peers besides novice ELs using less verbal language initially and general ELs benefiting more from imagery in lessons.

Per the data collected, English Learners are, at minimum, on par with their native English-speaking peers both social-emotionally and cognitively. Thus, learning an additional language at a young age is not detrimental in any manner to children and could be implemented in elementary schools with only benefits to be gained.

A student with a similar level of skill in all their acquired languages will likely experience the most benefits that multilingualism offers. This includes enhancement in executive function, working memory, greater creativity skills, and good use of metalinguistics. They also show greater social-cultural awareness because of their upbringing (usually a multicultural household in addition to being multilingual). Therefore, the data collected suggests a correlation between acquiring multiple languages and high social-emotional and cognitive engagement in the classroom.

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Perception of Social and Physical Environmental Risk Factors Affecting Women Experiencing Homelessness: A Mixed Method Study

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Abstract

Homeless people in general confront many difficulties that make their lives very challenging. However, when it comes to women experiencing homelessness, those challenges can threaten their well-being by increasing the risk of victimization and decreasing the levels of personal safety. This research project has three aims: first, to better understand the link between victimization and social and physical environment as it relates to homeless women; second, to recognize which aspects of the social and physical environment homeless women find threatening and difficult to overcome; and third, to examine the areas of conflict within the coexistence of homeless women in a mixed-gender transitional shelter. This study is based on a mixed-method approach. The data are drawn from ten in-depth interviews and secondary survey data collected by Ozanam Manor, a faith-based agency. The qualitative analysis uses a naturalistic perspective to study homeless women in their living settings in a transitional shelter and provides a rich, contextualized understanding of homeless women's perception of risk. For the quantitative analysis, we also analyzed secondary survey data collected by Ozanam Manor and used correlation analyses to understand the relationship between social

environments and respondents' safety perceptions. Our findings reported that the lives of the participants were not characterized by a unique challenge, but rather by a combination of interconnected challenges that perpetuated their situations of homelessness.

Introduction

This report addressed women whose traumas have led them to homelessness. This study was based on a mixed-method approach: the qualitative side was based on a series of interviews with women who are currently in a shelter. The qualitative aim was to obtain a rich, contextualized understanding of homeless women's perception of risk. The quantitative component was based on the analysis of secondary survey data collected by the agency and used correlation analyses to understand the relationship between social environments and respondents' safety perceptions. The overall goal of this study is to provide an insight into this population in our society which struggles to be acknowledged and most of all accepted.

Since there is no one direct path to homelessness, preventing and eradicating homelessness becomes an intricate endeavor. Previous cross-sectional studies postulate that homelessness is a chronic condition

with no way out; however, R. Broll and L. Huey found that homelessness is a fluid existence with individuals entering, exiting, and in some cases, re-entering numerous times (Koegel, 2004, as cited in Broll & Huey, 2020, p. 3380-3381).

Homelessness is a growing concern in the United States and around the world due to the consistently high numbers and disparities in subpopulations, each of these having its unique challenges, such as the case of women experiencing homelessness. Various factors can lead to women becoming homeless: these factors include drug use, economic problems, physical and mental health issues, domestic violence, and others. These factors are unpredictable and can result in women experiencing homelessness multiple times in their lives. Violent victimization, marital problems, and family disputes are other elements that often lead to frequent experiences of homelessness (Milaney, Williams, Lockerbie, et al., 2020). Homeless women are more likely to have drug and alcohol-abusing parents and are more likely to have spent time in a group or foster families (D'Ercole & Atrening, 1990; Wood, Valdez, Hayashi, & Shen, 1990). Some scholars have claimed that structural factors play a role in the emergence of homelessness among women. Inadequate welfare policies and insufficient family benefits have been referenced as explanations for higher-than-expected homelessness rates in the country, and, it is argued, have permitted homelessness to thrive (Alatorre, 2016).

It is important to note that throughout this research article, and in previous research, we have utilized the term gender specific as a reference to the challenges that women encounter specifically to their gender, that is, to the challenges that arise from the fact

that they are perceived as women. Naturally, men, as well as other genders, have specific challenges that arise from their perceived gender in the eyes of society, but this article will only relate to gender-specific challenges for cis-gendered women.

Homeless women, specifically those who have suffered trauma-related events, are subject to revictimization, ironically when trying to seek remedies to their situation, and/or trying to reintegrate into society is the population of this study. Homeless shelters provide many services such as showers, laundry, mail, voice mail, phone, lockers, case management, training programs, and donated goods, including clothing, shoes, hygiene products, and household goods. These services, while vital, may not be enough for the homeless women who have most likely suffered trauma: they may need specific counseling for their fears which may have led them to homelessness and complicate an already difficult existence, often making them feel invisible to society (Phipps, Dalton, Maxwell & Cleary, 2019).

A great percentage of homeless women have been exposed to traumas of neglect, psychological, physical, and/or sexual abuse at some stage of their lives and then must endure different types of victimization, self-victimization, and/or revictimization (Alatorre, 2019; Milaney, et al., 2020). A recent program evaluation from a faith-based agency indicated that several of its female clients are concerned about being revictimized in the shelter and that such fears might hinder or prevent their reintegration into society (Posada-Abadía, Marín-Martín, Oter-Quintana, et al. 2021). By understanding the dangers and challenges that a homeless woman who has been exposed to trauma may confront, the way society perceives her and others who have experienced similar

traumatic situations, regardless of gender or color, may improve their chances for successful reintegration.

The program evaluation cited above provides the cases that this project will study to gain insights into these women's experiences. The following case is an example of how the experiences of traumatized women lead to homelessness and invisibility. Laurie (a pseudonym), a female resident of a mixed shelter, revealed traces of mental illness such as depression and anxiety. Though she claimed to be functional, she also suffered from alcoholism and addiction to cocaine. A family atmosphere of abuse and neglect led her into abusing alcohol by the age of 7. At the age of 9, she became addicted to drugs, and this took a physical and legal toll on her life; Laurie became a drug dealer by the age of 14, delivering drugs to "customers." After being arrested and then released from a subsequent arrest, she commented that "drugs took over," and her son was taken from her. Laurie spent over 15 years being homeless, which she claimed was her choice: "I was so hurt that I decided to vanish." She supported herself by being "a prostitute and a drug dealer." She lived in the streets and claims to have carried a garden spade "to whack people with." She finally described herself as becoming "invisible" and that she still feels invisible though in a shelter. The traumatic experiences suffered by Laurie appear to indicate a pattern of a correlation between trauma and homelessness.

Tragically, many women live in a reality like the one described above. This harsh reality may cause homelessness. Throughout this project, we examined how childhood trauma and lifestyle decisions have affected and influenced the lives of the women from St. Vincent de Paul's Ozanam Manor, a transitional mixed-gender (a facility that houses people from all genders, primarily

cis-gendered women, and men) homeless shelter located in Arizona. We also analyzed how trauma and victimization contribute to female homelessness. During our interviews, the women in our study revealed that traumatic circumstances like unemployment, substance abuse, sexual assault, dysfunctional family dynamics, and negatively charged social interactions were obstacles to their success, independence, and growth in their daily lives. These problems pose challenges for our female participants as they work to transition from homelessness to stable employment and secure housing.

This study is important for a variety of reasons: society and the people who live in conventional communities may have prejudiced and stereotypical views of what homelessness looks like, what causes it, and how to treat those who experience it (Tutty et. al, 2013). We hope that this project will help dispel some—if not all—of the stigmas associated with homelessness and give people a better understanding of the marginalized communities and groups that exist in the general population of the homeless.

Literature Review

This review of literature focused on what causes women to be homeless (drugs, drinking, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), being victimized) how social, physical, and environmental factors often increase a woman's exposure to being revictimized, and how these experiences of revictimization might cause them to be fearful when she lives in a mixed gender shelter.

In the specific case of women experiencing homelessness (WEH), research indicates that many homeless women have suffered abuse and that there is a strong association between environmental risk factors

and violence (Castro, Cerellino, & Ribera, 2017). Moreover, the traumatic events these women experience are a strong indicator of revictimization (Alatorre, 2016; Castro, Cerellino, & Ribera, 2017). This may be a critical reason why some women either avoid homeless shelters or, when living in them, are fearful.

Women who have experienced violence, lack resources and assistance, and are dealing with trauma are more likely to experience revictimization, which could prompt them to take actions that contributed to their homelessness, such as abusing drugs and getting into hostile altercations with other people (Browne, 1993; Tutty et al., 2013). Furthermore, women dealing with depression frequently abuse alcohol and other substances (Bassuk et al., 1986; Bassuk & Rosenberg, 1988), events that make it challenging for them to get a job, maintain interpersonal relationships, and effectively communicate (Browne, 1993). The inability to function properly, express their concerns and needs, or socialize in a healthy manner with others, such as other women in society who have not experienced what they have, may make them even more vulnerable to attacks, and bullying, and increases their likelihood of becoming homeless.

Social and environmental risk factors increase these women's exposure to different forms of victimization. For instance, homeless women may suffer from medical conditions, such as not being able to hear or see well, or they may find it difficult to walk. They are exposed to high-risk environments, including living in mixed-gender shelters (Bullen, 2021). They are particularly vulnerable to multiple forms of victimization, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse (Shoemaker et al, 2019). In addition, the social and physical environmental risk factors increase the possibility for revictimization,

recycling the trauma that placed them in vulnerable positions. Therefore, many homeless women have reported being fearful when living in shelters, and that they avoid shelters because they feel uncomfortable living with other women and/or men (Belknap, 2007).

Experiencing financial hardship and the lack of protective support may prompt homeless women to continue living in violent situations, including staying in a mixed homeless shelter (Tutty, 2006) Women who are traumatized or violently abused are even more likely to be re-victimized before, during and after homelessness (Tutty et al., 2013).

A 2021 ATP report found that a gender-specific approach in a mixed transitional shelter must consider distinct differences in how women and men relate to each other in the shelter. In general, women tend to consider relationship-forming a significant part of their stay in a shelter, especially given their past traumatic experiences. The main motivation why they try to bond with other women is that they are willing to talk with each other. However, because of their past traumatic experiences, constant revictimization, and exposure to such high-risk environments, the coexistence among the shelter's residents might be the biggest factor when it comes to re-victimization. In short, "the re-traumatization of homeless women during their healing process while staying in the temporary residence is a big concern. This concern amplifies when the temporary residence is a mixed transitional shelter." (Aguilar-Delgado and Nunes, 2021).

Methodology Approach and Research Design

Mixed-Method Framework

A mixed-methods approach is used because this

study deals with human beings facing difficult problems. Our plan for integrating a mixed-method approach followed Hanson, Plano, Petska, Creswell & Creswell's study (2005, p.226) which indicates mixed methods investigations may be used to (a) better understand a research problem by converging numeric trends from quantitative data and specific details from qualitative data; (b) identify variables/constructs that may be measured subsequently through the use of existing instruments or the development of new ones; (c) obtain statistical, quantitative data and results from a sample of a population and use them to identify individuals who may expand on the results through qualitative data and results; and (d) convey the needs of individuals or groups of individuals who are marginalized or underrepresented.

Following Hanson and his colleagues, we determined the purpose/motive for this study, as well as the research questions and the type of data that needed to be collected. We also took other factors into account including the philosophical basis for this study. Furthermore, this study was exploratory in nature, with the main goal being to learn from the indigenous perspective of the participants. Thus, the specific method of the interview was used. This study began with open-ended interviews which were then complemented by a descriptive analysis of the population (Wengraf, 2001).

Qualitative Design

Qualitative methodology was used in gathering data to obtain valuable information from the perspective of the participant (Alatorre, 2016). Qualitative methodology is best suited to dealing with human beings facing difficult circumstances (Sandstrom, et al., 2003). This methodological approach takes advantage of the in-

depth, contextual nature of qualitative findings (Hanson et al., 2005). The sampling was purposive because we intended to select participants who would allow us to maximize our understanding of the phenomenon (Alatorre, 2016). Furthermore, the goal of this study aligns with Onwuegbuzie and Leech's (2007, p. 240) objective "to obtain insights into particular educational, social, and familial processes and practices that exist within a specific location and context." (Connolly 1998, as cited in Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007, p. 240). The researchers conducted five in-depth interviews because the project aims to understand the underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings of the participants (Sandstrom, et al., 2003).

Criteria for Recruitment and Selection of Participants

From the list of clients who were willing to participate in the study, the research team selected 5 participants based on the following criteria of selection:

- Identify as women.
- Adults.
- Previous exposure to trauma-related events.
- Between 19 – 85 years of age.
- Must be able to speak and read English.
- Must be mentally capable.

Data Collection/ Themes and Codes

In the interviews, the team identified recurring themes that were significant contributing factors to the women becoming homeless. Through carefully constructed questions, we examined how these themes appeared and expressed themselves in the lives of women. Additionally, we found that many of the themes overlapped or were a consequence of others.

As a result, we concluded that the women's lives were not characterized by a single challenge but rather by a variety of interrelated challenges that ultimately resulted in homelessness.

To convey our findings in a more organized manner, we created diagrams. The six themes (Abuse/Trauma, Avoidance, Health Issues, Relationships Issues, Unemployment, and Housing) that the five participants had in common were outlined in the diagram. The themes intertwined like a cause-and-effect relationship; for one theme, another appeared, which sparked another, which gave way to yet another, and so on. There were many more, but we decided to concentrate on those six because we believed they were the main causes/factors of women's homelessness.

We included "Abuse/Trauma" in our assessment because our female participants had suffered from emotional and psychological trauma because of violent situations and occurrences such as sexual assault, domestic violence, and family neglect, and was also one of the inclusion criteria. For the second theme, we chose to use the term "Avoidance" since the women refused to respond to our more personal questions and our attempts to extract more in-depth answers. The women also told us that they avoided interacting with other people and communicating with them while at the shelter. We also noticed that they expressed symptoms of social anxiety and/or other forms of social fear, all of which aligned with the theme of Avoidance.

Many of the women had health issues that left them with physical disabilities, limiting their mobility. The women also struggled with various mental illnesses, so we labeled this theme as "Health Issues". On another note, we decided that anything related to "Relationship

Issues" would be themed after the women struggle with trust and conflicts with others.

We referred to any job instability and cash flow problems as "Unemployment." Some of the participants, but not all, experienced problems with their finances or their jobs. Anything related to an unpredictable lifestyle or unstable housing (such as prior drug convictions, lack of support or familial ties, lack of income, etc.) that impacted or prevented the women from retaining shelter before or during their stay at Ozanam Manor was classified under the theme of "Housing".

2019 Sample for Quantitative Analyses

Ozanam Manor distributed a survey to their residents in 2019 during Quarter 3. In all, there were 47 participants in the survey. After dropping any cases with values missing, we have 42 respondents in our analytical sample. In the analytic sample, 64% of the respondents are white, and 64% are male. Descriptive statistics for the 2019 sample are shown in Table 2.

See Table 2.

2019 Survey Measures

Gender is coded as Male = 1, female = 0. Race is coded using dummy variables for Black and Other Race (with white excluded as a reference category). Age is coded 1 = 18 – 35 years old to 4 = 62 years or older. Length of stay at Ozanam Manor is coded 1 = less than a month to 5 = 7 or more months. Needs met by Ozanam Manor are coded using a Likert scale from 1 – not at all to 5 = extremely well. Connectedness the residents feel to staff is coded using a Likert scale from 1 = not at all connected to 5 = extremely connected. Connectedness residents feel to residents is coded using a Likert scale

from 1 = not at all connected to 5 = extremely connected. Perceived safety is coded using a Likert scale from 1 = not at all safe to 5 = very safe.

2021 Sample for Quantitative Analyses

Ozanam Manor distributed a survey to their residents in 2021 in Quarter 1. In the survey, there were a total of 35 participants. After eliminating missing variables, 29 respondents remained in our analytical sample. In the analytic sample, the percentage of males was 72.41% compared to women's 27.59%. 41.38% of the respondents are white, and 58.62% are non-white. 3.45% percent of the population was aged 18-35 years old, and 36-49 years old, whereas 58.62% of the participants were in the 50-61 age range, and 34.48% percent were aged 62 or older. The remaining descriptive statistics are shown in Table 3.

See Table 3.

2021 Survey Measures

Age is coded in the categories of 1-4. Category 1 for age is = "18 through 35 years old". Category 2 is coded = 36 through 49 years old. Category 3 is = "50 through 61 years old". Category 4 is "62 years or older". Gender is coded male = 1, female = 0. Race is a coded dummy variable for black and other races (with white excluded as a reference category). Length of Stay at Ozanam Manor is coded 1 = less than a month to 5 = 7 or more months. Needs Met by Ozanam Manor are coded using a Likert scale from 1 = not at all to 5 = extremely well. Connectedness to staff is coded using a Likert scale from 1 = not at all connected to 5 = extremely connected. Connectedness to Residents is coded using a Likert scale from 1 = not at all connected to 5 = extremely connected.

Perceived Safety is coded using a Likert scale from 1 = not at all safe to 5 = very safe.

2022 Sample for Quantitative Analyses

The original data set consisted of 40 people. Following the elimination of all missing data from the analytical sample, 38 participants remained. 52.63 percent of people were white, compared to 47.37 percent non-white. There were 26.32 percent women and 73.68 percent men. 13.16 percent of the population was aged 36 to 49, 47.37 percent was in the 50 to 61 age range, and 39.47 percent was 62 or older. The descriptive statistics for the 2022 sample are presented in Table 4.

See Table 4.

2022 Survey Measures

Needs Met by Ozanam Manor has a range of 1 to 5, where 1= "not at all" and 5= "extremely well". Connectedness to Staff ranges from 1 to 5, with 1= "not at all connected" and 5= "extremely connected". Connectedness to Residents ranges from 1 to 5, with 1= "not at all connected" and 5= "extremely connected". Perceived Safety ranges from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates "not at all safe" and 5 indicates "very safe". Perceived Confidence ranges from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating "not all that confident" to 5 as "very confident". Perceived Clearance has a range of 1 to 5, with 1 being "not well at all" and 5 being "extremely well". Gender ranges from 0 to 1. 0 means "males", 1 means "females", and . = "prefer not to say". Age ranges from 1-4. 1 denotes the youngest age group, 4 the oldest, and . = "prefer not to say". Race ranges from 0 to 1, with 0 representing "non-whites", 1 representing "whites", and . = "prefer not to say". Duration of Stay ranges from 1 to 5. 1 represents "less than 1 month" to 5 represents "7 or more months".

Results and Discussion

Qualitative Results

The qualitative analysis was an interview-based analysis, in which the researcher recorded the participants' behavior in their natural setting, as described by Sandstrom et al. (2003). The analysis was based on the systematic inspection of the substantive data, created by the interviews (Emerson et. al., 1995). Furthermore, from the analysis, the researchers sought to develop generalizations of common threads of trauma, fear, and victimization and the common threat of problematic situations which include personal and social issues (Wengraf, 2001).

The raw data were studied for themes and consistent occurrences and/or reactions from the homeless women. The basic narrative pattern was structured in the following sections: a description of their traumatic experiences; how they avoid and are resistant to getting help; the reasons and motivations to seek assistance; and their reflections on their specific experiences and interactions with other homeless people and shelter management. A description of specific issues and obstacles that they confronted daily was also included (Alatorre, 2016).

We found themes recurring among our participants: Abuse/Trauma, Avoidance, Relationship Issues, Trust Issues, Unemployment, and Housing are the themes that, in our opinion, participants have the most in common.

Before we go into detail about our findings, we would like to point out that the names in this study, which will be mentioned later, are all made up. Because confidentiality is so important, we decided to give our participants fictitious names to protect them from

harm and keep their data anonymized. We also did this to humanize our participants as opposed to dismissing them as mere test subjects. The participants in this study are referred to as *Alyssa, Bella, Courtney, Diana, and Elizabeth*.

Abuse/Trauma is one of the issues that emerged throughout our research, especially because the sampling of the participants was purposive and specifically directed toward trauma. The women disclosed that they had been the victims of abuse at some point in their lives; they stated that they had been subjected to physical, emotional, psychological, and verbal abuse, as well as family neglect.

Elizabeth and Courtney expressly admitted to having endured similar abuse through sexual assault. Both Elizabeth and Courtney's sexual assaults can be considered a case of family neglect. Since no one intervened to stop Courtney's uncle from abusing her sexually, her story is regarded as a case of family neglect as well as sexual abuse. Elizabeth was sexually assaulted in her early stages between her childhood and pre-teen age. The sexual assault occurred when her mother was still alive and before she was legally separated from her; the identity of the perpetrator is unknown. Family neglect and sexual assault can occur in many ways.

Due to Alyssa's husband's neglect, hostility, and disregard for her deteriorating health, she moved in with her grandfather. After her grandfather passed away, Bella's relatives evicted her from the home in which she lived with her grandfather, making her a victim of family neglect as well. Bella and Alyssa both ended up on the streets when they were most vulnerable. Because both of Elizabeth's parents were alcoholics, her neglect was different from Alyssa's and Bella's. Elizabeth's parents

were kind to her, but they disregarded her. This pushed Elizabeth into not wanting to become an alcoholic.

Bella's experience with domestic abuse included both actual violence and the threat of it. Courtney and Diana both mentioned experiencing verbal and physical abuse from their partners and even their kids. These women were all subjected to torture and suffering that could have killed them. They ran away from their unhealthy relationships and settings to try to survive, but this left them without homes in the end.

Many of the participants in our interviews revealed poor communication skills, feelings of social isolation, and fear of other people and group activities, all of which we categorized as Avoidance. This was a crucial theme to pay attention to since it demonstrates how individuals can become distrustful, fearful, and disengaged because of the events in their lives. For example, Diana and Elizabeth responded that they were reluctant to discuss or communicate with others about the traumas they had experienced before entering the shelter and that they tended to keep such private information to themselves when asked if they had open communication with the other residents or staff at the shelter. Diana, Elizabeth, and Courtney all reported a preference to refrain from interacting with others in social situations. Diana said she would rather stay away from the women at the shelter because she thinks they can be unpleasant and rude. Due to her PTSD, Courtney stated that she feels uneasy and on guard around other people.

The women informed us that they had gotten into altercations with the staff and other residents, mainly other women, at the shelter. Diana's dog was removed from the shelter because of a miscommunication with a staff member, and Courtney had numerous disputes with

the other women. All disagreements, misunderstandings, instability, and a lack of trust in others were categorized as Relationship Issues by the research team.

Some of the women we spoke with admitted having Health Issues, some of which were brought on by violent crimes, years of occupational stress, or medical conditions. Except for Diana, all the women mentioned having physical mobility problems, ranging from back pain to difficulty walking. Bella, Elizabeth, and Alyssa all experience back pain. Due to the pain from her sciatica, Alyssa finds it difficult to stand for extended periods. She frequently needs to take breaks to relieve pain. Due to previous surgeries, Alyssa's mobility is also restricted. Her body suffered because of the chemotherapy she had to undergo because she had cancer. She underwent more surgery in the following years after first being diagnosed, which further damaged her body and reduced her mobility.

Since Bella has fibromas on her feet and vision issues, she currently relies on a walker to help her get around. Even though she remained silent, it is safe to presume that she has ongoing disabilities that limit her mobility now due to her past exposure to domestic and gun violence. Due to severe leg and back injuries sustained in a vehicle accident when she was nine years old, Elizabeth needs a walker and suffers from arthritis. She suffered multiple fractures because of the collision, including a broken skull, hip, and both of her legs. Her age, combined with all this past suffering, wears her down.

Courtney is confined to a wheelchair because of a spinal cord injury sustained when she was carjacked at the age of 23. She can feel her legs but is unable to move them. Courtney has mental health concerns in addition to her mobility issues. She suffers from PTSD episodes

regularly because of her prior trauma.

Another issue that emerged throughout the research was unemployment. Many of the participants were in the process of trying to obtain a job. Bella had a goal to get work, even if it was part-time. She wanted to have some sort of income to rely on. Elizabeth lost her job when she became homeless because she had to work from home. She is now looking for a job, online or in an office; but the job must work around her disability. Alyssa also cannot work because she cannot stand for a long period without feeling pain and needing to rest. She currently relies on her social security. Courtney lost everything when her landlady burned her things. She then became homeless and with no finances or documents, she was looking to find a job so that she could save up for an apartment.

Wellness is another issue that emerged throughout our research. This theme considers how the participants felt in terms of safety and support, how connected they felt with both staff and other residents, and what solutions they had to feel better and deal with their trauma.

All the women we interviewed revealed that they felt safe at the shelter and that Ozanam Manor met their needs and supported them in every way they could. Alyssa reported that she felt safer than ever, and she did not feel uncomfortable around the men at the shelter because they behaved decently. In terms of support and meeting her needs, Alyssa stated that the residents and staff at Ozanam Manor “talk to you like you are somebody and not a homeless person.” They talk to her as if she is a friend or a family member. Alyssa feels a connection to them. For example, she needs vitamins, and the staff gets them for her. Ozanam Manor also provides help with legal

issues by giving residents access to an attorney. Because of this, Alyssa feels connected to the staff. They help her stay in control and not overreact.

Bella says that she feels safe in all parts of the shelter and one reason is because of the people. She also feels supported when the shelter provides group therapy in which they will do something creative such as “stress color” or make a vision board. Another thing she does to calm down is to go into a new mindset and shift from negative to positive feelings. She tries to be grateful for what she has instead of focusing on her past trauma.

Courtney feels that she is safe because when she wants or needs to talk to someone about something that is bothering her, the staff, the residents, and the case managers are always around to listen and give advice. At nighttime, there are security cameras and staff members who walk around to make sure that everyone is safe. This helps Courtney feel safe. Courtney tells us that if a problem arises with herself and with others instead of kicking them out of the shelter, the staff tries to talk with them to see how they can help to make the situation better. The staff truly care about the residents and try to do everything they can to make it better for everyone. To help control her temper, Courtney takes classes that help her deal with conflict in a more peaceful approach.

Diana says that she feels safe at Ozanam Manor. If there is ever a problem, she knows where to go and who to speak to. They provided her with her cubicle which does not have a door so there is limited privacy. She feels comfortable with both males and females and enjoys being around both genders. They all want to talk to her as if they are her friends. If she ever has a problem that is personal or involves another resident, she feels all right about it because she knows whom to go to. Elizabeth

tells us she feels safe because they have a good group of people who think the same way since they are going through similar events in their lives compared to other shelters. Everyone looks out for each other and helps.

Another issue that emerged throughout the research was housing. Since Courtney's landlady evicted her and then burned her things, she is trying to rebuild her life by attempting to get an apartment that she can afford. Courtney is on a waitlist for subsidized housing. Diana's home situation was fluid as she moved from one place to another. During her last stay with her son and his girlfriend, she was abused by his son's girlfriend. Elizabeth hopes to get a job and save money to be able to get a place with her daughter.

Through our interviews, we noticed many themes that were common among the participants. As we analyzed the themes, we noticed that they had a big impact on homelessness and the quality of life.

In conclusion, because all the women interviewed in our study were afflicted by abuse/trauma, ranging from physical and emotional violence to neglect, this impacted their lives in later stages. Abuse and trauma occurred at various ages, from childhood to more advanced ages, but no matter the age, it led to further issues and ultimately homelessness. All women have suffered, in varying degrees, avoidance, relationship issues, and health problems. Each issue can take varying paths, such as creating or impacting relationships with others, as well as complicating health issues that may have been in place early on but were certainly exacerbated by the neglect of those who might be able to help, or no help being offered by rocky or broken relationships. Of course, these problems, whether physical or emotional, make employment doubtful or impossible. Physical problems

can make work (even part-time work) impossible, such as stocking shelves in a store or working in the fast-food industry. Avoidance issues can disable the woman from applying for work, and if hired, from working well with others. Without employment, the woman cannot request housing assistance, and no prospect for housing: homelessness, or living in a shelter. If the shelter is not capable of treating the "whole homeless woman," from her emotional and physical issues rooted in trauma, then this woman has little or no hope of successfully rejoining society.

Quantitative Results

For the quantitative results, According to Table 5, Perceived Safety is positively correlated to Connectedness to Other Residents ($r = 0.5341$, $p = 0.0003$). Length of Stay is negatively correlated to Age ($r = -0.4693$, $p = 0.0017$). We expected to find that Needs Met positively correlated with Perceived Safety and that Perceived Safety positively correlated with Connectedness to Staff, however, we did not find these relationships in this sample.

Table 6 presents correlational results from the 2021 sample. Connectedness to Staff is positively correlated to Needs Met ($r = 0.4910$, $p = 0.0068$). Connectedness to Other Resident is positively correlated to Needs Met ($r = 0.4342$, $p = 0.0186$). Connectedness to Other Residents is positively correlated with Connectedness to Staff ($r = 0.4450$, $p = 0.0156$). Length of Stay is positively correlated with being male ($r = 0.3866$, $p = 0.0383$).

Table 7 shows several positive correlations between variables in the 2022 sample. There is a positive correlation between Perceived Confidence and Perceived Safety ($r=0.4754$, $p=0.0026$). Perceived Clearance and

Perceived Safety have a positive correlation ($r=0.6773$, $p=0.0000$). Perceived Clearance is positively correlated with Perceived Confidence ($r=0.4857$, $p=0.0020$). Needs Met is positively correlated with Connectedness to Staff ($r=0.4731$, $p=0.0027$). Needs Met correlates positively with Connectedness to Residents ($r=0.3243$, $p=0.0470$). A positive correlation exists between Needs Met and Perceived Safety ($r=0.3589$, $p=0.0269$). The correlation between Needs Met and Perceived Clearance is positive ($r=0.3218$, $p=0.0488$). Being white is negatively correlated with Needs Met ($r=-0.3428$, $p=0.0351$).

that feeling connected to other residents is associated with perceptions of needs being met and perceived safety. However, our sample size is too small to conduct further regression analyses and may not be sufficiently powered to detect small or medium effect sizes (Cohen, 1992). The changes in survey measures across the years also make it impossible to conduct longitudinal analyses. While our results are an important first step to understanding homelessness in a faith-based agency, a larger sample with data from more years will help us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the lives of residents at the shelter.

Conclusion

Overall, similar to what we find with the qualitative interviews, the quantitative results show

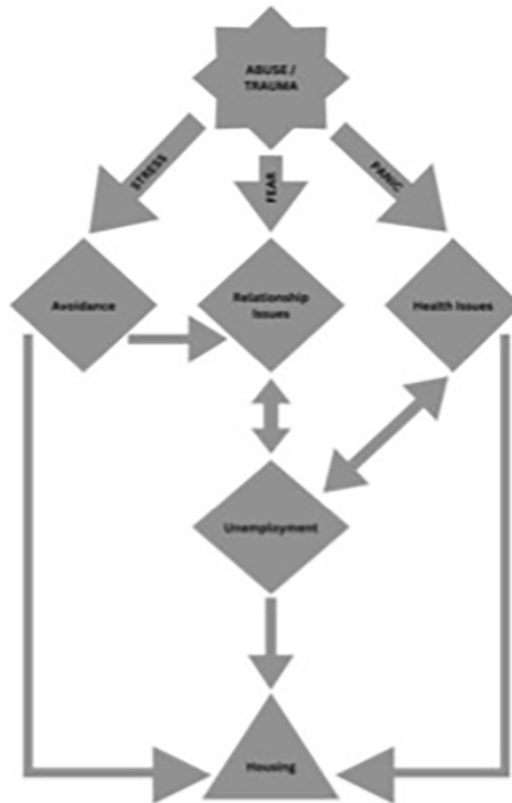


Figure 1

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the 2019 Q3 Sample (N = 42)

Variable	Mean or %	SD	Range
Age		—	2 - 4
36 – 49 years old	7.14%	—	2
50 – 61 years old	47.62%	—	3
62+ years old	45.24%	—	4
Gender		—	
Male	64.29%	—	0
Female	35.71%	—	1
Race		—	
White	64.29%	—	1
Non-white	35.71%	—	0
Length of stay at Ozanam Manor	3.5	1.419	1 - 5
Needs met at Ozanam Manor		—	2 - 5
A little	4.76%	—	2
Fairly well	4.76%	—	3
Very well	38.10%	—	4
Extremely well	52.38%	—	5
Connectedness the residents feel to staff		—	1 - 3
Not at all connected	2.38%	—	1
A little bit connected	11.90%	—	2
Fairly connected	85.71%	—	3
Connectedness the residents feel to other residents		—	1 - 5
Not at all connected	9.52%	—	1
A little bit connected	9.52%	—	2
Fairly connected	42.86%	—	3
Very connected	21.43%	—	4
Extremely well	16.67%	—	5
Perceived safety		—	2 - 5
Somewhat unsafe	4.76%	—	2
Neither safe nor unsafe	16.67%	—	3
Somewhat safe	35.71%	—	4
Very safe	42.86%	—	5

Abbreviations: SD = standard deviation.

Notes: Standard deviations are omitted for dummy variables.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of the Feedback Survey of Ozanam Manor, 2021, Q1 (N = 29)

Variable	Mean or %	SD	Range
Age		—	1 - 4
18 – 35 years old	3.45%	—	1
36 – 49 years old	3.45%	—	2
50 – 61 years old	58.62%	—	3
62+ years old	34.48%	—	4
Gender		—	
Male	72.41%	—	0
Female	27.59%	—	1
Race		—	
White	41.38%	—	1
Non-white	58.62%	—	0
Length of stay at Ozanam Manor	3.3	1.47	1 - 5
Needs met at Ozanam Manor	4.13	—	2 - 5
A little	3.45%	—	2
Fairly well	10.34%	—	3
Very well	55.17%	—	4
Extremely well	31.03%	—	5
Connectedness the residents feel to staff	3.58	—	1 - 5
Not at all connected	3.45%	—	1
A little bit connected	6.90%	—	2
Fairly connected	31.03%	—	3
Very connected	44.83%	—	4
Extremely connected	13.79%	—	5
Connectedness the residents feel to other residents	2.79	—	1 - 5
Not at all connected	3.45%	—	1
A little bit connected	41.38%	—	2
Fairly connected	34.48%	—	3
Very connected	13.79%	—	4
Extremely well	6.90%	—	5
Perceived safety	3.86	—	2 - 5
Somewhat unsafe	3.45%	—	2
Neither safe nor unsafe	34.48%	—	3
Somewhat safe	34.48%	—	4
Very safe	27.59%	—	5

Abbreviations: SD = standard deviation.

Notes: Standard deviations are omitted for dummy variables.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of the Feedback Survey of Ozanam Manor, January 2022, Q1 (N = 38)

Variable	Mean or %	SD	Range
Independent Variables			
<i>Connectedness to Staff</i>	3.947368	.7332773	3 - 5
<i>Connectedness to Residents</i>	3.078947	.8504873	1 - 5
<i>Perceived Clearance</i>	4	.8053873	2 - 5
<i>Duration of Stay</i>	2.842105	1.424236	1 - 5
<i>Needs Met</i>	4.184211	.7298746	3 - 5
Dependent Variables			
<i>Perceived Safety</i>	4.605263	.5945461	3 - 5
<i>Perceived Confidence</i>	4.263158	.7599506	3 - 5
Control Variables			
<i>Age</i>	3.263158	.68514	2 - 4
<i>Race</i>			0 - 1
<i>Gender</i>			0 - 1

Abbreviations: SD = standard deviation.

Notes: Standard deviations are omitted for dummy variables.

Table 5. Bivariate correlation for all the variables in the 2019 Q3 sample (N = 42)

	Needs Met	Connectedness to Staff	Connectedness to Residents	Perceived Safety	Age	Gender	Race	Length of Stay
Needs Met	1.0000							
Connectedness to Staff	0.2574	1.0000						
Connectedness to Residents	0.3154	0.0890	1.0000					
Perceived Safety	0.1857	0.0739	0.5341***	1.0000				
Age	-0.1032	0.0597	-0.1428	-0.1630	1.0000			
Gender	0.0181	0.1726	-0.1720	-0.1998	-0.3807*	1.0000		
Race	0.1717	0.1726	-0.1782	-0.1427	-0.0231	-0.0667	1.0000	
Length of Stay	-0.0433	-0.2557	-0.1571	0.0878	-0.4693**	-0.0177	0.3014	1.0000

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 6. Bivariate correlation for all the variables in the 2021 Q1 sample (N = 29)

	Needs Met	Connectedness to Staff	Connectedness to Residents	Perceived Safety	Age	Gender	Race	Length of Stay
Needs Met	1.0000							
Connectedness To Staff	0.4910**	1.0000						
Connectedness To Residents	0.4342*	0.4450*	1.0000					
Perceived Safety	0.3599	0.3601	0.2576	1.0000				
Age	-0.2068	0.0491	0.1827	0.0571	1.0000			
Gender	-0.0109	-0.1403	0.0526	0.1887	-0.2199	1.0000		
Race	-0.1290	0.0026	0.1106	0.1095	-0.02174	-0.1080	1.0000	
Length of Stay	0.1511	0.3374	0.2005	0.3435	-0.0146	0.3866*	0.0551	1.0000

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 7. Bivariate correlation for all the variables January 2022, Q1 (N = 38)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Connectedness to Staff	1.0000									
2. Connectedness to Residents	0.3102	1.0000								
3. Perceived Safety	0.1990	0.2236	1.0000							
4. Perceived Confidence	0.2195	0.2179	0.4754**	1.0000						
5. Perceived Clearance	0.1373	0.1973	0.6773***	0.4857**	1.0000					
6. Age	-0.1869	-0.2221	-0.0698	-0.0328	-0.0980	1.0000				
7. Gender	0.1261	0.2998	-0.0054	-0.2097	-0.1504	-0.3210*	1.0000			
8. Race	0.0038	-0.0364	-0.0095	0.0518	0.0000	0.2134	-0.0315	1.0000		
9. Duration of Stay	-0.2928	-0.0341	-0.2033	-0.0854	-0.2827	-0.0948	0.0671	0.1184	1.0000	
10. Needs Met	0.4731**	0.3243*	0.3589*	0.2513	0.3218*	-0.2077	-0.0699	-0.3428*	-0.2053	1.0000

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

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Olivia Rodrigo and the Twenty-First Century Personal Brand

EDINA ALIX

Introduction

Olivia Rodrigo's overnight rise to mega fame astounded the entertainment industry. When Olivia released her debut single "Drivers License" on January 8, 2021, it skyrocketed to number one on the Billboard Hot 100, as well as reaching number one on twenty-eight other charts (Trust, 2021). As of October 2022, Drivers License has 1.5 billion streams on Spotify, which ranks it among the 100 most streamed songs on the platform (Spotify, 2022). When this occurred, entertainment industry professionals remarked on how different Rodrigo's rise to global success felt from other artists in the past. Rodrigo's chart-topping hit song and overall rise to fame are indicators of the power of social media platforms and the entertainment sector of the public relations profession.

While there have been previous academic studies conducted on national PR branding (Szondi, 2010), political PR branding (Surowiec, 2016), and personal PR branding (Shintaro, 2010), there is limited research about image PR branding and its role in entertainment public relations in a twenty-first-century context. Most preexisting research comes from a twentieth-century perspective. In "A Branded World: Adventures in Public Relations and the Creation of Superbrands," Levine (2003)

talks about Jennifer Lopez's rise to fame in the late 1990s. The timing of the release of Lopez's prominent projects is discussed as well as the controversy around the green dress worn by Lopez during the 42nd Grammy Awards in 2000. While these strategies may have been successful during the late 1990s, it doesn't consider the rapid acceleration of social media in the twenty-first century and the current state of artist engagement. There is a massive gap between those strategies and where we are now. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter have become the norm for launching not just projects, but the careers of popular artists such as Rodrigo.

On January 9th, 2021, Rodrigo posted a viral TikTok about her new single Drivers License asking her audience to promote the song, which has been played 67.4 million times (Rodrigo, 2022). There are a few reasons why this specific TikTok, and thus the song itself, went viral. Firstly, Drivers License is objectively a fantastic lead single. Upon its release, Billboard said "Drivers License' is a taut power ballad and soon-to-be smash... The range that Rodrigo displays on the track, oscillating between the stomp-clap harmonies of the crescendo and the choked-up balladry of the bridge, hints at a promising future following this red-hot start" (Ginsberg, 2021). The second reason it went viral is because of the public inspiration behind the song.

In the song, Rodrigo sings “...And you’re probably with that blonde girl who always made me doubt” (Rodrigo, 2021). Fans of Rodrigo put together that the person she was allegedly referencing here is pop star Sabrina Carpenter, the new girlfriend of Rodrigo’s ex-boyfriend, fellow co-star Joshua Bassett. This speculation was picked up by media outlets such as the New York Times which said, “Drivers License” was an immediate sensation... riling up both Disney fans and newcomers with speculation about the real-life breakup that inspired the lyrics” (Coscarelli, 2021). Rather than address it outright, Rodrigo and her team leaned into the buzz by neither confirming nor denying the root of the rumors. This strategy worked in Rodrigo’s favor and helped to skyrocket the success of Drivers License, due to her promising talent and the gossip around the inspiration behind the release.

In the span of one month, Rodrigo went from being a Disney Channel star with one semi-popular promotional song (“All I Want” which peaked at 90 in the US) to having the number one song in the world and being called “the next Taylor Swift” (Coscarelli, 2021). As the hype of her debut single died down, Rodrigo and her team kept up with momentum by releasing two songs in succession before the release of her debut album *Sour* in May 2021.

The purpose of this paper is to help public relations practitioners understand how a personal brand comes to be formed, why creating a brand for public figures is relevant, and, most importantly, why brands can and should be effectively utilized to increase public awareness. Rodrigo’s career will be used as an example of what an effective twenty-first-century PR strategy looks like, why it was effective in launching her career as an artist, and how the work of her public relations team sets her up for longevity and further success in the future.

Review of the Literature

For the literature review, pieces of scholarly research will be analyzed to utilize the effectiveness of Rodrigo’s initial launch as a personal brand and identify gaps in research. The following themes will be outlined in the following paragraphs: an introduction to twenty-first-century personal brands, how parasocial relationships impact personal brands, what we do and don’t know about the present & future of personal branding, online brand endorsements, characteristics of great personal brands, how businesses/brands use Twitter and third-party credibility.

For the purpose of this research, the word brand is defined as “a set of tangible and intangible attributes designed to create awareness and identity and to build the reputation of a product, service, person, place, or organization” (Sammut-Bonnici, 2015, p. 2). A personal brand involves “a strategic process of creating, positioning, and maintaining a positive impression of oneself, based on a unique combination of individual characteristics, which signal a certain promise to the target audience through a differentiated narrative and imagery” (Gorbatov et al., 2018, para. 23). The “strategic process” uses elements of traditional and modern public relations outreach such as press releases, pitching journalists and posting to social media for the purpose of increasing media coverage to create widespread public awareness of a personal brand.

Twenty-First Century Personal Brands

Andres (2019) discusses how advancements in technology have introduced new forms of branding that afford celebrities more autonomy in the construction and marketing of their public identity. He examines different

case studies portrayed in a book to understand the implications of celebrity activism on popular culture. In July 2021, Rodrigo visited the White House to meet with President Joe Biden to promote COVID-19 vaccinations to the under-25 demographic. Andres concludes that the book could have benefitted from a discussion about the complicated relationship between celebrities and political activism. Since activism is a part of Rodrigo's personal brand, the move by Rodrigo's team to send her to the White House cultivates a well-rounded depiction of who she is as a person as well as a musician. In terms of specific activism, Capela (2021) revolves around personal branding in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Rodrigo rose to fame at the height of COVID-19 and faced the unique challenge of having to establish her brand as an artist without doing any in-person promotional materials for her debut single Drivers License. Capela (2021) concludes that online personal branding will continue to grow in the future and will be influenced by the legal and technological restrictions that social media platforms and their users will be subject to.

Legal and technological restrictions present a set of future challenges that publicists will need to be wary of when establishing client brands online. These challenges can include but aren't limited to obeying legal precedents as set in place by social media platforms and abiding by potential technological restrictions. Certain websites can be banned in certain countries, which can result in information not being communicated the same way depending on user location. Publicists need to be aware of how to counter potential misinformation that can occur because of these discrepancies. These two articles show that celebrity activism in the 2020s has the potential to fall under any of these categories.

Ciszek's (2020) article focuses on French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's notions of habitus, capital, and field (field theory) to look at celebrity public relations from a sociological standpoint. Ciszek (2020) uses the case of Caitlyn Jenner publicly coming out as transgender as an example of how celebrity public relations creates an avenue for socio-political awareness. This connects back to the throughline of late 2010s-early 2020's celebrity activism as being an active part of a celebrity brand. Ciszek (2020) writes how Jenner's longtime publicist Alan Nierob utilized traditional media sources such as securing the cover of Vanity Fair to use Jenner's coming out to create a watershed moment for transgender rights rather than something to be used as tabloid fodder. The article reaches the conclusion that a gap in the literature exists and that traditional media can be used to promote a celebrity brand. Ciszek (2020) acknowledges gaps in existing research saying, "Although promotional work is central to celebrity...little research in public relations exists outside of studies on fandom, image repair, and sports" (Ciszek, 2020, p. 12).

Researchers have explored Rodrigo's use of TikTok to reach fans/develop a celebrity brand (Rauchberg, 2022). Rauchberg's (2022) explores tensions emerging between traditional platforms and the current iteration of Internet celebrities through the postmodernism angle. Rauchberg (2022) looks specifically at TikTok's user interface and how it allowed Rodrigo's content to go viral. However, the dissertation doesn't look at how Rodrigo utilized other platforms to promote her personal brand. This is important because, despite TikTok being one of the biggest platforms today, it doesn't consider how far Rodrigo was able to expand her reach, specifically within the first month of her career launch. While Generation Z

is active on TikTok, there are other social networks where Rodrigo promoted Drivers License in its first month. This research will explore a different platform by looking at Rodrigo's use of Twitter and will show the variation in themes in the month after Drivers License became a number one hit.

How Parasocial Relationships Impact Celebrity Brands

The term parasocial is defined by Um (2022) as “a psychological relationship experienced by an audience in their mediated encounters with performers in the mass media, particularly on television and on online platforms” (p. 1). Um (2022) suggests that the parasocial relationships that influencers and artists have with their public are positive as long as there is an authentic match-up between the brand and celebrity (p. 1). Researchers have previously explored celebrity brands on various social media such as Instagram (Um, 2022) and Tik Tok (Rauchberg, 2022). Um (2022) looks at how people who interact with brand endorsements view the celebrity in question and measure the parasocial interaction that takes place as a result. The main conclusion that came because of the study occurred because a real brand name was used, which the author posited could result in consumer bias in processing the message of the ad.

Eng (2020) demonstrates how consumer attachment to celebrity brands is driven by perceived narratives about celebrity personas, which can cause parasocial relationships between the consumer and the celebrity/brand. He suggests that relationship norms that are selfless in nature can conciliate the relationship between the type of narratives perpetuated and overall consumer attachment to the brand. This conclusion poses

a similar line to research as this paper because the working theory is that parasocial relationships can be selfless in nature. Publicists can create strong brands that can avoid this pitfall. Eng's (2020) theory is in direct contrast to Um's (2022) theory that parasocial relationships are inherently selfless. In the wake of the decline of traditional media sources, it's more important than ever for PR practitioners to use social media to organize brand endorsements that contribute to the personal brand of the artist. From Um's (2022) perspective, the parasocial relationships that audiences hold with brand names stand to help public relations practitioners understand how personal brands come to be formed.

The Present and Future of Personal Branding

Another aspect examined is what this all means for the present and future of personal branding. Jacobsen (2020) looks at how social media managers are responsible for managing and executing organizations' brands on digital platforms. Due to workplace uncertainty, Jacobsen (2020) argues that social media managers embody the mentality of being “always-on-the-job-market,” which is a driver for personal branding in their attempt to maintain employment (p.3). This article takes a different approach to identifying a need for research that examines how employee groups experience personal branding. It allows publicists to flip the narrative on themselves and examine how personal branding affects them personally.

The question proposed by this is whether the personal branding of publicists has an impact on the brands produced on behalf of clients. In relation to this question, Sammut-Bonnici (2015) looked at how the trend of branding is moving beyond what the customer perceives a brand to be and how this can turn into measurable

metrics of customer satisfaction throughout the chain of consumption. This is relevant to Rodrigo because her 2021 brand is different from what it would have been in 2015. This is because of how social media has turned a leaf in how quickly it can create instantaneous, two-way communication where celeb can speak and connect directly to fans without a third-party media outlet.

Sammut-Bonnici (2015) looks at how development in the value chain is based on the development of products and overall market development. Rodrigo's 2021 brand has been developed as a product in the market for musicians specifically in the Twitter sphere as the platform has turned into a metric of measurability. Scheidt's (2020) review of personal branding engages with interdisciplinary concerns. He argues that the practice is still in its infancy and that personal branding frameworks and theories cannot be identified yet. Throughout this paper, Rodrigo will be used as a case study for potential personal branding frameworks that she and her team used in her initial ascent that made her a household name. Different methods that future publicists can utilize personal branding theories to create successful celebrity brands that fans and consumers can create connections to will be proposed.

Gorbatov (2018) proposed a research agenda for future professionals to study personal branding as a career and the organizational behavior activity inherent in a modern working environment. An area of future research as outlined by Gorbatov (2018) suggests examining whether constructing a working identity through personal branding is a source of greater employee loyalty and an indication of a strong brand. By way of examining the audience's response to Rodrigo's Twitter posts, we can look at whether this is a strong indication of brand

loyalty. Transparency represents a qualitative element because it's true for Rodrigo's brand. Other qualitative elements that will be considered in the analysis include credibility, usefulness, and analyzability. Credibility is valuable because without Rodrigo's sign-off on her social media content, misinformation can become rampant, and audiences will not be able to tell who the credible source is. Rodrigo's Twitter posts represent usefulness in this content analysis because they will show how a twenty-first-century media strategy can be implemented.

Online Celebrity Brand Endorsements

Online brand endorsements are important not just because they can serve as a form of third-party credibility, but also because they reflect consumer perceptions of the brand. Kennedy (2021) examines the importance of celebrity brands in influencing perceptions of celebrity authenticity. Kennedy (2021) argues that this in turn drives positive consumer intentions toward the celebrity. Using the effects of endorsement versus celebrity brand, Kennedy (2021) concludes that when consumers are aware of celebrity investment, the celebrity is not viewed as authentic regardless of the situation with the brand. Using Rodrigo and her partnership with Glossier as an example, it will be shown that when it comes to celebrity endorsements, consumers have the capability of viewing both the celebrity and brand as authentic regardless of the nature of the brand deal.

Liu (2020) explored factors that contribute to online celebrity branding and improving the purchase intentions of fans. Liu (2020) found that the brand equity of online celebrities drives the purchase intentions of followers. The perceived quality of the products produces a positive reflection of the relationship between fans and

the celebrity brand.

Min's (2019) study looks at what happens when a direct link between a celebrity and a brand has been formed by a consumer. If any negative information about the celebrity has been circulated, that will reflect negatively back on the endorsed brand. Min concludes that retail marketers need to investigate celebrity endorsements more thoroughly to match with a brand image that can lead to a long-term partnership. This research will look at Rodrigo's image during her ascent and why her minimal usage of social media led to no negative information coming out about her. Rodrigo's brand image has the potential to lead her and Glossier to a long-term and sustainable partnership due to a fundamental lack of scandals on both their parts.

Characteristics of Great Personal Brands

A great personal brand is comprised of different characteristics. As defined earlier, a personal brand is "a strategic process of creating, positioning, and maintaining a positive impression of oneself, based on a unique combination of individual characteristics, which signal a certain promise to the target audience through a differentiated narrative and imagery" (Gorbatov et al., 2018, p. 23). Building a strong personal brand can help an individual establish credibility and create opportunities for career advancement. Some characteristics of great personal brands cultivated from academic findings include authenticity, consistency, clarity, and relevance.

According to Sierra (2019), authenticity in a personal brand is what makes you unique and helps you build trust with others. Rodrigo's personal brand, particularly her tweets, reflect who she is, what she stands for, and what she believes in. This is shown in her

tweets about social activism and calls to action for her followers to heed.

Sierra (2019) adds that you need to be consistent in your content and behavior to build credibility and trust with your audience. During the first month of the initial launch of Drivers License, Rodrigo tweeted 67 times. Her consistent posting strategy allowed her to build her community of followers and create personal connections with them. Rodrigo was able to remain persistent across all platforms, even upwards of a year in advance of the release of the single.

Another characteristic of a strong personal brand is clarity (Sierra, 2019). Your community should be able to easily identify what you do and who you are. Clarity helps people connect with you and understand what you can offer. In promoting Drivers License, Rodrigo was clear about what the single was, why she was releasing it, and in other ways, who the single was about. She placed "Easter eggs" across the song so her loyal community members would make the connection as to who the song was about.

Another characteristic of a great personal brand is relevance. Relevance is defined by Duckler (2022) as "the degree to which consumers perceive a brand and its products and services as relevant to their needs and wants. Brands need to maintain relevance to remain competitive and connect with their target audiences" (p. 3). Kleppinger et al., (2015) suggest that in order to use personal branding as a relevant asset in the digital age, textual and visual performances are vital to adding clarity to make the brand tangible and real. Kleppinger et al., (2015) cite digital examples such as LinkedIn profile photos, Facebook profiles, Instagram photos, YouTube channels, and Twitter activity. All these elements are

important to maintaining the relevance of the brand because as PR practitioners, we must be kept abreast as to what social networks are the most prevalent among consumers. In order to be competitive among target audiences, Rodrigo chose Twitter, TikTok, and Instagram as the three primary social networks on which to promote Drivers License.

According to Jin (2014), the impact of instantaneous Twitter-based electronic word-of-mouth on consumers creates a social identification with celebrities that impacts purchasing power. This means that the more relevant the brand, the more likely it is to result in sales for the product and objectives met.

How Brands Use Twitter

Twitter is a social media platform that brands can use to build strong personal brands. Some established ways that publicists use Twitter to create a strong personal brand for their clients include engaging with their audiences, establishing thought leadership, and creating conversations (Godey et al., 2016). A best practice according to Godey et al. (2016) is to respond to your audience. By issuing direct replies and quote retweets to the content sent to her, Rodrigo is shown to value the feedback and opinions of her target audience (Godey et al., 2016). This leads to a parasocial relationship between Rodrigo and her audience because this engagement allows community members to connect her opinions to their own.

Thought leadership is also important in developing relationships with your target audience (Scheidt & Henseler, 2018). Rodrigo used Twitter to share a major industry-related trend by promoting her best-selling new single. By establishing this line of credibility, Rodrigo was

able to position herself as an expert in her field and build her personal brand (Scheidt & Henseler, 2018). She was also able to engage in and create conversations with her fanbase (Scheidt, & Henseler, 2018). Rodrigo initiated a discussion by having a Q&A with her fans. By doing this, she was able to showcase her personality, create a community around her brand and build a personal audience connection (Godey et al., 2016).

Third-Party Credibility

Musicians can gain credibility from third-party sources. Third-party credibility is defined as “the human tendency to value the opinion/expertise of someone outside their circle of influence more than someone within (i.e., an outsider must know something we don't)” (Burg, 2009, p. 6). The aspect of third-party credibility can be important because the person with whom you are sharing this information is more likely to accept it as true and believable, thus leading to a continuing relationship with the source behind the information (Burg, 2009). In terms of Rodrigo, she was able to obtain the amount of popularity that she did in such a short period of time partially due to an overwhelming abundance of third-party credibility. Sources such as Taylor Swift, Gwen Stefani, and the Billboard Hot 100 were able to offer third-party credibility during the first month of Drivers License being an overnight sensation.

These credible endorsements came with an overlap of pop music fanbases, allowing Rodrigo’s brand to translate across audiences. According to Swift (2017), third-party credibility is fundamental proof that public relations strategies still matter. She writes:

PR is all about perception and reputation – those are the hallmarks of credibility. While these

intangibles may be hard to measure directly, successful businesspeople will tell you (and so will I) that being seen as an expert in print, online and via the airwaves can pay big dividends over time" (Swift, 2017, pg. 14).

With this in mind, it is important to remember that third-party credibility is in itself public relations.

The elements of online brand endorsements, characteristics of great personal brands, and third-party credibility worked in Rodrigo's favor for getting Drivers License to number one on the Billboard Hot 100 for eight consecutive weeks. Twitter branding specifically allowed Rodrigo to grow her audience in a way that went together with the success of the single.

This research explores two questions: RQ1: What strategies did Rodrigo use on Twitter to create her personal brand after her Drivers License hit number one? RQ2: Were Rodrigo's strategies effective in establishing a durable personal brand?

Methods

This study uses qualitative content analysis to explore how Olivia Rodrigo's online presence helps public relations practitioners understand how a personal brand comes to be formed and why creating a brand for public figures is relevant. The researcher will analyze the posts on Rodrigo's Twitter and how the content was able to set her apart from her contemporaries.

The data consists of 67 Tweets posted to Rodrigo's Twitter account between January 18, 2021, and February 18, 2021. The tweets were selected for the month following the day (January 18, 2021) that Drivers License hit an unprecedented number one on the Billboard Hot 100. The platform Tweet Deck was utilized to gather

tweets posted to Rodrigo's Twitter account between those dates, the number of interactions for each post, the increase and/or decrease in those interactions, and familiar words/themes that the posts have in common.

The data was analyzed with inductive and deductive analysis on the social posts generating major themes of convergence and divergence. Tweets were reviewed and coded individually and then looked at collectively to determine major themes. The themes were verified by the primary investigator to ensure intercoder reliability and trustworthiness. O'Connor (2020) defines intercoder reliability as the numerical measure of the agreement between different coders regarding how the same data should be coded. While intercoder reliability is usually done in a group of three or more, in the case of this study, it was completed by two people. This worked for the purpose of the research because the themes established by Rodrigo's Twitter usage were coded by dissecting reoccurring concepts and verifying their validity & trustworthiness with the other researcher. Data was stored in a password-protected file that only the investigators have access to and will be destroyed within 6 months after the study is concluded.

Results

The number of tweets included in the data is 67. Rodrigo posted the tweets between 1/01/21 - 2/18/21. These dates were selected because this was the time period from the release of Drivers License to after the single hit a historic number one on the Billboard Hot 100. The collection of data was all found on Twitter.com, a social media site with 450 million monthly users. There were five themes found in the tweets.

Building Community

One of the primary emerging themes is building community. Building community is defined as creating pivotal connections with her emerging fan base. Rodrigo accomplishes this by creating relationships with celebrities who share a similar personal branding strategy, such as Taylor Swift, distributing exclusive Behind The Scenes content to members of her email list, and sharing important calls to action, such as change.org petitions. All of these things contribute to building her base of supporters through her personal brand. An example of a tweet where Rodrigo builds community is “omg do a twilight look I would die” in a reply to a few of her fans who were doing makeup looks to her songs. By tweeting this, she establishes a similar brand to a franchise that enthusiasts are already familiar with and creates a connection with her fan base.

Rodrigo builds community by understanding and targeting her main audience – Gen Zers – in her tweets. Characteristics in her tweets include her distinctly online sense of humor, specific emojis such as purple hearts and crying faces to signify excitement, all upper-case letters for emphasis, posting frequency, and her usage of videos, photos, and mentions puts her in a class with her peers who use similar verbiage on social media. An instance of this is when Rodrigo posted “Put some of my fav tunes on this playlist! Give it a listen if ya like 💜💜💜” in a quote tweet from Spotify where she announces in a video that she is sharing a heartbreak playlist with her fans. Her shortened abbreviations, usage of lowercase letters, and purple heart emojis in this tweet show that her Twitter posting strategy is both casual and geared towards Generation Z who can understand the message she is trying to get across.

Third-Party Credibility

Another emerging theme before Drivers License went number one is third-party credibility. Third-party credibility is defined as the value of an opinion of someone outside the main circle of influence. During the first month of the success of her debut single, Rodrigo is able to gain third-party credibility from sources such as Taylor Swift, Gwen Stefani, Jimmy Fallon, and Cardi B. A tweet from Rodrigo that shows this call to action from a third party is her reply to Cardi B who tweeted her praise for Drivers License. Rodrigo responded with “Girl i will pick u up and take u wherever u wanna go.” Another example is Rodrigo tweeting an anecdote from Gwen Stefani that was published in Time Magazine. The tweet reads “I’ve been a fan of Gwen for as long as I can remember. it’s so surreal to have her write about me. rilly honored to be included in this incredible group of people.”

Humility and Gratitude

Humility and gratitude are largely prevalent during the first month of the mainstream success of Drivers License. Throughout Rodrigo’s tweets, she continuously thanks her fans, critics, third parties, and outlets for covering and supporting the single. She also shows a tremendous amount of gratitude for the acknowledgment she has received from the general public while doing so. Rodrigo’s humility and gratitude show that her success is not something she has taken for granted. This makes her appear more relatable and grounded in her community as a result. An instance of this is when Rodrigo tweeted “homegirl went platinum in two weeks!!!!!! thank u guys so so much!!!!!!” in a quote tweet from the account @chartdata stating that Drivers License sold over 1 million units in the US.

Promoting Drivers License

A major reoccurring theme both before and after Drivers License went number one is Rodrigo's promotion of the single. While one could argue that every tweet during this time promotes Drivers License in one way or another, there are specific instances where the main goal of the Twitter content is to promote the single. Rodrigo began teasing Drivers License to her followers in December 2020 and released the single in January 2021. During the immediate aftermath of the release, Rodrigo retweeted a tweet from @TouchTunes stating "#OliviaRodrigo's powerful debut single #DriversLicense is here and we can't get enough! Check it out now on TouchTunes. 💜" After Drivers License went number one, Rodrigo quote tweeted "number one on the billboard charts 🥹🥹🥹 truly cannot believe this is real life. thank u thank u thank u" in response to Billboard's tweet announcing Drivers License's debut as the biggest song in the world. These tweets show that Rodrigo's primary goal in posting content during this time is to get the word out about the single to as many people as possible.

Social Activism

A large part of Rodrigo's brand before, during, and after the rise of Drivers License is promoting social activism initiatives. These can include Change.org petitions, online resources about the Black Lives Matter movement, and a video from the latest presidential inauguration. This shows that Rodrigo is aware of what is happening in the world around her and is passionate enough about these reforms to issue calls to action to her followers and build awareness around certain topics. By doing this, she establishes similar politics with her followers and the public. An example of this is when

Rodrigo retweeted a video of poet Amanda Gorman reciting "The Hill We Climb" at President Joe Biden's January 2021 inauguration at the height of Drivers License's popularity. This shows that Rodrigo's will to stand with her politics won't be swayed by any amount of attention and success she receives, another trait that she shares with her young, primarily female community.

Discussion

Rodrigo's personal brand reflects who she is and what she believes in. The tweets posted on her official Twitter account reflect her personal brand and what she advocates for as a public figure. This is important because it relates back to why creating a brand for public figures continues to be a relevant public relations practice because establishing positive relations with the public builds your community and creates a strong reputation for the figure in question. By using her platform to speak on trending topics, incorporating Gen Z terminology into her messaging, and interacting with her audience, Rodrigo used Twitter to capitalize on her virality. Rodrigo's celebrity brand created a long-lasting partnership between her and her community that remains strong while her fans wait for her to release new music.


The first way Rodrigo builds a strong celebrity brand is by using social activism. This is a new form of branding, which supports Andres' (2019) findings that advancements in technology have introduced new forms of branding that afford celebrities more autonomy in the construction and marketing of their public identity. Rodrigo achieved authenticity by retweeting a link to a change.org petition to change the sentencing of a wrong incarcerated man with no caption to signify the importance of that cause. By not adding any caption, she

didn't speak about the cause, but instead simply used her platform to spread awareness. This action shows her community that she cares about these causes and is passionate about issuing calls to action, something that other people in her generation and community have in common with her.

Sierra (2019)'s study concluded that authenticity in a personal brand is what makes you unique and helps you build trust with others. Rodrigo used an authentic tone when using Twitter to build a relationship with her community. In her tweet, gonna have a viewing party for the drivers license music video 2nite if u wanna come!!! i'll be live before the premiere. gonna die l'm so stoked!!!!, she is honest about showcasing her excitement for the event and the opportunity to further connect with her audience. Rodrigo has a unique and earnest tone in the tweet which allows for her authentic self to come through to her community. Um's (2022) findings suggest that an authentic match-up between brand and celebrity results in positive parasocial relationships between artists and their public were confirmed by this study. In the case of Rodrigo, her personal brand matches up with her level of celebrity among her target audience of Generation Z. As a result of Rodrigo's authenticity, her level of celebrity has become synonymous with the early 2020's era of TikTok and Instagram engagement.

Duckler's (2021) findings are that evolving your brand and staying true to your core values is how to ensure brand relevance increases with your target audience. Duckler (2021) goes on to explain that the foundation of your brand should remain constant even as other aspects of your brand change. In Rodrigo's case, the biggest change to her brand during this time was her visibility. She experienced an increase in Twitter

and Instagram followers, not to mention an influx of press mentions. To connect with her audience, Rodrigo's platform of choice became Twitter. The goal for Rodrigo's Twitter activity during January 2021 is to promote Drivers License by interacting with her audience and to build her emerging fanbase with her unique posting style. This is shown in her tweets both before and after Drivers License hit number one.

Rodrigo clearly knows her target audience as evidenced by the content of her tweets, which helps her build a strong community. Her tweets include purple heart emojis and lowercase writing. In her reply to @hearhandsswift, Rodrigo wrote ur so gorgeous! im glad u liked it . This kind of audience engagement shows that Rodrigo understands how Generation Z interacts with their favorite artists online and uses that to create a parasocial relationship. Her writing strategy extends beyond her Twitter account. Rodrigo's song titles follow the same pattern of grammatically skewed names. Drivers License is marketed as all lowercase without the apostrophe. This draws Generation Z in because, in this age of social media, many young people abbreviate their posts for convenience and accessibility. This brands Rodrigo as a peer and thus, someone her community can relate to. This connects back to Duckler's (2021) findings because he also mentions that the first step to increasing brand relevance is understanding your target audience. Duckler states "Once you understand your target audience, you can create messaging and marketing campaigns that resonate with them."

Burg (2009) defines third-party credibility as "the credibility in the mind of your prospect based on the recommendation of someone he or she already deems credible." To increase third-party credibility,

Rodrigo and her team partnered with the beauty brand Glossier in October 2022 to become their first official brand ambassador. Rodrigo created a limited-edition beauty collection under Glossier titled “You Look Good.” The line included lip glosses, a makeup bag, mascara, and skin care products (Tingley, 2022). This partnership helped to create third-party credibility because Glossier is a brand that was already deemed credible in the eyes of Rodrigo’s target audience. Glossier’s own branding strategy allowed them to become a beauty and skincare staple in the makeup kits of Generation Z. With Glossier recommending Rodrigo as a beauty ambassador and vice versa, the partnership validates Burg’s (2009) idea of third-party credibility.

Another example of third-party credibility is the approval gained from music industry sources. Rodrigo’s astronomic rise from Drivers License helped to establish herself as a pop leader in the music industry. Drivers License topped the US Billboard Hot 100 and made Rodrigo the youngest artist to debut on top of the chart. Drivers License also spent eight consecutive weeks at number one (Trust et al., 2021). It has been certified five times platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), one of only 525 songs to hold the honor (Hissong, 2021). These sources are all legitimate avenues of proven success. For Rodrigo to achieve these career milestones so young shows a pattern that her career is on the rise. This third-party credibility allows Rodrigo, her brand and her music to be taken seriously by the public. It goes back to Burg’s definition of “the credibility... based on the recommendation of someone he or she already deems credible.” Since the Billboard Hot 100 is the music industry’s standard record chart in the United States, it is hard to refute that level of self-built success. Thus, this bolsters Rodri-

go’s third-party credibility.

For a year and a half prior to the release of Drivers License, Rodrigo had been building her personal brand on Twitter. Rodrigo’s posting consistency paid off upon the release of Drivers License because she had already built a reputation among her community built during her Disney days. During this process, Rodrigo’s humility and gratitude were a consistent theme throughout her tweets before, during, and after the rise of Drivers License. Tweets such as me and mom on the Apple music chart. cryin in the club rn in reference to her song’s association with singer Taylor Swift and SHUT UP I LITERALLY GOT MY DRIVERS LICENSE BC OF UR APP OMG THANK U THIS IS SO FUNNY in response to the app that she got her driver’s license from reiterate her humility, an emotion that cements her relatability among Generation Z. Rodrigo’s ability to remain humble despite her rapid success in a short period of time remains one of the traits that define her personal brand. To answer the RQs, the strategies Rodrigo used on Twitter to create her personal brand after Drivers License hit number one were targeting Gen Z, social activism, promoting Drivers License, humility and gratitude, third-party credibility, and building community. Based on her engagement increase, we can determine that the strategies were effective in establishing Rodrigo’s durable personal brand.

Conclusion

The characteristics of great personal brands have worked in Rodrigo’s favor. The techniques that Rodrigo has used to build her personal brand include specific posting strategies designed to target Gen Zers and build a strong community such as lowercase lettering & slang, partnering with major brands such as Glossier that res-

onate with her target audience, tweets that encapsulate her ability to remain humble, third-party credibility from major sources such as the Billboard Hot 100 and using all of the above to build her core community. Rodrigo's career is the prime example of what an effective twenty-first-century PR strategy looks like. The strategy was effective in launching her career as an artist and the work of her public relations team sets her up for longevity and further success in the future.

Limitations and Future Research

Because this is a qualitative study, the research may prove true for Olivia Rodrigo specifically. The information gained through this study nevertheless provides interesting insights into how to build a celebrity brand, which may be employed by other individuals trying to establish a personal brand. For future research, it may be important for practitioners to look at other platforms such as TikTok and Facebook. This research also did not look at specific media outlets. A more comprehensive overview might include other media outlets or social platforms. This research only dealt with Twitter and did not go into detail about other social networks. It may also help to have quantitative survey research as many of these results can be generalized because of their qualitative nature.

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EDINA ALIX

Communications Studies, Public Relations Concentration

Edina Alix is a 2023 graduate and Departmental Honors student, and she majored in Communication Studies with a public relations concentration and a minor in film studies. Under the mentorship of Dr. Lisa Bergson, Assistant Professor in the Communication Studies Department, Edina was inspired by how storytelling in public relations can shape the way we view artists. Edina wanted to do a deep dive into Olivia Rodrigo's rise to fame and what public relations practitioners can take away from the strategies utilized by her team. After graduation, Edina attended the Cannes Film Festival and worked as a Film Publicity Intern under the DDA Group. A week later, Edina made the move to New York City to begin her public relations career as a Fellow with Small Girls PR.

The Public Sphere: Women's Struggle for the Vote in Canada

ALLISON BARBARO

Introduction

On May 24, 1918, through a law enacted by the Conservative Borden administration in Ottawa, Canadian women were granted the right to vote in federal elections, the crowning achievement of the decades-long suffrage campaign. But how did they do it? The cultural and political climate of the early 20th century was the perfect climate for a social transformation in Canada. The success of the suffrage campaign, spearheaded by middle-class white women, was a result of a changing Canada, one marked by urbanization, industrialization, and social and moral reform. Women's entry into politics was not new in the 20th century; in fact, the suffrage movement was built on organizations and movements led by reformers focused on temperance, prison reform, and containing the "girl problem." Growing fears of being outnumbered by immigrants in the West fueled support for white women's enfranchisement. The momentum of progress in North America followed by the First World War allowed white women to employ gender stereotypes and racism toward immigrants in the West, while also championing their contribution to the nation during World War I by associating suffrage with the new nationalism. In the climate of the early 20th century, white women argued for their right to suffrage by emphasizing their wartime employment, the

maternal feminist concept, the ideology of female purity which they used to campaign for moral and social reform, and the concept of the White settler nation.

The Legal Basis of the Suffrage Movement

The legal basis for Canadian women's suffrage includes both English law pre-Confederation as well as Canadian law post-Confederation covering the restriction of suffrage, legislation used to argue for suffrage, and legislation granting suffrage. Beginning in 1832, Britain's implementation of the Reform Act was the first legislation to explicitly restrict voting to men. In 1850, Lord Brougham's Act established that the words "male" and "men" should be taken to include females unless the contrary is provided. The Representation of the People Act of 1867 similarly declared that words like "man" or "person" should be given a broad generic meaning. Both of these laws were used to argue against restrictions on women, leading to a legal debate on whether or not women were "persons." Judges asserted that it should be assumed that when laws were written, they did not intend for women to be able to vote. A notable English decision was in 1868 with *Chorlton vs Lings* which "associates women with infants, lunatics, and aliens, lacking capacity because of status". This decision officially restricted women from possessing

the franchise. This enforced the idea, as Gail Brent notes, that if only men ever possessed the franchise, then how could parliament intend for their words to refer to anyone but men? This logic pattern was used in later decisions in which women sought to exercise rights that did not explicitly include women in the wording of the legislation. Women-owned property, paid taxes, and voted in municipal elections but were unrepresented in Parliamentⁱ.

Post-Confederation, the federal system was complex, making achieving suffrage a long struggle. A municipal franchise was easier to gain than a provincial franchise and gaining a provincial franchise did not guarantee a federal franchise, nor did a federal franchise guarantee a provincial franchise. As a result, enfranchisement had to be won at all levelsⁱⁱ. Voting was granted to women in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta in 1916. The federal government in 1917, amid the First World War, passed the Military Voters Act and Wartime Elections Act which enfranchised women related to men fighting in the war, a calculated move by Prime Minister Borden to ensure re-election to enact conscription policy. By 1922, all provinces except Quebec (1940) had granted full suffrage to White and Black women but excluded Asian and Indigenous womenⁱⁱⁱ.

Key Organizations

Several key women's organizations led the suffrage campaign. These groups were predominantly middle-class urban English women who believed it was their role to improve society and the lives of the less fortunate. Western women generally identified more with their class rather than their gender and founded women's institutes that educated women on home economics, and health and hygiene.

An organization of importance to the Canadian suffrage movement was the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC), formed in 1893. The ideology that drove this organization was maternal feminism which emphasized women as mothers and the moral superiority of women, and that enfranchisement would help women lead social reform. This was at the expense of First Nations women and racial minorities, particularly those of Asian descent. The Council was moderate and did not want to challenge the social order and wanted to avoid religious and political differences. As a result, they did not endorse suffrage until 1910^{iv}. The organization was created after the International Council of Women Congress in Chicago in 1893 by its first president, Lady Ishbel Marjoribanks Gordon, the spouse of Canada's new Governor General. The NCWC was a national body with local councils affiliated with it.

Women's Christian organizations were also prevalent in the suffrage movement, with the most significant being the Woman's Christian Temperance Union formed in 1874. Religion was a key driver of social and moral reform, and suffrage was a way to further their reform efforts. Middle to upper-class Protestant white women led the Canadian suffrage movement through an organization centered on social and moral reform with the idea that the vote would give them greater power to fix the problems they saw in society. The organization transformed from an advocate of temperance, as many Protestants believed the abuse of alcohol led to poverty and domestic violence and sought to eradicate it by banning alcohol, to an organization that lobbied for suffrage as a greater tool to do so. Temperance advocates often found themselves hindered by their lack of vote and reliance on men. As a result, in 1888, the WCTU became the first major or-

ganization to endorse women's suffrage in Canada. The WTCU pushed for the vote as a "home protection" against the vice of men. The WTCU led the suffrage campaign in the provinces and municipalities. Using the same strategies as the temperance movement; petitions and letters to newspapers were a Canadian staple in their protest. The federal government received eighteen petitions on female suffrage between 1885 and 1898, fourteen of which were from the WTCU^v. The moral and reform efforts of Protestant women on topics like temperance led to their lobbying for suffrage to strengthen their voice and their efforts.

Social Context- Industrialization and the Girl Worker

The social context of Canada at the turn of the century is integral in understanding the political and cultural climate that enabled the suffrage movement's success post-war. The rapid industrialization, urbanization, and immigration into Canada around the turn of the century pushed Canada toward modernization and social change, especially for women's employment and the feminist movement. Few Canadian women in the early suffrage movement would have identified themselves as feminists, however, they lobbied for the expansion of rights of women in what would be identified as the first wave of the feminist movement in Canada.

Around the turn of the century, women's employment patterns changed, reflecting greater economic and social changes in Canada, particularly urbanization. Canada was predominantly rural but industrialization rapidly urbanized Canadians. In 1891, less than a third of Canadians were urban, but by 1921 half of Canadians lived in cities. More women than men began to enter cities as

traditionally male jobs such as mining and logging were rural and new female jobs like light manufacturing, sales, and office positions were urban^{vi}. The Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital, launched by Sir John A. Macdonald's Conservative government in 1886, investigated tension between wage workers and their employers. The commission reported in 1889 that employers in new industrial enterprises had been profiting from the cheap labor of women. Women and children worked for small wages, submitted to poor conditions, and long hours for as little as \$1.50 a week when the lowest-paid male workers made \$1.00 a day^{vii}. Cities were filled with thousands looking for work, causing poverty and social unrest and bourgeois Canadians feared a moral decline, particularly for the young women increasingly leaving domestic work for industrial wage work.

The urbanization of Canadians and the availability of wage work in cities created a rapid change in the type of work young women did. In the early 19th century, women who worked remained in the domestic services as servants. By the late 19th century, being a servant was no longer an attractive option for young working girls and they turned to industry. Moral reformers wanted women to stay in domestic work but ignored the reality of the vulnerability to abuse and constant surveillance. Wage work in the city offered independence desperately wanted by young girls. Wage working jobs often brought young girls into the company of men, causing fears of moral corruption in the young girls and the fear they would abandon their roles as mothers and wives. In addition, there was the prostitution problem which reformers believed was caused by young girls being led astray through urban non-domestic jobs.

Fear of promiscuous young women at the turn of

the century was heightened as moral reform became popular. State intervention in the lives of young single urban women was a response to reformers' concerns and exacerbated fears. There were government investigations, commissions, journalism, police crackdowns of 'immoral acts', etc. on top of the religious and reformer groups' supervision of the morality of wage working women. Organizations like the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), which were concerned with the welfare and morals of wage-earning women in cities, feared that non-domestic work would corrupt young women and lead them "astray" to prostitution. The sexual immorality of young single women in the cities was a major concern for reform organizations as well as government-sanctioned commissions. They believed urban life and wage work alongside men in factories would lead to them turning toward prostitution. The government responded to the vocal concerns of organizations like the YWCA and the WCTU with legislation. Beginning in Ontario in 1884, labor legislation restricted the places of employment and hours of working women, particularly in factories. The laws required the passing of health and safety inspections in factories. With the migration of young women into cities, the sex ratios' correlation to the prostitution rates was scrutinized. A notorious city for visible prostitution was Winnipeg. In 1871, Winnipeg's population was about 241 people. By 1911, the population was 130,000 people, most of which were men. Winnipeg's working girls were primarily in the garment industry, but the city's prostitution was visible.

In 1909, the mayor approved a plan for an official commercial sex district that would allow free operation with regular inspections of brothels and prostitutes. The Moral and Social Reform Council was livid and pressured the city to shut down the scheme, which they did so suc-

cessfully. Fears of growing numbers of wage working women in cities and a perceived connection to prostitution led moral reformers to scrutinize the moral behavior of single young women in urban areas at the turn of the century. The Young Women's Christian Association and the sex-hygiene movement tried to crack down on sex outside of marriage. Further regulation of young girls' "morality" came in separate reformatories and juvenile detention for acts of loosely defined moral offenses. By 1920, two-thirds of women in their twenties were wage workers and were now employed in offices as clerks, stenographers, secretaries, and bookkeepers rather than in dangerous garment factories^{viii}. As women exited domestic work for wage work, they created greater independence for women and social changes that brought women further into the public sphere, calling for the expansion of their political rights.

The Counterargument

Anti-suffragists, such as members of the Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage in Canada (AOWSC) formed in 1913, feared the enfranchisement of women would destroy the "supposed" softer qualities of women and that the franchise was already too wide. In addition, they argued that women would take over politics and vote together as a bloc, rather than by political parties or personal beliefs, etc. Some feared that the vote would destroy the qualities of the "gentler sex" that resulted from their lack of education, opportunities, and dependence on men. Antifeminists, according to Rev. Hutcheon, wanted women to remain submissive, innocent, and ignorant. Abusive men wanted women to remain forcibly shackled and helpless. Some men feared that the vote was too wide and that the enfranchisement of women would further

empower the “ignorant vote of large cities”^{ix}. Men feared that the enfranchisement of women would lead to women taking over politics by occupying all offices and voting as a unit^x.

Men were not the only people against suffrage. Not all women involved in reform efforts were for the enfranchisement of women. Notably, Lady Taylor from the NCWC in 1910 expressed her worry that female suffrage would lead to further corruption in politics, stating: “manhood suffrage, in the West at least, had been more or less disastrous since their votes can be bought. So, too, would those of the women”. In addition, some members of the council expressed that support of suffrage would take away from their moral and reform efforts because the organization could not afford to lose public support. The NCWC was a conservative group and did not endorse suffrage until a vote in 1910 in which support for suffrage was 71 to 51. Lady Taylor, along with others, protested such a small majority^{xi}.

Women in Quebec also formed separate organizations due to language and cultural barriers and the influence of Catholicism^{xii}. In Quebec, Catholic clergy and politicians have staunchly opposed enfranchisement with fears of family disunity, smaller families, and sexual liberation^{xiii}. In protest of Quebec’s premier, Adélard Godbout, declaring his intentions for enfranchising women in the province in 1940, Cardinal Villeneuve, the archbishop of Quebec responded with four reasons why they were opposed to the measure:

To respond to numerous instances and put an end to the various opinions attributed to us, regarding the bill granting women the right to vote, in the provincial elections, we believe we have to express our feelings. We are not in favor of female

political suffrage. (1) Because it goes against family unity and hierarchy; (2) Because its exercise exposes the woman to all the passions and all the adventures of electoralism; (3) Because, in fact, it seems to us that the vast majority of women in the province do not want it; (4) Because the social, economic, hygienic reforms, etc., which are advanced to advocate the right of suffrage among women, can also be obtained, thanks to the influence of women's organizations on the margins of politics^{xiv}.

Wartime Employment

After the First World War, white women employed an argument pushing for suffrage that was based on their contributions to the nation during the war and their wartime employment. Although the suffrage movement long preceded the First World War, the idea of enfranchising women became more mainstream and was granted shortly after the conclusion of the war. Women had already been joining the workforce in increasing numbers by the turn of the century, but their employment was even more prevalent and essential to keeping the industry alive during the War. Female workers in Ontario numbered 175,000 in 1917. The War increased not only the number of women employed but also meant that women had greater direct involvement in the economy with employment in industry, as taxpayers, as the purchasers of goods, while also maintaining the social organizations and institutions of Canadian society. Despite this, women had no say in the laws regulating their employment. In addition, 1600 Canadian women served overseas as nurses with the Canadian Army Medical Corps and Queen Alexandra Imperial Nursing Sisters,

650 being from Ontario, in 1917.

In addition to industrial employment, the female teachers played a crucial role. Women, the chief educators, gained status since they were regarded as those in charge of forming the character of Canadians of the future, all within a post-war climate that was grieving the loss of young men. Further, they embodied a sense of nationalism and patriotism. The importance of education was emphasized, yet women had no direct say in the development of laws for the education system despite being trusted with being the educators. Although women influenced the creators of legislation, they could not themselves create, propose, or vote on legislation about education. Newton Rowell, in a speech to the Ontario Legislature in 1917, emphasizes the contribution of female educators: "... last year we had 10,786 women teachers in the province of Ontario as against 2,716 male teachers ... If we entrust them with the grave responsibility of educating our youth, are we going too far if we entrust them with the further responsibility of helping to make the laws which shall govern the educational system of our province?" Women emphasized these forms of employment to argue that they deserved the vote because they were essential to running the nation during the war as well as ensuring a prosperous future for all Canadians^{xv}.

Maternal Feminism and the Ideology of Female Purity

Canadian suffragettes were wealthier Protestant women, making them more conservative in their efforts and beliefs. They followed the ideology of maternal feminism which is feminism rooted in domesticity and mother-

hood. It encouraged the public and political participation of women as mothers rather than individuals. This feminism was popular because it was palatable to women who believed in traditional assumptions about gender and wanted to reinforce gender roles, such as women who wanted to remain in the domestic sphere as wives and mothers as opposed to more "radical" feminists who wanted to create social transformation and greater involvement in the public sphere. Maternal feminism did not threaten existing gender roles or social norms but rather reinforced them. Radical feminists asserted that women were equal to men and deserved full citizenship rights. Maternal feminists asserted that they were morally superior to men and emphasized the differences in nature between the sexes. These women believed in these differences and used them to their advantage to lobby for the vote. For example, May Wright-Sewell, the President of the United States equivalent of the National Council of Women, in an address to the NCWC in 1898 said: "Women were unlike men, and possessed tastes, interests and occupations which they alone could adequately represent, women needed the ballot for the protection of those interests, and for the safety of that home, which is ever woman's first thought, while men more particularly represent the material interests of the world." They used ideas about the purity and domesticity of women, to complement (not criticize) men's roles in the public sphere, and to justify women's so-called "meddling" by anti-suffragists into politics for their moral reform efforts^{xvi}.

A new sense of nationalism emerged in Canada after the First World War and the success and mythologization of the battle of Vimy Ridge. A key idea amongst suffragettes was that the next generation of men would be raised by feminist mothers and the political rights of wom-

en were tethered to their sons. Women would be granted the vote by their sons if they would not be granted the vote by their husbands by teaching their sons about the cause and the struggles of women. Jean Blewett writes in 1910: “The men of yesterday lifted up their hands in holy horror, and hurled the word “unsexed” at a woman who dared to aspire to a vote; the man of to-day, while not in love with the idea, sees the reasonableness of it—but the Boy, who is now learning things from his mother, who is espousing her cause, and fighting her battles—he will be the politician of to-morrow; and so we say to-morrow is the woman’s day^{xvii}.” Women oversaw the teaching of their sons’ “public-spiritedness” and “civic duty” and turning them into valuable contributions to Canadian society. Women, as mothers, were the main social and political influence on their sons, already showing the importance of their role in the political sphere. The NCWC pushed the idea that women did not want to take over, rather they wanted to remove the obstacles preventing them from holding supportive roles to men, ensuring the power of men would be maintained and that enfranchisement would not create social transformation^{xviii}. In addition, maternal feminists held that the home was the basis of the nation and good government and citizenship. The home was the template for the nation and those responsible for the home and the training of children should have a voice in making the laws that pertain to those jurisdictions^{xix}.

Reformers from the NCWC, such as Henrietta Muir Edwards argued that suffrage would give women political influence but not political equality, focusing on the moral female influence. As Anne-Marie Kinahan notes, members of the NCWC argued that women’s citizenship was best used through “personal influence and moral

suasion, through the election of men with strong moral character, and through the raising of public-spirited sons.” Men suggested that politics were too corrupt for women and that it would act as a corrupting force on the purity of women. The idea that enfranchised women would be a purifying force in itself suggested women were above politics rather than active participants. Women would act as parents in politics, exerting a moral influence on politics and the men elected. The idea was to vote to elect men, assuring men that they were not suggesting that women had the right to run for office. Women would be passive, not active, with their political influence, while not transforming any societal norms.

Emily Howard Stowe (1831- 1903), the Ontario-based, mother of the Canadian Suffrage Movement and the first female physician to practice in Canada, believed that white women’s suffrage was tied to the status and progress of Canada as a nation – “the failure to enfranchise women was indicative of moral, social, and political myopia.” Suffragists argued that the vote was not for selfish reasons, but for the benefit of society and to use their influence to advance their reform efforts^{xx}. Jean Blewett (1862- 1934), a prominent poet and journalist from Ontario, reiterated this idea, claiming that women had a “clear conscience and a clear vision” and that women were not greedy or bribable, nor did they want notoriety^{xxi}. Acquiring the vote would allow women, as a moral influence, to represent their interests and not rely on lobbying for men to represent them. In addition, male feminists, such as A. H. F. Lefroy in 1913, argued that women are the ones with the interest and willingness to focus on reform and the welfare of the ignorant, weak, and helpless, all while wanting nothing in return. Men, on the other hand, are preoccupied with capitalists and individualistic interests

and need women to exert their moral, motherly influence^{xxii}. Further, Robert Hutcheon argued that emancipating women would spiritualize men, meaning to soften and moralize them by preventing men from exploiting and abusing women so easily^{xxiii}.

White Settler Nation

Lastly, white women employed racism and anti-immigration sentiment to garner support for their enfranchisement. They argued that they needed the vote to outnumber the vote of immigrants and minorities. The frontier in Canada was still open at the turn of the century and massive waves of immigration to the West fueled concerns that Protestant Anglo-Saxons were losing control. In 1905, Alberta and Saskatchewan became provinces, resulting in part from railways and telegraph lines reaching the West. Women's suffrage was endorsed by farmer's organizations like the Saskatchewan Grain Grower's Association in hopes of increasing their political power by undermining the ethnic vote. Wealthy white and Protestant Canadian society was marked by white supremacy with increased fears over immigration into Canada that would result in the "racial degradation of Anglo-Saxons". The National Council of Women of Canada as well as in Christian organizations in the suffrage movement were white, middle-class, Protestant, and not working outside the home. They saw the nation-building project of settling the West and the anti-immigrant sentiment among their male peers as an opportunity to offer their vote to the cause of keeping the country Anglo-Saxon. Members of the NCWC, such as Margaret Gordon, pushed the notion that the enfranchisement of white women would protect the nation from racial degeneration. She believed the vote would separate white women from "the criminals, the id-

iots, and the minors of the race". Anne-Marie Kinahan quotes Vijay Agnew in discussing that the proposed white female vote was a chance to "offset the increased number of illiterate immigrants and paupers"^{xxiv}. They pushed the image of white women being the "mothers of the race" in the imperial context. This ideology targeted First Nations women and racial minorities, specifically of Asian descent. This is also an explanation for why the Canadian suffrage movement was less militant than its British and American counterparts because their maternal feminism was rooted in making Canada a white settler nation^{xxv}.

Conclusion

An important movement for equity and justice came at the expense of others, namely immigrants of Asian descent and Indigenous peoples. The "Women's Suffrage Movement" did not enfranchise all women. While willing to push the boundaries of gender, the suffrage movement maintained the socioeconomic status quo. They had little interest in challenging class and racial hierarchies. Many of the women who dominated the suffrage movement were worried about status and being associated with "lesser peoples" who did not have full citizenship, rather than true equality. However, the suffrage movement was important by generating further political reform and social change. The suffrage movement led to subsequent movements such as the Canadian equivalent of the Civil Rights movement, further feminist movements, LGBTQ+ movements, Indigenous rights movements, disability movements, and healthcare reforms. The women's suffrage movement was a symbol of modern democracy. Post-World War Two, after women in Quebec finally won the right to vote, leading up to the 1982 signing of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was a pe-

riod of activism and social change. The women's rights movement was one limited but important steppingstone of progress in Canada.

ⁱ Gail Brent, "The Development of the Law Relating to the Participation of Canadian Women in Public Life." *The University of Toronto Law Journal* 25, no. 4 (1975): 358–70. <https://doi.org/10.2307/825645>.

ⁱⁱ Patricia Roome, "Women's Suffrage Movement in Canada." ResearchGate: *Chinook Multimedia* Inc., 2001. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Carolyn-Strange/publication/268429468_Girl_Problem_in_late-19th_and_early-20th_Century_Canada/links/569ddddd308aed27a702fe227/Girl-Problem-in-late-19th-and-early-20th-Century-Canada.pdf. Pages 47-67

ⁱⁱⁱ Gail Brent, "The Development of the Law", pages 358-70.

^{iv} Anne-Marie Kinahan, "Transcendent Citizenship: Suffrage, the National Council of Women of Canada, and the Politics of Organized Womanhood." *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes* 42, no. 3 (2008): 5-27. muse.jhu.edu/article/367036.

^v Patricia Roome, "Women's Suffrage Movement in Canada." Pages 47-67.

^{vi} Patricia Roome, "Women's Suffrage Movement in Canada." Pages 47-67.

^{vii} Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930*. University of Toronto Press, 1995.

^{viii} Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930*.

^{ix} Robert J. Hutcheon, *Is the Growing Independence of Women a Good Thing?* (Toronto: Canadian Suffrage Association, c. 1910s). Accessed through Canadiana.ca, <https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.86708/1>. April 25, 2023.

^x A.H.F. Lefroy, *Should Canadian Women Have the Parliamentary Vote?* ([Kingston, ON]: Printed for the Equal Franchise League from the Queen's Quarterly Review, 1913). Accessed through Canadiana.ca, <https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.86114/1>. April 25, 2023.

^{xi} Anne-Marie Kinahan, "Transcendent Citizenship", pages 5-27.

^{xii} Susan D. Phillips, "Meaning and Structure in Social Movements: Mapping the Network of National Canadian Women's Organizations." *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue Canadienne de Science Politique* 24, no. 4 (1991): 755–82. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3229306>.

^{xiii} Patricia Roome, "Women's Suffrage Movement in Canada." Pages 47-67.

^{xiv} Cardinal Villeneuve, the archbishop of Quebec, "HE Cardinal Villeneuve speaks out against women's suffrage in provincial elections." Quebec. March 2, 1940. Viewed at <http://faculty.marianopolis.edu/c.belanger/quebechistory/docs/CardinalVilleneuveetlevotedesfemmesduQuebec.html>.

^{xv} Newton Rowell, "Speech of Newton Rowell on women suffrage, 1917 / Issued by The Ontario Provincial Liberal Party." Toronto, Ontario Provincial Liberal Party, 1917. Accessed through *Canadiana.ca*, <https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.66273/4>, April 25, 2023.

^{xvi} Patricia Roome, "Women's Suffrage Movement in Canada." Pages 47-67

^{xvii} Jean Blewett, "Canadian Woman and Her Work." *Collier's Weekly*, Toronto Canadian Suffrage Association, 1910. Accessed through *Canadiana.ca*, <https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.65393/2>. April 25, 2023.

^{xviii} Anne-Marie Kinahan, "Transcendent Citizenship", pages 5-27.

^{xix} Newton Rowell, "Speech of Newton Rowell on women suffrage, 1917"

^{xx} Anne-Marie Kinahan, "Transcendent Citizenship", pages 5-27. ^{xxi} Jean Blewett, "Canadian Woman and Her Work."

^{xxii} Lefroy, A. H. F. "Should Canadian Women Have the Parliamentary Vote?"

^{xxiii} Robert J. Hutcheon, "Is the Growing Independence of Women a Good Thing?"

^{xxiv} Vijay Agnew, 1993. "Canadian Feminism and Women of Color." *Women's Studies International Forum* 16 (3): 217-27.

^{xxv} Anne-Marie Kinahan, "Transcendent Citizenship", pages 5-27.

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Women in the Cuban Revolution: Where's the Change?

SIERRA BEAULAC

Introduction

The Cuban Revolution of 1959 was a notable turning point in the country's history, with significant ramifications for politics, culture, and society. One crucial aspect of the Revolution was its impact on the role of women in society. The Revolution sought to end capitalism and establish a socialist government as communism emerged, but alongside this was a push to challenge the entrenched gender norms of Cuba's patriarchal society. Before the Revolution, Cuban women faced significant inequality and discrimination. They were often relegated to traditional roles such as homemaking and childcare and excluded from participation in formal politics and activism. However, the revolutionary movement sought to change this. Fidel Castro and other revolutionary leaders recognized the importance of women's participation in the struggle and actively invited women to participate in political activities. Other women, however, became inclined to join based on their desire for equality.

As a result, women played a significant role in the Cuban Revolution, both in the armed struggle and, during state building, in areas such as healthcare, education, and community organizing. Women fought alongside men in the rebel army, and some rose to positions of leadership and authority. Women's participation in the revolutionary

war significantly departed from traditional gender roles and challenged patriarchal structures. However, the strategies aimed at gaining state approval for women's participation in the revolution were used to achieve outcomes that reflected Cuba's socialist values and goals for enhancing social and economic systems.

Post-war changes for women explicitly aligned with the state's goals for producing a "new Cuba." These specific goals included reform efforts such as implementing new policies focused on social welfare issues for all Cubans. Other policies reflected the development of industrialization in Cuba and promoted development within industrial settings as well as an adequate labor force to support such goals. Such policies include reform programs within education, healthcare, and agricultural industries. Many of these reform efforts not only supported Cuba's rural areas but also helped promote equality between men and women. The ambitions of leaders such as Fidel Castro provided women with a platform for consistent change after the conflict resided. Though various changes were made, their overall purpose was to promote best the ideals of "new Cuba's" development and did not always result in a positive result for all Cubans, including women.

In the state-building period following the revolutionary war, women witnessed the results of their efforts on behalf of the Revolution. By the 1970s, new policies slowly began to alter gender norms between men and women regarding education, parenting, and household responsibilities. Though these limited developments did not create significant change, women embraced work outside of the home and in advanced educational programs. The profound changes produced by Cuban women during the revolutionary era were tremendous; however, changes such as social reform were supported through policies set in place by male leaders. Approved policies that resulted in opportunities for equality reflected the ability and the limited willingness of male leaders to make changes surrounding gender norms. In many instances, such as healthcare and employment, the state's redeveloping economy played a more significant role than social equity. The government recognized the importance of women's contributions to the economy and society and sought to enable them to work outside more easily of the home. However, despite these advances, there were also some contradictions and limitations to the Cuban government's approach to women's rights. For example, there was tension between the government's promotion of gender equality in the workplace and its emphasis on traditional gender roles and family values in the home. The government implemented policies to promote women's rights but failed to address deep-rooted cultural attitudes toward women. As a result, women continued to face discrimination and harassment at work and home. The strategic limitations of the male-dominated political leadership created a double-edged sword for reform efforts—the publicly recognized inequalities between men and women and the limited

interest in making women truly equal to men. Despite a significant change in the revolutionary state, the growth of women's responsibilities and rights remained limited. Women who entered the workforce often remained in domestic work or careers considered "feminine" or maintained maternal values. Though Cuba was changing, the government's views on gender were a mixture of old and new attitudes.

In analyzing significant historical events such as the Cuban Revolution, it is crucial to consider how gender dynamics shape events and perspectives. Diverse groups of women from various racial and social backgrounds implemented unique change. Understanding the significance of women's roles in the Cuban Revolution provides a thorough analysis of their impact on the Revolution's outcomes and success. In addition, identifying and comprehending social and cultural norms provide insight into the power dynamics during the Cuban Revolution. Finally, the assessment of overall change can be studied by comparing Cubans' masculine and feminine values during the Revolution.

Overview of the Cuban Revolution

Before the Revolution began in the 1950s, men were the primary participants in political conflicts. When the war for Cuban independence broke out in the 1890s, José Martí, a Cuban Independence hero and writer, promoted freedom among Cuban men and highlighted women's importance to the cause when he wrote, "The people's campaigns are weak only when women offer them merely fearful and restrained assistance; when the cultured and virtuous woman anoints the work with the sweet honey of affection – the work is invincible."¹ The initial recognition of women's significance in achieving

independence motivated the development of efforts focused on women's reforms. This led to women becoming a model for effective participation, not just among other women, but also among men. The idealization of Cuban women's eagerness to support an independent Cuba depicted them as mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters. This strategy-maintained women's association with nurturing and domestic roles and highlighted their assumed need for protection. The overall goal was not just to end colonial rule but to address problems of poverty and inequality that strained ordinary people and created tension among Cubans. Though equality was a focus of Marti's independence campaign, equality among Cuban men became more central than equality between men and women.

Independence did not solve Cuban's political, social, or economic problems. As a result, the 1930s in Cuba were a time of political and social upheaval. The country was experiencing economic difficulties, and the government was unstable. The Great Depression hit Cuba hard, and unemployment was high. The Depression led to widespread poverty and social unrest. The economic decline in the 1930s helped to initiate women's transition into activists. In part, this was driven by feminist movements and by the passage of female suffrage in 1934. By recognizing a common interest in reform, women began organizing small groups to support the protests. Throughout the 1940s, with the development of a new constitution. The 1940s constitution brought hope for political and social change, but problems persisted. New struggles due to changing economic and social developments deepened inequalities that continued into the 1950s into the peak of the conflict.

Fulgencio Batista took advantage of this

turbulence and staged a bloodless coup in 1952; almost immediately, anti-Batista groups formed to combat corrupt leadership and reorganize the state.² Women took on essential roles within these resistance movements based on prior experience. Historian Aviva Chomsky noted, "The 1950s insurrection and women's place in it was not created from scratch but rather drew from experiences of Cuba's previous wars and rebellions."³ Upset with the dictatorship and ignited by the desire for equality within Cuba, women began to harness their abilities to create change.

In 1953, Fidel Castro and a group of rebels tried and failed to take over the Moncada army barracks, which although unsuccessful gained national attention for their cause. Fidel Castro's publicized opposition to Batista appealed to struggling Cuban communities, such as those unemployed or impoverished in rural and urban areas. Fidel Castro addressed the difficulties Urban Cubans faced under Batista's regime stating in his speech "History Will Absolve Me":

The people we counted on in our struggle were these: Seven hundred thousand Cubans without work, who desire to earn their daily bread honestly without having to emigrate in search of livelihood. Five hundred thousand farm laborers inhabiting miserable shacks, who work four months of the year and starve for the rest of the year, sharing their misery with their children, who have not an inch of land to cultivate, and whose existence inspires compassion in any heart not made of stone. Four hundred thousand industrial laborers and stevedores whose retirement funds have been embezzled, whose benefits are being taken away, whose homes are wretched quarters,

whose salaries pass from the hands of the boss to those of the usurer, whose future is a pay reduction and dismissal, whose life is eternal work and whose only rest is in the tomb.⁴

The struggle of urban Cubans is highlighted by Castro as he detailed the brutal conditions of workers and children, displaying limited support from the government and promoting the desire to revolt. After serving a jail term followed by a period in Mexico, Castro returned to Cuba in July 1956 with a small rebel army and began to wage guerrilla warfare against the Batista regime in the Sierra Maestra. The urban conflict and guerrilla forces fought for two years, but due to losses in urban leadership, the guerrilla force took the lead over the Revolution in 1958. The shifting focus from urban to guerrilla forces within the Cuban Revolution changed the dynamics of warfare.

The guerrilla struggle was now dominant, but the urban conflict continued. Historian Michelle Chase noted, "If existing historiography acknowledges the starring role awarded to guerrilla warfare by mid-1958, we may also surmise that some segments of the urban anti-Batista resistance embraced diverse strategies, continuing to raise the banner of mass civic struggle even while supporting the growing rebel army."⁵ The diversity of combatant techniques exemplified both in the urban sectors and the Sierra provided a more profound understanding of the involvement of Cubans in the Revolution. The Cuban Revolution was comprised of diverse groups that used both peaceful and violent means to achieve political and social change. The development of guerrilla warfare in the Sierra helped to push forward revolutionary efforts with force, while at the same time, urban protests led by women promoted gender inclusivity.

In many cases, however, women did not hold leadership positions in urban areas. Instead, Cuban women of the urban arena used their flexibility to strategize and contribute to various areas of conflict. The eventual turn to armed force united both parties, unifying men, and women under one set of leaders. The forced transition and desire for increased support from Cuban women required men to look past traditional gender norms and accept the assistance of women within warfare.

Following the revolutionary victory, the revolutionary government went through different phases over time. Benjamin Keen and Keith Haynes note that beginning in 1959, "the revolution consolidated its domestic political position, began the socialization of the economy, and established a new pattern of foreign relations."⁶ Reform efforts gradually focused on developing a socialist government, including income distribution. Other reform efforts such as Land reform developed slowly as their ideals at first did not inherently reflect Cuba's socialist beliefs. Before the Revolution, small groups of wealthy individuals owned Cuba's arable land for their benefit. The Agrarian Reform Law changed this by breaking up large estates and distributing them among peasants who had previously been landless. To improve the conditions of the sugar workers in Cuba, the government took actions such as expropriating large estates, redistributing land to farmers, and nationalizing foreign-owned properties. The focus was on improving work and wage conditions rather than increasing the amount of land. During the post-war era, these farmers made up most of the workforce. The redistribution of wealth to rural communities also saw success in the first three years following the Revolution.⁷ Reform efforts allowed for more outstanding food production

and improved living conditions for rural communities. The reform also led to the establishment of agricultural cooperatives, which allowed farmers to pool resources and share knowledge. These cooperatives were instrumental in increasing productivity and improving crop quality. Despite some challenges, such as resistance from former landowners and limited resources, the Cuban Revolution's Agricultural Reform has impacted the country's economy and society. It remains an important example of how agrarian reform can bring about positive change for marginalized communities.

One of the Revolution's most significant accomplishments was education reform. The Cuban government launched a nationwide literacy campaign that mobilized 250,000 volunteers to teach literacy skills to over 700,000 people. Education reform during the Cuban Revolution was a significant step towards improving the lives of poor Cubans. The revolutionaries recognized that education was a powerful tool to empower the masses and create a more just society. Thus, they implemented various reforms to improve education access and enhance quality. The literacy campaign accompanied educational reform, including advocating for increased Cuban literacy. Educational reform efforts and policy implementation impacted Cuba politically and benefited social development. Aviva Chomsky notes that for undereducated Cubans, "Illiteracy and lack of education meant to silence, marginalization and oppression."⁸ Education reform in Cuba impacted women by not only providing education opportunities but also advancements in new areas of employment. Though educational avenues were limited for women in Cuba, and many remained in positions that featured feminine nurturing roles, further integration of women

into careers outside of the home began to over time become a reality.

One of the most significant reforms was the literacy campaign launched in 1961. The campaign mobilized thousands of volunteers who went door-to-door teaching people how to read and write. This effort resulted in an impressive achievement as Cuba became one of the most literate countries in Latin America. Additionally, the revolutionaries nationalized all schools, ensuring that educational training was free and accessible to all. For women, training for new work opportunities such as nursing, teaching, and childcare were offered. They also introduced a new curriculum emphasizing critical thinking, creativity, and social responsibility, as well as pushed ideologies that proved loyalty to the state and the emerging Communist Party. As a result, vocational education became popular in rural areas of Cuba, providing greater accessibility to specifically agricultural work skills to combat poverty.⁹ The government invested heavily in education, creating a comprehensive public school system providing free primary school education through university.

Following the Revolution, women's reform groups emerged to promote social change and further developments in support of equal rights among Cubans. The establishment of such groups including the FMC displayed independent group development and prompted government officials to take accountability and action on behalf of Cuban citizens. The Cuban government established various social welfare programs in the 1960s. As a result, access to healthcare and education became universal, child mortality rates declined dramatically, and life expectancy increased.¹⁰ In 1961, the Medical Services Auxiliary Corps were established to support

the armed forces of the Revolution, allowing women to enter healthcare positions and provide support in a new way.¹¹ One of the most notable social welfare programs implemented after the Revolution was establishing a universal healthcare system. This system provided free medical care to all citizens, regardless of their ability to pay.¹²

The Cuban government's turn to communism in the early 1960s prompted economic reorganization through Soviet influence. During this period, Cuba became reliant on the Soviet Union for economic support. Castro's government focused on the sugar industry and adopted a centrally planned economic system. However, this economic restructuring was challenging. The U.S. imposed an embargo on Cuba in response to these changes, which severely impacted the country's ability to trade with other nations. In addition, inefficiencies in state-run industries led to shortages of essential goods and services.¹³ Despite these challenges, Cuba has maintained its socialist economic model for over six decades. While some recent reforms have opened the economy to private enterprise and foreign investment, the government remains committed to maintaining control over key sectors of the economy.

In addition, changes in Cuban leadership influenced economic change by the 1970s. During this period, authoritarianism began to develop as Cuba separated from its formerly democratic government. Rachel Hynson identifies this shift as, "the revolutionary movement's transition from a relatively democratic one with legions of mass supporters and outwardly accountable leadership into a more solidified authoritarian government, whose authority was contingent on citizens' willingness to surrender their economic autonomy to the

state."¹⁴ The shift in government prompted reform efforts to improve the state's productivity and development between 1971 and 1975. Keen and Haynes note that "Political institutionalism accompanied efforts to reorganize and rationalize the economy... At the root of the problem was the lack of professional management, quality control, and labor discipline, all of which contributed to poorly manufactured goods...."¹⁵ The economic crisis continued into the 1980s, ultimately leading to dissatisfied Cubans migrating out of the country.

Women Within the Revolutionary Conflict

Women from various backgrounds and social classes began to form activist groups against the Batista regime as soon as he took power in 1952. Over time, women in urban areas began to take the initiative within the revolutionary cause. Cuban women played a significant role in the urban setting of the Revolution by participating in protests and demonstrations. Independently, women formed groups in protest of the repression and violence of the Batista regime by means other than direct conflict. Urban protests during the Cuban Revolution were influenced by women's desire to engage in Revolutionary efforts on their terms. They also played a crucial role in guerrilla warfare against the regime. Women were involved in various acts of sabotage, including the burning of sugar cane fields and the bombing of military installations.¹⁶ However, they also gained some support for their participation through Fidel Castro.¹⁷

Women were essential to the guerrilla conflict, as they played a critical role in the covert operations that were carried out. Under the guise of being ordinary citizens and assumed less suspect than men, Cuban women smuggled

weapons, food, and even people through the mountains. Although these acts of resistance came with significant risks, including persecution and detention, Cuban women actively supported the Revolution. The role of women in the mountains was not limited to covert operations. Some were also actively involved in the fight as soldiers. Women who sought to fight alongside men had to prove themselves capable in training, undergo military training, and carry arms. Celia Sanchez led women to form their battalion and played a vital role in the revolutionary army. They were an inspirational force for the male rebels and helped to motivate them to fight hard, knowing there were women present fighting by their side.

Moreover, women in the mountains also served as medics, doctors, and nurses. Despite having limited access to medical equipment and being in a war zone, women played an essential role in treating wounded rebels. In medical roles, women worked tirelessly, using their skills to save countless lives. They were respected and valued for their contributions beyond gender roles and traditional expectations. The mountain conflict of the Cuban Revolution was a crucial turning point for the country, and women played a massive role in the victory of the Revolution. Female rebels demonstrated great bravery and resilience in the face of blatant discrimination, proving that they were equally valuable in society and that discrimination could not stand in the face of determination.

Demands for societal changes created varied expectations for men and women, which were clearly outlined during the era of conflict. Smith and Padula noted that “women were expected to be loyal implementers or grateful recipients of the male-determined revolutionary program. Women's concerns were viewed as peripheral.

Those women who could not accept this status were rejected by the Revolution.”¹⁸ The restrictions within the Revolution for women equally represented previously dictated beliefs regarding women's role in society as well as their ability to claim roles of leadership and power. The freedom Cuban women wished to earn through wartime victory became the same restriction that prevented them from participating in the liberation of Cuban women. The insurrection's masculine agenda focused on freedom from alienation within a socialist community as an end goal for Cuban men, completely disregarding the demands and rights of Cuban women.¹⁹ Many of Cuba's best combatants maintained an anti-women prejudice, further restricting participation. A focus on maintaining traditional masculine and feminine values appeared in the mobility of status among ranks.

The Marianas Platoon

Cuban conflict in the Sierra resulted in high demand for power in numbers—this need for increased support. With Fidel Castro's approval, the Mariana Grajales platoon was formed in 1958. In their 2003 study, Tete Puebla and Mary-Alice Waters note that “The founding of the Mariana Grajales Women's Platoon marked a milestone in the Cuban Revolution. It demonstrated in practice the social course of a victorious Rebel Army would fight for.”²⁰ The formation of the first and only women's platoon during the Cuban Revolution is documented in numerous interviews provided by Tete Puebla based on interviews by Mary-Alice Waters. Puebla described the formation of the Mariana's Platoon after the army's defensive line had been defeated in conflict.²¹ Armed for the first time during the Revolution, Cuban women became a leading force in the physical fight for

equality. The acceptance of the Marianas Platoon though a symbol of Cuba's initiative to support equality created conflict among men who supported traditional gender norms. description of the resistance focuses on the tension and limitations within the conflict created, "There were still not enough weapons for everyone, and the men were saying, 'How can we give rifles to women when there are so many men unarmed?'"²² The support from Fidel Castro to support the Marianas helped to reduce tension between male and female revolutionaries. Fidel Castro ensured that the Marianas Platoon received proper training, amplifying their succession and prominence. Providing the female platoon with arms helped to create a break from traditional gender norms.

Providing women with necessary weaponry and training helped to diffuse the nurturing and maternal imagery that created restrictions for women in the past. The Marianas quickly became Castro's first and last opportunity for defense as his forces and armed guerrillas depleted. The organization of the Marianas though late in the Revolution would initiate the promotion of gender equality within the Revolution's conflict phase. Mixed support of the Marianas followed the platoon as numerous Cuban men judged their abilities to participate in active warfare. The Marianas Platoon would prove themselves in September of 1958 by engaging in their first battle. Puebla's account of this conflict describes the perseverance and strength of the Marianas, "The first combat we saw was the battle of Cerro Pelado on September 27, 1958. This was the Marians' baptism by fire. The entire squad participated. This was a tough battle. Remember that the enemy had artillery the area had become the last redoubt of the dictator's troops... Five companeros were killed in the fighting; there were

no casualties among the Marianas. Fidel has talked about this battle.'"²³ The success of the Marianas Platoon was seen not only during times of conflict but also by providing a legacy that would come after the warfare. This memory from Puebla highlights the succession of the Marianas Platoon limiting the full perspective of their struggle and the truth behind the platoon's formation. Manipulated by the state, many accounts from the women of the Mariana's romanticize Fidel Castro's efforts within the war and his support for women combatants. This account fails to recognize the political strategies of Cuban government officials and how the Marianas were organized as a last result of effort and for further political gain for women's support of the Revolution and future reform.

Both Waters and Smith and Puebla describe the Marianas Platoon as a way of opening doors for women's equality. "Around the world, many are interested in your story because it helps capture what the Cuban Revolution meant for women."²⁴ Isabela Rielo, head of the Turiboca Vegetable Ian and captain in the Revolutionary Armed Forces, described the unity that the Marianas Platoon created among women during times of conflict;

Our relationships were the most fraternal, the most sincere and at the same time the most complete; it was the best kind of atmosphere for a woman, with all the problems and all of the difficulties that existed; privation, far from family, lack of affection... I don't know, though we always resisted that, because we knew damn well what we were there for and why we were there. Those of us who had formed the women's battalion never felt we should have any different treatment from the men; we wanted them to look on us as one more soldier.²⁵

As one of eleven members of the Marianas Platoon, Rielo provides a valuable account of women's limited experiences facing combat during the Revolution. The confidence and strength that the Marianas provided the guerrillas helped to promote their succession within the Cuban Revolution as well as provided them with opportunities to promote social change during the state-building era. Proving effective in combat, the Marianas' force was limited due to the size of the platoon and their formation late in the Revolution. In many ways, the Mariana's was formed by Fidel Castro as a gender tactic with benefits and repercussions during the war and following the Revolution.²⁶ These opportunities however were not easily available for women who participated in the Cuban Revolution, as gender norms continued to shape both the urban and rural environments, altering women's abilities to participate. The Marianas Platoon proved to Cuban leaders that they could withstand the brutalities of armed conflict in eth guerrilla and work among men.²⁷ Though proven true, the women of the Marianas Platoon, along with other women engaged in the Revolution, continued to face restrictions based on competing ideals of masculine and feminine norms.

Masculinity and Femininity in the Cuban Revolution

Historian Michelle Chase notes in her 2015 study of the Cuban Revolution that during the revolutionary war, masculinity and femininity constructs played a large role in the fight for freedom and liberation. She stated "The conflict sparked by the revolutionary victory of 1959 was not only a struggle over property rights, national politics, or international relations. It also unleashed a struggle over constructions of femininity and masculinity, of

marriage and the family."²⁸ Gender norms shaped Cuba's economy, politics, and social sectors both before and after the Revolution. In many ways change was produced, however, traditional gender norms were strongly tied to Cuba's history as a state and were a difficult obstacle to overcome. Gender norms within the urban underground during the Revolution created difficulties for women's participation. Women's strength was often questioned by men during the revolution. Chase also identifies the internal conflicts caused by masculine and feminine norms during the Revolution. "The issue here is not simply about the literal predominance of men over women in the urban underground and in the rebel army. 'Real' revolutionary participation was also understood as being linked to traditional notions about physical strength."²⁹ Urban Cuba's warfare focused on different strategies to succeed, many of which surrounded the diverse roles of women. Noncombatant efforts of urban Cuban women included moving materials, protesting, and other undercover elements where women remained in their everyday routines to support the Revolution. By women maintaining stereotyped roles, they were able to seamlessly blend into Revolution efforts without being detected while maintaining their home life. Chase goes on to argue that competing expectations of men and women during the Cuban Revolution are responsible for the lack of representation and documentation of women's support in urban environments.

A persistent problem in recovering women in the historical record has to do with existing frameworks for studying the Cuban Revolution. Women's mass participation primarily took place in urban settings, often in public protests, and in roles now understood to be auxiliary or

somehow secondary to the military struggle... State-sanctioned histories thus routinely include hagiographic treatment of the so-called heroines of the Sierra, praising the small group of female strategists close to Fidel Castro in the Sierra as important but exceptional actors. Yet they leave out the many more women who participated in or supported the urban anti-Batista resistance.³⁰

Important women such as Aleida March demonstrate the difficulty of balancing women's roles within the Revolution as well as traditional maternal and household duties. Aleida March married Revolutionary leader Che Guevara displaying the balance between Revolution participation and the duties of being a wife and mother. In her autobiography, March wrote, "My future role has been decided in the first days of January when, on a trip around Havana Raul Castro asked Che what rank I would be honored with. Che bluntly replied, none, because I would be his wife. I accepted this, although some may not understand my position."³¹ Aside from men deciding the roles of women within the revolution came the observation of women's limits. During the first year of the Revolution, Aleida March identified the limits of women's education. March saw uneducated women as an obstacle to reaching equality in urban Cuba and looked to Che as a teacher; "Che helped me a great deal. He was a brilliant teacher, leading me by his daily example. But some things I had to figure out for myself, like how to juggle my roles as a wife, mother, and worker."³² The duality women faced in urban areas of Cuba, often going unrecognized, forced women to participate in the Revolution in their way. Independently organized groups of protesters helped women take on roles within their communities and spread

the demand for equality, uncovering the Revolution within the Revolution. The contribution of Cuban women in the war, however, did not guarantee a reward once victory occurred.

Gender and Revolutionary State Building

In 1966, Fidel Castro gave a speech commending women's participation in the Revolution, identifying the need for gender-based reform as the "Revolution within the Revolution."³³ Though Castro stated that women's rights were important and contributed to the Revolution, Castro mainly discussed how women could best serve the Revolution rather than how the revolutionary state could serve women. Within his speech, Castro identified the efforts of Cuban women within the Revolution and the changes in which they promoted. Castro identified improvement in social and economic reform efforts, "For events are demonstrating, even now, the possibilities of women and the role that women can play in a revolutionary process in which society is liberating itself, above all, from exploitation, and from prejudices and a whole series of circumstances in which women were doubly exploited, doubly humiliated."³⁴ Here Castro publicly identified the struggles of women throughout the Revolutionary period, alongside the hardships gender norms created in moving towards equality. Fidel Castro's perspective on Cuban women's participation in the Revolution differed from other men's. Due to Castro's support, women were able to participate in indirect conflict and as noncombatants, however traditional views of a woman's responsibility remained. Addressing the controversy, Castro stated,

I described before the opinion held by many men concerning the functions of women, and I said that among the functions considered to belong

to women was -almost exclusively- that of having children. Naturally, reproduction is one of the most important of women's functions within society. But it is precisely this function, relegated by nature to women, which has enslaved them to a series of chores within the home.³⁵

Castro's claims highlight the restrictions that numerous women faced before, during, and after the Revolution. Though social changes improved opportunities for women many remained in roles that used domestic skills such as education, healthcare, and caretaking roles. Though Fidel Castro tried to use these opportunities to uplift women in the workplace, it remains a constant reminder of the limited change in the lives of Cuban women after the Revolution. In 1974, Castro presented a second speech reflecting on the struggle for women to integrate equally. Almost ten years following his speech regarding women's change for equality in Cuba, progression towards women's equality and autonomy had not gained significant traction. Castro identified the continued need for women to further integrate into employment outside of the home to further stimulate Cuba's industrialization, "Naturally, in the socialist countries women have advanced a long distance along the road to their liberation. But if we ask ourselves about our own situation: we who are a socialist country with almost sixteen years of revolution, can we really say that Cuban women have acquired full equality of rights in practice and that they are absolutely integrated into Cuban Society?"³⁶ Understanding the limited social and economic growth under "new Cuba's" development, displays the motive of government officials to present solutions for women which overall stimulated economic growth. Security within Cuba's new and developing

economy became a priority above all others. The Cuban government incorporated opportunities for women into its social platform when it was advantageous for the state. However, there was also resistance towards granting Cuban women full and equal integration into society, which sparked a debate on the roles that women should play. Castro argued the importance of women in roles reflecting traditional gender norms and the consequences of removing them;

Of course, in this lack of equality, in this lack of full integration, as I said, there are objective factors and there are subjective factors. Naturally, everything that prevents the incorporation of women into the workforce makes this process of integration difficult, makes this process of achieving full equality difficult. And you have seen precisely when women are incorporated into the work force, when women stop performing the traditional and historical activities, is when these problems begin to show up.³⁷

The continued desire for women to maintain maternal positions as well as maintain Cuban family life became another construct plagued by traditional gender norms.

Reform efforts produced policies to develop the Cuban "nuclear family." In 1975, Cuba's executive government passed the Family Code to unify Cuban families and modernize gender roles within the home. The Family Code included policy on aspects such as marriage and relationships between husbands and wives.³⁸ The expectations of married Cuban couples highlighted equal care for the family and must "cooperate with the other in the education, upbringing, and guidance of the children according to the principles of socialist morality."³⁹ These

policies helped to initiate the division of household roles among Cuban families. Though the government initiated household regulation to promote equality among Cuban men and women, the attempt to regulate the private lives of Cuban families was near impossible. The private lives of many Cuban families remained inside of the home and changes from traditional gender norms had already seen resistance. Primary source accounts collected by Margaret Randal provide a different perspective on women's participation in the Revolution. In an interview of fourteen women who actively participated in the Revolution, Randal identifies the various roles Cuban women took on. One woman, Josefina, is "a forty-one-year-old peasant woman, married and with eight children. Of worker-peasant stock, she has a fourth-grade education and belongs to the FMC and the militia. She lives in a small village in the province of Havana, and both she and her husband work in the nearby sugar refinery."⁴⁰ Interviews with Josefina describe her agricultural labor as well as her perspective on gender roles in Cuban households. When asked about her perspective on men's strength versus women's, Josephina responds, "Oh Yeah, stronger sometimes. That's the truth...when the Federation got us to go to the mill there were fifteen of us women and the only one who stayed was me. They give me the hardest job, that the men don't even want."⁴¹ Josephina's claims prove that the incorporation of women into the labor force did not always prove to become appositive or equal opportunity among Cuban men and women. Once again, an attempt made by Cuba's new socialist government had only limited success. Even as government programs tried to implement change, economic development remained more important than social advances. The policy implemented by government officials continued to

bring only limited change to the lives of women on their own, initiating Cuban women to organize and take reform efforts into their own hands.

The Federation of Cuban Women (FMC)

Various causes before the revolution had allowed women's groups to mobilize when upcoming rulers desired to strengthen their support, allowing women to participate and organize.⁴² These events would allow generations of women to participate in the Cuban Revolution conflict creating designated groups referred to as the "Old Left" and the "New Left." According to Chase, Women of the Marxist "Old Left" belief system were primarily older women who did not mainly participate in the insurrection efforts. This group of women and their advocacy included progressive ideologies not found in the youthful "New Left" groups who engaged in conflict during the insurrection.⁴³ Within conflicting ideologies, both groups supported women's roles throughout the Revolution. Though Cuban women began to organize themselves during this period and increase their involvement in the era of conflict, leaders often dismissed the demands of women and were selective with their wording while addressing concerns. Rather than using "the term 'liberation' or even 'equality' to discuss women's issues... terms usually used by the leadership were 'integration,' 'incorporation,' or even 'redemption.'"⁴⁴ These remarks placed Cuban women as parts of a working system rather than humanizing them within the context of the Revolution; such comments would continue to promote masculine ideologies and priorities throughout the insurrection while making participation by women increasingly tricky. By 1959, struggling women's groups collaborated to become the Federation of Cuban Women

(FMC).⁴⁵ As Chase notes the development of such groups occurred as the state weakened independent women's groups in favor of the FMC to maintain control.

The Federation of Cuban Women's establishment helped women gain a more secure foothold in the Revolution and brought attention to women's reform and revolutionary demands. The FMC would eventually become "the largest women's organization in the history of Latin America."⁴⁶ Influential female leaders of the FMC included Vilma Espin, who worked closely with Fidel Castro, initiating some improvements for Cuban women. The group sought to combat gender-based discrimination and provide a strong all-female force for the Revolution.⁴⁷ Though acknowledged for their efforts, women often faded into the background of their male counterparts who represented the masculinity of liberating Cuba. Men remained primary leaders of combat efforts and even oversaw women-based groups. The strict control of the FMC by the Cuban government limited the group's overall ability to promote change. Outcomes of the FMC's reform efforts would only be produced if they aligned with the views of government officials. The group also focused on the support of women within society, such as through education, healthcare, and family-based support. These changes helped to initiate the development of new gender expectations among Cuban women. These changes would catalyze the "New Cuban Woman," providing its need for advocacy.

The FMC, or the "Federacion de Mujeres Cubanas," was formed during the Cuban Revolution on August 23, 1960. The organization was established by Vilma Espin, who was the wife of Raul Castro, the brother of Fidel Castro. Espin's primary source account of the FMC and interactions with Fidel Castro provides a

contradicting perspective of women's roles in the Cuban Revolution. The FMC was formed to achieve gender equality and improve the status of women in Cuba. The Cuban Revolution brought about significant changes in the country, and the FMC played a crucial role in ensuring that these changes extended to women. The formation of the FMC was a significant milestone in the Cuban Revolution. Women in Cuba had been marginalized and oppressed for generations. The FMC provided Cuban women a platform to voice their concerns and further promote gender equality. The organization aimed to break down patriarchal structures in society and promote equal treatment for women in all areas of life, including education, healthcare, and employment. The FMC also played a vital role in promoting family planning and reproductive rights, which had previously been neglected in Cuba.⁴⁸

The FMC often helped to organize social welfare initiatives. This organization of Cuban women fought for just and equal social welfare opportunities for poor Cubans, especially women. The FMC supported women's education and health and provided subsidies for single mothers, older women, and disabled women. As a result, the FMC helped thousands of women explore their full potential, with many rising to leadership positions in government, science, and other fields. Castro's support for women's rights was a cornerstone of the Cuban Revolution. Castro's policies empowered women to take control of their lives and participate actively in building a socialist society. By creating opportunities for women to participate in all areas of society, he broke down the barriers that had oppressed women for generations. With the creation of The Federation of Cuban Women, women gained a platform to raise their voices and influence

policy decisions. These points contradict the findings of historians such as Smith and Padula who note the limited ability of Cuban women to gain independence. Additionally, the Cuban government implemented policies promoting gender equality, including free healthcare and education for all citizens. These policies helped break down traditional barriers and stereotypes about women's societal roles, enabling them to participate more fully in the country's civic life.

As a result of these policies, Cuban women gained greater access to education and professional opportunities, leading to increased participation in the labor force. This increased participation helped bolster the country's economy and gave Cuban women in some cases a sense of purpose and fulfillment. The changes brought about by the Cuban Revolution were not only limited to economic and political fronts but also significantly impacted women's personal lives. Various legislative acts promoted gender equality and accorded women unprecedented rights to equal inheritance and divorce.⁴⁹

By 1975, the FMC secured the Family Code, which helped to "recognize the equal right of both spouses to education and career, required them to share in household duties and childcare, and established divorce as a legal remedy for any spouse whose mate refused to comply."⁵⁰ The Family Code's objectives stated the institution of the Cuban family including "marriage, divorce, parent-child relations, the obligation to provide alimony, adoption, and tutelage with the main objections contributing to: the strengthening of the family... the strengthening of formalized... marriage based on absolute equality of rights between men and women..."⁵¹ This code, though presenting initial support for family

development withing "new Cuba," displayed limitations based on the government's ability and willingness to regulate the code. Though many changes from the Family Code embraced equality among men and women's roles within the home, there is limited proof that families upheld such policies within their homes. The desire for further support for women and the hope for equality prompted further organization of reform groups. The FMC provides insight into the lasting impact of women's reform efforts following the Cuban Revolution and the state's transition to socialism. Changes by the Cuban government influenced the development of a "new Cuba" while simultaneously maintaining some of Cuba's traditional values. This focus on gender equality and women's rights was also reflected in the revolutionary protests, where women played a prominent role. The revolutionary movement in Cuba represents a significant turning point in the history of gender relations. Through its policies and initiatives, the Revolution addressed long-standing gender disparities in Cuba and created a more equal society. The Revolution in Cuba was a significant turning point in the history of gender relations, as it enabled women to participate more fully in the country's civic life and create a more equitable society.

The Revolution's emphasis on gender equality and women's rights allowed Cuban women to break free from traditional gender roles, access education, and professional opportunities, and participate more fully in the country's civic life. The creation of "The Federation of Cuban Women" offered a platform for women to raise their voices and influence policy decisions, enabling them to play an active part in shaping the country's future.

Women, Family, and Work

The years of reconstruction following the Cuban Revolution presented new opportunities for Cuban families to shift away from traditional patriarchal beliefs. Operation Family, a program established by the Ministry of Justice, was enacted within the first year of Cuba's state-building phase. Historian Rachel Hynson notes that this movement promoted greater autonomy for "the female heads of household who participated in the paid-labor force."⁵² The initial phase of Operation Family allowed working women to maintain part-time employment even after marriage if the state approved the line of work. Operation Matrimony and Operation Registration, initially implemented from 1959 to 1962 and again in 1965, helped to expand the state's outreach to rural areas of Cuba where formal documentation of marriage was limited. Over time with increasing state control, Operation Family provided new opportunities for married Cubans. Women who had children before marriage became less scrutinized, and divorce became an option for women, giving them more control over their home life situations. However, the limits to Operation Family required strict state control and supervision, creating limitations. Interracial marriages and relationships also became a source of conflict and tension between Cubans and the State. These limitations over time became less regulated but still provide an example of how new policy created new opportunities and maintained restrictions for Cubans, especially women.

The Revolution prompted more women to enter the workforce, and the Campaign for Women's Employment helped support better women entering the workforce while initiating economic and social development within Cuba.⁵³ The integration of women

into Cuba's workforce was initiated in the 1940s when the state no longer tolerated sex-based discrimination. These policies ultimately became regulated as the state of Cuba relied on an extra labor force to stimulate the economy, providing women with new work opportunities that provided new skills and experiences. In rural Cuba, women's work often needed to be recognized as the sugar industry hired few women. Cultural biases also limited rural women's integration into other areas, such as harvesting and processing crops and tending to small plots.⁵⁴ Following the Cuban Revolution, employment for women changed as domestic service positions and prostitution were eliminated. As a replacement, "Government programs to expand and democratize healthcare and education provided many new jobs for women. New positions created for women by government programs were crucial to the integration of rural women into the workforce. Following these social reforms can the agricultural reform movement, providing further outlets for employment for the rural women of Cuba."⁵⁵

Conclusion

Overall, the Cuban Revolution was a period in which women played a crucial role in gender-based reform efforts. In studying the Cuban Revolution, understanding the shift of dynamics within societal perspectives is crucial to fully analyze change. The changes for equality and autonomy for women produced by revolutionary participation widely differed for women based on their age, race, home life, and geography. The Cuban Revolution in fact produced change for all Cubans as the state adopted socialism and began to industrialize. However, many of these changes still maintained limitations for groups who were traditionally seen as a minority in the

past, including women. A combination of traditional and progressive beliefs that were prevalent in Cuban society helped to facilitate social change and stimulate the economy. While certain improvements were made for women, such as new opportunities, there was also a continued emphasis on maintaining traditional maternal and feminine roles. During the Revolution, some women were able to secure positions in politics. However, despite these gains, male leadership continued to maintain its dominance. Male leaders of the Cuban Revolution such as Fidel Castro, allowed promoted social equality among Cuban men and women, only when it was able to benefit “new Cuba’s” economic development.

Within Cuba’s era of conflict, women participated willingly to fight for equality in the hope to improve their own lives. By participating many women including Aleida March, Vilma Espin, and the women of the Marianas Platoon developed as historic figures for women’s rights during the Revolution. Participation by female revolutionaries took place in both urban and rural Cuba using different strategies against Batista’s regime. Though the armed conflict was mainly used in the Sierra by guerrillas, smaller-scale resistance efforts and protests supported women’s success in rural Cuban areas, stimulating social and economic changes directly.

Post-Revolution changes and continuous reform efforts by women helped to expand education, healthcare, employment, and home-life balance among all Cubans. Social development in Cuba provided women with opportunities to gain some independence by becoming educated and entering new types of work. In contrast, many of these opportunities kept women in caregiver positions that they had tried to escape before the Revolution. The ultimate change of the Cuban Revolution

came with economic development and industrialization, promoting the integration of women’s demands outside of the household. The organization of women’s groups such as the FMC, helped to initiate reform campaigns that would create lasting change. Achieving such change, however, proved to become a difficult task, limiting the potential for positive outcomes. As Cuba’s new government recovered and gained stability and became increasingly authoritarian. The Cuban government found it challenging to keep up with the constant demand for change from the general population. To prevent further economic crisis and conflict, the government initially supported and publicized social and gender-based reforms. This initial support allowed organized women’s groups to make more significant changes within their communities.

Overall, the Cuban Revolution resulted in lasting change for generations, but not without struggle or consequence. Though change can be witnessed by social reform and economic development, the impact on women resulted in stagnant mobility for autonomy and liberation. The Cuban Revolution’s main goal was to gain freedom and liberation from corrupt government and dictatorship. Various efforts through conflict and noncombatant efforts proved successful. By adopting a socialist government with an emphasis on equality, many minority groups within Cuba awaited change. However, by the end of the 1970s, equality, especially for women had only witnessed limited progression. It is not to say that change did not occur during the Cuban Revolution. But these changes can be seen in the economic success of industrialization rather than the adoption of gender equality.

¹ As quoted in Lorraine Bayard de Volo, *Women and the Cuban Insurrection: How Gender Shaped Castro's Victory* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 25.

² Aviva Chomsky, *A History of the Cuban Revolution* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 5.

³ Bayard deVolo, *Women and the Cuban Insurrection*, 23.

⁴ Fidel Castro: "History Will Absolve Me," Castro: History Will Absolve Me, accessed May 9, 2023, <https://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/slatta/hi216/documents/dabsolve.htm>.

⁵ Michelle Chase, *Revolution within the Revolution Women and Gender Politics in Cuba, 1952-1962* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 49.

⁶ Benjamin Keen and Keith Haynes, *A History of Latin America, Vol. 2* (Boston: Cengage Group, 2013), 403.

⁷ Keen and Haynes, *A History of Latin America, Vol. 2*, 403.

⁸ Chomsky, *A History of the Cuban Revolution*, 42.

⁹ Chomsky, *A History of the Cuban Revolution*, 43.

¹⁰ Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, and Yolanda Ferrer. *Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution within the Revolution*. (New York: Pathfinder, 2012), 210.

¹¹ Espin, Asela de los Santos and Ferrer, *Women in Cuba*, 211.

¹² Espin, Asela de los Santos and Ferrer, *Women in Cuba*, 237.

¹³ Rachel Hynson, *Laboring for the State Women, Family, and Work in Revolutionary Cuba, 1959-1971* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 14-15.

¹⁴ Hynson, *Laboring for the State Women, Family and Work in Revolutionary Cuba, 1959-1971*, 16.

¹⁵ Keen and Haynes, "Cuba: The Revolutionary Socialist Alternative to Populism," 408.

¹⁶ Margaret Randall, *Cuban Women Now: Interviews with Cuban Women* (Kitchener, ON: Women's Press Dumont Press Graphix, 1974), 296.

¹⁷ Lois M. Smith and Alfred Padula, *Sex and Revolution: Women in Socialist Cuba* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 22.

¹⁸ Smith and Padula, *Sex and Revolution*, 23.

¹⁹ Che Guevara, and Fidel Castro. *Socialism and Man in Cuba*. (New York: Pathfinder, 2002), 33.

²⁰ Teté Puebla, and Mary-Alice Waters. *Marianas in Combat: Teté Puebla & the Mariana Grajales Women's Platoon in Cuba's Revolutionary War, 1956-58*. (New York: Pathfinder, 2003), 45.

²¹ Puebla and Waters, *Marianas in Combat*, 46.

²² Puebla and Waters, *Marianas in Combat*, 47.

²³ Puebla and Waters, *Marianas in Combat*, 48-49.

²⁴ Puebla and Waters, *Marianas in Combat*, 63.

²⁵ Randall, *Cuban Women Now*, 139.

²⁶ Bayard deVolo, *Women and the Cuban Insurrection*, 210-211.

²⁷ Bayard deVolo, *Women and the Cuban Insurrection*, 219.

²⁸ Chase, *Revolution within the Revolution*, 207.

²⁹ Chase, *Revolution within the Revolution*, 59.

³⁰ Chase, *Revolution within the Revolution*, 95.

³¹ Aleida A. March, *Remembering Che: My Life with Che Guevara*. (London, UK: Ocean Press, 2012), 79.

³² March, *Remembering Che*, 89.

³³ Fidel Castro, "The Revolution within the Revolution," in *Women and the Cuban Revolution: Speeches & Documents by Fidel Castro, Vilma Espin & Others*, ed. Elizabeth Stone (New York: Pathfinder, 1981), 64.

³⁴ Stone and Castro, *Women and the Cuban Revolution*, 65.

³⁵ Stone and Castro, *Women and the Cuban Revolution*, 70.

³⁶ Stone and Castro, *Women and the Cuban Revolution*, 75.

³⁷ Stone and Castro, *Women and the Cuban Revolution*, 79.

³⁸ Stone, *Women and the Cuban Revolution*, 192-193.

³⁹ Stone, *Women and the Cuban Revolution*, 192.

⁴⁰ "Fourteen Cuban Women Speak," in *Cuban Women Now: Interviews with Cuban Women*, ed. Margaret Randall, (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1974), 35.

⁴¹ "Fourteen Cuban Women Speak," ed. Randall, 46.

⁴² Chase, *Revolution within the Revolution*, 106.

⁴³ Chase, *Revolution within the Revolution*, 106.

⁴⁴ Chase, *Revolution within the Revolution*, 115.

⁴⁵ Chase, *Revolution within the Revolution*, 105.

⁴⁶ Smith and Padula, *Sex and Revolution*, 33.

⁴⁷ Smith and Padula, *Sex and Revolution*, 36.

⁴⁸ Espin, Asela de los Santos and Ferrer, *Women in Cuba*, 191-193.

⁴⁹ Hynson, *Laboring for the State Women, Family and Work in Revolutionary Cuba, 1959-1971*, 144-145.

⁵⁰ Keen and Haynes, "Cuba: The Revolutionary Socialist Alternative to Populism," 409.

⁵¹ "Cuban Family Code," in *Women and the Cuban Revolution*, ed. Elizabeth Stone (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1981), 184.

⁵² Hynson, Laboring for the State Women, Family, and Work in Revolutionary Cuba, 1959-1971, 91.

⁵³ Smith and Padula, Sex and Revolution, 95.

⁵⁴ Smith and Padula, Sex and Revolution, 96.

⁵⁵ Smith and Padula, Sex and Revolution, 96.

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A Song of Ivory and Steel: Suppressive Empowerment in Game of Thrones

CASSANDRA COUTO

Introduction

This paper examines George R. R. Martin's series, *A Song of Ice and Fire* (1993--), and its television adaptation, *A Game of Thrones* (2011-2019). Using a feminist lens, I will be addressing how the adaptation figuratively strips agency from empowered female characters in the novel through portrayals of rape and blatant suppression of the characters, Daenerys Targaryen, Sansa Stark, and Catelyn Stark.

Throughout the few decades, the presence of female characters in media has been far more prominent than ever before. Several hit television series star an overwhelmingly female cast, such as *Grey's Anatomy* (2005-present), *Gilmore Girls* (2000-2007), *Sex and the City* (1998-2004), etc. While these series are highly rated and represent the roles of femininity in multiple forms, it is important to look at not only who is represented, but how. When exploring this concept of female portrayal, particularly the empowered female, one major series comes to mind. In 2011, *Game of Thrones* was released on HBO, resulting in an incredibly large fan base. From this point until the series finally in 2019, the show has stirred up a lot of talk. The show, adapted from George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* (1996-present) series made up of five completed novels out of the seven

proposed, depicts a misogynistic medieval world fueled by power. However, Martin provides his readers with a more nuanced version of what medieval culture was like. His series not only depicts several prominent female characters, but female characters who wield even more power than the men.

When the show was released, Martin's fifth novel, *A Dance With Dragons* (2011) was released. With only five books on the market, the television adaptation quickly surpassed the novels, providing viewers with 8 total seasons. This created a need for the showrunners to not only deviate from the novels in ways that made sense for tv, but they also had to bring in new information to viewers that were not in the novels. While this allowed for the HBO series to end, it disrupted a lot of the story that was being told through Martin's vision.

A Song of Ice and Fire shows its readers a world where femineity is a force to be reckoned with. Martin represents strong females, such as Daenerys Targaryen, the dragon queen who rose from the ashes to take over the Iron Throne, Catelyn Stark, a mother and fierce protagonist who protects her family and does whatever she can to ensure their safety and Sansa Stark, Catelyn's daughter, who becomes a woman learned through her preservation through trauma. Even Cersei, the evil queen,

is an example of female empowerment, although she won't be thoroughly discussed throughout this essay. Martin ensures his female characters are represented in a way that evokes strength through femininity.

However, when viewing HBO's adaptation, *Game of Thrones*, it becomes clear that Martin's vision for his characters begins to shift. These powerful female characters, especially Sansa Stark, Daenerys Targaryen, and Catelyn Stark, are changed in such a way that is both subtle and extreme at the same time. Through various forms of repression, the show handles its characters in a way that both promotes strong female characters and simultaneously uses the illusion of female empowerment as a vessel to further patriarchal ideals.

Sansa Stark begins in both the novels and the show as a young, naïve girl who wishes for all the glory that comes with marriage and royalty. Her wish is to marry the king's son, Joffrey, which rather quickly becomes a seemingly inescapable nightmare. The show, however, spins Sansa's characters into a web of childish acts where she is consistently taken advantage of. A major change in her character's story arc is her marriage to Ramsey Bolton, which ultimately ends with a horrendous rape ("Unbowed, Unbent, Unbroken"). This rape, in particular, was not in the novels and was instead a plot for another character who is not in the television series, Jeyne Poole. Her rape is to provide character development for another character, Theon Greyjoy, who ultimately ends up saving Jeyne from Ramsey Bolton in *A Dance with Dragons*. This complete divergence from Martin's Sansa Stark in *A Song of Ice and Fire* demonstrates how, "the treatment of rape [is] an infection at the social and cultural level rather than a series of disconnected dots, and the knowledge that rape is the product of a multifaceted complex of sexism

supported by benevolent as well as hostile ideologies" (Fraser 145). The use of Sansa's rape not only strips her character of her virginity but serves as a stepping stone for a male character to develop humanity and simultaneously contributes to Sansa's shift from a young girl to a woman.

Rape in both the novels and the show is nothing new, however, the implications that are made by having exceptionally powerful female characters built off of these rapes are symbols of the patriarchal power over women and their agency. To add to this example is Daenerys rape by her husband, Khal Drogo, which made it into the adaptation but was not from the books. While in the novels she is thirteen and being wed to a powerful Khal (king), her first sexual encounter with him is not violent. Her acceptance of her position and willingness to consummate their marriage is demonstrated in the novels, whereas in the series her wedding night depicts a violent rape while her husband continues reciting the word "no" ("Lord Snow"). However, rape on its own isn't the main issue I bring up in this essay. In the novels and the show, the relationship between Daenerys and Khal Drogo is portrayed as a pure romance. Their love for each other grows stronger throughout the first novel and season, where we see Khal Drogo protect and stand up for Daenerys. Yet, if we are to believe that Daenerys is a victim of rape by her husband, what are the implications of having her fall in love with her rapist? His devotion towards Daenerys depicts this idea that although he performed sexual violence on her, their budding relationship after and in turn, her coming to power is a benefit of that violation.

As mentioned earlier, though, the sexual violence in this series is not a surprise to anyone who has read

the novels. In an article titled, *Westeros to HBO*, when discussing an interview with Martin, they state that:

Martin has defended the sexual violence in the show on the same grounds as he has defended his books: accuracy to medieval social norms, particularly during wartime. He has also contended that the fantasy elements must be grounded in history if the narrative is to remain credible. This unfortunately suggests that a non-patriarchal society would be an inherently fantastical strain on audience credulity (Hynes 44).

Martin's novels contest this medieval-era portrayal of characters' actions, sexually and graphically, and are nothing new to fantasy. However, sexual violence isn't necessarily the problem with this series. It is more about how sexual violence on characters, notably Daenerys, and Sansa Stark are added to the series, providing no value to their characters arc's, other than to demonstrate a lack of agency in their characters.

This brings up Catelyn Stark, who, similar to the other women mentioned, has been stripped of her agency through the adaptation's portrayal of her. In her case, while not raped, her entire character arc in the novels is replaced by a shell of herself. Her scenes are few far and few between, whereas in the novels she has an abundance of chapters in *A Game of Thrones* (1996), *A Clash of Kings* (1998), and *A Storm of Swords* (2000), submerging the reader in her perspective on the world of Westeros. Catelyn is not only an intelligent woman who demonstrates an understanding of war, men, and the political powers around her, but she provides a lens into the ongoings of the Starks war, particularly her son, King Robb.

The show, however, completely rids her character of any say or power, instead changing her lines and actions in the series with a male character's voice and eliminating other important features. In her chapter, I break down these different examples to show how her character has been watered down to place power in other roles, primarily the male characters. Through the drastic limitations placed on Catelyn's character and the rape and suppression of Daenerys and Sansa, the show demonstrates not only a misrepresentation of powerful women but the fatal actions of silencing women through media.

Daenerys: The Loss of Throne and Agency

Daenerys Targaryen, the Unburnt, Breaker of Chains. Her character is prolific and loved in both *Game of Thrones* and *A Song of Ice and Fire* and has served as a grand representation of the strong, empowered female. Daenerys was sold to the Khalasar as a sex slave, wed to the great Khal Drogo, and ended up ruling as their Khaleesi (queen). She shed her innocence in the burning pyre that held her deceased husbands' body and rose from the ashes with three dragons. She led slaves to freedom and ruled through every land she passed through. Even though there is more left to her story in George R. R. Martin's, *A Song of Ice and Fire*, it is clear that her character's progression is leading toward her main quest: conquering the iron throne and taking back what is rightfully hers. However, when looking at her character's adaptation in *Game of Thrones*, there are several changes to her character from what is seen in the novels. Daenerys is not only raped by her husband in the show, which is an important change I will be arguing about throughout this chapter; her character also demonstrates a loss of

agency, similar to what is seen with Sansa and Catelyn.

One of the glaring differences between the novels and the show is the rape scene shown in “The Kingsroad” from season one. When Daenerys is sold to Khal Drogo by her brother, they are made to consummate their marriage. In her first sexual encounter with her husband in the novel, Daenerys gives him her consent to continue. His demeanor comes off as understanding and wanting to please his wife. As peculiar as it is, especially given her age, her ability to accept the terms of her marriage and take ownership of her circumstances began early. While she was forced into a marriage to a man she did not know, she finds enough strength, herself, to grow into a woman with power. The show adaptation, however, presents this consummation differently. Rather than have Daenerys be a willing participant in her first sexual encounter, she is instead forcibly raped by Khal Drogo. While this divergence from the novels could arguably seem more realistic than what is shown in the novel, its implications demonstrate a misogynistic approach when outlining her character for the series.

While her relationship with Khal Drogo remains the same in both the novels and the show, this specific change alters her story significantly. In the novels, Daenerys is thirteen years old, whereas in the show she is aged sixteen. This age difference is an important concept to look at, especially when arguing the differences between the show and novels:

The notion of selling a thirteen-year-old girl- in all modern sense, and most countries, a minor- into marriage would have become much more visceral when shown in images rather than conjured up by words, not to mention the fact that casting the role would have been very difficult and even might

have resulted in accusations of creating child porn (Larson 558).

Changing Daenerys’ age was necessary to prevent the exceptionally negative consequences of keeping her thirteen years old. However, in a way, it speaks to the ideology of society and the social standards, where thirteen is too young, but sixteen is somehow old enough to not cause an uproar. Her age, at this time, is still considered a child and a minor, so if already leaping, why not simply change her age to eighteen? This is a change that, while is understandable, is still flawed at best.

Another important aspect that is to be discussed, is that if we are to believe that her budding relationship with Khal Drogo is something to be admired, then it is peculiar that their marriage would begin with a traumatic rape. As stated by Andrea Lee Press in her book, *Media Ready Feminism*, “Daenerys was initially presented as a young, victimized girl, sold by her brother and raped by her new husband, notable in an incident absent from the books but inserted into the show as a particularly egregious example of its extreme sexual violence” (Press 24). Press highlights the fact that the show presents an overwhelming number of incidences of sexual violence that is arguably more than what is seen in the novels. This furthers the argument made earlier, that by shifting the scenes of characters, notably Daenerys, Sansa Stark, and even Cersei Lannister, and implementing violent rape, they are utilizing sexual violence as a plot device rather than making a direct distinction of how these matters and the implications that come with abuse. The sexual violence towards Daenerys is not a necessary plot element that needed to be added. If anything, it took away her sense of agency and instead replaced it with a traumatic scene representing her oppression that both disvalues her

relationship with her husband and promotes the idea that rape is a tool used to endorse female empowerment.

This concept further identifies a common device used in media that exemplifies rape culture. Courtney Fraser explains this concept in her essay, *From "Ladies First" to "Asking for It": Benevolent Sexism in the Maintenance of Rape Culture*:

...rape culture, or the complexity of images and ideologies in society that normalize sexual violence, depends on chivalry for its existence. More precisely, it depends on the attendant ideologies that place women on a pedestal and strip them of agency in the process (Fraser 143).

Rape culture represents this concept that women in movies, tv shows, and even novels are subject to traumatic, violent sexual abuse to simultaneously demonstrate their ability to overcome oppression. However, this toxic idea that women need to be subjected to brutality to grow is a representation of patriarchal views. If we are to believe that empowered women are developed primarily through violent acts placed on them by men, then the message being sent is that women need men to abuse them to become stronger. It's a method of taking agency from women and giving it to men to both silence and oppress women, while simultaneously presenting women as liberated.

Considering how Daenerys' rape is transformed into a devoted love story, we can also reference Cersei's rape by Jaime Lannister ("Breaker of Chains"), which is never mentioned again in the show and is absent from the novels. Sansa's rape, mentioned in the next chapter, is only used to stimulate plot development and is later used as a way to promote her character's growth. This suggests that the action of rape on a female character is somehow

a positive contribution to that woman's story. The specific rape scenes of these characters are in no way situated in the plot as an exploration of real-world experience; they are never brought up, few emotional consequences ever come of them, particularly for Daenerys or Cersei, and are instead used as a way to promote female empowerment, as if rape is a way for a woman to come into her power.

From this first deviation from book to series, Daenerys's character exhibits differences, ultimately leading to her complete derailment at the end of the adaptation. One specific change is Daenerys's appearance after burning in the pyre. In the novel, Daenerys enters the pyre that is to burn the witch and her dead husband:

When the fire died at last and the ground became cool enough to walk upon, Ser Jorah Mormont found her amidst the ashes, surrounded by blackened logs and bits of glowing ember and the burnt bones of man and woman and stallion. She was naked, covered with soot, her clothes turned to ash, her beautiful hair all crisped away...yet she was unhurt (A Game of Thrones 806).

While this visual depiction of her arising from the ashes is on par with what is shown in the television series, there is one specific difference: in the novel her hair is burnt off. The visual of Daenerys burning in the pyre and rising from the ashes is meant as a representation of her breaking the chains placed on her by the patriarchy. Those who did not believe in her power to rule are now seeing her survive the unthinkable. The loss of her hair is a part of this rebirth, representing her shedding of what ties her to the femininity that allowed for her oppression. Not only this, but it also serves in opposition to the tradition of the Khal's long hair that represents his role as a great

warrior and his ability to rule a Khalasar. For Daenerys, her loss of hair demonstrates the reformation of the Khalasar themselves, who come to accept a woman as a ruler unlike they ever had before. In keeping her hair, adaptation is arguably minimizing her rebirth and instead, equating power to beauty and the visuality of what society deems as beautiful. Therefore, the show is taking her agency through the perception of beauty rather than the symbolism of the strength that is established through her loss of hair.

Daenerys' story throughout both the novels and the show demonstrates a strong and willful woman. She begins with nothing and quickly takes action to support her growth throughout the series. While the novels strongly emphasize her ability to achieve self-growth, the show taints this perception of her by building her up through a traumatic rape and promoting a loving marriage with her rapist, taking her agency while simultaneously promoting female empowerment through suppressive behavior.

From Stark to Stone: Empowered through Violence

Sansa Stark is the beautiful daughter of Ned, the Warden of the North, and Catelyn Stark, his lady wife. Betrothed to the king's son, Joffrey Baratheon, she quickly discovers that her dreams of being queen were not quite what she anticipated. Not only does she witness her father's death at the hands of her betrothed, but she is also held captive by his family. Naïve and easily manipulated, Sansa is deemed a traitor's daughter and wed off to the brother of Queen Cersei Lannister. She is tortured, mentally and emotionally by her captors, but eventually escapes their restraints. In the novels, we

are left off with Sansa, hiding under the name Alayne Stone, a bastard of the Eyrie and growing every day as a woman. In the show, however, she is wed off to Ramsey Bolton, violently raped, and eventually escapes again only to eventually take back her family home as Queen of the North ("The Iron Throne"). While both series leaves us with an empowered Sansa, her journey to this point is exponentially different. Sansa's growth in the novels demonstrates pure perseverance and determination and embodies an empowered woman. The adaptation, however, uses the addition of violent rape to take Sansa's agency and suppress her within the story, figuratively and literally. Through this, the show uses rape culture as a means of equating a woman's empowerment to physical violence suggesting that they cannot become truly powerful unless they are subjected to violence at the hands of a man. That, without said violence, a woman's true nature, and fierceness can never be developed unless it stems from loss of innocence, anger, and humiliation.

When taking a close look at Sansa's character within *A Song of Ice and Fire*, it can be made clear that she represents the stereotypical role of a young girl whose dreams are wrapped up in ideals rather than truth. She wants nothing more than to marry a prince, become queen and have babies. Of course, Sansa occupies a rarefied space which means she actually could marry a prince. While her desires seemingly come to pass, her perception gradually begins to shift from fantasy to reality. And in both the novels and in the HBO adaptation, that reality is hardly pleasant:

...Sansa Stark seems a fundamentally passive character with virtually no control over her own destiny. From her betrothal to Joffrey, to her mistreatment at the hands of the Lannisters, to

her forced marriage to Tyrion, to her abduction by Littlefinger, the course of Sansa's story arc is shaped by those around her. (Napolitano and Johnston 909)

In this argument made by Marc Napolitano and Susan Johnson, the authors argue that Sansa seems as though she has no control over her life. It is important to note, then, that in the novel she does demonstrate many instances of resistance and has agency in her story. She is forced into two engagements and one marriage, and still, she shows both resistance and resilience in the face of her suppression. She can make logical decisions and rectify her situation, even if it's through accepting help from others. HBO's version of Sansa, instead, conducts this image of Sansa as someone unable to act against oppression until she is forced to.

In the novels, her continuous action, both internally and externally, help her guide herself through the course that others have set for her. Her decisions and actions, even in the smallest amounts, shape who she becomes by the end of *A Storm of Swords*. Yet, if we are to look at the show, alone, the Sansa portrayed there suggests that this author is arguing, that Sansa has no agency over her life until the very last season of *Game of Thrones*. Even in this instance, she gives credit to her trauma and those who abused her, rather than acknowledging her strength and willpower to escape.

With her father dead and the remaining family at war with her captors, Sansa is left with no one to save her but herself. Her character builds off of this instinct of survival with her deceased father's voice in her ear. Reborn from the young girl she once was, Sansa begins her transition into a woman empowered. Even in the face of grim truth, George R. R. Martin reveals that Sansa is

more than just a naïve little girl and instead expresses her character through her survival and resilience:

A pure world, Sansa thought. I do not belong here. Yet she stepped out all the same... She could feel the snow on her lashes, taste it on her lips. It was the taste of Winterfell. The taste of innocence. The taste of dreams... Another new day. It was the old days she hungered for. Prayed for. But who could she pray to? The garden has been meant for a godswood once, she knew, but the soil was too thin and stony for a weirwood to take root. A godswood without gods, as empty as me. (A Storm of Swords 1100)

Sansa's transition from naivety to strength in the novels is one of her key character developments. She recognizes her innocence and begins to shift out of the safe illusion of childhood dreams and discovers the harsh reality of the world of Westeros. Martin alludes to her shift, here, where she is safe in the Eyrie under the alias of Alayne. She can no longer pray to the godswood as she had when she believed in the illusion of safety. Like the soil for the godswood, Sansa is hardened by the veracity of the world. She can never revert to her childish dreams, and now she is empty without them.

Sansa's strength is a valuable aspect of her character in the novels. It comes from within, a voice in her head that pushes her through to the end, allowing her to save herself through her willpower. However, the show's representation of Sansa is on par with a common trope, "The Ingenue" ("The Ingenue") which marks her innocence and virginity as a vulnerability to prey upon by others who are willing to harm her. Her character in the show represents a different version, where the novels show her strength, but the series weakens her character

as a way of continuing her suppression. Rather than being her hero, she is simply a victim whose only growth comes from the trauma and torment she suffers.

When comparing Sansa's characters in both the novel and HBO's adaptation, it is important to first acknowledge a harmful addition to her character's story. In the novels, Sansa's virginity remains intact and is seemingly a representation of her armor throughout the story. Her betrothal to Joffrey never ends in marriage, her first marriage to Tyrion Lannister is never consummated, and in two other instances where others have attempted to rape her, she can escape unscathed. However, the television series not only takes her virginity, but in the episode "Unbowed, Unbent, Unbroken", they also invent her first sexual encounter as a violent rape by her second husband, Ramsey Bolton. In the novels, this plot derives from another character's story, Jeyne Poole, who is forced to wed Ramsey Bolton under the disguise of Sansa's sister, Arya Stark. Therefore, it is not Sansa, but Jeyne, who is raped by Ramsey. The decision to change Sansa's story arc in such a damaging way becomes even more detrimental when combined with how the show portrays it, and what is done with it later.

During Sansa's wedding night, it is immediately made clear to viewers that Ramsey Bolton is dangerous. Before this episode, Ramsey had already established himself as a vial antagonist when he bound, tortured, and mutilated Theon Greyjoy, and forced him into slavery under the name "Reek". Therefore, it was no surprise that Sansa would also fall victim to Ramsey's twisted ways when it was discovered that she would wed him. Their wedding also signifies an important moment for both Sansa and Theon, who were raised in Winterfell together. Theon, who ultimately betrays the Stark family who raised

him, is now joined in confinement by Sansa.

While, like Theon, Sansa is also a victim of Ramsey Bolton, her rape somehow never really seems to be about her. In fact, the portrayal of her rape was more focused on Theon than Sansa at all. In *#METOO's First Horror Film: Male Hysteria and the New Final Girl in 2018's Revenge*, Time Posada addresses this issue, "...HBO series *Game of Thrones* employs a cutaway in season 5 when Sansa Stark is raped, but the male showrunners' decision to focus instead on another male character forced to watch removes the female victim's agency by emphasizing a male character's trauma instead" (Posada 196). Posada is bringing up an excellent argument, that by shifting the focus on Theon who is made to witness Sansa's violent rape, it not only takes away her traumatic moment by giving it to Theon, but it suggests that her rape isn't even about her and is further a way to progress Theon's story, since this is the moment where his character development begins and he can rectify his previous behavior through saving Sansa from the Boltons. By using Sansa's rape as a plot device to promote a male character, you are taking away both Sansa's trauma, but it also takes away her agency by having her rape, to begin with.

The violent acts placed on Sansa in this instance are more than just a change from the original series, it is a complete unraveling of her novel's character growth. In the novels, Sansa generates her strength through her captivity in Kings Landing, channeling her innate ability to read people and helping her eventually escape. The show, however, creates an illusion that without her trauma, she would never have become an empowered woman. In episode four of the final season, Sansa divulges her truth to Sandor Clegane, as her secret to becoming a woman was in the hands of her abusers:

Sandor: It used to be that you couldn't look at me.

Sansa: That was a long time ago. I've seen much worse than you since then.

Sandor: Yes, I heard. Heard you were broken in. Heard you were broken in rough.

Sansa: And he got what he deserved. I gave it to him.

Sandor: How?

Sansa: Hounds.

Sandor: You've changed little bird. None of that would have happened if you left King's Landing with me. No Littlefinger. No Ramsay. None of it.

Sansa: Without Littlefinger, Ramsay and the rest, I would have stayed a little bird my whole life ("The Last of the Starks").

This scene is telling, as it shows Sansa claiming that her ability to come of age as a woman was due to her traumatic rape. This only serves as another representation of how her character is losing agency throughout the show. In the novels, Sansa can grow and mature, without the need for a violent rape to prove that to herself. By not only including sexual violence in her story but justifying it through her growth as a character, the show exemplifies this need to strip women down to promote their version of an empowered female.

Taking away Sansa's virginity in the series only amplifies Sansa's loss of agency. However, there are several other instances where the show changed Sansa's character in ways that take her control. In the books we can see Sansa's perspective through her chapters, showing the reader her ability to not only think for herself but to take some control of what is being done to her. During her wedding to Tyrion, which was quickly and unexpectedly forced on her, Sansa's internal dialogue

shows her ability to take a stand:

As he moved behind her, Sansa felt a sharp tug on her skirt. *He wants me to kneel*, she realized, blushing. She was mortified. It was not supposed to be this way. She had dreamed of her wedding a thousand times, and always had pictured how her betrothed would stand behind her tall and strong, sweep the cloak of his protections over her shoulders, and tenderly kiss her cheek as he leaned forward to fasten the clasp.

She felt another tug at her skirt, more insistent. *I won't. Why should I spare his feelings when no one cares about mine?"* (*A Storm of Swords 386*)

Sansa's upbringing prompted her to the idea of how a true lady is to act. She had always played the part of the courteous little bird, reciting what her septa told her to. (*A Game of Thrones 747*) Now, we begin to see Sansa become surfeited by the consistent oppression she faces from the Lannisters. She was brought to King's Landing under the guise that she was to marry the prince of her dreams, only to then discover that her betrothed was fueled by his cruel fantasies. Sansa, who even after her father's murder was still tormented, emotionally and physically, by Joffrey was then traded off to Tyrion Lannister to be wed. Her resistance to kneeling represents her taking a stand against the patriarchal oppression placed on her by the Lannister family. While she is still being held captive and forced to marry against her will, her ability to both accept and take some action over this demonstrates Sansa's growing ability to reject suppression.

The show's take on this scene, however, does not reflect the same irrepressible Sansa seen in the novel. In episode eight of the third season, Sansa is

wed to Tyrion and kneels for him with no hesitation. This greatly contrasts with Sansa's refusal to kneel as a representation of her resistance in *A Storm of Swords*. While this could be seen as a level of compassion that Sansa shares for her newfound husband, I would argue that Sansa kneeling symbolizes less empathy and more passivity. In this instance, it symbolizes her acceptance of the Lannister power being wielded over her, whereas in the novel her refusal to kneel exemplifies the kind of woman she has become who will help manage her escape later in the novel.

Towards the end of *A Storm of Swords* and season five of *Game of Thrones*, Sansa finally can escape King's Landing. Not only is she able to void her marriage to Tyrion Lannister, but her abuser, King Joffrey, is dead. Her escape and the murder of the King were something that show viewers may not have anticipated. However, the novel depicts her escape very differently. Throughout, *A Clash of Kings* and *A Storm of Swords*, Sansa plans her escape with Ser Dontos. It is possible that the decision to leave out this arrangement in the television series was meant to provide another shock factor to the audience; however, the implications behind Sansa's sudden rescue fulfill the "ingenu trope" where Sansa is simply a victim who needs to be rescued. The novel instead uses Sansa's participation in her escape as a way to accentuate her ability to not only adapt to her surroundings but to show her growth into a woman who will take hold of her fate later in the series and eventually become, unmarried, Queen of the North.

Where Sansa's story is left off in the novels, it is made clear that she is no longer the little girl riddled with fantasies. Her resilience and growth show through her ability to fully adhere to her new role as Alayne Stone, the

bastard of the Eyrie. Sansa fully absorbs this new persona, so much so that her chapter titles change from "Sansa" to "Alayne". Through her new perspective, we begin to truly see the woman whom Sansa has become:

Sansa Stark went up the mountain, but Alayne Stone is coming down. It was a strange thought. Coming up, Mya had warned her to keep her eyes on the path ahead, she remembered. "Look up, not down," she said... but that was not possible on the descent. I could close my eyes. The mule knows the way, he has no need of me. But that seemed more something Sansa would have done, that frightened girl. Alayne was an older woman, and bastard brave. (A Feast for Crows 882)

If we are to compare Sansa in the novel to Sansa in the adaptation, I would argue that the Sansa we are presented with post-rape and the Sansa who emerged as Alayne are the same. Both women have been through trauma, yet Alayne is made up of her own will to survive. She is rectifying her situation by literally transforming into a stronger version of herself.

This new transformed version of Sansa is shown when she escapes King's Landing, before returning as Alayne Stone. When the plan is unfolding during the chaos of the King's death, Sansa's transformation begins to ensue, "She felt so numb and dreamy. *My skin has turned to porcelain, to ivory, to steel*" (*A Storm of Swords* 833). Sansa is finally able to free herself from the chains of the Lannisters, and in this, she can release herself of her innocence and metamorphose into a woman. Her shift from porcelain, ivory, and steel reflects the stages of her growth where she begins as a child, develops into a lady, and ends as her guardian. If we are to look at her

physical transformation from Lady Sansa to “bastard brave”, it aligns with her feelings as she is leaving her captors one and for all. She is no longer a little girl with unrealistic dreams, she is a strong, fierce woman who acts for herself.

In both *A Song of Ice and Fire* and *Game of Thrones*, we see a young Sansa Stark being coerced, abused, and violated. The novels both show Sansa’s ability to navigate these acts against her and are left off in her final chapter in *A Storm of Swords* as Alayne Stone, the brave bastard of the Eyrie. However, the show, while completing Sansa’s story as the unwed Queen of the North, shows a different journey for her. In the show, Sansa’s agency doesn’t come until after she is sold off, abused, raped, and creates an illusion that her survival is simply dependent on others, usually the same people who had a hand in her abuse, to begin with. The changes made here are unnecessary additions that evoke a notion that women can never escape the patriarchy, and that they can only grow through violent or traumatic abuse. The adaptation represents women as merely a product of oppression with no say in their lives and no drive to escape the confinements of the patriarchy, while simultaneously promoting them as empowered. Therefore, this portrayal of women serves as a message that a woman’s agency can only be given to her through the violent acts of patriarchal dominance.

Catelyn: The Silent Mother

Catelyn Stark is shown in both, *A Song of Ice and Fire*, and HBO’s *A Game of Thrones*, as a matriarchal figurehead who does all she can to protect her children. A woman born in the South, yet married to the North, who represents a fusion of ice and fire. She was wed to

Ned Stark after his brother, her betrothed, was burned to death by the Mad King Aerys. From there, she gave Ned five Stark children, Robb, Sansa, Bran, Arya, and Rickon. When Ned came home from war with a baby in his arms, claiming it to be his bastard, she did her best to care for him even though she resented everything about him. Her resilience is greatly pronounced in the series, yet the television adaptation shows a different version of what we see in the novels. Lady Stark is a complex woman, who is both political and intuitive. In the show, however, she is a watered-down version of what we see in the novels. This reduction in character is a demonstration of taking away Catelyn’s agency, in that her story is no longer being told and her strong empowering character is ultimately silenced in the process.

In George R. R. Martin’s novel, *A Song of Ice and Fire*, Martin provides grand insight into his characters’ thoughts and movements throughout their chapters. Each character has their point of view, allowing the reader to understand who they are and how they think. Catelyn Stark is one of the main characters within these novels, provided that she has several chapters from her point of view. These perspectives are important for understanding the character’s motives. Especially for Catelyn, whose internal monologues detail her extensive experience with patriarchal limitations that are placed on her in Westeros.

These narratives advance her character to being more than a simple traditional mother and develop her as a woman with complex perspectives. Catelyn’s internal monologues provide the audience with insight into her experience with the men in her life:

“She was no stranger to waiting after all. Her men have always made her wait. ‘Watch for me, little cat,’ her father would always tell her, when

he rode off to court or fair or battle. And she would, standing patiently on the battlements of Riverrun as the waters of the Red Fork and the Tumblestone flowed by." (*A Game of Thrones* 695)

She reflects on her waiting for her father while continuing these memories as she remembers waiting for her former betrothed Brandon Stark, her husband Ned Stark, and now her son, the soon-to-be crowned King in the North. Through these recollections, Martin creates an understanding of the parallels between the traditional women and the oppressive society around her. While Catelyn identifies with the submissive female and recognizes that she is part of the patriarchal domination, this awareness allows Catelyn to wield more power in the world around her. She is not a submissive character; she is a survivalist.

It is important to note that these internal monologues would be a difficult task to accomplish within a television series. However, without a nod toward Catelyn's perspectives, the adaptation has instead presented her as the typical submissive mother trope, stripping her of her value and using her, instead, as a filler character whose perspectives are no longer relevant. With the novel providing the reader with chapters that demonstrate not only her internal dialogue but the entire story surrounding her son, Robb, we see a version of Catelyn that controls the narrative of what is being shown. Instead, the show limits her greatly and changes both her voice and her actions. This shift is addressed by Rhiannon Thomas:

In the books, Robb is a boy-king, out of his depth and somewhat reliant on his mother for help, while Catelyn is shrewd, intelligent, and vehemently anti-vengeance. In its attempt to make Robb into

more of a stereotypical 'sexy young king,' the show has stolen a lot of Cat's agency, allowing Robb to voice her idea (such as sending an envoy to Renly Baratheon), leaving her out of strategy meetings, and transforming her desire to help Robb into a desire to return home and be with her youngest sons. (Thomas)

The author, here, brings up the point that Catelyn's agency is lost to Robb's voice, which contrasts the novel greatly. In *A Song of Ice and Fire*, the only Robb we see is through Catelyn's perspective and her chapters. Instead, the show has essentially replaced Catelyn's voice with her son, demonstrating how the adaptation has taken someone who is known in the novels to be an extremely empowering woman, and instead limits her character to just a mother.

While Catelyn has many important roles in the novels, one especially important role is her intellect in understanding the politics of Westeros. When Ned is asked to attend King's Landing at the Hand of the King, he initially intends to refuse. Catelyn, however, understands the implications of that refusal, "He will not understand that. He is a king now, and kings are not like other men. If you refuse to serve him, he will wonder why, and sooner or later he will begin to suspect that you oppose him. Can't you see the danger that would put us in?" (*A Game of Thrones* 59) Catelyn convinces Ned to follow King Robert to King's Landing because she recognizes their fate if they do not accept the king's demands. She is determined to protect her family and her understanding of the patriarchal system allows her to do so. She is aware that her family would be at risk if they did not succumb to the rules and duty that is expected of them.

In the show, however, this scene is reversed. When

Ned is asked to join King Robert in King's Landing, Ned tells Catelyn that he must go, where Catelyn responds, "I won't let him take you... I'll say, listen fat man, you're not taking my husband anywhere. He belongs to me now" ("Winter is Coming"). The vast difference between these two scenes is detrimental to Catelyn's character. While in the novels we see Catelyn ordering Ned to go to King's Landing, suggesting her intuitive ability to understand the implications if he were to stay, the show has her begging him not to leave. This change once again takes from Catelyn's agency. Her ability to understand political consequences is diminished to her simply wanting her husband to stay for her, suggesting that a woman is expected to feel lost and incomplete without her husband. In addition to this, her failed plea to her husband in the show provides Catelyn with no say in the rule of her family, as he ends up going to King's Landing, regardless. It exaggerates the concept that women cannot live in society without their men. In Valerie Estel Frankel's essay, *Women in Game of Thrones: Power, Conformity and Resistance*, she acknowledges this disparity, "In the first few episodes, her part in the story is as Bran's mother and Ned's wife, fighting to protect them both. Unfortunately, this reduces her to a stock character- the wife who ignores all political realities to beg her husband to stay with her" (Frankel 1267). Indeed, her character is extremely watered down in the series to the point that she is simply fulfilling the role of the emotional mother and wife. Yet, in the books, Catelyn ultimately decides for her husband and decides for him that he has to go. Catelyn is instructed to rule the North in Ned's stead, which coincides with this idea of marital equality. The unbalanced nature of their relationship in the show validates the idea that women are in a submissive role to their husbands further promoting

the societal expectations that women are to remain silent and let men make decisions for them.

This method of silencing Catelyn in a way that presents her character as just the wife illustrates a misogynistic view that relates to rape culture. According to Fraser, "benevolent sexism refers to 'characterizing women as pure creatures who ought to be protected, supported and adored and whose love is necessary to make a man complete.'" (Fraser 145) In this case, Catelyn is projected through the lens of this benevolent sexism, where the intense woman we see in the novels is diminished in the show as a method of highlighting the act of Ned, Robb, and the other men around her. By taking away the fierce voice that Martin provides us with in her chapters, we instead see a woman whose love is the cushion for men to land on. Her care and nurturing ability and her ability to step aside and let them take over is a method of silencing her to instead promote male advancement. Through this, the show is not only taking Catelyn's agency, but they are using her to enhance the male perspectives.

The HBO adaptation limits Catelyn's character in several other ways. While they continuously omit her thoughts and actions that are demonstrated in the novels, they also erase pivotal quotes and value her character holds in the plot. This phenomenon can be observed in season two's episode, "Garden of Bones" when she goes with Renly to meet his brother Stannis. During this scene, Catelyn simply sits on her horse, making little conversation. It is only when the two brothers are fighting that she says, "Listen to yourselves. If you were sons of mine, I would know your heads together and lock you in a bedchamber until you remembered that you were brothers" ("Garden of Bones"). In this scene,

the two brothers are fighting like children and Catelyn is placed in the role of being their mother. While Catelyn says this in the novels, as well, she also speaks for the political nuances taking place at the time. Instead, the show eliminates her voice by keeping her subordinate, only to speak out of hand by reprimanding the brothers as a mother would.

The novel, however, demonstrates an ardent version of Catelyn. While she does reprimand the brothers, she speaks up on behalf of the politics being discussed with wisdom and acknowledgment:

Lord Tywin sits at Harrenhal with twenty thousand swords. The remnants of the Kingslayer's army have regrouped at the Golden Tooth, another Lannister host gathers beneath the shadow of Casterly Rock, and Cersei and her son hold King's landing and your precious Iron Throne. You each name yourself king, yet the kingdom bleeds, and no one lifts a sword to defend it by my son (*A Clash of Kings* 475).

Catelyn has no problem speaking up to the men within this world and raising points that their egotistical negligence would prevent them from seeing. She opposes the views of men and uses her years of observations to identify their flaws and irrational views of war and wisdom. When looking at this same scene in the show compared to the novels, it is apparent how much her voice is silenced in the adaptation. Rather than showing Catelyn's intelligence, the show promotes her maternalism as a method of demonstrating the patriarchal notion that a woman's only strength comes from her ability to nurture. Whereas for Catelyn, her wisdom, intuition, and diplomatic understandings are a welcomed addition to her maternal character.

One of the most important aspects of Catelyn's character arc that is displayed in the novel is her rebirth as Lady Stoneheart. Lady Stoneheart is Catelyn, who is brought back to life after treacherous murder by the trusted Frey family, who hosted a wedding, known as the "Red Wedding", in their home for her brother. Catelyn and her son, Robb, were unaware of this betrayal, leaving both of them and their entire hoard of soldiers, dead. Lady Stoneheart is a direct parallel to Catelyn, as everything she embodies demonstrates a thirst for blood and revenge. This rage is shown strictly through violence, as she can no longer speak due to her throat being cut, "Lady Catelyn's fingers dug deep into her throat, and the words came rattling out, choked and broke, a stream as cold as ice." (*A Feast for Crows* 915) This imagery Martin presents shows a version of Catelyn, a woman silenced by the oppression of the society she is a part of. Lady Stoneheart is not only a reanimated corpse, but she is also a representation of a woman's ability to fight against the men who have taken everything from her, figuratively and literally.

Her slit throat and inability to speak represents the patriarchal silencing of women throughout the world of Westeros. Frankel makes note of Lady Stoneheart's character: Though formerly human, she is on a mission of vengeance, and ignores all pleas for mercy or attempts at reason. She is stonehearted in function as well as name. The lady who was once highborn, conformist, lovely, well-spoken, and proper has become her own shadow, a monster that lurks in the wild and subverts the patriarchy as a fearsome outlaw. (Frankel 2433)

Lady Stoneheart is thoughtless and careless; she serves

no other purpose other than to rid the world of those who killed her family and herself, and anyone who serves the Lannister's or Frey's. She is not just a cruel avenger; she is a woman who has been oppressed by the views of men and war. This concept is further satisfied by her attempted murder of Brienne of Tarth. The woman knight who once served as Catelyn's sword has now begun carrying a Lannister sword. When Brienne refuses to kill Jaime Lannister, the man whose family killed her husband, and son and imprisoned her daughter, Lady Stoneheart demands her to be hanged. Through her eyes, Brienne is a woman who has now been tainted by the control of men and like Lady Stoneheart, needed to die to surpass this. This character is an important addition to the novels, as she is finally and successfully able to destroy and break the chains of oppression she has faced from men in her lifetime. Yet, this character is completely omitted from the show. In doing so, the adaptation is further silencing a powerful woman from the ability to sequester the domination of men in society.

Through Catelyn's story in the adaptation, it is clear that there are many deviations in how she is portrayed, or not portrayed, in the novel. We can see that the truth of her character and her strength remains solely in the books. The show, however, takes a fierce woman and makes her fit into the patriarchal role of who a woman should be. Not only do they take away her agency, but they also take away her voice. This method of silencing an otherwise prominent figure demonstrates how the show would rather promote the empowerment of men, such as Robb, Ned, and the others around her, rather than use Catelyn's true story as a means of enlightening true feminine power.

Conclusion

Throughout this essay, we have looked at the female characters, primarily, Daenerys Targaryen, Sansa Stark, and Catelyn Stark, in both, *A Song of Ice and Fire* and the adaptation, *Game of Thrones*. Each female character's portrayal in the series demonstrates how the series has made an impeccable effort to showcase women through loss of agency. While this essay's focus was primarily on the three characters discussed, several other female characters also demonstrate the adaptations' elimination of the female voice and focus on sexual violence rather than empowerment. However, there are also characters, notably Arya Stark and Brienne of Tarth, who can arguably be said to have the same or more agency in the show than in the novels. Yet, these characters only make the perception of the empowered female murky, as their character flaws and strengths come from more masculine features than femininity.

When looking at these series and acknowledging how the show has deviated so far from the novels, it leaves many unanswered questions. If we are to accept that this show demonstrates truly empowered women through the likes of Daenerys, Sansa, and Catelyn, then what does that mean for how we are defining female empowerment? If we are to believe that strong females are made through the loss of agency through men, then that subtracts from other characters in the series, like Arya Stark and Brienne of Tarth, who both use their masculine characteristics to pave their path without the help of men.

With new series' emerging, namely *House of the Dragon* (2022-present), adapted from Martin's novel *Fire and Blood* (2018), it only further complicated how the *Game of Thrones* franchise is representing powerful women. In this new series, which takes place several

centuries before the pilot of *Game of Thrones*, the main protagonists are predominantly female, showcasing the importance of these roles in medieval culture. Sexism weighs heavily on the plot of this series as the main argument is whether a woman can sit on the Iron Throne. It will be interesting to see how this story, whose adaptation relies heavily on historical-based source material, will use this dispute to challenge the perception of femininity and what implications this popular franchise will ultimately have on how we define female empowerment.

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CASSANDRA COUTO

English, Education Concentration

Cassandra Couto, a recent graduate of Bridgewater State University, holds a bachelor's degree in English with a concentration in Education. Throughout her academic journey, she displayed unwavering dedication and a profound passion for the English language, distinguishing herself as a departmental honors student. Her thirst for knowledge and commitment to excellence culminated in the completion of her Honors Thesis during the Spring of 2023, under the guidance of her mentor, Dr. Lee Torda. This pivotal experience not only pushed Cassandra beyond her comfort zone but also proved to her that she possesses the capability to achieve anything she sets her mind to.

With her Honors Thesis as a testament to her academic prowess, Cassandra embarks on her post-graduation journey with a sense of purpose and determination. Armed with valuable skills in research, critical thinking, and writing, she is eager to make a meaningful impact in the fields of Education and English. As a trailblazer in her academic community, Cassandra's journey at Bridgewater State University has shaped her into an inspiring individual whose tenacity and thirst for knowledge continue to motivate and inspire those around her. With each accomplishment, Cassandra Couto proves her ability to overcome challenges and reaches new heights, leaving a legacy of academic excellence and unwavering determination for others to follow.

The Spotlight Effect on Social Media

LAUREN CROWLEY

Abstract

Social media is used by the vast majority of emerging adults. This age group is apt to experience anxiety related to their social media usage. One possible stressor for Instagram users is not knowing what exactly other people think about their posts. This uncertainty about if one's online audience is judging them is similar to the spotlight effect – a phenomenon where individuals think more people notice them than they do. Our research set out to investigate if people believe that their posts on Instagram get more attention than the viewers give. To test this out, two groups of participants were used: content creators, who submitted a fake Instagram post, and content viewers, who scrolled through a simulated feed. The content creators had to estimate the number of people that would point out their perceived most noticeable feature. This was compared to the number of content viewers that did notice the predicted most noticeable feature. Questions about the amount of time spent on Instagram were asked to see if there was a correlation between usage and the spotlight effect. It was found that the content creators significantly overestimated the number of people that noticed their feature, thus supporting our hypothesis. A statistically significant correlation between hours spent on Instagram and the prevalence of the spotlight effect was not found.

As with all research, there were limitations in our study; however, the findings will give future researchers several avenues to investigate the spotlight effect on social media further.

The Spotlight Effect on Social Media

Social media use is omnipresent in adolescents' and young adults' lives; therefore, its impact on this population should be investigated. In a 2015 study, it was found that teenagers prefer to connect with their friends via digital communications versus face-to-face (Lenhart et al., 2015). Social media is still a relatively new form of communication compared to traditional in-person interactions, texting, or phone calls. Unlike the physical world, the online environment in which social media exists is created by its users. Individuals can see and post whatever they want; this can serve as a valuable tool. Social media keeps the entire world connected despite any physical distance. Users know that photos and information about nearly everyone they know is just a scroll or search away.

With never-ending streams of content, it can be easy for social media users to feel overwhelmed. Social media addiction is a true issue some people face where they feel an uncontrollable desire to compare themselves to others (White-Gosselin et al., 2022). Not only are social

comparisons happening online, but they also occur in person, meaning for some, there is no escape from comparing oneself to others. Even those who do not post themselves on social media but still “lurk” are still at risk for adjustment issues (Underwood & Ehrenreich, 2017). Without decades of data on the long-term impacts of social media use, many questions have not been answered regarding the social-emotional consequences. The amount of time spent on social media as well as how the online platforms are used can create implications for mental health.

Social anxiety is, unfortunately, all too common for some people. During adolescence, it is normal for social anxiety to increase to some degree. This might be because peer relationships become more important during this stage of life (Chiu et al., 2021). Because this population is so susceptible to feeling socially anxious with face-to-face interactions, it is not surprising that social anxiety translates to online situations as well. Anxiety relating to social media can be caused by a myriad of things. Possible anxiety-inducing situations are feeling like not enough people have interacted with one's content, not having enough followers, wondering if people are judging one's posts, etc. (Underwood & Ehrenreich, 2017). Those with social anxiety tend to be highly aware of social status and compare themselves to others (Parsons et al., 2021). With social media, not only do people follow their friends and family, but also celebrities and influencers. In a research study, the change in negative self-perceptions after viewing influencer Instagram content was investigated using a pre/post-test design (Parsons et al., 2021). It was found that those who already had social anxiety indicated their social rank as being lower after seeing the influencers'

idealized content. Furthermore, these participants' self-esteem decreased, and negative affect increased. These findings assert that socially anxious individuals feel worse about themselves after using social media.

People with different anxieties – whether it is social or social media anxiety – are typically very concerned about what others think of them. Sometimes it can feel as if the entire world is watching and critiquing one's every move. This is a common phenomenon called the *spotlight effect*. As it turns out, people generally do not notice other people as much as one might think they do. Researchers have investigated this topic in a variety of situations. In a study where minority students were asked about the attention, they receive during lectures pertaining to people of the same background as them, participants substantially overestimated how much people were looking at them (Crosby et al., 2014). In a Gilovich et al. (2000) study, participants wore “embarrassing” clothing and had to estimate the number of people that would recall what was on their shirts. Participants generally overestimated how many observers picked up on the fact they were wearing an embarrassing shirt (Gilovich et al., 2000). In one study, it was found that the social spotlight can be felt even in imagined situations (Golubickis et al., 2016). This finding is alarming because people are assuming social judgments despite the presence of an actual audience. This relates to social media because users might feel like their followers are judging them without knowing if they are.

Feeling this way ties into the inability to see things from another person's point of view, also called egocentrism. People's overestimation of the salience of their appearance and behaviors is egocentrically biased (Gilovich & Savitsky, 1999). It has been long theorized that

children are egocentric; however, they usually grow out of this thought process by the time they reach adolescence (Elkind & Bowen, 1979). Surprisingly, in a 2008 study, it was found that egocentrism exists consistently from ages 11 to 21 (Schwartz et al., 2008). This could mean that people retain the inability to accurately judge situations from another person's perspective, which relates to the spotlight effect.

The desire to be on social media could potentially stem from egocentrism. People do not know how others truly feel about them, so by going on social media, one can try to find some answers or validation. With social media, one puts themselves in a position where people can look at their content for hours. There is no way of telling how long people have looked at one's posts. Even counts are not an accurate gauge because people can see a post and choose to not like or comment on it. The potential negative side effects of social media have been investigated quite a bit; however, there are still some unknowns. In relation to adolescents' social media use, the spotlight effect has never been studied in that particular context. What is known is that it is common for young adults to spend several hours of the day on social media and those with social anxiety tend to feel worse after scrolling (Parsons et al., 2021). With the massive amount of time people spend on social media, it is important to know how this age group estimates their followers' attention to their content.

This form of the spotlight effect was tested by creating two groups of participants: content creators and content viewers. The content creators submitted a simulated Instagram post and described what the most noticeable feature was in their post and estimated what percent of viewers would also notice the feature.

The content viewer group saw the simulated posts and indicated what they believed was the most noticeable feature of each of the posts.

Because of previous literature, it is hypothesized that the spotlight effect does exist in young adults while using social media. Specifically, it is hypothesized that when asked to use open recall, a multiple-choice selection, and to give a detailed description of the most noticeable feature, social media content viewers will select a content creator's predicted most prominent feature of their post significantly less than what the content creators estimate. Furthermore, it is hypothesized that the more hours a content creator spends on Instagram daily, the larger the discrepancy between their predicted most prominent feature and how much the content viewers notice it will be.

Method

Participants

Participants in the content creator group were recruited via personal contact with students in Dr. Laura Ramsey's PSYC 304-004 class. All participants in this study were 18 years old or older and were Instagram users. There were 12 participants in the content creator group. All participants in the content creator group were students at Bridgewater State University. Of the participants, 9 were cisgender women and 3 were cisgender men. The ages of these participants ranged from 20-33 and the mean age was 21.92 years old ($SD = 3.61$). There was 1 participant who identifies as Hispanic/Latinx, 8 who identify as Caucasian/White, 1 who identifies as African American/Black, and 2 who identify as Middle Eastern. 6 participants were juniors, 3 were seniors, and 2 were "super seniors," meaning students

who have already completed four or more years of college at an undergraduate level. There was 1 participant who did not indicate their class year. Participants in the content creator group were compensated with \$15 added to their Connect Card in Flex Dollars.

For the content viewer group, there was a total of 102 participants who were recruited using the Cloud Research platform. There were 51 cisgender women and 48 cisgender men. There was 1 transgender male, 1 person who identifies as nonbinary, and 1 participant that did not indicate their gender identity. The ages of participants ranged from 22-76 years old with the mean age being 38.59 years old (SD = 11.26). 8 participants identify as Hispanic/Latinx, 78 identify as Caucasian/White, 15 identify as African American/Black, and 8 identify as Asian. The sum of these numbers does not reflect the 102 participants because 7 participants identified as having two different races. 4 participants were currently enrolled in college. Of those 4, only 3 indicated their class year: 1 sophomore and 2 seniors. All participants in the content viewer group were compensated roughly \$1 from Cloud Research for their participation.

Procedure for Content Creators

The Qualtrics Survey program was used to collect data. A brief description of the study was provided, and informed consent was obtained. Participants were asked to choose or take a photo of themselves so that they would feel comfortable posting on Instagram. The photo had to be of the participant without any other people. Participants were given the option to write a caption they would add if they were posting it on Instagram. They then had to select from a list of options what they

thought the most prominent part of their photo was, like their clothing, for example. Then, they described in detail what feature they specifically meant. Using a sliding scale from 0-100, the participants had to estimate what percent of viewers would notice the feature they selected. Next, there were questions about personal social media habits. When asked how much time one spends on Instagram, the options participants had to choose from were using it more than two hours a day, about one hour a day, less than one hour a day, a few times a week, once a week, or less than once a week. These responses were associated with numbers one through six, with one being the response over two hours a day and six being less than a few times a week. Then, questions about self-consciousness had to be answered. Demographic questions were asked. Personal information was collected for compensation purposes. Participants' first and last names, Banner IDs, and email addresses were collected. The purpose of the study was stated after the survey.

Procedure for Content Viewers

An overview of the study was presented, and participants gave their informed consent. Participants were instructed to view the images as if they were scrolling on their own Instagram feed. Next, participants were asked to describe any details or features in the posts in the feed that they could remember. Then, they were shown five randomly selected posts that were previously seen in the feed. For each of the five posts, they were asked to indicate and describe the most prominent feature in each post, like the person's facial expression, for example. The participants were asked to reflect on their social media habits. Specifically, they were also asked about how frequently they use Instagram.

Participants then answered questions pertaining to their self-consciousness as well as demographics. Finally, participants were debriefed on the purpose of the study.

Measure

Content Creators' Estimate of Viewers' Attention

After indicating the most prominent feature of their post, content creators used a sliding scale from 0 to 100 to answer the following question: "If this photo was posted on Instagram, what percentage of viewers do you think would notice the feature you selected above?"

Content Viewers' Perception of Creators' Posts

The content viewers indicated what they noticed in the content creators' posts in three different ways: open recall, multiple choice, and descriptions. The open recall appeared first, to get the most uninfluenced perception of the whole feed of posts. The open recall question was, "Describe any details or features in the posts in the feed that you remember. Try to list as many as you can and be as specific as possible." Participants were then given space to type in whatever came to mind.

Next, the content viewers were shown five posts from the feed, selected at random. For each post, content viewers indicated in a multiple-choice format to allow for easy comparison to the content creators' indication of the most prominent feature in their posts. The question to the content viewers read, "For each of the five specific posts below, indicate the most prominent feature in each post." The response options were *facial expression, clothing, pose, tattoos/piercings, accessories, and hair/makeup*.

Finally, the content viewers described, in an open-ended question, the most notable feature for another randomly selected five posts from the feed. The

instructions read, "Now for each of the following posts, describe what specifically stood out to you the most." A space was allotted next to each of the five posts for the content viewers to write whatever came to mind.

Social Media Habits

Both content creators and content viewers were asked a series of questions regarding their social media habits. To ensure that all of the participants were Instagram users, they were asked which social media platforms they used regularly and which social media platform they used the most. Then they were asked how often they typically use Instagram, with the following response options: two or more hours every day, about an hour every day, less than an hour every day, a few times a week, once a week, less than once a week.

Public Self-Consciousness Scale

For both content creators and content viewers, the Public Self-Consciousness subscale of the Self-Conscious Scale (Scheier & Carver, 1985) was used to gauge vulnerability to the spotlight effect. This survey measure has been used for many years and has been validated. There were seven items on the Public Self-Consciousness subscale. One item of the sub-scale was "I'm concerned about my style of doing things" (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Each item had the response options of "not at all like me," "a little like me," "somewhat like me," or "a lot like me," and participants were asked to select the option they felt most closely described them.

Results

To determine if the spotlight effect exists on Instagram, data was analyzed using a paired-sample

t-test. Though the data came from different groups of participants (content creators and content viewers), a paired-sample t-test was appropriate because the comparisons were matched by post (i.e., the content creators and the content viewers offered data on the same post). For each post, the content creator's estimate of viewers' attention (on a scale from 1 to 100) was compared to the percentage of content viewers who identified the most notable feature (as perceived by the content creators). This resulted in three different comparisons because the content viewers identified the most notable feature in three different ways: the open recall after viewing the whole feed, the multiple-choice for each of five randomly selected posts, and the open-ended description for each of five randomly selected posts.

On average, participants in the content creator group estimated that 74.42% (SD = 26.62) of content viewers would notice the feature they thought was most prominent in their posts. For the open recall based on viewing the whole feed, content viewers noticed the content creators' predicted most prominent feature an average of 3.25% of the time (SD = 7.33). Thus, the content creators significantly overestimated the percentage of viewers who would notice their predicted most prominent feature, $t(11) = 10.16, p < .001$. For the multiple-choice question for each post, content viewers selected the content creators' predicted most prominent feature an average of 31.95% of the time, on average (SD = 32.97). This comparison also indicated a significant overestimation by the content creators, $t(11) = 5.16, p < .001$. For the open-ended description for each post, content viewers only noticed the predicted most prominent feature an average of 33.56% (SD = 34.66) of the time. This comparison also indicated a significant

overestimation by the content creators, $t(11) = 5.21, p < .001$. Therefore, consistent across all three comparisons, the results provided support for our hypothesis that the spotlight effect may be experienced on Instagram. Figure 1 illustrates the discrepancy between the content creators' average prediction of how often the content viewers noticed the feature believed to be most prominent versus how often the content viewers did.

Next, a variable estimating the spotlight effect for each participant was created by subtracting the percentage of content viewers who identified the prominent feature in the multiple-choice question from the content creators' estimate of viewers' attention to the prominent feature. Then, to determine a correlation between the spotlight effect and the amount of time spent on Instagram, a Pearson's r test was conducted. It was found that most content creators reported spending about an hour on Instagram daily ($M = 1.92, SD = 0.29$). Then, it was found that on average, content creators were 42.46 points off in their estimation of how many people would notice their selected feature (SD = 28.51). Pearson's r test revealed that there was a medium correlation between Instagram use and the spotlight effect ($r = 0.46$), but it was not found to be statistically significant ($p = 0.13$).

Discussion

This study aimed to determine if the spotlight effect exists on social media. Individuals submitted a photo that they felt comfortable posting on Instagram and estimated what percent of people would pick up on the feature that they perceived to be most noticeable. The photos were then shared with a different group of people, and they indicated what they thought the most noticeable features of the posts were. Then, content creators'

responses were compared to the content viewers. The data suggested that there was a significant difference between the content creators' overestimations compared to what the content viewers noticed, thus supporting our hypothesis. When investigating whether a correlation exists between the spotlight effect and time spent on Instagram, the analysis suggested that there was no significant difference between those who use Instagram more than those who use it less frequently. This was probably due to the small sample size.

Previous research has suggested that peer relationships are highly important in emerging adulthood (Chiu et al., 2021). This leads one to believe that staying connected to friends on social media by engaging with their content and uploading photos oneself is also important. Furthermore, it was established that there tends to be anxiety about what the posts look like and if enough people are liking them (Underwood & Ehrenreich, 2017). The current study used this knowledge as a framework for our design. Trying to recruit participants for the content creator group proved to be a challenge. If people are generally self-conscious about their social media posts, then they would likely not want hundreds of other participants judging them. This explains why the sample size for the content creator group was so small.

In prior studies, it was found that people overestimate how many other people were looking at them in public settings (Crosby et al., 2014). Unsurprisingly, this was also the case in the present study where participants significantly overestimated the number of people that noticed a specific feature of their post. Perhaps this was the case in part because the participants in the content creator group knew that their photo was going to be shown to strangers. It is known that the spotlight

effect can be experienced by people even in imagined situations, so our findings that it exists on social media were not unexpected (Golubickis et al., 2016).

Limitations and Future Research

A limitation of this study is that there was a small sample size for the content creator group. It is more difficult to generalize results to the entire population of young adults because there were only twelve participants in the content creator group. Another limitation is that, for that group, the sample was exclusively comprised of Bridgewater State University students. The participants were not completely varied in their class year; there were not any freshman or sophomore participants in the content creator group. Because this is such a specific group of people, perhaps there is something about the cisgender juniors, seniors, and super seniors that attend Bridgewater State University that makes them more or less likely to experience the spotlight effect on Instagram. Having a larger sample size drawn from a more varied population would reduce this uncertainty.

Another limitation was that our study required content creators to upload photos of themselves. This meant that we needed a group of people that were confident enough to share a photo of themselves that they were willing to subject to scrutiny from people that they did not know. Because of the nature of what we were asking participants to do, it is likely all of those who agreed to participate are different from those who were uncomfortable with the task. There is no way of knowing if the spotlight effect exists on social media at all in those individuals who were not willing to participate, or it could be that the spotlight effect is even stronger for those

people.

Finally, there was a limitation with the content viewer group. Because we used the Cloud Research platform, we had no control over who saw the posts. For example, there was a participant in this group that was 76 years old. Her perceptions of the Instagram posts and what she thought was the most noticeable feature might have been different compared to someone in the age group of those who uploaded the photo. Usually, most of one's followers are close in age to the user; however, this was not necessarily the case for our simulated feed. In other words, perhaps having such a wide range of ages in the content viewer group that did not match those who uploaded the photos was a limitation.

Because there is such little research on the spotlight effect on social media, there are several different avenues one could take for future research. Our findings point to the spotlight effect possibly existing for college-aged Instagram users. Discovering a way to reduce the effect on Instagram would benefit society because it can be an uncomfortable thing to experience. Doing so might require finding the root cause of the spotlight effect on Instagram, which could also lead to more research questions.

Comparing how a person experiences the spotlight effect in the “real world” versus Instagram could provide some interesting insights. There is strong evidence for the spotlight effect existing in public situations, and after the present study, there is some support for believing that it exists online. One could investigate whether the effect is stronger for individuals in real-life situations or on social media. To determine this, one could use the same research design as the current study, as well as having participants complete some type

of embarrassing task in public, such as the Gilovich et al. T-shirt study (Gilovich et al., 2000).

An additional suggestion for future research is to expand the study to include different age ranges. This study only looked at college-aged students; however, they are not the only ones who use social media. Discovering if it also exists for younger and older populations would be interesting to know. Then, one could compare the prevalence of the spotlight effect between the different age groups. This could provide important insights into how the spotlight effect varies through different life stages.

Conclusion

The spotlight effect had never been investigated on social media before the current study. Our findings point to the fact that the imagined social spotlight does influence people's beliefs on the extent to which people notice their posts. This is new information for the psychology research community and has the potential to launch countless more studies on the topic of the spotlight effect on social media.

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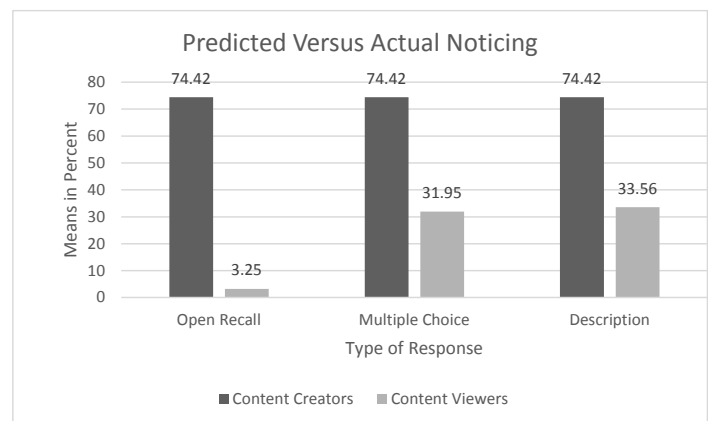


Figure 1: Predicted Versus Actual Noticing of Created Content by Content Creators and Viewers

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Juan Crow: A Discriminatory Past with Contemporary Consequences against Mexican Americans

ALICIA DELANEY

Introduction

In 2008, Justeen Mancha and her mother, who are citizens of the United States and Mexican descent, found themselves in a predicament they will never forget. The two work hard in an onion field and live in a trailer in Georgia, a state riddled with the exploitation of Latinx people and African Americans. One morning, their home was raided by ICE agents armed with guns, asking the women if they were “illegals.” The armed men surrounded the trailer and interrogated Justeen with no warrant or cause for entry, hoping to find an “illegal.” Once the agents got what they needed to prove she and her mother were documented citizens of the United States, they left. Although the agents left the trailer, the trauma lingered, and the memory will never be forgotten. Experiences like that of Justeen and her mother have unfortunately become more common as xenophobia has accelerated in the US, all under the guise of protecting its borders and nationals from immigrants. The disregard for the human rights of immigrants, especially Latinx peoples, is today more blatant and rampant as people are “terrorized and families [are] torn apart all in the name of getting tough on ‘illegals.’ Anyone who looks or sounds ‘foreign’ is a suspect” (Cohen).

Roberto Lovato, a Salvadorian journalist, used stories like that of Justeen and her mother to coin the

term “Juan Crow” to describe the unjust immigration enforcement statutes and analogize them to the Jim Crow laws of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. According to Lovato, Juan Crow refers to “the matrix of laws, social customs, economic institutions, and symbolic systems enabling the physical and psychic isolation needed to control and exploit undocumented immigrants” (21). Even though the term Juan Crow was coined in the twenty-first century, Latinx people have faced a long history of exploitation and racialization that can be traced back to the nineteenth century. This is particularly the case for Mexicans and Mexican Americans, many of whom lived in the Southwest and West territories long before they were integrated into the United States.

This paper will focus on the past and contemporary systemic discrimination of the Mexican and Mexican American communities in Texas and California. I will first discuss how, despite being considered citizens at the federal level since the enactment of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, Mexicans and their descendants were subject to de facto segregation policies, discriminatory economic and social practices at the local and State levels, and numerous acts of violence. They were racialized as “others” in terms of language, customs, and supposed inferior morality. In addition, I will explain the numerous factors that have, in the past and

present, physically and psychologically isolated Mexican Americans and relegated them to a powerless position in US society. Lastly, I will explain how the stigmatization of Latinx people has resulted in the contemporary “Juan Crow” period in which Latinx people are criminalized, incarcerated, and deported in masses and subject to the racist stereotype that they are all “illegal” criminals.

History

On February 2, 1848, the United States and Mexico signed a treaty to end the 2-year Mexican-American War. “By its terms, Mexico ceded 55 percent of its territory, including the present-day states of California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, most of Arizona and Colorado, and parts of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Wyoming. Mexico also relinquished all claims to Texas and recognized the Rio Grande as the southern boundary with the United States” (National Archives). After the Mexican-American War and the annexation of Texas, immigration from Mexico into the United States increased, making Mexicans a large part of the United States population. The war’s primary purpose was Western expansion. Yet, it is essential to note that half of their territory was not the only thing Mexico had ceded to America in 1848 after the war, but their power also. While the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo created peace on paper, in reality, the two countries and their inhabitants were pushed further apart.

The Mexican people living in the newly acquired territories were granted citizenship due to the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. Nevertheless, they were denied many civil rights. Although Mexicans were deemed “White” according to federal law, they were discriminated against and treated like foreigners. The United States government and criminal justice system were able to get away with

discriminatory practices because Mexicans were legally White, therefore making it not racially charged discrimination if the argument can be made that the group feeling discriminated against is part of the same racial category as the group they are being discriminated by. White Anglo-US Americans were able to sweep Mexican prejudice under the rug. As Rodríguez indicated, “[T]he 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo...stipulated citizenship for the Spanish-speaking residents in these areas ...one could assume that these Spanish-speaking residents were once considered ‘White’... these Spanish-speaking peoples became citizens of the United States... However, despite these formal pronouncements of citizenship and implied White status, the reality of real citizenship eluded many” (9). The United States has a history of granting citizenship just to turn around and continue treating people as foreigners or less than others. For example, “within a year of ratification, the US government violated the treaty citizenship stipulation and began a process called racialization which gave Mexicans different legal rights based on their race” (Menchaca 56). Again, the United States government got away with discriminating against Mexicans because Mexicans were, in terms of race, federally and legally classified as White. Cobas et al. explain how the racialization of Latinos “refers to their definition as ‘racial’ group and the denigration of their alleged physical and cultural characteristics, such as phenotype...Their racialization also entails their incorporation into a White-created and White-imposed racial hierarchy...with White Americans at the very top and Black Americans at the very bottom (1). Racialization was used to maintain the structure of the racial hierarchy keeping White Anglo Americans at the very top and all other races and ethnicities at the bottom.

Acts of Violence

Violence can be correlated with racially charged discrimination. Although Mexicans were classified as White, they faced violence similarly to African Americans. The lynching of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Texas has an untapped history rarely discussed in scholarship. Mexican representation and protection did not exist in the criminal justice system after the Mexican-American War. Mexicans were kidnapped from police custody and executed many times, with the kidnapers not subject to any form of punishment. In the United States, legal authorities overlooked and ignored the racially motivated violence against Mexicans because they wanted to keep their White supremacist country intact with racial and political rule. Romaine Scott describes how “[o]ur American moment reveals two contradictory impulses: first, to contain and limit the Latin presence and, second, to categorize and absorb Latins so they fit previous patterns of US incorporation” (187). The desire to retain power and authority in Anglo-Americans' hands altered the justice mechanisms and led to the “denying the legitimacy of” Mexican-run courts and allowing racially motivated execution of Mexicans. For instance, “Anglo vigilance committees arose in opposition to the predominantly Mexican legal authorities. These committees showed little respect for the legal rights of Mexicans, executing them in disproportionately large numbers. Their actions, therefore, amounted to institutionalized discrimination” (Carrigan and Webb 71-72). Vigilance committees composed of Anglo-Americans took matters into their own hands to execute Mexicans in the United States. The legal authorities who chose to turn their cheek at the murders sent the message that mobs and vigilance committees can, without reason, kill

Mexicans and get away with it.

The validations for the lynchings of Mexicans by mobs were excuses to act on a violent, racist impulse. A majority of the “crimes” that prompted lynchings were day-to-day actions, like “Being a successful Cartman” or things that a person cannot control, like “Being of Mexican descent” (Carrigan and Webb 76). The table’s list of alleged crimes is a long one that shows the hatred Anglos had for Mexicans by showing how these common occurrences serve to justify a brutal murder (see Figure 1).

Lynchings of African Americans in the United States have been an important topic discussed in scholarship when discussing US history and civil rights. Therefore, it seems fitting that the lynching of Mexicans should also be addressed in scholarship when discussing civil rights issues. Mexicans were being lynched out of racial motivation, which is not discussed. As I have mentioned previously, it is a large part of the history of discrimination against Mexicans in the United States. The history of racial violence and intolerance has continued until today, for they are still stigmatized and discriminated against. It is no coincidence that the same states in the South that were ceded to the United States by Mexico are the states that are home to the most lynchings. According to Carrigan and Webb, the states with the most lynchings are Texas, California, Arizona, and New Mexico (see Figure 2).

As shown in the table, the data concerning lynchings in the South and Southwest parts of the United States that researchers were able to get ahold of include all the states ceded to the United States from Mexico. These are areas where there were large groups of Mexicans living there and moving to in the seventeenth

Alleged Crime	Number of Lynching Victims
Murder	301
Theft or Robbery	116
Murder and Robbery	38
Being of Mexican Descent	10
Attempted Murder	9
Cheating at Cards	7
Rape or Sexual Assault	5
Assault	5
Witchcraft	3
Kidnapping	3
Courting a White Woman	2
Taking Away Jobs	2
Rape and Murder	1
Attempted Murder and Robbery	1
Refusing to Join Mob	1
Threatening White Men	1
Being a "Bad Character"	1
Killing a Cow	1
Being a Successful Cartman	1
Miscegenation	1
Refusing to Play the Fiddle	1
Taking White Men to Court	1
Protesting Texas Rangers	1
Serving as a Bill Collector	1
Giving Refugee to Bandits	1
Unknown	83

Figure 1: Alleged Crimes of Victims

Source: Table 4.1 in *How the United States Racializes Latinos: White Hegemony & Its Consequences* (Carrigan and Webb 76).

State	Number of Lynchings
Texas	282
California	188
Arizona	59
New Mexico	49
Colorado	6
Nevada	3
Nebraska	2
Oklahoma	2
Oregon	2
Kentucky	1
Louisiana	1
Montana	1
Wyoming	1

Figure 2: Lynchings of Mexicans by State

Source: Table 4.1 in *How the United States Racializes Latinos: White Hegemony & Its Consequences* (Carrigan and Webb 71).

and eighteenth centuries. Along with quantitative data regarding lynching victims who were Mexican, researchers also found data that specifies the decades in which the most lynchings against Mexicans occurred in the southwestern states listed in the table above. The years that closely followed the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, 1851-1860, as well as the annexation of Texas and ceding of territories, were the highest, with 160 lynchings reported. 1871-1880 and 1911-1920 were the second and third highest, with 147 and 124 lynchings reported. Although lynching was the most common form of violence reported against Mexicans, they were also violated and tortured in other ways. Many were shot,

physically mutilated, and burned. Being gunshot was the second most common way of killing Mexicans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Shootings are also a common present-day form of violence against Mexicans and Latinx people in the South.

Lynching and execution of Mexicans were only some of the acts of violence Mexicans and Mexican Americans faced. Since President Trump's administration, mass shootings of immigrants have increased. One case of a mass shooting involving Latinx people is from 2019 at a garlic festival in California, where Latinx people make up 58 percent of the community (Menchaca 255). A man who supports Trump opened fire with a semi-automatic rifle into a large crowd at the Gilroy Garlic Festival, killed three people and injured fifteen before the police shot him, and then shot himself. Before the shooting, the man, Santino William Legan, made a post to Instagram exclaiming his hate for "mestizos" and how they are infiltrating the community. Another mass shooting happened in the same year, 2019, in El Paso, Texas, in August. The shooter claimed he wanted to shoot as many Mexicans as possible, and he killed 20 people and left many injured as well. This was three months after Trump held a press conference where he emphasized how he wanted border patrol to get tough on migrants coming "illegally." In the press conference, he asked the crowd how to keep migrants from crossing the border, and a person from the audience shouted, "Shoot them," and Trump laughed (Rivas). When the President of the United States laughs at a suggestion to shoot people crossing the border, it can cause people to think that it is something that he agrees with and can be done. And as mentioned previously, a president's words and actions greatly influence the population they govern.

Language

As the population of undocumented immigrants from Latin America and Mexico increased, so did the number of US-born children of immigrants. With this population growing and becoming part of the United States, it is unjust that they are all clumped into one category by the terms "Hispanic" and "Latinx." Their unique histories and cultures make them individuals, yet the United States found it easier to homogenize these groups. Latin America consists of many countries that are unique in their ways; not every country that speaks Spanish is the same. Clumping the countries up into one big group takes away from their individuality.

The stripping of culture, or Americanization, of the Mexicans living in the South, came along with educational segregation. The most common way this was done was by banning the Spanish language at school, forcing young children to speak English. One scenario where we can see this forced assimilation occurred in California in the mid-nineteenth century, just two years after the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. Before the Mexican-American War, much of California belonged to Mexico; therefore, Mexicans comprised most of the population. Due to the large number of Mexicans living in California and the recent territory change, the Spanish language was prevalent and the only language used by many. Nevertheless, forced assimilation occurred rapidly. According to Ofelia García, "The language people spoke Spanish, was slowly eradicated from the territory [ceded from Mexico to the US], especially in schools. California became a state in 1850 and five years later, in 1855, English was declared the only language of instruction in schools" (102). This is an example of forced assimilation because most of the Mexican population that

had inhabited the area for hundreds of years spoke only Spanish, making it difficult to pick up and consistently use a new language. In 1998, California passed a proposition called, Proposition 227 to get rid of bilingual education and force English-only in schools. This forced assimilation through language control racializes the Spanish language.

Because of the declaration of English as the language of school instruction, teachers discouraged children from using their first language in class. In addition, teachers also talked poorly about the Spanish language, calling it dirty and making the children feel bad about themselves. Hurtful reprimands “[s]uch as ‘Don't speak that ugly language, you are an American now...,’ not only reflected a strong belief in Anglo conformity but denigrated the self-esteem of Mexican American children” (Ruiz 24). For most children in “Mexican Schools,” Spanish was the only language they spoke; it was their parents and their culture's language. Enforcing the no Spanish in-school rule made it difficult for Mexican children growing up in the Southwest. Comments like the one above from teachers telling young Mexican children they need to speak English because they are in America are unfortunately still prevalent today.

The United States is only a part of North America, and Canada and Mexico are also part of the North American continent. In Canada, French and English are the official languages, and in Mexico, Spanish is the official language. There are also other (Latin) American countries where Spanish and other languages are the official languages rather than English. Therefore, the claim that only English should be spoken in America is one of ignorance. In the United States alone, many languages are spoken as it is a heterogeneous country with no official documented language. It is true, however, that English is

one of the most common languages used in the United States, but it is not limited to only English. Thus, not only was it challenging for Mexicans to go about not being able to communicate in their first-learned language, but it was a forceful way of making Mexicans, who became United States citizens from the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, assimilate to the Anglo-American culture of the United States.

Jim Crow & Juan Crow

Mexicans were and are racialized because they are part of an ethnic category. Consequently, they fall victim to discrimination through laws and policies. When discussing the racialization of Mexicans and other Latinx communities in the United States, it is essential to note that Mexicans and Latinx people can fit into any race or multiple races. Still, they are identified based on their ethnic category.

The term Juan Crow emphasizes the similarities between the systemic discrimination of Mexican Americans and African Americans during the Jim Crow era in the late 1800s to early 1900s. The states of the US ceded by Mexico are the states where the Juan Crow laws are most prominent, which is not a coincidence that the Jim Crow laws plagued the same area. Jim Crow laws institutionalized racism against African Americans in the Southern United States by exploiting them, controlling them, and denying them civil rights. A similar form of exploitation and control has and still affects the Mexican Americans living in the United States' southern region. As Carrigan and Webb argue, “[T]here are important, if not underappreciated, connections between the history of Mexicans and the history of African Americans, and these connections await further scholarly investigation.” (83).

For centuries, like African Americans, Mexicans in the United States have fallen victim to White hegemony that has birthed the institutional discrimination still present today. There is a long history of racially charged violence towards Mexicans in the United States, labor exploitation, and a lack of civil rights. Similar to the discrimination African Americans faced in the southern United States with the Jim Crow laws and segregation, Mexican Americans and other Hispanic/Latinx immigrants in America found themselves segregated and discriminated against under the “Juan Crow Laws.”

Mexico’s Land Act of 1883

Railway systems in the United States led to increased immigration from Mexico to the United States. United States railroad tracks were laid in Mexico through a law that hired surveyors to survey farmland in Mexico. This “led to the appropriation of ranchland owned by thousands of small-scale farmers,” known as Mexico’s Land Act of 1883 (Menchaca 92). The hired corporations got one-eighth of the land they surveyed instead of getting paid and were offered more land to purchase for “a few cents an acre.” Consequently, Mexican farmers lost their land to US railroad corporations. The President of Mexico at the time, Porfirio Díaz, changed Mexico into a political dictatorship and wished to modernize and reorganize Mexico’s land system. Díaz believed only rich people could “make the land productive,” and so he used his political power to strip land from lower-class Mexicans. Díaz also hired judges to be in charge of an appeal court for people to go to in order to fight for their land back. These judges were appointed to ensure the land stayed in the hands of the US corporations for railroads and Mexican higher-ups to make the land productive. This

stripping of land in Mexico urged Mexicans to migrate North to the United States because, without land, they had no source of income (Menchaca 91-92).

Twenty years after the stripping of land, the Mexican Revolution in 1910 pushed Mexicans out of Mexico and into the United States. Between the Mexican Land Act of 1883 and the Mexican Revolution that lasted 10 years from 1910 until 1920, President Díaz’s policies continued to push Mexicans out of Mexico and into Texas. In addition, not only did the lack of land lead to decreased income, but Díaz lowered the minimum wage from “35 centavos to 15 centavos” and triggered a revolution (Menchaca 101).

Segregation Laws

Zoning laws in Texas institutionalized the segregation of Mexican Americans in 1927. County commissioners and other city officials had the authority to draw and redraw county boundaries with a mandatory voting process. Like most authority figures at the time and present day the county commissioners were White, thus upholding the hegemony of Anglo people in the United States. The zoning laws of 1927 also gave commissioners and other county officials the power to assign schools to specific neighborhoods. School assigning policies based on neighborhoods made it easy for the officials to segregate Mexican children from Anglo children.

Education & Segregation

Historically, Mexicans lived in barrios or neighborhoods where they could keep their customs and traditions intact and alive. After the Mexican territories were ceded to the United States, Mexicans continued to live in those same areas. The territory change was merely

a geographical change, so it makes sense that Mexicans would be living in their barrios of Texas. Texas State and local officials used the highly concentrated Mexican areas to their advantage to segregate Mexicans, especially through schools. Consequently, education for Mexican children was not equal to that of their White counterparts in Texas, California, and other states in the Southwest.

One specific inequity between “Mexican” schools and “White” schools was the curriculum. Mexican schools were more vocational, whereas “White” schools were more academic. For example, “Historians Gilbert Gonzalez and Mario Garcia demonstrated that the curricula in ‘Mexican’ schools, which emphasized vocational education, served to funnel youth into the factories and building trades” (Ruiz 25). There is a history of Mexicans being exploited through labor in the South, doing the jobs that Anglo-Americans did not want to do. Anglo-Americans hoped to keep Mexicans in the factories by creating a curriculum that directed Mexican children to acquire labor skills rather than academic skills. Mexicans in the United States often did difficult hands-on work for low pay and very long days; through education, this became more of a regular occurrence causing Mexican Americans to be at a standstill class-wise and economically.

Along with assigning specific neighborhoods to Mexican-only schools, the commissioners were able to redraw school districts with the vote of the citizens living in the areas. Due to the fact that many Mexican Americans lived in areas with a high concentration of Mexican people, those barrios were assigned to Mexican-only schools. Commissioners and local officials were able to use these barrios to force Mexican children into inadequate school buildings.

Mexican children in California were also educated

in very old buildings with limited space. “The ‘new’ two-room facility resembled a barn hastily furnished with second-hand equipment, supplies, and books” (Ruiz 25). Consequently, parents and other family members were outraged at the unfair treatment their children faced when it came to education. They rightfully argued that a school building with only two rooms is too small and that a hastily furnished, barn-looking building with no new supplies is hardly a “new” building for a school. Unfortunately, the commissioners got away with not revealing the whole plan to get and keep votes, therefore furthering the segregation of Mexicans from Anglo people in Texas and California.

Mendez v. Westminster School District

Violence, segregation, and restrictions resulted in legal challenges in the Southwest of the United States. Among those lawsuits was the educational segregation that Mexicans faced in California. In 1947, a Ninth Circuit case challenged the “separate and inferior ‘Mexican Schools’” in California and the Southwest United States (Saenz 67). The parents of nine-year-old Sylvia, Gonzalo, and Felicitas Mendez, along with other enraged parents challenged school segregation in Orange County’s Westminster School District. Mexican and Latinx children were denied entry to their local schools and put into segregated schools for Mexican American students. The Mendez family claimed that their child and all other Mexican American children forced into Mexican-only schools, were being discriminated against based on ancestry and “supposed ‘language deficiency’” rather than racial discrimination (Zinn Education). In comparison to the court case, I will discuss next, both parties in the Mendez case made the argument that “Mexican

Americans are part of the White race and that the case, therefore, raised ‘no question of race discrimination’” (Saenz 69), but *Hernandez v. Texas* was the one to prove that “interracial ethnic discrimination” is very much present (Saenz 72). However, the point of “no question of race discrimination” is contradicted by the fact that there was segregation occurring. Despite Mexicans being classified as “White”, Mexicans in the United States were treated as a racial minority. The lawsuit was successful in all three levels of court it went through, the school district appeal court, district court, and the Ninth Circuit court.

During the time of the case in 1947, “the school districts could reasonably calculate that they could hide what was, in intent and effect, racial discrimination, behind a facade of intra-racial ethnic discrimination, and assume that the courts would find the latter as acceptable or more acceptable than the former,” but racial discrimination is now recognized on the same level as ethnic discrimination (Saenz 71). Its success was the termination of discrimination against Mexican students in public schools based on ancestry and language. Although it did not make it to the highest court in the United States, the Supreme Court, it was the first case to prove that segregation in schools violates the Fourteenth Amendment (Blanco). Mendez’s victory in the case is significant not only for Mexican students in the United States but also for African American students as *Mendez v. Westminster* served as a precursor to the significant case *Brown v. Board of Education* that established school segregation went against the constitution.

Hernandez v. Texas

Another case that paved the way for future success for Mexican Americans was *Hernandez v.*

Texas. Pete Hernandez was a Mexican man indicted by a full-White petit and grand jury for the murder of a man named Joe Espinoza. Hernandez and his legal team argued that his Fourteenth Amendment rights had been violated because he had been indicted by a jury from which Mexicans have been banned. “*Hernandez*, a landmark Supreme Court decision...recognized Mexican Americans as a distinct class with the right to challenge systematic exclusion from juries” (Saenz 67). Before the Hernandez case, courts excluded Mexican Americans and African Americans from being on juries. In order to challenge the courts about not being allowed on juries is racial discrimination, there needed to be evidence. It was difficult to provide evidence to prove racial discrimination when Mexicans in Texas at the time fell under the racial classification of White, making it easier for courts to keep them off juries without pushback. Texas state courts were able to get away previously with banning Mexican Americans from juries until the Supreme Court changed that by ruling that the Fourteenth Amendment applies to distinct classes within the two races, White and Black. That ruling made it so Mexicans on trial in Texas could not be racially discriminated against in the form of a biased jury that did not include fellow Mexicans. In that US Supreme Court case in 1954, the Fourteenth Amendment was granted to Mexican Americans, ensuring they would benefit from the equal protection clause. In this case, though, the state of Texas had argued that Mexicans are White; therefore, the all-White jury did not discriminate. Yet Mexicans were not treated as though they were White; they were treated as others. Once again, it is apparent that Mexicans were legally White on paper but not treated as such. Although the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964, it took Texas until 1967 to comply with it and apply it to

government facilities. In 1972, all discriminatory laws in Texas, along with the desegregation of public schools and nullification of state laws regarding private businesses, were finally terminated (Menchaca 217).

1954 "Operation Wetback"

In 1954, under President Eisenhower, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) issued a policy called "Operation Wetback" that was put in place to control the "illegal" crossing of the Mexican-United States border. The term "wetback" is a racial slur used since the 1920s to refer to Mexicans who "slipped" through the Mexican-United States border into Texas (Quinney 673). This policy is responsible for the mass deportation of Mexican nationals from the United States. Like other anti-immigration policies, "Operation Wetback" instilled in enforcers to profile people and assume their nationality based on stereotypical phenotypes. These enforcers included Border Patrol agents and local officials who justified their brutal treatment of Mexicans through racial stereotypes that called Mexicans dirty, irresponsible, and disease-bearing (Blakemore). This policy was seen again in 1996 with the Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility that increased deportation and "substantially tightened earlier immigration and asylum measures" (Rodriguez and Menjivar 195).

1965 Immigration Act

In 1965, there was a swell of immigrants entering the United States from Latin America. This surge of immigrants from Latin America in the United States occurred due to "the Immigration and Naturalization Services Act of 1965 [which] abolished the natural-origin quotas that had been established by the National Origins

Act of 1924" (García 104). The national-origin quotas under President Calvin Coolidge only allowed a certain number of immigrants to receive visas, "two percent of the total number of people of each nationality in the United States as of the 1890 national census" (Office of the Historian). The abolishment of these quotas made it possible for more Latin Americans to come to the United States without being denied. According to the table below, the percentage of people born in Latin America living in the United States increased from 1960 until the 2000s (see Figure 3). On the other hand, the statistics for the Europe-born population residing in the United States decreased as the Latin American-born population increased. During the 1970s, right after the quotas were abolished, the first increase in Latin American-born people in the United States was seen. From there, it continued to increase where in the 2000s, Latin American-born people in the United States accounted for over 50 percent of the foreign-born population in the United States.

Chicano Movement 1965-1975

The term "Chicano" refers to Americans of Mexican descent. The Chicano Movement was a movement that involved the fight for civil rights by Mexican Americans, similar to the Civil Rights Movement that African Americans were involved in around the same period. Challenges to anti-immigration laws and the Chicano Movement led to new census records that included ethnicity, which allowed Mexican Americans and other Latinx peoples another choice beyond the Black and White racial binary. This, however, was used to racialize and push Mexicans and the Latinx population further away from the White race and continue to justify discriminatory practices. The Chicano Movement fought

	1910	1930	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Europe	87.4	83.0	75.0	61.7	39.0	22.9	15.8
Asia	1.4	1.9	5.1	8.9	19.3	26.3	26.4
Africa	-	0.1	0.4	0.9	1.5	1.9	2.8
Oceania	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.5
Latin America	2.1	5.5	9.4	19.4	33.1	44.3	51.7

Figure 3: Region of Birth of Foreign-Born Population in the United States, 1910-2000 (in Percentages)
Source: Table 4.1 in *How the United States Racializes Latinos: White Hegemony & Its Consequences* (García 104).

for equality in education and politics as well as better working conditions.

Part of the Chicano Movement involved a student-organized walkout of a Los Angeles high school in 1968. As mentioned previously, the curriculum for Mexican students served to funnel them into vocations rather than providing them with academic education. In Los Angeles at the time, Mexican American students were dropping out frequently due to the language barrier imposed by forced English learning and the lack of Mexican American administrators to help them succeed. The walkout occurred at seven high schools in East Los Angeles, where its students called for educational equality and civil rights. The Mexican American students' demands were rejected, but this large protest paved the way for further Chicano civil rights activists to make changes in the future (Library of Congress).

In the late 1960s, Chicanos also marched and boycotted in protest of the harsh working conditions they experienced working in the fields of Texas and California (Bada and Cárdenas 168). In addition, Black-

Latino coalitions were formed after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr in an attempt to keep the Civil Rights movement going. African Americans were present during marches and boycotts with Mexican Americans for better field conditions.

Within the Chicano Movement, it is essential to note the critical similarities between the riots, walkouts, boycotts, and protests of Latinx people and those of African Americans around the same period of the Civil Rights Movement. Latinx communities and African Americans allied against their common oppressor through struggles and protests. African Americans were doing the same things to push for civil rights in the South. They know each other's struggles all too well.

Prop 187

Proposition 187 was an anti-immigrant ballot initiative in California in 1994. The proposition made it difficult for unauthorized immigrants to obtain public social services like public education and health services (Rodriguez and Menjivar 194). According to Arellano,

“Prop 187 sought to create an atmosphere of fear and rejection, thereby driving all immigrants out of California. One section would deny public benefits – from public schooling to healthcare and food assistance – to illegal immigrants and their children, whether foreign-born or not” (Arellano). Once the proposition passed, the denial of benefits to people who could not prove they were “legal aliens” or a citizen would immediately take effect. During the time of this initiative, California was struggling economically, and they were using undocumented immigrants as scapegoats. Because there were no set detailed guidelines to determine whom to consider a possible undocumented immigrant, this allowed for racial profiling and the targeting of individuals who “looked foreign.” The United States Supreme Court ruled that Proposition 187 went against the Fourteenth Amendment and its equal protection clause, similar to the case of *Hernandez v. Texas* in 1945 (Library of Congress), which was previously discussed. Although the proposition was eventually found unconstitutional in 1999, it has impacted how Mexicans and other Latinx people are assumed to be undocumented because they look a certain way and speak Spanish. For example, other states, including Arizona, admired California’s proposition. They proposed their versions of Proposition 187 to deny services to undocumented immigrants or people who looked “foreign enough” to fit the undocumented immigrant profile.

Present Day

There is, without a doubt, a connection between the vigilante mobs in the 1800s and armed ICE agents in the twenty-first century breaking down doors searching for undocumented people with no warrant or cause. It is still a racially motivated occurrence. In the case of ICE

agents, however, they are employees of the United States government, not just a vigilante group, making it more institutionalized rather than just a hate group.

In 2012, President Barack Obama signed an executive order creating a program known as “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals” or DACA. It is a two-year renewal program that allows children brought to the United States “irregularly” at 16 years old and younger to stay in the country without the threat of deportation and obtaining workers’ permits. However, this program does not lead to any form of citizenship; therefore, people who are part of DACA have to ensure they renew it on time to avoid the threat of deportation (Boundless).

Throughout President Donald Trump’s administration from 2017-2021, Trump focused a lot on minimizing immigration at the Mexico-United States border. Trump built an actual wall that spans at least 400 miles along the border so far, employed more troops to monitor the border, and threatened to cut federal funding to cities that provide sanctuary for undocumented immigrants. In 2019, Trump began processes that expedited the removal of non-Mexican nationals (through PACR, Prompt Asylum Claim Review) and Mexican nationals (through HARP, Humanitarian Asylum Review Process) seeking asylum in the United States (“Trump Immigration”). In 2019, Trump also introduced the Family Fraud Initiative that sought out traffickers posing as families to smuggle children across the Mexico-United States border (“Trump Immigration”). Trump also got strict on the conditions of Temporary Protected Status (TPS), which is only granted to people whose country of origin is in ongoing armed conflict, environmental disaster, epidemic, or other extraordinary conditions. Under TPS, immigrants cannot be removed, can obtain work permits,

and may be able to acquire travel documents (“Temporary Protected Status”).

Since President Joe Biden took office, he attempted to do away with a Trump administration policy that made it so Mexicans would have to wait in Mexico while their claims were processed, but it was reinstated. It is called the Migration Protection Protocols, or “Remain in Mexico policy” (Barrera and Krogstad). President Biden’s proposals and goals include creating more opportunities for visas and citizenship, whereas President Trump’s proposals and objectives were to reduce “illegal” and legal immigration.

Criminalized

Undocumented immigrants in the United States are criminalized. ICE agents raid workplaces, take large groups of undocumented immigrants, and throw them into detention centers and jails based solely on the lack of documentation. Immigrants are often targeted without provoking anyone or anything and without doing anything illegal to call the attention of ICE. What comes along with criminalization is the predisposed assumption that undocumented immigrants are dirty criminals. On top of being assumed criminals, undocumented immigrants are not welcomed with open arms into the United States. The United States continues to grow more hostile towards undocumented immigrants as time passes, and more openly discriminatory government officials influence the country. One reason undocumented immigrants are criminalized in the United States is the assumption that immigrants from Mexico are part of the Mexican drug cartel or are smuggling drugs into the United States. This assumption has led to a more punitive response to immigrants, putting them in jails and detention centers

for long periods. In addition, the tragedy of 9/11 unlocked a greater fear of another terrorist attack, leading to the United States wanting to patrol the border even more so. “Middle Eastern-looking and other dark-skinned persons, including Latinos,” were targeted (Cobas et al. 7). This fear resulted in large numbers of undocumented immigrants being thrown into prisons (Douglas).

2006 Illegal Immigration Relief Act (IIRA)

Pennsylvania passed a relief act in 2006 called the Illegal Immigration Relief Act (IIRA). Per the IIRA, business licenses were suspended for all companies that employed unauthorized migrants, fined landlords who rented to undocumented immigrants, and mandated that transactions be conducted in English. This act subjected legal and illegal immigrants to constant suspicion and scrutiny (Rodriguez and Menjivar 194). People who “looked illegal” based on stereotypical phenotypes became victims of hate crimes and discriminatory profiling. Unfortunately, New Jersey, Texas, and California followed in Pennsylvania’s footsteps.

Over a decade after the Illegal Immigration Relief Act, Mexican, and Latinx people were targeted and stereotyped by the 45th President of the United States. Trump is known for calling undocumented immigrants “illegals,” further stigmatizing the Mexican American and Latin American populations in the United States. Having federally employed agencies going around, busting down doors yelling and searching for “illegals”, and having a President of the United States call undocumented immigrants “illegals”, opens the door for people all over the country to assume all Mexicans and Latinx people are undocumented immigrants, even if they are documented citizens of the United States and regardless

how they obtained their citizenship or how long they have been citizens. There is no specific way a citizen of the United States looks. Therefore, a person's citizenship or immigration status cannot be assumed.

The assumption of immigration status is still present in modern times, as seen in the case of Justeen Mancha and ICE. Similar to how we see Hispanic/Latinx people homogenized by the United States government, documented citizens of Mexican descent are grouped with the stigmatized group of undocumented immigrants from Mexico. Language and assumed immigration statuses were and still are significant factors that fuel this discrimination. Overall, Mexicans who are citizens of the United States are stigmatized because they are considered to be undocumented immigrants and are treated poorly by other citizens as well as state and local authorities.

Not only did former President Trump enact laws and policies to “get tough” on immigrants and separate immigrant families at the border, but he also talked about Mexicans, Latinx people, and immigrants from Central and South cruelly. In other words, under President Donald Trump’s administration, on top of an increase in acts of violence towards Mexicans and Latinx people, the stigmatization grew as well. Hate speech by a president has so much impact and influence on a population. Trump has published many offensive tweets about Mexicans and Mexico before and during his presidency. For example, in June of 2013, he tweeted, “Sadly, the overwhelming amount of violent crime in our major cities is committed by Blacks and Hispanics - a tough subject-must be discussed.” In July 2015, he tweeted, “El Chapo and the Mexican drug cartels use the border unimpeded like it was a vacuum cleaner, sucking drugs and death right

into the US.” According to FBI statistics from 2013, White people accounted for the most crimes in the United States. With the second tweet, Trump is inferring that the only people who cross the border are criminals and are part of Mexican drug cartels. However, many people crossing the Mexico-US border are immigrants from South and Central America looking to escape the violence in their home countries and seeking asylum in the United States.

Immigration status discriminates against Mexicans and Latinx people in general when it comes to jobs, housing, and other fundamental human rights. It also incorrectly and unfairly deems them to be criminals. This unjust treatment can be traced back to 1915 when “courts gave broad judicial deference to the anti-immigrant sentiment of local communities and the underlying assumption that immigrants were predisposed to criminal behavior” (Romero II 156), resulting in work restrictions and a lack thereof of job opportunities for immigrants in the United States. On the local and State levels, when jobs had to do with public works, immigrants were taken off the table as potential employees. These struggles are similar to those faced by ex-cons trying to reintegrate back into society. The reputation and pre-conceived assumptions of Mexicans and Latinx people make it difficult to find jobs or find a person/place comfortable to rent them a house.

Although there are federal laws and regulations concerning immigration and immigrants, states and local governments have a certain amount of autonomy to create policies they find to be more fitting. This causes some discrepancies as laws can change from state to state, and rules can differ from those established by the federal government. This is particularly the case in southern states that are riddled with xenophobia and

people who are under the impression that all migrants are undocumented. Because nothing is being done about it at the federal level, numerous states have been able to pass their anti-immigration laws. As Mendoza indicates,

The overall strategy these local and state governments have followed has been centered on enforcement, hence the mantras of 'enforcement first' and 'attrition through enforcement.' These laws are therefore not designed to try to reform or repair the current immigration system. Instead, they are aimed at obtaining better and more efficient enforcement of the current one. They also recognize the difficulty of rounding up and deporting 10-12 million undocumented immigrants, so along with bringing stricter enforcement, these laws are also designed to try to make the day-to-day lives of undocumented immigrants so miserable that they begin to self-deport (17).

Conclusions

Despite being considered citizens at the federal level since the enactment of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, Mexicans and their descendants were subject to segregation policies, discrimination through economic and social practices at the local and State levels, and numerous acts of violence and supposed inferiority. But this determined inferiority started long before the Mexican-American War and the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. "From its beginnings in the 1600s, the White racial frame has insisted that 'Americans of color' are not only inferior biologically and intellectually but also uncivilized, dangerous, and foreign to the

'American way of life.'" (Cobas et al. 7). Throughout this paper, I have identified how Anglo Americans have pushed Mexican Americans and the Latinx population in the United States out of the White racial frame and into a category of others and less than others. This has been seen through the most common term used to describe undocumented immigrants from Mexico and Latin America and even documented citizens of Mexican and Latin American descent, "illegal". Cobas et al. emphasize how the term "'Illegal,'[is] an epithet meaning 'foreign and dangerous,'[and] has become a regular part of the United States' vernacular, but only in reference to Latin American immigrants" (7). The use of this derogatory term has created barriers and challenges for immigrants of Latin-American descent in the form of discriminatory laws, policies, and practices and prohibited them from climbing the racial or social hierarchy of the United States dominated by Anglo Americans. I also described small and large wins for these communities through court cases and nullifications of discriminatory laws and policies during the 1800s, 1900s, and early 2000s.

Given all this information regarding the discriminatory past reappearing in contemporary times, it is crucial to notice how the discrimination against Mexican Americans and the Latinx population in the United States has not gone away; it has only changed its appearance. Cases like those of Justeen Mancha should be avoided in the United States. With a better understanding of history, I hope for my readers to be more aware of the rampant xenophobic discourses and practices surrounding them. It is important to know and understand the history of the discrimination against Mexicans to better understand the present-day discrimination that the same group continues to face at the hands of lawmakers and White supremacists.

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ALICIA DELANEY

Spanish & Criminal Justice

Adquirí mi conocimiento como persona bilingüe por medio de la escuela; aprendí español en la escuela, mientras que aprendí inglés en casa y en la escuela también. Tomé clases de español desde sexto grado hasta universidad en Bridgewater State University, de donde me gradué recientemente con una especialización en Español y concentraciones en Justicia Criminal y en Estudios de Latinoamérica y el Caribe. Como persona bilingüe, cada vez que yo veo a alguien que tiene dificultad comunicándose con alguien que no entiende español, yo trato de ayudar y traducir, especialmente en mis trabajos. Para mantener mi conocimiento de los dos idiomas, yo hablo con mi familia en casa en inglés y hablo con la familia de mi novio en español en su casa. Además, yo leo libros, escucho música, y veo la televisión en español a veces para mantener mi conocimiento.

Another Loss for Team Canada: How Americanization Has Been Stealing Canadian Identity in Sport since the 1930s

NICHOLAS FOLLETT

The Importance of Identity

The establishment of a national identity is crucial to the development of a nation. When held positively, national identity can unite people around a desire for good government, economic development, strong character, trust, and support of one another.¹ The nation of Canada has had to struggle with its identity for many centuries. Once a French colony, it became a territory of the British Empire, then a Dominion that could not amend its constitution, and lastly an independent nation. Canada is best labeled as a “multicultural state;” there are many people who live within the borders of Canada including white Europeans, Africans, Asians, Pacific Islanders, Latino/a, and Indigenous populations. Within the context of this diversity, a singular Canadian identity seems impossible, and the people of Canada have tried to establish what it means to be a Canadian by focusing on what is on the inside rather than the outside.

The Canadian identity is built upon respect for diversity. Canada is a “multicultural” nation, which is considered a uniquely Canadian creation because of its mosaic of diverse cultures that emerged from its Indigenous roots, its European settlers, and more recent immigration from around the globe. These cultures are different and have past tense relations; Canada’s dedication to fostering respect for diversity of

cultures is a piece of their identity in which Canadians take great pride.² Canadians are also known for their progressiveness. According to the Social Progressive Imperative, Canada is the second-most progressive nation in the world behind Finland.³ Canada became the first nation in North America to enact national socialized healthcare and Canadians consider Medicare as a point of pride. Canada has also led the way in the reconciliation with Indigenous people through their decolonization efforts, beginning with a formal apology for Indian residential schools in 2008.⁴ But perhaps what makes Canadians the proudest of their national identity is their independence within North America. The colonies that became the nation today rejected joining the United States of America following the American Revolution, became a self-governing Dominion under the authority of Britain in 1867, and earned their full independence in 1982. The path toward independence was an “evolution” rather than a “revolution;” it was a slow and methodical transition to responsible government rather than a sudden break from an imperial power. The autonomy to define their national identity and create their own culture in the face of other Western nations defines much of the Canadian concept of their collective identity.

However, many feel that the Canadian identity faces a persistent threat: Americanization. Best defined

as the process by which American cultural influence is manifested in other countries.⁵ Considering its proximity to the United States, it is understandable that Canadians have feared Americanization since its inception in 1867. Since the end of the Second World War, the United States emerged as a global superpower that influences world politics and economics and has been matched only by nations such as the former Soviet Union and today's China. In the private sector, American corporations like McDonalds and Nike have taken advantage of this global dominance to spread goods into new markets and change the consumer culture of entire nations. Canadians fear that Americanization is a threat to their cultural distinctiveness, political independence, and economic sufficiency.⁶

The United States is far less progressive than Canada with a history of imperialism and meddling in foreign politics and culture, Canada included. There are many examples of the Americanization of Canadian culture. The Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau was established in 1918 to advertise Canada through the distribution of Canadian films and documentaries, yet by the 1930s it had become part of the powerful American film industry. American filmmakers used the Bureau to film in new locations and distribute movies across the world at the expense of Canadian filmmakers and the establishment of a profitable domestic film industry.⁷ The Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Act of 1962 led many doctors to seek private practice opportunities in the United States. Montana and other border states had an increase of applicants from Saskatchewan physicians and looked to hire Canadian physicians to shore up their less-than-stellar healthcare services.⁸ Canadians involved in the Canadian Convoy Protest of 2022 against

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's COVID-19 measures were influenced by the January 6 protests to the election of Joe Biden in the United States by right-wing American extremist groups.

Many Canadians fear such Americanization because the United States is far less progressive than Canada. Mainstream Canada's response to the Convoy Protest, for example, was rooted in the that the attitudes held by American January 6 protestors were gaining momentum across the border, which would threaten the progressiveness of Canadian identity.⁹ At its most extreme, Americanization threatens the full social and political annexation by the United States if there is a failure to protect the uniqueness of the Canadian cultural identity. It would allow American scholars, politicians, and corporations to take advantage of Canadians for their agendas and profit. With such foreign involvement in the lives of the people, Canadians lose that sense of autonomy to be their people and create a culture independent of foreign influence.¹⁰ The United States is a superpower in every sense of the word, and the need to protect Canadian culture and identity from it requires constant attention. It is a task that many Canadians feel is important, but the level of political or social activism required is too complex and demanding for Canadian citizens to engage with. So, how can the ordinary people of Canada protect who they are in the face of Americanization? With a ball or a puck.

Sport and Cultural Identity

Across the world, sports is one of the most coveted pieces of national identity. Through mass participation and fandom, sports build an identity with large groups of people who bond over their passion for athletic competition.¹¹ Fan communities arise with an

appreciation for teams and athletes who play and for the sport itself, and they turn “game day” into another holiday. The Super Bowl in the United States is treated as if it is the Fourth of July and has become a celebration of America in its own right.¹² The “Hockey Night in Canada” tune is familiar to most Canadians just by humming due to the countless nights they spent watching primetime hockey on television.¹³ Sport brings people together to create a daily, weekly, or annual tradition revolved around sitting down and watching the best in the world compete at the highest level. The athletes who participate in sports at a prominent level are revered and idolized by those who watch. Their stories and accomplishments evoke emotion within a group of people and become as much of a staple of culture as myths and legends of gods and creatures.¹⁴ In Canada, the names Wayne Gretzky and Mario Lemieux are spoken with the same Canadian reverence as Louis Riel and Tommy Douglas. The city of Toronto has a statue of Winston Churchill downtown, and a few blocks from it stands a whole row of statues dedicated to Toronto Maple Leafs’ players. Sport gives a nation not just athletes, but heroes.

As sport is so intertwined with identity, it can influence politics in a nation as well. In the United States, African Americans lived with segregation following the American Civil War. This included segregated professional baseball leagues, or “Negro Leagues” as they were referred to in the day. But when Jackie Robinson, a highly talented African American player, broke the color barrier of Major League Baseball in 1947, he retired in 1956 as one of the greatest players ever. Only eight years later, the 70-year reign of de jure segregation in the United States was brought to a glorious end. In Canada, when Clarence Campbell banned Maurice Richard on March 14,

1955, Montrealers protested with the “Richard Riot” days later as a response to the anglophone oppression against the French in Quebec. Years later, the Quiet Revolution began, sparking serious conversations about Quebec independence as francophones could no longer stand the English-speaking dominance in their economy, politics, and, no less important to some, their hockey. Sport can be the catalyst for social change, the battlefield of national heroes, and the inspiration of tradition that creates a national identity.

Canadians invest their national identity into sports as much as they do their politics and economics. Canadian football is a sport uniquely Canadian, and they are the only country that plays the sport professionally. Canadians claim the sport as a symbol of their shared identity, as well as an example of the values of teamwork and unity held by their society. Of course, hockey is the national winter sport of Canada and is Canada’s great contribution to the sporting world.¹⁵ To many, hockey represents Canadians’ resilience and toughness and is played in organized leagues by more than a million people in the nation. Through their participation and passionate fandom for these two sports, Canadians believe that they can protect their unique combination of diversity, progressivism, and independent spirit in the face of Americanization by playing and watching Canadian sports. The most talented and physically gifted athletes in the nation battle it out in the sanctity of sports, displaying and promoting the Canadian identity at home and abroad. Ten thousand strangers in an arena turn into a family wearing the same colors, chanting the same songs, and all hoping that their team is the victor. To Canadians, hockey and Canadian football are not just entertainment, they are part of who they and their nation are.

However, national identity may define fandom, but it may not always define a player's career path. The professionalization of sports challenged the local, regional, and national identities of teams and players. In professional sports, winning and money become the main force of players, coaches, and owners. Professional hockey and football athletes who are highly competitive wish to play amongst the best while being paid for their talents, and fans who want to consume a product want the best competing against the best every night. Profit is the goal, not the celebration of culture. Owners most often focus on profits, either through cutting costs or moving into a bigger market, and professional leagues look to market new products in cities to turn their fandom toward a sport that may not be familiar to them at first. Even if Canadians see sports as part of their national identity, it must be balanced with the profitability of the sport. If professional sports' natural focus is on profit and victory rather than culture, then the door is left open for that capitalist American influence on Canadian identity in sports.

Canadian Football and the Canadian Football League

Canadian football can be traced back as early as the 1860s when rugby games with modified rules emerged as the first proto-Canadian football games.¹⁶ While an average television viewer may find Canadian football and American football to be similar, there are plenty of differences between the two that truly make Canadian football its sport: the number of players on the field, the number of downs to advance, the dimensions of the field, the ability for multiple men to move before the ball is snapped, the width of the line of scrimmage,

and the CFL's one-point play.^{17,18} These changes result in a fast-paced and more pass-heavy product that requires a different strategy and game plan than an American football game. Fans of Canadian football appreciate these unique qualities of the sport because it makes it so much more than a "Canadian version of American football." It symbolizes the uniqueness of the Canadian identity, and how the people of Canada desire independence from American influences.

The Canadian Football League (CFL) was created in 1958, and ever since has been tasked with being the sole protector of professional Canadian football, and in turn a hallmark of Canadian identity.¹⁹ In the CFL, teams compete to be in a championship game where the winners are awarded the storied Grey Cup. The Cup was first awarded in 1909 and as of 2023, it has been competed for by the best Canadian football teams in 109 Grey Cup championship games.²⁰ The Cup is 60 years older than the Super Bowl game and Lombardi Trophy presented to the National Football League champion. Some Canadians consider the Grey Cup as Canadian as the Stanley Cup, as all but one of the champion clubs in its 100-year history have been Canadian.²¹

As a protector of the Canadian identity and Canadian football, Canadians must be the face of the CFL. To achieve this goal, the CFL has implemented its most unique rule: the "Game Rule Ratio."²² With this rule, all CFL players are designated into one of three categories based on nationality. A "national" player designation is given to a player who was a Canadian citizen at the time first contract and who had lived in Canada for at least five years before signing with a CFL team.²³ An "American" player designation is given to a player who was born in the United States, and a "Global" player designation

is given to any player not born in Canada or the United States. These designations are important to roster construction as, per CFL Rules, teams cannot have more than 20 “American” players on their roster, with four of those players only being allowed to play minimal snaps or come in for the relief of another “American” player.²⁴ There is also a minimum of two “global” players, two quarterbacks of any nationality, and the remaining 21 spots filled by “national” players.²⁵ With this practice in place, the Canadian Football League roster remains over half Canadian, which protects and promotes the Canadian identity in sport. Many critics of the CFL say that the “Game Rule Ratio” hurts the on-field product, with the emphasis on nationality rather than talent handicapping the level of play on the field. Throughout its history, American players have been the most talented athletes and play the most important positions on CFL teams yet can only make up half a team’s roster because of their country of origin.²⁶ Canadians feel that seeing the rosters be majority Canadian-born players is what makes the league so important to the people of Canada.²⁷ The motto of the CFL is “This is Our League” and shows that the sport of Canadian football means something more to Canadians than the games. Even if the league is not the wealthiest or the flashiest, the CFL celebrates the Canadian athlete and protects the Canadian identity in sport.²⁸

Owners, however, also need to consider the financial viability of the league, which has faced many financial woes throughout its history. By 1993, the CFL faced a devastating fiscal crisis that threatened to fold multiple teams. Commissioner Larry Smith concluded that to generate profit, expansion was needed into new markets - specifically the United States. While American

football was certainly popular in the States, some major markets had no professional football team. The league believed that by putting CFL franchises in cities like Baltimore, Maryland, and Sacramento, California, American football-hungry fans would gravitate toward Canadian football. To entice new owners in the United States to fund new franchises, the league announced that the “Game Rule Ratio” would be exempt from the rosters of American CFL teams.²⁹ The 7-1 vote among owners to accept these exceptions, suggests that using the CFL to protect Canadian identity may not have been the sole focus of the owners when facing such financial crises.³⁰ When the ratio-free Baltimore Stallions won the Grey Cup in their first season, it appeared as if the future of Canadian football was no longer in the hands of Canadians.³¹ But by 1995, this expansion proved to be a financial failure. Attendance for the American franchises decreased every year and the cost of sending teams across the border proved to be too costly for the CFL to sustain. The CFL in America experiment proved to be a disaster for the league and all United States expansion teams officially folded before the 1996 season.

After the embarrassing failure of the American expansion, the CFL ironically experienced a renaissance in popularity in the early 2000s. The league saw booms in viewership, attendance, and overall profitability thanks not to an expansion into the American market, but instead because it maintained its purely Canadian focus and fanbase.³² It appeared that Canadians responded to the effort to export their football to the United States by recognizing the importance of Canadian football to their identity. Many proud Canadians reembraced the league as the protector of their beloved sport. While the CFL and its fans may have concluded it did not need to expand

into the American market, the efforts to bring American football north into Canada emerged as the new threat.

American football is the last of the four major American sports (basketball, baseball, hockey, and football) to not have a Canadian franchise. Creating a market for the sport in the “Great North” has been on the to-do list of many American sports moguls for decades. This has included not just those within the National Football League, the undisputed top American football league in the world, but owners of start-up leagues looking to compete with the NFL through new markets or unique gimmicks. One such league to attempt to bring American football to Canada was the short-lived World Football League or WFL. Started in 1973, the WFL looked to compete with the National Football League with an ambitious goal: make American football a global sport. Naturally, one of the markets chosen to accomplish these feats was Toronto, Ontario. Businessman John F. Basset Jr, the owner of the CFL team Toronto Argonauts at the time, drew the ire of many Ontarians when he decided to launch a WFL team in Toronto. He even signed three members of the 1973 Super Bowl Champion Miami Dolphins to three-year deals.³³ The league planned to officially introduce the Toronto Northmen as part of their inaugural season in April of 1974, but Canadian politician Marc Lalonde of the Liberal Party felt that the new league was a threat to the viability of the CFL, and therefore the Canadian identity itself. In response to the perceived danger to Canadian football, Lalonde looked to use his political power to stop American football from crossing the border.

In April 1974, Lalonde proposed to the Canadian House of Commons Bill C-22: “An Act Respecting Canadian Professional Football.” The bill would give a government-approved monopoly of the sport of football

– both American and Canadian – to the CFL and make the establishment of any other professional football league or team illegal and subject to fines or imprisonment.³⁴ When asked his reasoning for introducing the bill, Lalonde said that an American football team in Toronto would be a serious threat to the already struggling Canadian Football League and that a successful expansion of American football into Canada would mean the “definite demise of the Canadian Football League and part of the Canadian identity.”³⁵ Although the proposed law never passed, the WFL took notice and moved and was relieved that Lalonde’s bill had resisted any threats to that piece of their identity.³⁶

American football and the National Football League have grown in popularity both in the United States and abroad since the 1970s. The league’s marketing savvy promoted its high-level athletes and hard-hitting action around the world, including Canada. With a growing fanbase for American football in the nation, Toronto has been discussed as a landing spot for multiple franchises looking for a new home. In 1994, Canadian American football fans campaigned for an official relocation of the Los Angeles Rams to Toronto, Ontario despite already hosting a historic CFL franchise.³⁷ It was the first sign that the quality of the CFL product was starting to outweigh the cultural significance of the sport when compared to the game being played in the NFL. Over the last 30 years, more Canadians have acknowledged the National Football League has an undeniably stronger, faster, smarter, and more talented player pool than the CFL. Coupled with the league’s unparalleled marketing and television presentation, the NFL product is hard for any fan of sport in Canada to not want to watch. According to a survey done by Angus Reid Institute in 2023, 62% of self-

proclaimed Canadian football fans prefer watching the NFL's annual Super Bowl championship game to the CFL's Grey Cup Finals on television.³⁸ The NFL has been able to captivate more young Canadians and studies show that more Canadians aged 18 to 35 years old watch the NFL product compared to the CFL despite it being a foreign product.³⁹

The National Football League has never been shy about the possibility of an expansion into Toronto, either. The success and popularity of American sports such as basketball and baseball in the city has made it difficult for the league not to do business up north themselves. While the league had dabbled in holding events and exhibition games in the nation, the league decided in 2008 to truly test the American football market in Toronto. The NFL held a regular season contest between the Buffalo Bills and Miami Dolphins in Toronto on December 7, 2008. The game was proven to be a success, as more than 52,000 people came to watch American football in Rogers Centre,⁴⁰ and the NFL continued playing games in Toronto for the next five years, including a four-year run from 2008 to 2011 of 50,000 Canadians attending games of American football despite the quality of games being considered lackluster at best. In 2013, the success of what was known as the "Toronto Series" began serious talks of the Buffalo Bills franchise, which had been the "home" team for all six of the NFL Toronto games, to be relocated to Toronto permanently. The investment group Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment along with music artist Jon Bon Jovi looked to move the Bills to Canada into a new Toronto-based stadium built specifically for American football.⁴¹ Vice President of Rogers Communication Phil Lind said that despite the cultural importance of the CFL, Southern Ontario had become "NFL territory," and

the younger generation would welcome the expansion.⁴² The relocation never happened as the Bills remained in Buffalo, but the NFL still recognizes the popularity amongst the younger generation of Canadians in Ontario and continues to hold watch parties for games such as the Super Bowl. There is still hope for many American football fans that one day an expansion team will go to Canada, but there are many who dread that same prospect. Those who understand the importance of the CFL to national identity know that if the NFL posed serious threats to the CFL, a Canadian NFL team would be the death of the sport of Canadian football.

Much like the American film industry and the Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau, the National Football League seems to want to expand into Canada at the expense of the Canadian Football League. The league expects an NFL expansion to Toronto would be as profitable and popular as the franchises of other American leagues and has already built a fanbase for the sport in the city and the nation through its marketing. While 40% of Canadians may oppose NFL expansion if it meant the end of the CFL,⁴³ the NFL is fully aware they can use their unmatched marketing and presentation to take over the Canadian market almost overnight with the relocation of one of its franchises to Toronto. That very real possibility looms large over the survivability of the cultural bastion of the Canadian Football League. While the NFL looks to bring the best football players in the world in the most successful sports league on the planet up north, Canada insists on keeping the "Game Rule Ratio" to protect Canadian heritage. By constructing the CFL's talent pool based on nationality rather than skill the league is allowing its direct competitor to become more popular in its home nation, and Canadians are switching

their televisions from the sport created for them in favor of a more exciting American product.

Hockey and the National Hockey League

Canada is hockey. Its culture has been molded around the great winter sport since the first organized game of ice hockey was played in Montreal, Quebec in March 1875.⁴⁴ Hockey began as a game played exclusively amongst anglophone Canadian men, but today it is played by francophones, women, and new immigrants thanks to efforts of expanding inclusion and equity that is a part of the national identity of the progressive nation.⁴⁵ The sport represents the taming of the harsh Canadian winter with some competitive fun. Lord Frederick Arthur Stanley, governor-general of Canada from 1883 to 1893, fell in love with the game and its proud Canadian origins creating a strong identification with the nation and its people. In 1892, Lord Stanley donated a challenge cup, a small silver bowl, to be competed for by the best hockey teams in Canada to determine a champion of the Dominion. The “Stanley Cup” soon became a symbol of Canadian pride and excellence, symbolizing hockey's ability to bring Canadians together from across the nation in the quest to crown the best team in an indigenous Canadian contest.⁴⁶ The sport is considered a source of national pride by over half of Canadians, with 1.2 million Canadians participating in organized hockey leagues around the nation. Immigrants to Canada attribute their participation in hockey to feeling more assimilated into the nation and its people. Canadian hockey players dream of one day playing professionally and competing with players from around the globe and representing the superiority of Canadians in the Canadian sport. Most players have been playing in the top league in the world as their goal: The

National Hockey League.

The NHL was formed in 1917 in Montreal, Quebec as a successor to the National Hockey Association. Hockey clubs were becoming more competitive, and amateurism gave way to legitimate professional hockey organizations, such as the NHL. The league had four clubs: the Ottawa Senators, the Montreal Wanderers, the Montreal Canadiens, and the Quebec Bulldogs, later known as the Toronto Maple Leafs. All four clubs were based in Canada, and each became Stanley Cup champions within 10 years of the league's inception.⁴⁸ The success of these teams allowed the NHL to firmly establish itself as the most competitive and talented hockey league in Canada, and the profitability of the NHL opened the door for expansion into the United States.

The NHL established the Boston Bruins, the first of its American franchises, in 1924 followed by the New York Rangers franchise in 1926. The American market for hockey was not exceptionally large at this time, and new owners needed convincing that an American hockey franchise would be a worthy investment. But quickly these investments proved to be worth it, as the NHL grew in terms of profitability and popularity with these new American teams. After the collapse of the West Canada Hockey League in 1926, the league added two more franchises in Chicago, Illinois, and Detroit, Michigan, and became the sole possessor of the Stanley Cup in 1927.⁴⁹ By 1930, The National Hockey League, comprised of four Canadian clubs and five American clubs, was now the undisputed top ice hockey league in the world.

During World War II, three of the nine clubs folded, and in 1942, only six franchises were left in operation: the Boston Bruins, New York Rangers, Montreal Canadiens, Toronto Maple Leafs, Detroit Wings, and

Chicago Blackhawks. These six clubs, known today as “The Original Six,” were the only franchises in the league from 1942 to 1967.⁵⁰ Despite the “National” in National Hockey League referring to the nation of Canada (and had its headquarters in Toronto) four of its six teams were actually in the United States. In the 1960s, the NHL began plans for expansion and the addition of new clubs to the league. Despite the sport being of Canadian origin, and a source of Canadian pride interwoven into Canadian culture, the league decided to focus its 1967 expansion entirely on the United States with six new franchises: Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Minnesota, St. Louis – and most bafflingly of all – Oakland and Los Angeles, California.⁵¹ Canadians felt cheated and betrayed by the National Hockey League as no new teams were established in Canada, hockey’s birthplace and homeland, while markets like Oakland and Los Angeles, which barely experience a winter season, were granted new franchises. It seemed to many Canadians, including *Edmonton Journal* writer Jim Coleman, as if the NHL attempted to become an American institution, and purposefully ignored the dedicated and passionate Canadian cities to cash in on profitable yet unestablished markets in the United States.⁵²

The National Hockey League listened to the complaints of their Canadian fans and in 1970 announced two new expansion teams: the Vancouver Canucks and the Buffalo Sabres of Buffalo, New York. While it was a quick fix, frustration returned as the NHL’s expansion plans in the 1970s included new franchises in Atlanta, Washington, DC, Kansas City, and even another franchise in New York. It was not until 1979 that the NHL added new Canadian-based franchises in Winnipeg, Quebec City, and Edmonton, but only after the World Hockey Association folded and the NHL adopted these new clubs.⁵³ It was

apparent that new franchises in Canadian markets were not a priority of the National Hockey League in the post-Original Six era, and the once top hockey league in Canada had only seven of its 21 teams based in its home country. The NHL, and in turn hockey, was becoming more American every passing year.

The NHL’s growth in popularity in America was accelerated during the late 1980s thanks to the biggest trade in sports history: the trade of Edmonton Oilers’ Wayne Gretzky to the Los Angeles Kings in 1988. Already considered the greatest hockey player ever, the Los Angeles Kings and their new owner Bruce McNall looked to trade for eight-time NHL Most Valuable Player with the goal in mind of making hockey a major league sport in the city of Los Angeles.⁵⁴ The people of Edmonton did not want to see their hero go, as he had just guided the Oilers to their fourth Stanley Cup, but it was clear that this trade was going to happen, and that Gretzky was bound for America. Gretzky did not want to go to Los Angeles at first, as he loved Edmonton and the fans’ dedication to hockey.⁵⁵ He was born a Canadian and was proud to represent his people in their sport while playing for his home nation. Gretzky made it public that he was reluctant to move on from Edmonton, and he was even given the option to decline the trade because of his despondence over the potential move. But after some negotiating about price and some other accommodations, the “Great One” allowed the trade to proceed. Edmonton exchanged Gretzky and two other players whom he requested to join him for two players, three first-round NHL draft picks, and \$15 million.⁵⁶ McNall’s decision immediately paid off as the Kings and Gretzky became the talk of “Tinsel Town” with home game tickets selling at all-time highs. Despite the game’s creation in the harsh Canadian winter, the

people of sunny California quickly became hockey fans as they watched Gretzky score 54 goals in his first season in Los Angeles. Hockey fandom spread across the United States including Florida, Arizona, and Texas. With the popularity of the sport finally growing at the ambitious rate the league had hoped for decades, the NHL moved its headquarters from Montreal to New York City in 1989, officially becoming an American business. Gretzky's stint in Los Angeles from 1988 to 1996 helped build new NHL markets all over America. Without the massive trade orchestrated by McNall, the NHL would not have had the popularity in Anaheim, San Jose, Tampa, and Miami needed to expand there in the 1990s.⁵⁷ Canadians who had considered the sport a cornerstone of their culture watched as more franchises were created and moved to America. In 1995, Denver, Colorado became the new home of Quebec Nordiques⁵⁸, and Phoenix, Arizona adopted the Winnipeg Jets in 1996.⁵⁹ The total number of NHL franchises in Canada was lowered to just 6 of 30 by 2000, and of 11 new expansion teams created since the beginning of Gretzky's run in Los Angeles to the year 2010; only the Ottawa Senators were based in Canada.⁶⁰

The national in the National Hockey League may still refer to the nation of Canada, but the league itself is hardly Canadian. The NHL today consists of 32 teams; only seven are based in Canada. The league has placed franchises in hot weather cities where hockey can't be played casually like Tampa and Dallas, yet has not returned to a passionate Quebec City that has bidding for a new franchise since the departure of the Nordiques. Saskatoon, Hamilton, London, and Regina also have never had an NHL team despite all having a rich hockey history. Each of these cities has real advantages that they could provide to the NHL from large populations

to lack of inter-sport competition, yet they are rarely considered legitimate sites of expansion.⁶¹ The revived Winnipeg Jets are currently the youngest Canadian team in the league after being relocated from Atlanta in 2011, but the small market club has lost thousands of season ticket holders over the last three years. With revenues at all-time lows, the franchise has had to quell rumors of yet another relocation of the Jets to an American market such as Houston, Texas in the future.⁶² It is not solely the clubs that continue to be more American each passing year. According to a 2017 report by Business Insider, the game formerly played amongst Canadian gentlemen will be played by more Americans professionally in the NHL as soon as the year 2028.⁶³ The sport of hockey once represented the spirit of Canadians in the eyes of Lord Stanley will soon be played by more Americans.

The most crushing piece of evidence of the Americanization of the sport of hockey is what is described as the "Bettman Curse" by Canadian hockey fans. A few months before the Montreal Canadiens would win the 1993 Stanley Cup, American sports executive Gary Bettman assumed his role as NHL commissioner, a position he holds today. It is during Bettman's tenure that the NHL has expanded into what many people would consider "non-traditional" hockey markets like Tampa, Florida, and Phoenix, Arizona. This alone would have been enough to draw the ire of Canadian hockey fans, but since Bettman became commissioner almost 30 years ago, no Canadian team has won the Stanley Cup. Since Montreal's win in 1993, the symbol of Canadian sport that is the Stanley Cup has been lifted three times by the Tampa Bay Lightning, two times by the Los Angeles Kings, once each by the Anaheim Ducks and Dallas Stars, and none by Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Calgary,

Toronto, Ottawa, or Montreal. Coupled with the American-focused, Canadian-ignored expansion of the NHL, the 30-year “Curse” has fanned the flames for discussion on hockey’s Americanization through the NHL completely stripping Canada of its beloved sport.

One franchise has become the personification of the Americanization of the NHL in the eyes of Canadian hockey fans: The Vegas Golden Knights. Another team placed in a hot dry climate not naturally suited for hockey, the Golden Knights were given what many people considered preferential treatment before they even played a game. Due to the changes made to expansion franchise draft rules before their inaugural season in 2017-18, the league aimed to give the new franchise a competitive roster right away.⁶⁴ The Knights capitalized on their opportunity by reaching the Stanley Cup finals in their inaugural year and becoming instantly popular in Las Vegas. Many fans of other franchises accused the league of rigging the rules and even games in Vegas’s favor to capitalize on the budding sports market, which had not had any professional sports teams before it, giving the Knights the image amongst rival fanbases as “Bettman’s team”. Vegas continued to experience success the following seasons by making the playoffs four of their next five seasons, including winning more than half their games in all five. Their consistent success from their inception culminated in a 2023 Stanley Cup Championship, which they won on their home ice in Las Vegas, Nevada. To place into perspective, it has been 30 years since the Montreal Canadiens, one of the NHL’s oldest and most beloved franchises, won the Stanley Cup. The Toronto Maple Leafs have been waiting 55 years for the Stanley Cup to be theirs, the longest current drought in the league. The Jets, Senators, and Canucks have never won a Cup

in their history. Yet it took the Golden Knights six years to bring the prized trophy of Canadian sport to the middle of the Mojave Desert. To many Canadian hockey fans, the Vegas Golden Knights – an American team in a climate and market foreign to hockey that had all the advantages and publicity given to them by Commissioner Bettman from the start – is the Americanization of hockey playing on the ice.

Nowadays, Hockey resembles the spirit of America, a business looking for profit and new markets to cash in on, with no respect for the people who created and shaped the sport into what it is today. Even as many Canadians and foreigners alike associate hockey with the great north, the sport has no doubt come under the threat of Americanization, as well.

The Validity of Sport as a Cultural Stronghold

Sport is just as much of a vehicle for Americanization as any other facet of Canadian culture. Canadian football is threatened by a more refined and higher-quality product in the States, and hockey has been taken away from its roots and turned into an American business. Despite believing that it would curb them, the fears of Americanization of Canada are best realized in sports. Culture is protected best through the passion of the people who create it. It’s why art is seen as the best mode of promoting culture. But professional sport is not art. It is not meant to be a mode of story or a space to share your ideas. Professional sports leagues and the teams within them are businesses. Players and coaches are employees who are hired or fired based on their talent and paid with the money the customers or fans bring in to consume their product, which is the game being played. Profit is at the heart of American capitalism, and all sports

leagues' main objective is to generate as much profit as possible sometimes at the expense of culture. The United States has been built upon the seizing of opportunity and exploiting advantages its opponents do not have. There is a long history of America interfering in culture and politics, including Canada, to make profit more possible for its domestic business. The capitalist economy of the nation encourages the constant growth of businesses, which usually includes the expansion of new markets. A successful expansion into a new market can completely shift and change the culture of the city or nation that it is in. The NFL's talent and marketability were able to defect Southern Ontario to "NFL Territory," while the subpar play and cultural focus of the CFL now make it the second most popular football in its own country. It became an inferior product in the eyes of that market, and now the culture of Toronto and Hamilton has grown to appreciate the American sport rather than the Canadian. But the capitalist nature of Americanization is also alluring to those in foreign lands looking to make money in a manner they may not be able to elsewhere. Canada's proximity to the United States also means Canadian businesses and entrepreneurs can look to America for new opportunities. The NHL became the best league in Canada in 1927, but its potential for profitability was realized south of the border. America quickly became home to more NHL franchises as the smaller Canadian markets were ignored, and even the headquarters of the league moved to the United States. Americanization has taken two of the biggest pillars of Canadian national identity in sports, stripped the Canadians out, and made them their money machines. In short, the Americanization of culture is just a byproduct of the capitalist economy of the United States affecting culture through expansion into new markets and

offering business opportunities not available in other parts of the world. Unfortunately, Canada's proximity to the United States will continue to make it an easy new market for many American businesses to expand to as well as be a place of refuge for aspiring businesspeople to make profits. So, whether it is television, movies, imports, exports, politics, football, or even hockey if America remains the dominant cultural and economic superpower of the world, Canada will always be under the most severe threat of Americanization.

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Mental Illness and Creativity in the Selected Poetry of Robert Lowell and Anne Sexton

NICHOLAS HUARD

Introduction: The Fine Line Between Madness & Genius

One should never underestimate the potential of someone who suffers from mental illness, as many individuals with mental illness can create great art. Madness, after all, can be seen as a sign of genius. The goal of this paper is to show how mental illness and creativity are connected. Despite suffering bouts of madness, poets such as Robert Lowell and Anne Sexton displayed genius through their poetry. “Skunk Hour” by Lowell and, Sexton’s “45 Mercy Street” depicts madness while displaying a deep understanding of poetic form.

In “Mad as a Hatter: Robert Lowell’s ‘Skunk Hour,’” I look closely into the life of Lowell and his mental anguish as a poet. In and out of McLean Hospital during his adult life, Lowell still became a recipient of the Pulitzer Prize in 1947. In this chapter, I examine some poems of Lowell that can be considered biographical, especially, “Skunk Hour,” his poem from 1959. The speaker’s crisis in that poem mirrors Lowell’s psychological crisis. Lowell depicts this crisis eloquently through his word choice and the use of symbolism. “Skunk Hour” speaks not just to Lowell’s condition, but also to anyone who suffers from mental illness or is on the verge of a mental breakdown.

In Chapter Two, I look closely at Sexton’s life and her poem “45 Mercy Street.” Sexton’s childhood was not

a great one, due to having a complicated relationship with her parents. After having her first daughter, Sexton was diagnosed with postpartum depression, which would greatly impact her mental health and would be reflected in her poetry. In “45 Mercy Street” Sexton blurs the line between that of dreamlike state and that of reality. “45 Mercy Street” can be seen as a poem reflecting on Sexton’s past and her current situation. Sexton’s and Lowell’s poems each in their unique way depict madness. Sexton’s speaker’s state of mind is a blur, while Lowell’s speaker’s is in a manic state of desperation.

While the lives of Sexton and Lowell were often tragic, their poetry has a life-giving and life-saving power that heals the heart and soul. Out of their madness and creative genius arose a beauty that outlived them and will outlive us all. In the closing of this paper, I make a note to explain that writing is known to be very therapeutic psychologically, like stabilizing one’s mood with many other positive results.

Mad as a Hatter: Robert Lowell’s “Skunk Hour”

Robert Lowell’s poetry falls under the category of “confessional poetry,” and the canon of American Literature is not complete without his work. Lowell is a prime example of a life lived on that fine line between madness and a master poet. The reason for this claim is

that despite Lowell's achievements as a poet, Lowell had the diagnosis of manic depression. Psychiatrists today call this bipolar disorder. Lowell, over the course of his life, was in and out of McLean Hospital because of his mental illness. Lowell's deeply personal, groundbreaking poetry collection from 1959, *Life Studies*, helped to bring mental illness more into the public eye when mental illness was still a taboo subject. In the poems in *Life Studies*, Lowell pours out his very being, and one of his greatest poems, "Skunk Hour," will be examined in this chapter.

The Lowell household was governed by the persistent tension between his inept father and his mother who was overbearing" (Poetryfoundation.org 1). Lowell, as an adult, would attend Harvard University for a short time. In 1937, during his time as a student at Harvard, Lowell had a falling out with his father and decided to leave home. This act of revolt had significant consequences for his life, as well as his poetry. During this time of rebellion, Lowell decided he would go south to the state of Tennessee, the home of the poet Allen Tate. According to Jamison, the poets "Allen Tate and John Crowe Ransom tutored [Lowell] in art and life" (Jamison 81). Lowell's intelligence was exemplified while at Kenyon as he graduated *summa cum laude*. Lowell, during this time, met the poet Randall Jarrell and writer Peter Taylor, who would be his two dear friends until he died in 1977. By the age of thirty, "[Lowell] had exchanged his Protestantism for Catholicism, anonymity for literary acclaim, and sanity for madness" (Jamison 80). In 1940, Lowell would marry the writer, Jean Stafford. In 1946, Lowell would compose his second poetry collection, *Lord Weary's Castle*, for which "he was awarded Pulitzer Prize for 1947" (Jamison 98).

This Pulitzer Prize-winning collection blends

opposition to war and Puritan ideas and greed and materialism. This collection was the best of Lowell's early works. Despite his literary achievements, Lowell also had a side of madness to him that would plague the rest of his life. Jamison argues that Lowell's bipolar disorder and his poetic imagination together make his writing great: "Those who knew Lowell knew his contradictory sides: With his courage came fragility with his darkness a saving wit" (Jamison 21). Lowell was quite aware of his mental ailment, and he feared becoming severely ill. Lowell himself even claimed that his manic episodes fueled his creativity. According to Jamison, "Mania brought brutality, even violence, but it stood sharply in contrast to his more usual and often-noted gentleness" (21). Throughout his lifetime, Lowell would have psychotic breaks that would land him in McLean Hospital, in Belmont, MA. These stays at McLean Hospital for Lowell were not brief but lasted for months at a time. Jamison tells us that Lowell's poem, "Home After Three Months Away," from *Life Studies*, tells "of a father who returns home from the mental hospital and laments the time he has missed with his young daughter; grieves the time and hope that he has lost to madness; fears his darkening, uncertain future" (220). This madness would be displayed in his marital relationships.

Lowell was married three times in his life. As noted, the first of the three women to be married to Lowell was the novelist, Jean Stafford. The two of them were married for eight years, and those eight years of marriage were very rocky. According to Jamison, "Jean Stafford described Lowell as a man whose rages—more fierce than those he had experienced as a child and adolescent—terrified her" (82). This, undoubtedly, was also due to Lowell's drinking bouts. Like many with mental illness, Lowell chose to self-medicate with alcohol. Lowell writes

of alcoholism in his collection *For the Union Dead* (1964), specifically in his poem titled “The Drinker.” In this poem, he writes,

Stubbed before-breakfast cigarettes
burn bull's-eyes on the bedside table;
a plastic tumbler of alka seltzer
champagnes in the bathroom. (5-8)

This stanza reflects Lowell’s drinking bouts, one of the reasons for a turbulent marriage with Stafford. Lowell also creates a picture for the reader of the speaker’s cigarettes that have been snubbed out before breakfast, and there are burn holes that look like “bull’s-eyes.” Here the speaker is taking alka seltzer to settle his stomach from a drinking episode. Lowell describes the “Alka seltzer” bubbling like champagne in the plastic tumbler in the bathroom, like champagne in a glass. This alcohol to Lowell is like medicine, as he used it to mask his symptoms, but at the same time, the alcohol makes him sick. In return, Lowell needs the Alka seltzer to settle his stomach.

After Lowell and Stafford divorced in 1948, Lowell “fell in love with the writer Elizabeth Hardwick and declared his determination to marry her” (Jamison 100). Despite Lowell’s manic episodes, Hardwick was “the ideal wife, friend, and critic to Lowell” (107). Despite Lowell’s unstable mental state, he still proved to be a loving and present father to his daughter Harriet. Then, in the year 1970, Lowell moved to England and “fell in love with Lady Caroline Blackwood” (225), and they were married from 1972 until Lowell died in 1977. Lowell’s collection, *The Dolphin*, was “dedicated to Blackwood” (331). Lowell’s last collection was *Day by Day* (1977). According to Jamison, “Lowell’s hopelessness at the return of his madness, his

broadening awareness of his mortality, and his newfound vulnerability to heartbreak all went into *Day by Day* (360). Lowell, in the preface to his *Selected Poems*, writes, “My verse autobiography sometimes fictionalizes plot and particular” (Lowell vii). Here Lowell makes the point that there is an inseparable relationship between his life and his art.

The poem that best depicts Lowell’s mental anguish, “Skunk Hour,” is also one of his most famous. This poem can have a tremendous impact on the reader, as it is a deeply gut-wrenching poem that illustrates a man in a moment of crisis. Poet Troy Jollimore writes, “‘Skunk Hour’ expresses the turmoil of Lowell’s personal life ... What feeds [Lowell’s] later work is precisely what energizes ‘Skunk Hour’: the perpetual, irresolvable tension between the wild and the civilized, between the artist’s need to reveal and the human being’s need to conceal” (Jollimore 5). Lowell as an “artist” of words brings mental illness to the surface when many feel the need to “conceal” it. “Skunk Hour” is the last poem to appear in *Life Studies* and was dedicated to poet Elizabeth Bishop. Lowell’s poem is his response to her poem, “The Armadillo,” which was dedicated to Lowell.

In stanza one of “Skunk Hour,” the speaker transports the reader to the state of Maine, where Nautilus Island is located. Lowell describes in this stanza a female hermit living on Nautilus Island “in her Spartan cottage” in winter (2). This female hermit takes care of sheep on the island and “her son’s a bishop” (4). There is also a third character mentioned in the first stanza, a farmer who is the “first selectman in our village” (5). This hermit is in her “dotage.” The use of the word dotage is quite interesting here. According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* online, “dotage” in its denotative, or literal

sense, is defined as “a state or period of senile decay marked by decline of mental poise and alertness.” While in the Oxford English Dictionary, “dotage” is defined as “the state of having impaired intellect or understanding in old age.” In other words, dotage at one time referred to the incapacity or instability of the mind. In this stanza, Lowell is identifying with the hermit. In stanza two, the poem slowly makes a shift from a very light tone to one of ugliness and decay. Lowell makes this clear in the last two lines of the stanza which reads, “the eyesores facing her shore, / and lets them fall” (11-12). Here, Lowell is drawing a parallel between the hermit in her dotage and the decaying house. Lowell, as the hermit, desires privacy, like in “Queen Victoria’s Century” (9).

In stanza three, Lowell makes a few references to the hermit, the summer millionaire, the lobstermen, the fairy decorator, and lastly, Lowell himself. One of the interesting things to note is the opening line of this stanza, which reads, “The season’s ill--” (13). Here Lowell is alluding to the changing of the seasons from summer to fall. But it is significant to note Lowell’s diction of the word “ill.” This is significant because the poem is describing the hermit who is mentally ill. In stanza four, Lowell introduces us to yet another character. This time the reader is introduced to the “fairy decorator” (19-20) who is preparing his shop for the autumn season coming. Here, the fairy decorator decorates fishnets, his cobbler’s bench, and his awl with orange to go along with the color of the season. Sadly, “there is no money in his work” (23), and he would “rather marry” (24). Throughout the poem, thus far, Lowell seems to be shining a light onto different individuals in different locations in the state of Maine, to show a contrast of characterizations and motives.

In the fifth stanza, the point of view of the speaker shifts from omniscient to first person. Lowell starts off this stanza with the three words, “One dark night” (25). This night is a “dark” moment of crisis. Then the first-person narrator gets in his “Tudor Ford” (26), a symbol of a pastime, and drives up the “hill’s skull” (26). When Lowell writes of “hill’s skull,” he is alluding to death. When Lowell writes, “I watched for love-cars” (27), he is referring to paranoia, as this is a sign of mental instability; he is watching lovers in their cars with their “lights turned down” and observing them lying together “hull to hull” (28). This first-person narrator is inappropriately snooping on the lovers. The speaker goes on to describe this hill, indicating that the graveyard slopes down on the town. Then the speaker relays his cautionary line to his reader with the haunting line, “My mind’s not right” (30). In this line, Lowell tells his reader that he is having to come to terms with his mental instability.

Then in stanza six, the speaker draws the reader’s attention to his sense of hearing when “A car radio bleats, / “Love, O careless Love...” (31-32). “Love, O careless Love” was a well-known blues song that was written by W.C. Handy and was performed by Bessie Smith in 1925, according to a poem guide from Poetryfoundation.org. According to this poem guide, the narrator of the song makes threats to kill his or her rebellious lover. Lowell, when he was manic, would become extremely violent. As the speaker of “Skunk Hour” hears the lyrics to this song, the song makes his “ill-spirit sob in each blood cell” (33), as if his “hand was at its throat” (34). Here the speaker is trying to strangle himself to commit suicide. Lowell then, in line 35, alludes to John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* when he writes, “I myself am hell.” This line can be interpreted as an individual going through psychosis, where they

get delusional and don't know if they are real. Here, the speaker is getting delusional, thinking he is Satan due to the horrors he is going through in his mind. Satan in *Paradise Lost* says, "Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell" (Milton 4.75). Then the closing line of stanza six leaves the reader confused as the speaker states, "nobody's here" (36), when before he made it seem as if he were spying on individuals. This line expresses the confusion of the speaker.

In stanza seven, the speaker lets the reader know the only things that are around are skunks. The skunks are searching "in the moonlight for a bite to eat / they march on their soles up Main Street" (38-39). The speaker makes a personal connection with nature, the skunks. The skunks with their "moonstruck eyes' red fire" (40) become illuminated by the light of the moon. The skunks walk on their soles up Main Street "under the chalk-dry and spar spire / of the Trinitarian Church" (41-42) with their "moonstruck eyes" (40). Lowell is using the skunks symbolically to stand for the stigma of mental illness. This conclusion has come about by associating skunks with their foul odor, and one who is mentally ill feels shame or stigmatized by being mentally ill.

In a letter dated December 3, 1957, to Elizabeth Bishop, Lowell wrote, "A skunk isn't much of a present for a Lady Poet, but I'm a skunk in the poem" (Travisano 239). This is clear evidence that Lowell made a connection with nature by having the skunk symbolize him in the poem. In the final stanza, the speaker stands on top of the back steps of his home where he "breathes the rich air—" (44) and observes a mother skunk with her group of kittens that "swills the garbage pail" (45). There the mother skunks "jabs her wedge-head in a cup/of sour cream (46), and "drops her ostrich tail" (47). The skunk is

not scared of the speaker, even though it is a wild animal. It just goes about its natural business looking for food. According to Troy Jollimore, this image can be read as a metaphor that "seems both mocking and derogatory" (5). Jollimore goes on to note that the poem brings "what is hidden to light" (5). Whatever possible secrets Lowell may have concealed, have finally come to the surface. Lowell's secrets are concealed in the "garbage pail" and the mother skunk brings those secrets to the surface, or the light when she dips her head in the cup of sour cream.

"Skunk Hour" depicts Lowell's mastery as a poet, while surfacing his madness. Surely, Lowell's mood was as the cliché goes: "Mad as a hatter." This cliché describes the man behind Lowell's poetry. Lowell started the wave of confessional poets in the mid-century who would write poetry as autobiography and other poets have been inspired by him (like Sexton). Lowell's "Skunk Hour" displays not just Lowell in a crisis state, but also anyone who experiences the horrors of mental illness. "Skunk Hour" can be used as a tool for those who study mood disorders, like Jamison, to get into the mind of the mentally ill and study how one who is manic can have a deep and powerful way with words. Lowell uses the skunks to symbolize the stigma of mental illness in the 1950s. There is still much work to be done on ending this stigma, even in the 21st century. All of us have something that we choose to conceal inside of us, but these secrets always find a way to come to light.

Dream vs. Reality: Anne Sexton's "45 Mercy Street"

One of Robert Lowell's pupils at Boston University's writing workshop was Anne Sexton. Gail Crowther, in *Three Martini Afternoons at the Ritz: The Rebellion of the Sylvia Plath & Anne Sexton*, paints a

picture of Sexton and her classmate, Sylvia Plath, sitting in Lowell's poetry writing class in 1959. These two unique individuals with various mental illnesses came together to sit and read, discuss, and write poems with Lowell along with their peers. Sexton, who will be discussed in this chapter, was among the leading confessional poets in modern American literature. As Sexton herself battled multiple mental health diagnoses such as postpartum depression and, like Lowell, bipolar disorder.

Sexton's family had a history of mental illness from an early age. Sexton was born Anne Gray Harvey on November 9, 1928, in Newton, Massachusetts. Anne Sexton's parents "were like characters out of an F. Scott Fitzgerald novel" (Middlebrook 4). Sexton's grandparents on both sides of the family had leading roles in society. Anne's grandfather from her father's side, Louis Harvey, was a meticulous man who tolerated few interruptions while he worked. According to his family, Harvey suffered a nervous breakdown after one specific exhausting period of endeavoring to set up a bank in Puerto Rico (4-5). This event later prompted Sexton's father to be concerned with his daughter's mental health. Louis's sister, Frances, had a bit of a troubled youth and made a suicide attempt in her twenties (Middlebrook 5). Then, in 1975, a year after Anne's suicide, which weighed heavy on Aunt Frances, she too would take her own life at the age of sixty-nine. Anne's middle sister would also take her own life in middle age, according to Middlebrook.

The Harvey household was a formal one. Performance and appearance were everything in the Harvey house. Later in her life, Sexton would recall, in one of her psychotherapy sittings: "When Mother and Daddy had people over, they kicked us upstairs until Daddy would come up and say, now turn on the charm—

oh, how I used to dread it" (7-8). Sexton's parents made the three girls perform for houseguests when they would come over, something Anne dreaded. Sexton's family members remembered Anne as theatrical and saw this as crucial to her personality (10). Anne loved performing for an audience, a pure actress. Anne was starved for attention that she hardly received at home. Anne's great-aunt, Anna, nicknamed "Nana," was the one who showed unconditional love to Anne during her childhood (15). Both Anne's mother and father were heavy drinkers. Anne's father would be admitted to Westwood Lodge, a private hospital, to get treatment for his alcoholism (14). Sexton would later tell one of her therapists that her mother would intimidate her "with a colonoscopy, and examine her bowel movements" (14). This claim is to be taken with a grain of salt, as Sexton was known to embellish her childhood wrongs in her therapy sessions. Such claims, however, point to the difficult relationship Sexton and her mother had.

Sexton's great-aunt was a significant figure in her life. "Nana" and Anne's tight bond would last till she was about thirteen. "Nana," one time during a concert at Boston Symphony, had significantly lost her hearing in her left ear (15). This sadly led to a slow decline in "Nana's" health. There were times when Anne would find "Nana" confused in her bedroom. Seeing this devastated Anne after the two of them shared a tight bond. Middlebrook notes that one night, Anne witnessed "Nana" being taken to a mental hospital where she would receive electroshock therapy (16). This was just another horrific incident in the Harvey family. Louis Harvey would have another breakdown when Anne was just fifteen and was hospitalized at Glenside, in Boston. Sexton once said, "My father was drinking every minute, "Nana" was going crazy,

my grandfather was crazy, Jane [my sister] was having a baby” (16). The Harvey family to Anne seemed to be falling apart before her very eyes. In 1944, Anne’s parents would place “Nana” in a small private nursing home that was nearby. Anne’s only sense of love and refuge was no longer at her fingertips. “Nana” would end up passing away in 1954 at the mature age of eighty-six. This loss would have a lasting impact on Anne for the rest of her life.

Sexton was in a relationship for five years was Jack McCarthy. Both Anne and Jack were intellectually minded individuals, as Jack wrote poetry and dreamed of being a novelist. Jack had no recollection of Anne being depressed while they were together, though there was one incident that disturbed Jack profoundly. Jack recalls one evening when he and Anne were about fifteen years old. At this time, Anne’s “Nana” had just been hospitalized for the first time, and Jack and Anne made a date to go sledding on a steep hill behind Harvey’s home. Jack’s arrival was delayed, but when he showed up Anne was not there. Then his eyes, by the light of the moon, caught sight of Anne at the bottom of the hill (19). There Anne’s body lay motionless in the snow. Jack then ran down to her and discovered that she was unconscious and bleeding from her head. Jack then took Anne back home in a panic, only to discover that the blood was mercuriochrome and that she had been pretending to be unconscious and acting out her death. Anne considered it a good prank on him. This prank indicates ideation of Sexton can be seen as dramatic or known to embellish things. Anne’s parents, perceiving her strong infatuation for men called her “boy-crazy.” In hopes of curing this, her parents sent her to the female boarding school, Rogers Hall, in Lowell, Massachusetts, in the year 1945. Anne’s

parents greatly approved of Jack and Anne’s relationship, hoping that Jack would marry Anne. Jack would later break off their relationship shortly after Anne was seventeen. In this time of heartbreak, Anne in her adolescence would compose her first poems.

During her senior year at Rogers Hall, Anne would begin to compose elaborate formal poetry. These poems would be published in the school’s literary magazine known as the Splinters. Anne’s mother, Mary Gary Harvey, was not necessarily an author. Mary Harvey’s contribution to literature was comprised of scripts for family skits and the occasional verses for family birthdays. In the Harvey household, the mother was talked of as being a writer. Anne during this time believed she might inherit the role of the writer in her family (20). In the year 1958, Anne’s poems would appear sporadically in the Christian Science Monitor. Anne’s father, Ralph acquired several copies to send to his business associates. However, he angered Anne by negatively comparing her poems to the wonderful letters her mother had written to him while he was away traveling. Ralph Harvey once said, “We ought to have kept those letters. None of you girls are as brilliant as your mother. You are creative but she is brilliant” (20). These statements from her father would cause Anne much pain into adulthood.

At one point, while Anne was still engaged in a relationship, she met and fell in love with Alfred Muller Sexton II, nicknamed Kayo. The two eventually eloped. Kayo was from a financially well-off family and hoped to go to medical school. Anne and Kayo met in the month of May in the year 1948, through a trading of letters. At the advice of her mother, Anne eloped with Kayo, as her menstrual period was distressingly late. Kayo and Anne would then drive to North Carolina where the legal age

to marry was eighteen years old, along with a premarital health certificate from Massachusetts. Anne and Kayo married in Sunbury, North Carolina, on August 16, 1948. This elopement made Kayo's family extremely angry. Kayo and Sexton's marriage was a turbulent one. Middlebrook remarks on this marriage saying, "During the years that her network of friends and colleagues had spread and strengthened, Kayo had grown increasingly distant and again prone to explosions of violent rage" (Middlebrook 370). Anne was also having multiple affairs during their marriage as well. Sexton and Kayo would eventually end in divorce.

Anne would eventually become a mother to her first daughter, Linda Gray Sexton, in 1953 and another daughter named Joyce Ladd Sexton in 1955. After the birth of her daughter Linda Gray, Anne was diagnosed with post-partum depression and during this time she also had her first breakdown when she was hospitalized at a neuropsychiatric hospital. This, like Lowell, would not be the only hospitalization in her life: depression would follow for the rest of her life. During her time in treatment for her post-partum depression and her breakdown, Anne would be inspired to write as a means of psychotherapy.

In 1957, Anne would join writing groups in Boston where she would come to be friends with other poets such as Maxine Kumin, George Starbuck, and Sylvia Plath. According to Poetryfoundation.org, Anne's therapist during this time was impressed with her work and prompted her to continue writing. Anne also told Berg that she saw on television the poet and literary critic I. A. Richards describing the poetic form of a sonnet and decided she would replicate it. In 1960, Anne would have published her first collection of poems, *To Bedlam and Part Way Back*. This was Sexton's first collection of poetry

that focused on her psychological hardships. Anne's poetry focused on many other themes such as "religious seeking, transformation and dismantling of myth, the means of gender, inheritance, and legacy, the search for fathers, mother-daughter relationships, sexual anxiety, and issues of female identity" (George 1). During her short writing career, she wrote eight other collections of poetry. Two other collections were printed posthumously, *The Awful Rowing Toward God* and *45 Mercy Street*.

Anne would attempt to take her own life ten times, in her lifetime. The first of these attempts was in 1956, on the day before her twenty-eighth birthday. Anne would feel lonely and depressed when Kayo was not around. This suicide attempt was done while Kayo was away from home on a business trip in the Midwest. Some months later, Anne would be encouraged to put the pen to the page to write poems, as a way of psychotherapy. After much writing of poetry, Anne's poetry collection *Live or Die*, from 1966, would win the Pulitzer Prize. Despite this huge literary achievement, Anne still wrestled with her mental health. Horribly enough, on October 4, 1974, Anne at the young age of forty-five would commit suicide.

The legacy of Anne Sexton's poetry still captivates readers who suffer from mental illness and poetry fans alike. Anne's poetry even speaks to songwriters like Peter Gabriel, who was once part of the band Genesis. Gabriel composed a song titled *Mercy Street* in honor of Sexton's play *Mercy Street* which was written in 1969. Gabriel, like Sexton, is also a profound thinker who could relate to Sexton's depression and her search for meaning through art. In his song *Mercy Street*, Gabriel sings of darkness, a symbol of Sexton's deep depression. According to the website Songfacts.com, the end of his song *Mercy Street* is said to be very intense. The reason for this

intensity is that Gabriel uses a high-pitched screech to mimic Sexton's death. Sexton's poem "45 Mercy Street," published posthumously in 1976, is a poem that plays on the unclear distinction between reality and a dreamlike state, as well as how the speaker wishes to be purged of her mental anguish.

In the opening stanza of "45 Mercy Street" Sexton writes, "In my dream,/ drilling into the marrow / of my entire bone" (Sexton 1-3). It is important to note that bone marrow produces stem cells, along with other substances, which in return make blood cells. It is also where DNA can be found. This is relevant for two reasons. One way is that Sexton's mental health is hereditary and the other is that this dream could be a hallucination she is experiencing as part of her psychosis. The speaker then goes on to tell the reader that she is "walking up and down Beacon Hill" (5) and is looking for a street named Mercy Street. But sadly, the street sign is not in sight. Sexton here is making the reader decipher what is a dream and what is reality. Sexton here is seeking the family home of the past that is now lost to her with time and due to her mental status she is unable to place where the house is.

The female speaker in stanza two then decides to go on a quest to search for Mercy Street, but this time she is specifically looking for house number 45. Sexton uses the refrain of "Not there" (10-11) twice. When the speaker says, "Not there," she is telling the reader that this dream is clouding her reasoning from seeing reality clearly, as she can't tell reality from that of a dream. This refrain is taken from line eight of the first stanza. In this stanza the speaker describes the house she remembers and "the stained-glass window / of the foyer" (14-15), its "three flights" and its "parquet floors," and she can recall the furniture in the house. The

speaker even clearly recalls some of the occupants of the house: the speaker's mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and servants. The house in the poem can be seen as a figure from her childhood. She then goes on to recall "where the butter sits in neat squares" (23) and compares the squares to "strange giant's teeth" (24) which are "on the big mahogany table" (25). The speaker recalls the servants and neat squares of butter, this tells the reader that is a wealthy family home, for the speaker knows the arrangement of the house and its items very well. The speaker then writes, "Not there." The repeating of these two words is significant for the speaker wants to emphasize that 45 Mercy Street is a figment of her imagination, or so she wants her reader to think. Here Sexton describes the squares of butter as "strange giant's teeth." By using this hyperbole to describe the squares of butter, the reader gets the sense that the poem is just one big exaggeration. This hyperbole is also a sign of the speaker's crazed mental state of mind, as it shows that things are not what they seem. For in this state of mind, things seem larger than life to the speaker.

In stanza three, the speaker starts by asking the question, "Where did you go? / 45 Mercy Street" (28-29). Now, the speaker shifts to describe some of the occupants that she previously mentioned in the last stanza. The speaker tells us that Mother was making her "third" child "with the stranger's seed [sperm] blooming in the flower called Horrid." In this line, the speaker indicates to us that she is a child out of wedlock. If we pay close attention to some of the details of this stanza, one will see resemblances of Sexton's personal life. For example, the speaker mentions the many occupants living in the house, and Sexton came from a wealthy family. Then when the speaker says, "the third she will beget" (44), the speaker

alludes to the fact that Sexton was the third child of three girls. This description can be seen as a “nature versus nurture” image as described in psychology. Mental health issues were evident in Sexton’s family (nature), and her terrible upbringing by her parents (nurture) had an impact on Sexton’s mental health in adulthood.

In stanza four the speaker addresses a conflict that revolves around her husband and children. She starts by telling of her clothing and the accessories that go along with her clothing, a white pocketbook containing cigarettes, pills, and her keys. The speaker begins to tell the reader her age but seems disorientated as she isn’t sure if she is twenty-eight or forty-five. This is significant as well to the poem because it makes the reader of the poem stop and question the credibility of the speaker. She continues to walk and walk, holding “matches at street signs” (53) in search of Mercy Street. She then goes on to tell her readers that she even seems to have lost her “green Ford” and her “house in suburbs” where her “two little kids / sucked up like pollen by the bee in me.” This simile suggests that she sucked the life out of her children. Then she goes on to say that her husband “has wiped off his eyes / in order not to see my inside out” (61-62). In these two lines, the speaker is telling the reader that she can see what is going on externally, and yet still cannot understand what is taking place inside her mind. She then takes the reader by surprise as she tells us that “this is no dream,” (64) but just her “oily life” (65) where the people are alibis” and that 45 Mercy Street to the speaker can be seen as a safe haven that she can only dream of. Sexton’s judgment is still a blur from having a hard time telling dream from reality as her life is slick like that of oil and the people are self-justifiers. Sexton at the end of this stanza asks herself if Mercy Street is real or a

figment of her imagination. Sexton here is seeking mercy from something or someone, but to no avail receives none.

In the stanza to follow, the speaker is crying for help to be free from her troubled state of mind. The speaker in this stanza exclaims, “Pull the shades down—I don’t care” (69)! She then goes on to personify mercy as if it can “bolt the door, / erase the number, / and rip down the street sign” (71-73). When the speaker asks, “Who owns the past that went out / and left me only with paper?” (77-78) she is referring to her profession as a poet with the symbolism of the paper. Then refrain, “Not there” (79) is uttered again in a line all on its own. This is quite a dramatic stanza. It is as if the speaker is saying that she wants to be rid of her past and the problems that have brought her to this point. Sexton’s mental anguish in this stanza is intense. It is as if Sexton is screaming, “Mercy!” to be free from her mental illness, which feeds off her like a parasite. The house at “45 Mercy Street” symbolizes her past.

In the last and final stanza, the reader comes to a revelation. The speaker tells us that she opens her pocketbook and picks out “the dollars and the lipstick... and throw them at the street signs” (82,85). She then takes her pocketbook and tosses it “into the Charles River” (88). This symbolizes that the speaker wants to be purged of everything that defines her. Then in the last seven lines, the speaker puts the reader on one last mind trip, as she says,

Next I pull the dream off
And slam into the cement wall
of the clumsy calendar
I live in,
My life,

and its hauled up
notebooks. (89-95)

In stanza four, the speaker exclaims that this is not a dream, but now, in the final stanza, she tells us it is a dream and that she crashes into “the cement wall / of the clumsy calendar” (90-91) she lives in and that her life is “hauled up in notebooks.” This crashing into the cement wall can be seen as an eye-opener to help Sexton to distinguish dreams from reality. This passage refers to Sexton as being stuck in her mundane life as a poet with her poetry dragged along in her notebooks.

“45 Mercy Steet” is a “mind trip of a poem” by Anne Sexton. Sexton truly makes it hard for even her reader to distinguish dream from reality. It is as if Sexton puts up a veil that does not let us see what is dream or reality. At the start “45 Mercy Street” reads of a dreamlike state, and then slowly shifts by having that dream become a reality. In the poem, Sexton reflects on her past from mental illness being hereditary, while her upbringing was also in part due to her mental distress. Sexton’s “45 Mercy Street” is a cry for help to those who are suffering from mental illness, as Sexton dwells on the past and well as a place of refuge. A home is a place individuals go to find serenity, something Anne could never achieve.

Conclusion: Pick up the Pen and the Page

According to the World Health Organization “in 2019, nine-hundred million people around the world were living with a mental disorder” (WHO 1). The two main disorders were anxiety and depression. In 2020, when the pandemic started, it made these two disorders rise greatly. Even though there are treatment options for these disorders, many of those affected do not have admission

to successful care. Many individuals with mental illness are prone to encounter stigma, discrimination, as well as having their human rights violated. Lowell and Sexton lived during the 1950s, a time when mental health was considered a taboo subject for many. Mental illness was something that was brushed under the rug, and treatment was not as developed as it is today. Lowell’s diagnosis of manic-depressive disorder, or what is known as bipolar disorder now, in 2019 forty million people suffered from it. In 2019, there were two-hundred eighty million individuals who had depression, which included twenty-three million kids and young adults. Aside from taking medication and seeing a therapist for mental illness, one can be like Lowell and Sexton and practice psychotherapy. One can do psychotherapy by journaling or by writing poetry. According to Dr. Dan Brennan, psychotherapy has some psychological benefits to it. Psychotherapy can help with the following: reducing your anxiety, helping you with continually dwelling on a certain event, it creates recognition, helping to control emotions, and it allows you to open up. So, like that of Lowell, Sexton, and myself, put the pen to the page and begin to write amazing poetry, and never underestimate your work. You never know one day your poems would win you the Pulitzer Prize like Lowell and Sexton did.

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The American Doctor's Villainization of Childless Women during the Nineteenth Century

VICTORIA KNOX

The Center for Reproductive Rights describes the current situation pertaining to women and their struggles for reproductive autonomy in the United States, "In the U.S., one in four women will end a pregnancy in her lifetime—yet abortion is now illegal in 13 states, leaving millions without access to care. And although most U.S. maternal deaths are preventable, the country has one of the highest maternal mortality rates among wealthy nations. In addition, contraception and assisted reproduction services are often unaffordable and out of reach for many."¹ The medical fight for reproductive rights is not new. It has been through many cycles with different challenges. During the early twentieth century, the ACLU fought for the right for schoolteachers to have maternity leave, lobbied for childcare, and appealed New York's abortion law.² Later on, the first case regarding abortion in the Supreme Court was the *United States v. Vuitch* in 1971.³ *United States v. Vuitch* decided that a women's right to abortion for the sake of her health would include both physical and mental health. This led to a slew of cases that would make it to the Supreme Court. More famously, in 1973, *Roe v. Wade* decided that women had a constitutional right whether or not to continue pregnancy with privacy.⁴ More recently, as of 2022, the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*,

leaving many women today without access to abortion, stripping the constitutionality and privacy of abortion. This record of reproductive struggles amongst women in the United States predates the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Many of the problems seen today are the effects of misogynistic and racist medical practices and research of the nineteenth century that came with the professionalization of medicine.

Medical science in nineteenth-century America was shaped around the adult white male. Both male doctors and patients were the main characters in the line in fundamental medical narratives. Men were assumed to be most fit to be medical doctors making up the profession. The adult white male was the epitome of health, and the closer nonwhite men perpetuated whiteness, the healthier they were perceived to be.⁵ Male-dominated medical research and practice started to shift with the medicalization of birth which led to the establishment of the field of obstetrics. The medical field of obstetrics in the United States was officially established through academic discipline during the nineteenth century. At the same time, many American women were facing infertility and all faced menopause in later life. These experiences were especially painful because a woman's identity in the eyes of everyone around her was tied to her ability to give birth

to healthy children. Alternatively, there were many women who were choosing not to have children either preventing pregnancy or terminating through abortion. The workforce and educational opportunities were expanded so women could choose to do something meaningful outside of their role in the home. This essay uses a collection of primary and secondary sources to characterize both types of women, the group that could not have children and the group that would not have children, and how each group was denigrated by the medical field. The essay will demonstrate that in the nineteenth century the medical treatment of women who did not have children -- those who were involuntarily childless or voluntarily childless -- was based on misleading ideologies, generalized mental diagnoses, and invasive procedures which created a negative opinion about educated and working women in America.

The value of a woman was largely based on whether she would produce a child or not. Once a woman hit menopause, she was no longer a feminine being. In her book, *The Eternally Wounded Woman: Women, Doctors, and Exercise in the Late Nineteenth Century*, historian Patricia Vertinsky suggested that once a woman hit menopause, she was no longer considered worthy: "It followed that representations of the menopause often equated that period of transition from fertility to infertility as the passage to becoming an 'unperson'. Since menopause marked the end of fertility, attitudes towards it reflected the social status of women, and the value attached to their reproductive capacity."⁶ A woman's worth was grounded under the condition that she could bring healthy white children into the world. A woman who was going through menopause could no longer have children, therefore she was seen as useless. This is

true for any woman that did not have children because of infertility or other lifestyles she pursued.

Men's bodies were not devalued if they were infertile, because that was not usually concluded as a problem if a couple were having trouble having children. A couple not being able to conceive was a medical problem for the woman. In Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Charles Rosenberg's 1973 article "The Female Animal: Medical and Biological Views of Woman and Her Role in Nineteenth-Century America" they explore a medical doctor's description of how sensitive and frail women could be and how men were automatically considered intellectually superior:

"The nerves themselves," another physician concurred a generation later, were smaller, and of a more delicate structure. They are endowed with greater sensibility, and, of course, are liable to more frequent and stronger impressions from external agents or mental influences." Few if any questioned the assumption that in males the intellectual propensities of the brain dominated, while the female's nervous system and emotions prevailed over her conscious and rational faculties. Thus, it was only natural, indeed inevitable, that women should be expected and permitted to display more affect than men; it was inherent in their very being. Physicians saw woman as the product and prisoner of her reproductive system.⁷

According to this medical doctor, women were more susceptible to irrationality, and it was natural for them to face pain. A woman's reproductive system was considered the main source of pain if a woman was ill, and especially if she was having trouble producing children.

There were many theories that medical doctors used to define infertility because they could not imagine women as wanting to not be mothers and wives.

Women were often diagnosed with hysteria whenever medical doctors could not get to the bottom of a patient's problem. Hysteria had many symptoms because it was a temporary blanket for many illnesses or problems within both body and mind. Any type of distress a woman could have had would have been labeled under hysteria. Technically, both men and women could have been diagnosed with hysteria – but women faced the majority of diagnoses due to the predisposed stereotypes about women and their mental health, sensitivity and nervousness. Hysteria was not able to be healed, but it could be treated in experimental ways. Medical doctors would try to treat women with bloodletting, long spans of bedrest, and even surgery to remove the ovaries.⁸ This is an example of how men who worked as medical doctors could blame a woman's reproductive system for her "hysterical" symptoms. A body part that is biologically woman could be to blame for whatever pain and suffering they were facing; the solution could be to remove those important body parts altogether – of course with no documented success.

A frequent symptom of hysteria was a woman finding her children burdensome and finding her husband a tyrant. Women could not be unhappy with their situation because nothing could be happier than having the ability to have children when there were women who could not. Medical doctors could not accept the idea that women might be traumatized and exhausted after the experiences of childbirth, raising children, and the little assistance they received from their husbands in the household. All women's experiences and feelings were dismissed,

and they were labelled as hysterical. Miscarriage was assumed to be caused by nerves or hysteria, not an underlying health issue.⁹ Medical doctors concluded that women who were struggling with fertility or were having miscarriages must have had a bodily imbalance, and that her reproductive system was probably faulty. She would be described as weak, nervous, or hysterical, and it was the physician's job to experiment with her body for treatment.

Historically, women around the world still made the decision to have abortions. Sixteenth century Egyptians recorded recipes for abortifacients.¹⁰ Thousands of miles away in North America, indigenous people have practiced abortions using different recipes and techniques for many years.¹¹ Despite how people may have felt about abortion, women still had them at many different points in history. This includes women in nineteenth century United States. During the nineteenth century, a British woman living in New York, by the name of Ann Trow, or infamously "Madame Restell" provided abortions for women. Known as an abortionist, Madame Restell continued to rise in popularity, many viewed her as evil, yet she brought herself to become a millionaire (in today's dollars) through her practice and the abortifacients she sold.¹² Madame Restell's practice as a midwife and abortionist caused her many legal troubles. In 1845, while childbirth and reproductive care was becoming medicalized in the United States, giving abortions or the medicine to do so, and having an abortion as an individual became illegal in New York. Fast forward to the 1860s, many states began to make abortion illegal with different fines and prison sentences. This did not make abortion go away but led to a booming underground abortion industry.¹³ Women have always weighed the options of having children,

there have just been different points in which the men that held government power vilified reproductive health practices. Women having the choice to get an abortion threatened the societal power dynamic between men and women. With abortion, men as sexual partners or medical doctors no longer have the power over women to decide when they have children and with the choice of abortion, women could take childbirth and pain that entails into their own hands.

Many medical doctors believed that non-white women did not have a problem with the pains of childbirth. There was a belief between medical doctors that non-white women were much more fertile and much less likely to have a miscarriage. They believed that “savage” women were able to escape the painful realities of birth that the “civilized” white woman had no choice but to face.¹⁴ Painful birth and frequencies of miscarriages was caused by the progression of the white race, and painless birth was a characteristic of being uncivilized. This untrue stereotype opened the door for non-white women to be taken advantage of and experimented on for male recognition in the medical field and their hope to contribute to medical progress.

The fascination that men in positions of power had with women’s bodies is proved true in their unethical research and experimentation. Dr. J. Marion Sims became famous for his work that cured vesicovaginal fistula with surgery. He is still considered the “father of gynecology,” but the women used in his experiments are usually forgotten.¹⁵ Enslaved from the South especially went through traumatizing experiments. Medical doctors like Sims were able to gain recognition, and women today reap the benefits of his success, but there has not been much recognition for the Black women who had to endure

the suffering that went into these same experiments. The experiments completed by Dr. Sims were often done without consent.¹⁶ Medical doctors who took advantage women for the sake of society and medicine were contributing to stereotypes and social norms enforcing the idea that all women could be taken advantage of easily.

Since women are responsible for bearing children, they also became the first responsible for being treated for infertility. In *The Empty Cradle*, Margaret Marsh asserts the influence Dr. Sims had on the medical field, “In terms of infertility treatment, two things stand out in the journals: First, therapies for sterility – as practitioners now almost always called once was known as barrenness – in the 1870s and 1880s were based on the ideas and specific techniques by Sims and reflected his growing influence.”¹⁷ Dr. Sims’ techniques and advancements made through the exploitation of Black women were influential for other medical professionals. Americans’ opinion of women who did not have children was a result of medical doctors pushing the thought that there was something wrong with women who choose not to have children – ultimately villainizing infertile women.

A woman who was infertile in nineteenth-century America was to be blamed for her condition. It was believed that somewhere in her life she made a bad choice that would result in the inability to have children. Published in the *Journal of Women in Culture in Society* by Margarete Sandelowski, “Failures of Volition: Female Agency and Infertility in Historical Perspective” describes the thinking behind diagnoses related to being infertile:

Sterility was viewed not so much as a distinctive diagnostic entity but rather as the result of the leukorrhea, cervical and uterine displacements,

menstrual irregularities, bowel and bladder problems, and other medical and gynecologic ailments that plagued both women and their physicians. Frequently appearing in nineteenth-century gynecology texts only in passing, in abbreviated discussions, or in an appendix, sterility was conceptualized as a symptom "only to be reached through the malady causing it." If the physician cured this malady, he would also have cured sterility.¹⁸

Women's health problems in fertility were burdensome for the medical doctors because they thought that if women had made the right decisions, they would not be in the position to be infertile. Curing whatever illness, a woman may have had meant that the doctor would have also cured sterility since it was considered a symptom of a larger illness.

Some of the treatments that women had to go through were invasive and often unsuccessful. Medical doctors began to get creative with their methods and started experimenting on infertile women's bodies without research to back up their dangerous practice, "By the late nineteenth century...physicians by the score were performing surgery to restore fertility and one prominent surgeon has devised a procedure he called 'ovarian transplantation,' which involved transferring portions of the ovaries of fertile women into women whose own ovaries had been lost to disease."¹⁹ Dr. Robert Morris had one success where a patient conceived and gave birth, but that was followed by many failures, leading him to abandon the procedure entirely.²⁰ Many women were willing to go through excruciating pain in order to fulfill their dreams of being mothers, but there are many women who did not see the excitement in having children.

Mothers had their own opinions about childbirth and choosing whether or not women despite all of the evidence that put medical doctors' opinions at the forefront of what was happening within the medical system in nineteenth-century America. Many women have wished to have children, while women who can wish to not have them at all, despite the desire by all members of society for women to have children. Many women felt burdened with children because of the pressure they had on them to produce them. Although there were different methods in which women could try not to have children, their options were restricted. In the book *Lost: Miscarriage in Nineteenth Century America* author Shannon Withycombe, she reveals the feelings women had around childbirth and miscarriage from letters in diaries. A woman named Alice Kirk Grierson wrote a letter about her feelings about her own children:

Charlie's existence I accepted as a matter of course, without either joy or sorrow. Kirkie's with regret, for so soon succeeding him. Robert came nearer being welcomed with joy, than any other. Edie was gladly welcomed so soon as I knew her sex....Henry succeeded her too soon to give me as much rest as I would have liked...and told you before he was a year old, that I would rather die, than have another child, yet no sooner was he weaned, than Georgie came into life...I firmly believe it injured me, as soon as I weaned him, and was again immediately pregnant, my nerves became so irritable so such a degree, that life has ever since, been nearer a burden to me.²¹

Grierson had no desire to feed more into her womanhood through childbirth; she truly wanted control over when she would have her children. Throughout her experience

with each child, she was neither happy nor sad. Having children made her feel weak, and in full honesty was able to rank her experiences of having children depending on how happy the occasion was.

The manner in which Americans thought about and talked about women's bodies and the choices made by women about them was rooted in biased medical research completed by men. Medical doctors were able to create stereotypes around women who were patients under their care. The way in which women were perceived by medical doctors was representative of women's social standing in American society during the nineteenth century: "Physicians saw woman as the product and prisoner of her reproductive system. It was ineluctable basis of her social role and behavioral characteristics, the cause of her most common ailments; woman's uterus and ovaries controlled her body and behavior from puberty through menopause."²² Many of the pains or illnesses that women have had were associated with their reproductive system. Due to a woman's reproductive system, she was inevitably responsible for keeping the human race alive. If a woman did not bear children, either from infertility or by independent choice, she was letting down her family.

Society's opinion on women who did not have children was associated with the terminology. Women who did not have children were described as barren – a land where no fruit could grow, useless. The growth of these ideas is due to the growing number of women who entered the workforce and university in the nineteenth century. Working outside of the home or outside of carrying children was considered too much for a woman. She was considered too weak to handle that much stress. Women were able to gain more autonomy over whether they needed to have children and found self-worth in

what they studied and where they worked. Many people were upset with the decline in marriages and children and deemed the decline as a failure caused by women. "Woman and the Fading of the Maternal Instinct" was a New York Times article published by a husband and wife, Mr. and Mrs. John Martin, in 1922. The subtitle of their article is, "Can the Contributions of the Sex to the World in Other Ways Compensate for Its Failure to Reproduce? Statistics on the Numerical Relation of Sexes."²³ The way that doctors diagnosed and described infertility and reproduction to women and families created a toxic atmosphere for misogynistic ideologies to infiltrate the media.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin claimed that fertile women who spent their time in college were wasting their time and energy. They thought that women were trying to compensate for not having children by contributing to the world in other ways such as contributing to education. To them, not reproducing for your family or the world meant that you were failing your family and your entire race: "Women are the temples of the race. They live through their children more than do men. Normally man desires a wife for the sake of having the woman; woman desires a husband for the sake of having the child. Man seeks the woman in the wife; woman seeks the child in a husband."²⁴ The authors behind this believed that women were not allowed to have desires in a marriage outside of having children. Women could not have desires without having responsibilities that came along with it. Men were able to have wives that benefitted them, but husbands were believed to be a part of a woman's life so she could fill the only joy of having a child.

The desire for men and outsiders of individual

women's lives for women who were not mothers to have children was not because they wanted children in the world, but because they wanted to have that control over them. With women at work and no children to take care of, women could now take care of themselves, without a man's financial help. There was nothing to keep a woman stuck to a man or household if she did not have children. Firsthand experiences of working women and opinions are used in attempt to persuade readers into thinking that women should reconsider working outside of the home:

1. A doctor who has been practicing for a number of years largely among working women said: "Women simply cannot have many children and work away from home. They can manage one or two, but not more."
2. A woman dentist, with one little girl, said: "I can't have more children because I'm so busy with my profession, and I cannot get a competent person to care for the baby. I should have to give it much of my time and let my practice run down. It is out of the question."
3. A doctor, with twenty years practice and much interested in sociology said: "The wage-earning woman fails to have children because she cannot make motherhood and industry co-existent."²⁵

Even though there are no names attached to those statements or indication if they were real people, the authors behind this New York Times article were adamant in arguing that the workplace was no place for women. They used medical doctors for professional opinions, because even with all of the experimentation within the medical field, the field itself was becoming more professionalized and trusted because of the place the men working in it had. Women were expected to trust other women, and a

mother stating that she cannot have more children might scare someone away from the workforce or education if they still have the desire to have children while working.

Women who could not have children and women who voluntarily chose not to have children were both villainized by the medical field through biased and unscientific ideologies, the over-diagnoses of hysteria, and the dangerous and ineffective fertility procedures, all of which painted a negative picture of women who did not have children in the media. The judgement that women faced for not having children or not being able to have children was a direct result of the medical fields treatment of women and infertility. Research on medical treatment of women in the nineteenth century is significant because of the current American tensions over the right to women's bodily autonomy. The history of reproductive rights traces back to the nineteenth century and continues throughout the twentieth century to modern day. It is important to make connections between the past and present so we can understand how or if the medical field has developed to benefit humans regardless of gender in American society.

¹ "United States." Center for Reproductive Rights, October 17, 2023. <https://reproductiverights.org/our-regions/united-states/#:~:text=In%20the%20U.S.%2C%20one%20in,mortality%20rates%20among%20wealthy%20nations>

² "The ACLU and Women's Rights: Proud History, Continuing Struggle." American Civil Liberties Union,

2002. <https://www.aclu.org/documents/aclu-and-womens-rights-proud-history-continuing-struggle>

³ "United States v. Vuitch." Oyez. <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1970/84>

⁴ "Roe v. Wade." Oyez. <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1971/70-18>

⁵ C. Charatz-Litt, "A chronicle of racism: the effects of the white medical community on black health." *Journal of the National Medical Association* vol. 84,8 (1992): 717-25.

⁶ Patricia Vertinsky, *The Eternally Wounded Woman: Women, Doctors, and Exercise in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press 1989) 88.

⁷ Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Charles Rosenberg. "The Female Animal: Medical and Biological Views of Woman and Her Role in Nineteenth-Century America." *The Journal of American History* 60, no. 2 (1973): 332–56. 334-335.

⁸ Laura Briggs. "The Race of Hysteria: 'Overcivilization' and the 'Savage' Woman in Late Nineteenth-Century Obstetrics and Gynecology." *American Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (2000): 246–73.

⁹ Laura Briggs. "The Race of Hysteria" 246–73.

¹⁰ Charles Savona-Ventura, *Ancient Egyptian Medicine*, 2017.

¹¹ Z. Acevedo, "Abortion in early America." *Women & health* vol. 4,2 (1979): 159-67.

¹² Jennifer Wright, *Madame Restell: The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Old New York's Most Fabulous, Fearless, and Infamous Abortioneer*. New York, NY, Hachette Books, 2023, 223.

¹³ Z. Acevedo, "Abortion in early America." *Women & health* vol. 4,2 (1979): 159-67.

¹⁴ Laura Briggs. "The Race of Hysteria" 246–73.

¹⁵ Walter Fisher, "Physicians and Slavery in the Antebellum Southern Medical Journal," *Journal of the History of Medicine* 23 (1968) 36-49.

¹⁶ Diana E. Axelsen. "Women as Victims of Medical Experimentation: J. Marion Sims' Surgery on Slave Women, 1845-1850." *Sage* 2, no. 2 (1985).

¹⁷ Margaret Marsh. *The Empty Cradle: Infertility in America from Colonial Times to the Present*, (Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press 1996) 81.

¹⁸ Margarete J. Sandelowski. "Failures of Volition: Female Agency and Infertility in Historical Perspective." *Signs* 15, no. 3 (1990): 479.

¹⁹ Marsh. *The Empty Cradle*, 2.

²⁰ Marsh. *The Empty Cradle*, 131-132.

²¹ Shannon Withycombe. *Lost: Miscarriage in Nineteenth Century America* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2018).

²² Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female Animal" 332–56.

(1992): 717-25.

²³ Woman and the Fading of the Maternal Instinct: Can the Contributions ... By Mr. and Mrs. John Martin New York Times (1857-1922); Sep 5, 1915; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times pg. SM9

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VICTORIA KNOX

History & Secondary Education

Victoria Knox graduated with a degree in History and Secondary Education, and minors in Spanish, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and Social Studies. Her research project was completed during the Fall semester of 2022, in Dr. Andrew Holman's capstone course, *Medicine and Society in the Anglo-American World 1700 to 1920*. Victoria presented this paper at the 2023 "History of Medicine Days" conference at the University of Calgary's Cumming School of Medicine. Her travel was made possible with funding from BSU's Undergraduate Research Canadian Studies programs. Victoria plans to teach and continue her education and writing in the field of history. Vic is pursuing graduate study at BSU while teaching with Americorps this year.

An Excerpt from the Play, *1000 Ways a Black Woman Dies: Stories from the Waiting Room*

BRITNEY MALLEBRANCHE

1000 Ways a Black Woman Dies: Stories from the Waiting Room is a play based on real stories of discriminatory events that Black women have undergone in the United States. I am a firm believer that art can take the shape of the silenced and give them a voice. This play intends to reflect the voices of those we unfortunately never got to hear.

The play is composed of a group of women sitting in a circle on a dimly lit stage having an A.A.-style group-therapy session. They are in a type of waiting room, anticipating their final judgment after death. The women share the stories of their deaths and have conversations with each other. The script is purposely written so that no lines are assigned to a particular character. That fluidity in the script allows a director to choose the cast size they desire, and it offers flexibility in the rehearsal process to mold the show in any way the company sees fit. In the following excerpt, the dialogue is ascribed to four different women, but those lines could be shifted among a smaller or larger group of actors.

The full script, notes on my research process, video logs, and recordings of the music that accompanies the play, including two Haitian hymns (one remixed and translated into English by me) and an original song I wrote,

titled "Alone," are at <https://britneyleeannemall.wixsite.com/1000waysblckwomendie>.

Woman 1: Do you know I grew up telling myself that racism is no longer a thing? That Black people just used it as a crutch to give themselves an excuse to not exceed in life. To fail to be everything that our ancestors wanted us to be. I worked so hard to rise above stereotypes and everything that is attached to the color of my skin because I thought I was beyond that.

Woman 2: What kind of self-hatred?

Woman 3: Why would you ever think we would WANT to keep ourselves down?

Woman 4: Well, the media always portrays it that way.

Woman 2: That is true. If you go on any major news network, they are always talking about the poverty and violence that surrounds majority-Black areas.

Woman 4: They even do it to Black countries. Honestly, sit here and ask yourself if you have ever heard an American news story on a Black country that shed any positive light on them.

Woman 1: It's always the bad things.

Woman 3: Because people only see us for our "bad things." There's no pleasing news with good things.

Woman 2: It's all about the greater agenda of always painting "Americans," a.k.a. white people, in the most positive light they can.

Woman 4: So they make these stories to make it seem like they care and are trying to spread awareness when it really is just helping them look good and Black people look voluntarily helpless.

Woman 1: But you see when I saw stories like that, I always saw myself above it. Like it did not pertain to me. But in this world, I will never escape that. I died at the hands of that.

I was driving home from dinner at a restaurant around 10 o'clock at night. I didn't have anything to drink besides one glass of wine but I was entirely sober. I was driving perfectly fine. As I was driving home, I noticed a car on the side of the road and a white woman was standing there looking for help. So I pulled over to see what I could do for her. If I could offer her anything or help her out. Her tire popped and she didn't know how to change it to put the spare on. Luckily my dad taught me how to do that when I was younger, so I offered to help her and she said sure.

As we were talking and I began to rummage in her trunk to find the spare tire and the tire-changing kit, the woman was obviously still very stressed out about the situation. That's when a cop pulled over behind us. Like I said, I've

never had a single offense in my life. I'm a stand-up citizen. I have done nothing to aggravate anyone. But immediately a cop came out with his gun drawn. The interaction ended as soon as it started.

All I could hear was him screaming, put your hands up, put your hands up, and the woman next to me was screaming, and I turned around because, like I said, everything was happening so fast, and all I could feel was six bursts of pain all throughout my chest. I dropped to the ground, and everything went dark.

That was the end of the story. I opened my eyes, and I was here. No prelude to the story, no extra information, it was just senseless death. It had no purpose. Had no impact afterward. I was just alive and then I wasn't. I was alive and then I wasn't.

And it's not even like death itself is something that sticks out in the crowd, you know. Because Black people die like this all the time. Men and women. But the problem is, typically once you hear about stories like this in the news, you constantly are hearing about how they had a drug past or a violent history or a record of owning or criticizing the police. I had none of that. I was just a normal person who did the right thing, who never ever crossed anyone. But no one sees that. For the first time, I am being forced to understand that the reality of my life is the color of my skin. That racism is very much still alive and well and that there's nothing that I can do.

I can rise above as much as I want to but I will never get anywhere as long as this is the color of my skin. I want to do better for myself and for my culture, but as long as

people like that run this earth, I will never get the chance. Nor anyone else like me.

Woman 3: I understand how you—

Woman 1: Do you understand how I feel, because clearly we're on two different pages it seems.

Woman 3: Excuse me?

Woman 1: You seemed to have made peace with this. I refuse to make peace with this. I didn't deserve this.

Woman 3: You didn't deserve this? We didn't deserve this. Our ANCESTORS didn't deserve this. The people who will come after us won't deserve this. But guess what? It's still happening.

Woman 2: It's a generational curse.

Woman 3: You think what's happening to us is anything new? Hate to break it to you but we are just one part of a mile-long line of generational trauma.

Woman 4: As Black women, we carry the pain and trauma of not only ourselves, but the Black women who came before us.

Woman 3: It's a cycle that never fails to repeat itself.

Woman 4: You know there was a massive decline in health in Black women during the Jim Crow era due to racial stress?

Woman 2: Generational trauma.

Woman 4: In fact, Black women diagnosed with breast cancer who were born in racially charged areas were at greater risk to get more aggressive tumors that were less responsive to chemotherapy?

Woman 2: Generational trauma.

Woman 4: Even now, the majority of women in the U.S. who have uterine fibroids are Black women. Which have been linked to stress.

Woman 1: So what? I thought fibroids are harmless.

Woman 4: So they say. But they never tell you what it can affect. What it can block.

Woman 2: Now that you say that, they never explain what to really DO with your fibroids and what can happen or what to look out for.

Woman 3: That's because they don't know the answers to those questions.

Woman 1: It's the 21st century. How do they not know?

Woman 3: No one cares enough to do the research or to fund the research.

Woman 4: You know why?

Woman 3: Because it's a "Black disease."

Woman 4: And “Black diseases” are a Black people problem.

Woman 2: Generational. Trauma.

Woman 1: Okay so we have some restraints. I’m not going down like this.

Woman 3: Oh my. What do you want us to do? We are already here. I can’t reverse anything, and you certainly can’t either. There is nothing we can do.

The women sit for a beat.

Woman 1: You know what? There is. I can have hope.

Woman 3: Hope.

Woman 1: Yes, hope. A prayer so loud it shakes the earth, and may the right people hear it.

In the distance, a woman begins “writing” a letter while speaking it aloud.

Dear Woman,

I’m sorry. I’m sorry that we have to live in a world under these conditions. I’m sorry that we come across ways of us dying and crying and feeling less of ourselves each and every single day. I’m sorry because we don’t deserve that. I’m sorry because no one handed us “a spoonful of privilege on a Silver Platter” like the others. I’m sorry that it always feels as if we fall short of something greater.

But I’m hopeful. I’m hopeful that we will find eternal joy

one day in who we are. I am hopeful that we will rise above all the pain and spite and become what our ancestors have called us to be. I am hopeful that we will grow and evolve the world around us to make them see that Black girls are truly magic.

People often try to make special things feel small. Sometimes out of insecurity, sometimes out of hate, but primarily out of fear. Fear that the special thing may become bigger than life. Bigger than the person who’s doing the hating themselves. So it’s easier to oppress people than it is to coexist with them

Black girl, may you take every single way others try to bring you down as inner praise for your undeniable talent and strength. The fear they try to make you feel about them is the exact fear that they have when they look at you and see you shine.

Do not let them try to use your magic as a weapon against you. Change the narrative. Change the storyline. Break the shackles of this endless chain of oppressive violence.

I’d like to think we didn’t necessarily fail. Sometimes some stories have just really senseless and harmful deaths. Unfortunately, we fall under that. But allow our pain to be used as armor around your bodies as you go into battle in this war. The blood that we have shed to cover you and give you the strength to push through. Because our stories are not over. The legacy of our lives does not end after death just because we are no longer a part of this world. They carry on through you. How you choose to continue the story is your choice. There is no defining ending to this tale. And for good reason. We give no end

because the work is not over, the pain has yet to end, and the unimaginable tombstones continue to be engraved. So I refuse to give you an end. I guess you'll have to find that on your own.



BRITNEY MALLEBRANCHE

Theatre Arts

Britney Mallebranche majored in Theatre Arts with a minor in Digital Media. Her research project was completed in the summer of 2021 under the mentorship of Professor Miranda Giurleo (Theatre) and later workshopped for a presentation during the 2021-2022 academic year under the guidance of Professor Miranda Giurleo and Professor Sarah Bedard (Theatre). This was all made possible with funding provided by the Adrian Tinsley Program summer research grant. Britney presented this play at BSU's 2021 Mid-Year Symposium and BSU's 2022 Arts Week. Britney is now pursuing her master's degree in media science at Boston University and plans to continue her career in the entertainment industry.

A Cross-Cultural Exploration: Global Methods of Contraception and Family Planning

CORA PEREIRA

Abstract

In today's world, women are attempting to take control of their reproductive choices. Some have been met with roadblocks that may prohibit or limit access to women's healthcare centers and family planning services. This research explores women's reproductive health and contraception usage and the impact of cultural influences globally. Cultural adversities may overshadow the benefits of having access to healthcare facilities along with contributing to the circulation of inaccurate information. This may prevent or deter women from accessing healthcare facilities and methods of family planning. Understanding variation in the United States and in other cultures will contribute to the global understanding of women's reproductive healthcare and how different societies view family planning. This is an opportunity to explore the global processes and methods that are implemented cross-culturally that contribute to women's reproductive health and family planning techniques.

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to elucidate the various circumstantial elements that contribute to women's reproductive health. The recent political events early in 2022 regarding *Roe v. Wade* have stirred up misinformation and turmoil in women's healthcare and family

planning (Shinkman, 2023). Various states now have the right to choose if women's healthcare practices such as providing contraception and abortion will be available or illegal. Regional variations in perceptions are one reason why states will either terminate or continue to provide family planning services. Contraception has been used in cultures such as the Greeks, Egyptians, and many more during history (Haimov-Kochman, 2016; Riddle, 1992). My research has allowed for an examination and discussion of cultural connections between ancient practices, and current cultural influences on use of family planning methods around the world.

Cross-cultural experiences of cultural variation can elucidate how women view family planning and how it influences choices regarding their healthcare. The key components that influence these choices are women's accessibility to online support, barriers and adversities, religion, and the influence of relationships. Each of these can influence a woman's choices and will be introduced sequentially, followed by an examination of how they intersect during a woman's reproductive years. Elucidating these intersecting elements provides a platform to improve accessibility, and initiate conversations we need to have about women's reproductive health.

In this thesis, I will be discussing the methodolo-

gy used, some historical aspects of reproductive health and contraception, how some women today experience reproductive health care, and the religious influences on these aspects of women's health. I conclude with discussion on the intersectionality of these various influences on women's reproductive health care.

Methodology and Framework

This research was carried out with representational literary analysis, women's public forum contributions, and cross-cultural analysis. The design included interviews with women's healthcare practitioners and was approved by the IRB. This research was based on qualitative methods used to make connections between women's experiences. Interviews were originally planned but practitioners did not respond to contact letters.

In place of interviews, individual anonymous posts from a reproductive health forum named Eve have been included to highlight the complexity of women's family planning experiences. Eve is a mobile app that serves as a support center, uses fertility tracking technology, and connects women in a public forum to answer each other's questions in specialized groups based on subject matter. I chose Eve as a resource for discovering connections and shared experiences women chose to share and voice with others. Eve contributed experiences from women, experiences that were missing without my interviews.

The framework used for research used a mixed-paradigm approach. The two paradigms I most closely used in my design were the ecological and social network paradigm. Using these frameworks provided the means to integrate the context and connections from different sources.

Reproductive Health and Contraception in the Ancient World

Contraception has long been used in women's reproductive health. Examples are historical societies such as Ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome (Haimov-Kochman, 2005; Riddle, 1992). This is significant because many methods were brought forward from the ancient world and influence the methods available to women around the globe today. Cultures have yielded different methods due to the local environment, trade routes, and colonization. Specific cultural practices and religions such as Christianity influenced the availability of methods. Well-known methods used prior to modern birth control are discussed by Riddle in his book *Contraception in the Ancient World to the Renaissance* (1992). He discusses the cultural methods used by different ancient civilizations not only for population control, but for freedom of reproductive choices. Examples discussed here bring to light many oral contraceptive recipes and methods such as herbs and tonics, *coitus interruptus*, condoms, rhythm method, vaginal suppositories, infanticide, and abortion (Riddle, 1992). These methods were used around the globe and each culture had their own factors that contributed to methods available for use. The information in this book gave substantial evidence and context for the modernization of birth control from its humble beginnings. It also touches on the first recognized gynecologists in different cultures such as a writer under the name of Cleopatra in the Late Antiquity Period, and Dame Trotula of Salerno, Italy during the late twelfth century (Riddle, 1992). The significance of this resource is the recognition of early-stage contraceptive methods and practices that led to the methods prioritized in current society.

Contraception in Ancient Egypt is another import-

ant example of contraception in the ancient world. The main written source of gynecological methods in Egypt is the Kahun Papyrus dated during the Middle Kingdom under Pharaoh Amenemhat I. "The gynecological text is divided into 34 paragraphs, of which half deal with women medicine, e.g., infertility diagnosis, pregnancy diagnosis, methods to improve conception, contraception methods, complications of vaginal delivery and reproductive disorders" (Haimov-Kochman, 2005). By this date gynecological methods were practiced and loosely understood in the ancient world far before the common era.

Like in Riddle's book, Egyptians used numerous methods practiced by physicians called *swnw*, but the various papyri mention the practice of midwifery in the field of women's reproductive health. Additionally, there is mention of midwives in the Bible who disobeyed Pharaoh's order to kill male newborns (Haimov-Kochman, 2005:4) - therefore resisting infanticide - another method of contraception. This method is a sensitive topic as the child has already been born rather than being aborted in utero. Many methods, including techniques for contraception, pregnancy, childbirth, and preventing complications, were recorded in the Kahun Papyrus and influence the world of women's health today. The major contribution of the Kahun Papyrus and historical Egyptian Knowledge is the discussion of reproductive herbs that can be evaluated today for medicinal uses in women's health.

Colonization and Herbal Methods

A continuation of the previous section brings us to herbs and environmental methods used in ancient Egypt. The Kahun Papyrus describes several methods of herb use and preparation for various aspects of women's health. One example is the use of plants in a marsh. A woman

would be placed on a marsh of beer and date. The strong odors of the marsh would cause the woman to become nauseous or vomit. The presence of nausea and/or vomiting was seen as an early indicator of pregnancy (Haimov-Kochman, 2005).

In connection to this, contraception was also carried out with herbs mainly by women and midwives. This knowledge was passed down as an oral tradition as a part of their culture. Many methods were carried out intra-vaginally. One common recipe from the Ebers Papyrus is described in the quote below.

The recipe of linen soaked with honey steeped in acacia spikes described in the Ebers papyrus and later adopted by Soranus of Ephesus (1st century A.D.), as probably used as today's modern sponge and diaphragm. Modern researchers have found acacia to be spermicidal [21]. *Triterpene saponins* from *Acacia auriculiformis* were found to have sperm immobilizing effect in vitro. This acacia derivative successfully prevented sperm entry into the cervical mucus, disrupted spermatozoa plasma membrane and disintegrated the acrosomal cap (Haimov-Kochman, 2005:7).

The recipe above is an example of how the knowledge of local plants and herbs was successfully used to prevent pregnancy in ancient Egypt. These recipes would have been orally transmitted from midwives to women to control pregnancy and the population. The exploration of these methods and herbs by modern scientists can provide new knowledge and insight into holistic methods of contraception to be used in our current time.

Other historical examples show how knowledge and methods used for women's health were utilized during Caribbean colonization. Women in this region used many

herbs and plants to control reproductive choices (O'Donnell, 2016). O'Donnell goes into depth about the historical influences of colonization in the Caribbean, and how the methods of contraception in the Americas were shaped by Caribbean influences, particularly during the slave trade. The slave trade was enforced in Antigua after colonization of the Caribbean by the Spaniards in the fifteenth century (O'Donnell, 2016). This context of historical colonization is important because it influenced African women's reproductive choices during this time. In the Caribbean, women used various methods. This was a way of refusing to provide more slaves for plantations. Examples of methods used were "late weaning of infants, self-induced sterility through mechanical or medicinal means, infanticide, and a variety of abortifacient plants, such as yam, papaya, lime, and the roots and barks of cotton trees" (O'Donnell, 2016:1).

This led to the description of the oral tradition of contraceptive methods that are passed down from mother to child. The following statement from one of her informants describes how oral tradition influenced enculturation of cultural knowledge for future generations. "This is how to make bread pudding; this is how to make doukona; this is how to make pepper pot; this is how to make good medicine for a cold; this is how to make a good medicine to throw away a child before it even becomes a child" (O'Donnell, 2016: 59). This statement provides context for reproductive health in culture, and how reproductive cultural knowledge is incorporated into the daily lives of women. The grouping of reproductive health with other daily cultural traditions highlights the importance of women's reproductive autonomy and how this knowledge is passed down.

The lessons learned through female relatives

in society are a part of the interconnected relationships that shape a culture. Women not only learn reproductive knowledge but build relationships in the community from this shared web of knowledge. The traditional practice of "Obeah," which includes local knowledge and medicinal plants, is derived from West African holistic practices (O'Donnell, 2016); these Caribbean women have brought these practices with them. Local knowledge guides methods needed to prepare certain herbs to rid toxicity from plants before use, such as guinea hen weed. Many plants such as this were used for reproductive control after colonization by European nations.

Western colonizers created their own records of Caribbean herbs, and various gynecological methods used by locals were withheld from Western missionaries outside their culture. This makes the record of reproductive herbs difficult to locate outside of Western collections due to incomplete records of cultural uses of herbs and methods. Historical context elucidates the use range of different methods and elements of society that intersect, and this can influence women's control over their reproductive health.

Women Today

Women are globally connected through reproductive experiences throughout their lives. Social media has created a platform where women with access can seek out knowledge and support from other women without fear of judgment. One platform is the fertility tracking app Eve. Eve allows women to track their daily reproductive experiences, while also providing forums and groups for women to build an online community.

Women's Voices and Experiences

Forum posts are an essential part of my research; it spotlights the voices of women. Women use this platform when faced with uncertainty, and this is what stuck out to me as a main theme while reading their concerns. Uncertainty was the prevailing theme, because women who reached out on Eve did not have the answer. Women choose to reach out to other women with similar reproductive experiences to navigate their reproductive lives.

Contraceptive Uncertainty

Contraception is a large part of family planning and for reproductive health. With many different types, effectiveness statistics, and instructions, there are many areas for confusion. These women chose to voice their concerns about contraception because of uncertainty in their own reproductive lives.

Period after IUD Removal

Hi, just looking for some relatable experiences and if I should be worried. I got my Paraguard IUD removed on January 18th... Did anyone experience irregular periods after copper IUD removal... (I'm so paranoid to get pregnant again because of financials). (Anonymous, 2023)

Depo Birth Control Shot

I had gained a ton of weight after being on the depo for 9 months! I have tried eating right, exercising and such to drop the weight since I stopped getting the shot. Is there anything I can do? I'm miserable (Anonymous, 2023).

Best Birth Control that Doesn't cause Weight Gain

Hi, I really want to get back on the pill. I used to

take Junel Fe, and I completely blew up in weight. Any suggestions on a pill that doesn't cause weight gain! (Anonymous, 2023).

Ovulation and Birth Control

When did you ovulate after stopping birth control? Just wondering when ovulation goes back to normal (Anonymous, 2023).

Emergency Contraception Uncertainty

Contraception is the first defense against unwanted reproduction, but when this fails, women may rely on emergency contraception. This can range from Plan B pills to IUD insertion, or herbal remedies (Riddle, 1992). Emergency contraception is time sensitive, and the pressure of time constraints and unknown variables contribute to uncertainty.

Plan B

I've noticed that when taking plan b that it says that it delays ovulation, but if I'm already ovulating will plan b still work? (Anonymous, 2023)

Plan B or no Plan B?

I need help with no judgment. I am not on birth control currently because I hated it. I have already taken two plan B's in this past year and really want to avoid taking another because I know it's only to be used in emergencies. I had sex with my boyfriend on the last day of my period, and he used a spermicide condom...the condom ended up breaking. He wasn't close to finishing so therefore there was no sperm in the condom. I'm just wondering

if I should take a plan b to be safe. I just wanted y'all's opinion because I really don't want to take all those hormones again (Anonymous, 2023).

Abortion Uncertainty

Abortion can be a troubling decision for some women. Some may be deciding to have one, or wish not to, but the influence of their partner can be the deciding factor. This decision can be a daunting one, and the uncertainty created from it can create a need for external support from other women. The experiences of one woman can be the deciding factor for another.

Unwanted Abortion

I recently found out that I'm pregnant. I'm 8 weeks, and I've scheduled an appointment for my first ultrasound. He's still asking me for an abortion to start our relationship over and thinks we won't regret it. I will. He won't carry that guilt, but I'll feel empty every day. I don't want to leave him, and I don't want to be alone during my pregnancy. I don't know what to do (Anonymous, 2023).

I'm 19 and Pregnant ADVICE

He doesn't want the baby and wants me to get an abortion, but that's against myself beliefs. It's so hard right now. I need advice, I'm nervous to tell my mom. I'm depressed. This is tough. I don't want an abortion. I told him I wasn't on birth control. Thanks for the advice (Anonymous, 2023).

Uncertainty, Anxiety, and Guilt

Women voice the pressures and anxiety that can come from their experience during their reproductive years. These can be emotions and experiences that start

in adolescence and carry on into adulthood. Feelings of uncertainty of their actions within their own culture and from their own personal beliefs can influence their need for external support.

Anxious

Is it normal to have so much anxiety about being pregnant? We've always used a condom correctly, but sometimes I get so scared that I might be pregnant, and it gives me so much anxiety and I don't know how to stop it or control it (Anonymous, 2023).

MIL Opinions on Family Size

We have a 7-year-old, 5-year-old, and a 2-year-old. We just found out we are expecting again. My mother-in-law has made comments in the past ..."you have two of each, why do you want to have another one?" Today we were in the car together and she told me I should start getting rid of our baby items that we have stored away. Then she said, "Unless you have another one. GOD, I hope not! But you know...it's up to you". She has no idea that I'm pregnant right now. After she said that, I couldn't help but feel a bit upset. The only thing I can think of is that she has a different view on raising children and she doesn't agree with ours. Any Advice? Sincerely A sad and nervous mom (Anonymous, 2023).

Do You Feel Bad Sleeping with Other People

So, I'm 23 and have had some one-night stands, but I was in a 4-year relationship, so I was only having sex with one person. However, anytime

I sleep with someone that I'm not in a relationship with, I feel guilt. I don't regret it when it happens or anything, I just feel guilty, like I'm doing something wrong or dirty. I don't understand. I was raised Christian (I'm not anymore), So I was thinking that's why? I want to be able to have sex with someone and not feel bad about it. I envy the people who just have sex and don't feel any remorse. I don't understand. I want to be like that. I want to simply feel good about it. Anyone else? If so, why do you think this happens to you? (Anonymous, 2023).

Religion

I'm 14 and my hormones are crazy right now... I've never had a boyfriend or done anything..but I'm Christian and go to church and I'm scared that when I masturbate it's not like okay? Or like against my religion.....and I feel so guilty (Anonymous, 2023).

Parental Uncertainty

Women enter their reproductive lives before adulthood, and for many mothers, the decision to educate and provide birth control for their daughter can be a difficult decision. Younger daughters can be a tough decision, as contraceptive implementation can influence their hormones, emotions, and view of sex and fertility. A mother feels a responsibility to pass down reproductive knowledge, which influences the next generation's reproductive perspectives.

Should I Put My Daughter on Birth Control

She started her period this past October and got a boyfriend. She's 12. Anyway, she literally doesn't

go anywhere but school. I'm a stay-at-home mother, so all 7 kids are either at school, or home with me, or at church on Sundays. I don't want to do that to her body so young, but I think carrying a baby so young would be harder on it than birth control. Wouldn't I be irresponsible if I didn't? I dunno. I just want to be a good mom (Anonymous, 2023).

Barriers and Adversity

Women's choices are determined by the various barriers that prevent accessibility. One barrier seen in many cultures is the choices women wish to make are controlled by their spouses (Fortier, 2013). If a husband does not want his wife using birth control, and his word holds more value, a woman may not gain access to family planning methods. He may decide he does not want a child, such as the voiced experiences women contributed above. Several men wanted their partner to have an abortion, even when women voiced their opinions against it.

One culture-specific example of barriers is the view of family planning in the DRC. The number of children women contribute to the community raises their social status (Fortier, 2013). This is seen as a way to repay dowry. Simultaneously, the role of Christianity contributes to the negative stigma of contraceptive use in the DRC (Fortier, 2013). These are examples of the many different elements in a culture that may prevent women from accessing family planning.

Modern Contraception used in the US

Women's contraception in the United States differs from contraception in other countries around the world. The circumstances that dictate the funding, ac-

cessibility, and education of modern contraceptives are interconnected by many different socio-cultural factors. This includes, but is not limited to, religion, marriage, economics, politics, and warfare.

With so many factors needed to understand complex interrelationships, I would first like to define what birth control and contraceptives are. Sundstrom and Delay's book *Birth Control: What Everyone Needs to Know*, published in 2020 describes birth control as "any method that intended to prevent or regulate reproduction, including behavioral methods", while contraception is described as "the use of something artificial, usually a device, hormone, or medication, to prevent pregnancy during or after penile-vaginal intercourse" (Sundstrom & Delay, 2020: 8). It is important to distinguish between these two terms as this understanding can be a deciding factor for women in their decision to implement an artificial method. These two terms today in the United States are used interchangeably to describe "actions taken by humans to prevent or space pregnancies" (Sundstrom & Delay, 2020: 8).

The website for Planned Parenthood lists the different types of birth control, their upkeep, and how effective they are. The low maintenance methods include the arm implant commonly known in the United States as Nexplanon, and an Intrauterine Device (IUD). Both are 99% effective. The next category of birth control includes scheduled methods that require maintenance. Examples are the Birth Control Shot (96%), Birth Control Vaginal Ring (93%), Birth Control Patch (93%), and Birth Control Pill (93%). Following these, Planned Parenthood lists methods that must be implemented at every act of penetration such as Condoms (87%), Internal Condoms (79%), Diaphragms (87%), Birth Control Sponge (78-86%),

Spermicide and Gel (79-86%), and Cervical Cap (71-86%) (Planned Parenthood, 2023).

According to Sundstrom and Delay's definitions, the methods above are contraceptive methods. The following lifestyle methods are recognized as behavioral changes and fall under birth control. They are listed as Fertility Awareness Methods (77-98%), Withdrawal/Pull out Methods (78%), Breastfeeding as Birth Control (98%), and Outcourse and Abstinence (100%) (Planned Parenthood, 2023). These methods are important to recognize due to economic reasons. These can be implemented by sexual partners for little to no cost. The final methods on the Planned Parenthood website mentioned are permanent methods that are provided through surgery. For males this is a vasectomy (99%), and for females, sterilization (99%). Various methods have been used for "birth control" as a general term, and each has its own pros and cons based on the cultural perspectives of women.

Intersectionality between different elements in an individual's life can influence how women and their partners view "birth control" and how they choose to implement it. One example of this is Sundstrom and Delay's book where they describe the potential negative perspective of women in the United States: "Immigrants, women of color, and people with disabilities sometimes view contraception as a negative that some providers may force on them." Women from different backgrounds in their historical ancestry or own lives may perceive "birth control" as coercing them into forced sterilization. This perception comes from historical events in which women of undesired backgrounds or circumstances were forcibly sterilized and coerced in US history (Sundstrom & Delay, 2020). This example also applies to the forced sterilization of Native American women without their knowledge

during surgeries (Maguire, 2001).

Modern birth control is important to include in women’s reproductive health because of the effects it can have on a woman’s life. Birth control and contraception are a large aspect of the female experience in the United States. Sundstrom and Delay state that “99% of women have used contraception at some point in their potential childbearing years” (2020: 11). Birth control is a large determinant of how a woman structures her life. The choice to start a family is one that influences the educational, economic, personal, and social structures in her life. Her fertility choices intersect with many elements in the everyday experience of a female, not just in the United States, but around the world.

International Contraception

Women in other countries have different experiences when it comes to viewing and using family planning methods. Culture has a profound influence on how they perceive the morality and circumstances of using family planning methods. Many influences come from enculturation passed down generation-to-generation, but some come from other medical systems. Each culture has its own perception of contraceptive methods. In 2019, 922 million women of reproductive age (or their partners) were contraceptive users (Figure 1) (United Nations, 2019). The chart in Figure 1 shows that 44% of women use modern methods such as contraception technologies, and 4% use traditional methods such as herbal, rhythm, and pull-out methods. However, a little over 50% have an unmet need or no need. These categories can be influenced by many factors such as education, access, or marriage. Do women who report “no need” actually have no need, or are they unaware or separated from making reproductive

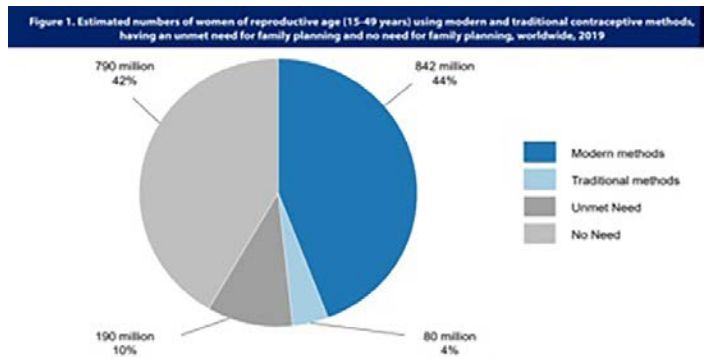


Figure 1: World Contraception Statistics provided by the UN in 2019

choices?

Women use particular methods of contraception based on their needs, safety, perception, and accessibility. Many women will have a preference between various

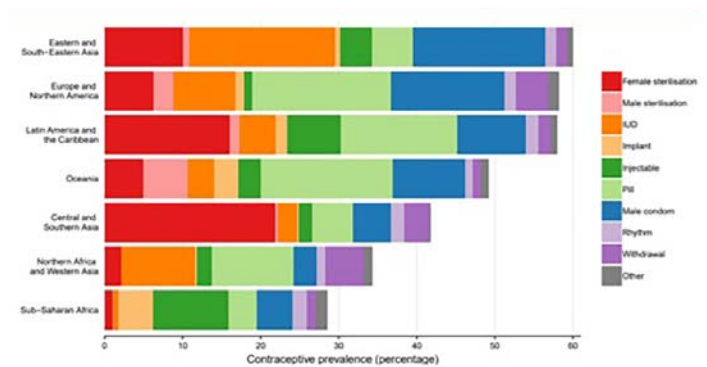


Figure 2: Contraceptive Prevalence by Method of Women of Reproductive Age by Region (United Nations, 2019).

methods. A second data table provides the rates of different contraceptive practices in the major geographic regions of the world during their reproductive years (Figure 2).

The United Nations provides data on what methods are primarily used on each major continent. Figure 2

provides a snapshot of what women are using with their partners but is not an indication of their preference. Percentages of preferred methods may change when women are provided more access to various methods. Women in Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe commonly use short-acting contraceptive methods such as condoms, while in Latin America, Asia, and the Caribbean, more permanent and long-acting methods such as sterilization and IUDs are utilized (2019).

Women's reproductive decisions can be influenced by a multitude of factors, and according to the United Nations, 190 million women had unmet contraceptive needs (see Figure 1). This is one example of how women struggle to make reproductive choices, as they lack the resources to do so (United Nations, 2019). Other barriers, in addition to accessibility, determine the number of choices women have. The many different types of contraception shown above demonstrate the range of options that may be available to women from which to choose.

Abortion

Abortion is an option women may choose when contraceptive methods fail (Joyce, 2014). Abortion is defined as termination of a pregnancy that ends with the expulsion of an embryo or fetus. An abortion is a choice, which differentiates it from a miscarriage. A miscarriage is a naturally occurring event in which the embryo or fetus is spontaneously expelled from the body (Medlineplus.gov, 2023). Two main types of abortions are described on MedlinePlus: Medical Abortion and Surgical Abortion. Medical abortions use pills such as Mifepristone followed by Misoprostol to terminate a pregnancy, while surgical abortions require a procedure to terminate the pregnancy, and remove the embryo or fetus (MedlinePlus, 2023;

Shinkman, 2023).

Religious Influences

Religion, contraception, and abortion are related because of the influence religion may exercise over family planning. Religions and their views of contraception and abortion can provide preconceptions and stereotypes. One pre-existing notion is that religions are firm and absolute in their ruling of abortion and contraception, which is false. Perspectives of religious groups are on a spectrum (Maguire, 2001). Religion and family planning are, therefore, heavily intertwined (Srikanthan, 2008). "Religious traditions are never seamless garments, though the faithful like to think of them that way. They are patchwork quilts, and not all the patches match" (2001: 53). The influences of religion and personal autonomy of family planning do not require the sacrifice of the other.

Catholicism

Catholicism is known stereotypically to be "anti-choice" when it comes to family planning techniques. The stem of this misconception has both historic and recent roots. Infanticide before the Middle Ages was widely practiced, and the Catholic church grew alongside cultures that practiced contraception and abortion such as the Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians (Haimove-Kochman, 2005; Maguire, 2002; Riddle, 1992). To say that Catholicism is strictly against abortion is to abandon several figures of the past that believed in women's reproductive health.

Abortions were widely practiced and seen as moral with the concept of *delayed ensoulment*. This concept imposed the idea that the soul did not enter a fetus until after three months of pregnancy. Catholicism even saint-

ed an archbishop named Antoninus for his work on abortion in the fifteenth century (Maguire, 2001).

The presumption that Catholics prohibit abortion comes from the Vatican Roman Catholic branch rather than the roots of Catholicism itself (Joyce, 2014; Maguire, 2001; Srikanthan, 2008). This prohibition mainly comes from the decrees of Pope Gregory IX and Pope Pius XI in the *Casti Connubii* (1930). It was prohibited because of links to witchcraft and sorcery, and the idea of abortion as homicide (Maguire, 2001). This view was reaffirmed in 1968 with Pope Paul VI in connection to mechanical and chemical contraception (Sundstrom & Delay, 2020) in addition to abortion. Bishops from fourteen different countries disagreed and declared they were not morally wrong for declining to follow his decree (Maguire, 2001).

It is here we see the dichotomy, with some Catholics believing that family planning is sinful, while others welcome it with open arms. Maguire's informant on Catholicism and abortion named Gudorf claims that teachings on abortions are underdeveloped, and the Catholic religion's view is also in development. How does this relate to culture? Catholicism is one of the many well-known religions that shaped the Euro-American world, and, as a popular religion, its influence is paramount from its spread during colonization.

Hinduism

Hinduism is another prominent religion in the world and has its own unique view of family planning and abortion. The concepts of *dharma* and karma are important. Dharma, "that which supports right living," is applied to morality, as it must be consistent, yet malleable, as situations change (Maguire, 2001). *Karma* is the concept that your actions have consequences in this life and the next

(Srikanthan, 2008). Hinduism prohibits abortion as one of the atrocious acts, but it is still practiced. It is seen as an atrocious act due to the disrespect of the *atman* or "the life principle or spirit" (Maguire, 2001: 50). The religion deems abortion as a karmic act that will affect one's reincarnation into the next life.

Despite this religious ideology, abortion is legal and practiced in India because women may have need of an abortion after being raped, acts of incest, or for mental health (Joyce, 2014; Maguire, 2001; Srikanthan, 2008). Women were practicing abortion with or without legal acts, and therefore asserted this need in the medical treatises (Maguire, 2001). This is one prime example of how religion can be independently followed, but women's rights and access do not need to be torn away in the process. Women will practice abortions and contraception without legal decrees, but this sacrifices safety (Joyce, 2014).

Buddhism

Buddhism follows the wisdom and teachings of Buddha, in following the four noble truths, and escaping suffering through the eightfold path. This includes the idea that excess greed and consumption leads to suffering. This principle to some Buddhists applies to contraception and abortion. They support reproduction, but also understand that excess children can cause hardship, and support the use of contraceptive use (Molitoris, 2019; Srikanthan, 2008).

Abortion is more difficult as Buddhists believe in reincarnation, and that life begins at conception due to the presence of "a being to be born" or *gandhabba* (Maguire, 2001). The rule of Right Action in the eightfold path also forbids killing, as this will have karmic retribu-

tion (Maguire, 2001). There are clauses, however, that may allow abortion, such in the cases of a mother with HIV, or to save a mother's life. It is important to note that this is true for some Buddhists but is illegal in some areas such as Thailand (Maguire, 2001).

There is, however, solace for Buddhist women who decide to have an abortion and those who provide abortions. Maguire's informant for the Buddhist perspective, Suwanbubbha, claims that a good woman or person that has built up good karma can outweigh the effects of bad karma. This provides emotional support for women who undergo an abortion procedure, along with the practitioner. Suwanbubbha clarifies the intentions of the abortion determine its seriousness and the moral retributions (Maguire, 2001).

Japanese Buddhism differs; they are familiar with family planning and have been carrying out abortions and infanticide throughout history (Maguire, 2001). Abortion, however, was still a serious topic, as children are treasured. The fetus removed during an abortion is seen to be put on hold, rather than terminated. The families do not forget the fetus, but instead the life of the fetus, called a *Mizuko*, is prayed for, and rituals are carried out by the family for the *Mizuko* in the sacred realm where it resides or has returned to (Maguire, 2001). The aborted or miscarried children are then protected by a savior-figure named Jizo, who gives them comfort in the realm of the Buddha (Maguire, 2001). This provides comfort for the parents and is partnered with a sex-positive view of intimacy. Sex in Buddhism is encouraged not strictly for reproduction, but also for pleasure, leaving the use of contraception and abortion as an option for families in Japanese Buddhism.

Confucianism and Taoism

China has a history in family planning during the Communist movement with its well-known "one child" policy (Maguire, 2002). This can be perceived with a negative stigma by Western societies, but in fact was used as a temporary emergency measure due to population pressures on the economy (Maguire, 2001). Confucianism and Taoism have played a large role in shaping the culture of China and created an environment where family planning was tolerated. The main idea supported by these two religions is that the peace and harmony of the universe should be the goal of human life (Maguire, 2001; Srikanthan, 2008). The way of the universe is called *Tao* and conforming to *Tao* is named The Mandate of Heaven. This is noted to be like dharma in Hinduism (Maguire, 2001).

The mandate of heaven is important when applied to family planning, as it calls for humility, self-restraint, and unselfishness. This is combined with the term *Jen*, or respect and compassion. Maguire's informant Shang explains that the Chinese were practicing family planning prior to the first records. This was due to the idea that reproduction can affect the balance and harmony of the universe. Confucianism and Taoism believe humans are all interconnected and made up of the same substance called Ch'i, and that their individual actions can affect their family, community, nation, and then the whole world (Maguire, 2001).

How does this relate to family planning? The view that we are all connected deemed social obligation as a duty to provide and keep harmony and balance. This allowed malleability with government policies for family planning. There was not much restraint by families because it was seen as a duty to balance the universe. Due to this ideology, the government was heavily involved in

family matters. Confucianism rewarded their society for having children, and even had a welfare system to provide for families with more than one child (Hardee, 2004; Maguire, 2001). The government would take care of orphaned children with a welfare system, so children were wanted and taken care of to prevent having too few people to help the nation's family, and when resources were scarce, the Communist party enacted the one-child policy to reduce stress on resources and expand economic growth (Hardee, 2004). Chinese culture also wanted quality over quantity when it came to children, so family planning was encouraged.

Taoism differs slightly, as the main idea was to keep competition for resources down, so fertility was monitored (Maguire, 2001). Taoism has a main difference with the idea that sex is part of health and happiness required for balance, so sex positivity other than reproduction was widely encouraged (Srikanthan, 2008).

Abortion, however, was not prohibited in Chinese culture. Shang described abortion taking place since ancient times by midwives (Maguire, 2001). Abortion played a part in the one-child policy because it was for the greater good of the society and rebalanced the universe. It is an action accepted with compassion or *Jen*, as it is for the benefit of not only the family, but of the community, nation, and world. Abortion is only looked upon unfavorably when it is done unnecessarily (Maguire, 2001; Srikanthan, 2008).

Judaism

The next major religion is Judaism. Judaism is a parental religion to both Christianity and Islam, and therefore has had a large influence on Western culture (Maguire, 2001). Judaism itself is, like the others above,

pluralistic in its perspectives of contraceptive usage and abortions. This is linked again, much like the other religions, to a sense of community. To have children is a gift bestowed by God, to produce the next generation to continue the vision of the Torah (Maguire, 2001). A woman has an important role in this, as she keeps the vision of the Torah from crumbling away with children, which Maguire's informant Zoloth describes as "child-making as worldmaking" (2001: 99).

Women and caregivers in the Jewish community hold themselves to the duty of *Tzedakah* or Justice, and to create a household of justice (Srikanthan, 2008). To care for the poor and destitute is one part justice, and childbearing, rearing, teaching, etc. is also seen as a fulfillment of justice (Maguire, 2001). It is important to note here that family planning to some members of the Jewish community is seen as planning to create more children, rather than plan to withhold or put off reproduction. Maguire describes that, like in other religions, quality is still seen over quantity in Judaism. To create the next generation, teaching the essence of *Tzedakah* is seen as more important than excessive child-rearing, as the time can be taken to fully teach the Jewish faith.

Historically, Jewish communities have used birth control called *Mokh*. This is a soft cotton pad seated against the cervix (Maguire, 2001). This was especially used along with nursing, as the current living child deserved to have primary care, and pregnancy during nursing was prohibited (Maguire, 2001). This is also observed in child spacing to reduce harm to future offspring and prevent complications (Molitoris, 2019).

Contraception is therefore allowed, and abortion has limits but is also allowed. The fetus is not seen to have a soul until the head passes through the vaginal canal and

is then known as a *Nefesh*, or person. A fetus, however, can be aborted based on the principle of duty or *Mitzvah*. Abortion for the sake of abortion is not allowed, but with each religion there are exceptions. Maguire lists a few as to avoid disgrace, for the health of the woman (Srikanthan, 2008), and if a woman becomes pregnant from another man that is not her husband (2001).

Duty has a role in the religious community that individual members and families play a part of. Historic events in relation to the Jewish community have created an atmosphere where reproduction is encouraged. Such events are those of Jewish persecution during the Holocaust. The community lost many families and members of the community that shared their vision of the Torah and the concept of *Tzedakah*. Directly after the Holocaust, the *mitzvah* of progeneration was encouraged to rebuild the community and contributed to families' motivation for reproduction (Maguire, 2001).

Islam

Islam is a religion that is stereotyped to be extremely strict and against women and their rights. This is not the case, and again has a pluralistic view like the many religions' perspectives described above. For Muslims, duty is to the *Umma*, or all people in the one family, in combination with justice, peace, and compassion (Maguire, 2001). Combined with the term *Zakat*, Muslims believe their moral duty is to distribute their wealth to the community so all people can live a comfortable life, and is one of the five pillars of Islam (Maguire, 2001). Every person created by God is a good person and deserves to live in comfort. This applies to family planning based on the principle that over-reproduction and consumption of resources is detrimental to the *Umma*, or the family.

Contraception and abortion are decided based on the principle of the *Ijithad* (Maguire, 2001). This term means that a logical answer is considered based on the moral principles of the Qur'an and the specifics of the situation. This comes from the idea that the principles can guide one in deciding morally, but one must come to a reasonable solution based on their own thinking. Contraception has been used in Islam and is allowed based on the use of *AzI*, or withdrawal (Srikanthan, 2008). Any contraception that does not create permanent sterilization is permitted based on similarity to the historic use of *AzI* (Maguire, 2001). The logic that also determines this is again for the best of the *Umma*, and Maguire describes it as sickly, underdeveloped, or undereducated children who are not of the best interest to the *Umma*.

The informant for this section, named Hassan, describes abortion as a pluralistic issue. Some in Islam are completely against it, while others believe over-reproduction deprives the children who are already born and, by extension, the *Umma*, and allow abortion up to the fourth month of pregnancy (Maguire, 2001). This varies as there are several branches of Islam, and every community may have different beliefs, much like other religions.

Protestantism

Protestantism was born from reformations against Catholic papal authority and clerical celibacy, so it allows marriage as one of the most holy acts (Maguire, 2001). These reforms were driven by tolerance, a perspective in which there are many views in this world that differ from one another, but those with a different worldview can still be good people. Like in every religion, there are fundamentalists, or those who follow extremism, such as the right-wing Catholics and Protestants in the United States

(Maguire, 2001; Srikanthan, 2008). Extremists can influence the government, legislature, and rights of others, but these make up a small portion of the religious community. However, many stereotypes come from views of extremists. Protestantism is pluralistic, but overall allows family planning and abortion due to the ideas that started the reformations against the Catholic hierarchy.

Native Religions

Native religions and perspectives are important to understanding that a patriarchal view is not innate to human nature. Like the persecution of Jewish populations, Native Americans have also been subject to assault and force born of persecution. Their view of family planning is one of non-European perspectives. There are many Native groups in North America and their views may differ from Maguire's summary of their beliefs.

Maguire explains that Natives believe in a story of the Land, in which all things are interconnected. This connection does not only extend to living things, but everything in the cosmos. From my understanding they believe that everything is equal, and no being, or thing, is greater than another. This is based on Maguire's explanation of Native respect for all they use, such as animals, plants, rocks, the list is endless, and their morals stem from gratitude. How does this apply to family planning?

According to Maguire, most Native Americans are pro-choice due to the worldview that women are unique in their ability to create and sustain life (Maguire, 2001). So much so that a woman has autonomy in her own reproductive choices. Women are seen as equals to men, and although there is a division of labor, gender roles do not determine status. That is because of a communal perspective. Like in other religions such as Buddhism,

Confucianism, Taoism, Islam, and many more, members must act in the best interests of the community. In this case, for Native Americans, what is best for the Land/Cosmos. Reproductive freedom therefore lies with the woman and is further strengthened in some groups by matrilineal social structure in which the woman is the head of the household, and the father figure is the mother's brother (Maguire, 2001).

A society in which women are given reproductive autonomy provides full freedom in terms of contraceptive usage and abortion. Maguire names a few groups in which a woman's reproductive choices are her own: Dakota, Lakota, Papago, Iroquois, Ojibwe, and Cherokee (2001). It is here we fully see the difference between the influence of *I-self* and *We-self* views. *I-self* communities are based on the needs of the individual, and each choice is based on what the individual deems best for themselves rather than the community, or the larger picture. *We-self* is a view in which members of the community do what's best for the community. This may seem like a small distinction but is a large factor in women's reproductive autonomy. There are many perspectives from Native People that can be significant for shaping the path of women's health, but intersectionality makes this process complex.

Discussion

Intersectionality and Women's Reproductive Autonomy

There are many factors that influence the degree of freedom women have when making reproductive choices. Family Planning, contraceptives, and abortion are only some of the choices a woman must make in her reproductive years. These choices then determine her education, marriage, social status, and health, both physical and mental. The choices she makes in these

years determine her status not only now, but when she can no longer reproduce (Bledsoe, 1998). These choices, however, are determined by the many elements of her culture and her own perspective.

Religion

Religion as discussed is a large indicator not only of a woman's beliefs, but the beliefs of the community she resides in. To go against one's culture—to defy a worldview you were raised in and surrounded by—can be alienating and detrimental to a woman's perception of her own self value. Religion is one of the many elements that create what we know as culture. Each religion has its own particulars based on the community, country, region, and leaders (Maguire, 2001). Religion is an ever-changing form that takes in all that is around it, and this is what causes pluralistic views in women's reproductive health.

What causes the plurality in religion? Religion is meant to be a unifying entity of the human experience. Religion is not the enemy of women's reproductive autonomy. Greed is. Greed is born of a need to overpower and control others, and this is seen throughout history in every culture. Colonialism, militarism, and capitalism are only some of the major components that have shaped religion and, simultaneously, culture.

We see this in many world events such as Columbus and his attack on Native Peoples, the persecution of the Jews prior to and after the Holocaust, every world war, every act of colonialism, and the enforcement of European concepts and ideals from missionaries in Africa (Maguire, 2001). We see this repeated throughout history with the slave trade, colonization of the Caribbean (O'Donnell, 2016), and the impact of warfare in Sudan (Elmusharaf, 2017). These are only fragments of the historical timeline

of our planet, and each has influenced religion, culture, economics, and politics, and leaves nothing untouched.

Religion is one element that women all over the world may be affected by, and the support of a woman's social network and community shape her choices. Women in the Catholic faith may view contraception and abortion as a negative choice because of the influence of the Pope on reproductive prohibitions (Maguire, 2001). One woman from the Eve Forum posts discusses her feelings of guilt because of her religion during one-night stands. Christianity was a cultural element in her upbringing and influenced her view of sex. On the other end of the spectrum, Native American women have full autonomy in their culture to make their own reproductive choices for the benefit of the community. Religion is a cultural particular that can affect not only a woman's voice, but the tone and volume of her voice. Reproductive health is a personal experience in each woman's life and can be influenced by many factors.

Sex Attitudes and Perspectives

The spectrum of women's authority over their reproductive choices is interconnected with sexual attitudes shared by the culture. Maguire brings up one of the most important influences of reproductive perspectives for both men and women, the view of sex. Sex is an innate act, seen beyond humankind, so why is the perspective of sex influential? Children in their culture will have a spectrum of attitudes on sex after coming of age. Much like Margaret Mead's found in Samoa, women everywhere will make choices influenced by either sexual positivism or sexual negativity.

A young teen on Eve reached out to other women because she had a negative view of masturbation, which

is part of a woman's reproductive life. She was influenced by religion as she is Christian, and consequently felt prohibited or shamed to explore her own sexuality and body. This is one modern example of how culture, religion, and sex attitudes can influence a woman about her reproductive choices. This can be seen in our day-to-day lives.

Cultural norms we may have parted from can still affect a woman's cognition and sense of worth sexually. The Catholic faith, in which sex is seen in some cases as purely for reproduction, often demonizes pleasure (Maguire, 2001). A community that chastises a woman for sexual acts will cause a negative view of sex as an act and of reproductive choices. This can shape a woman's choices about abortion, due to cultural shame, such as the assumption that a woman is a mistress or promiscuous. Other examples can be seen in such beliefs as Hinduism and Karmic accumulation. Worldviews of spirituality and invisible forces can deter women from seeking out contraceptives and abortions based on religious creeds.

On the other hand, some cultures combined with religion have a sex-positive view that can create an environment of support and comfort. This not only affects literal reproduction, but how women view their menstrual cycle. In Native groups a menstrual hut visit was not viewed as banishment for possible pollution, but to get in touch with their own spiritual power (Maguire, 2001). Native American groups are an example of this, but also can be applied to other religions on a lesser scale such as Confucianism. Women make decisions for the benefit of their society, and that in its entirety is reason enough for her choices. It is here we can see a dichotomy between religions based on individualism and those based on community. This dichotomy, however, is not as simple as this and is influenced by the prospect of power.

Perspectives and Power

Religion is blamed for discourse in reproductive health but is directed by greed and enriched by the wielders of power. Usually, this power is seated in the ruling government. Government on its own is to govern the people and create order for prosperous living, but intersectionality with economics and religion can be the main cause of discourse in women's reproductive health.

Religious extremists in positions of power seek to reassert the male monopoly over women (Maguire, 2001). We can see this with the gradual disappearance of midwifery. As men started to take over the medical field in the 19th century, women practitioners were seen as competition. Women began to be contained in some cultures to the domestic sphere of the home and romanticized with the advertisement of the "nuclear family" in patrilineal societies descended from European influences.

We still see this today, such as the current discourse in the United States due to the overturning of *Roe v Wade* (Shinkman, 2023). These decisions are not being made by the female populace of America, but by extremists in the government body. The governing bodies in some cases then use religion to enforce reproductive perspectives and prohibit use of contraceptives and abortion services such as Planned Parenthood, the Plan B pill, and others. The justification of prohibiting these services with religion is unethical and demoralizing. Religion is not a concrete rule book in which there are no exceptions, and to hold one woman to the standards of a religion she doesn't follow is cruel. Must she throw her own upbringing and worldview aside for another religion or culture?

For some women this has been the case. Such is the case for Native American women who were forcibly sterilized without their knowledge, and the prohibition by

the United States until 1978. They were only able to become women in their culture traditionally after the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, which publicly allowed a Dakota coming of age ceremony called *Ishna Ti Awica Dowan*. This is a practice by which girls become women by living alone. They gain control of their reproductive freedoms and are celebrated as adults, while being mentored by the elders of their community (Maguire, 2001). Dakota girls were losing a sense of identity due to the enforcement of colonial ideals up until almost the 2000s. From this example we can see the significant impacts of government and legislature on cultural communities and groups because of the promise of power.

Governments simultaneously influence the construction and availability of family planning services all over the world. Some examples known globally are the Cairo Convention of 1994; due to the misconception that family planning was only for wealthy societies to deal with overpopulation, less family planning resulted (Gillespie, 2004). Other countries around the world have been attempting to implement accessible family planning services, such as the Static Clinic System implementation in Bangladesh (Mercer, 2005), the acts of Peruvian women to integrate ideas and goals from the Cairo convention and the following convention in Beijing (Ewig, 2006), and the Use of Contraceptive Technologies in Gambia (Bledsoe, 1994). Governments influence not only healthcare, but funds, accessibility, perspectives, religions, as well as infrastructure and support for growing families.

Influence of Relationships

Influences from around the globe influence the perspectives and actions of women, but internal relationships inside the home are another determinant. A wom-

an's spouse or husband can be a place of comfort and support, or a cause of pressure and anxiety. Women from Eve voiced their uncertainty with their relationships in connection to reproductive choices. The support or lack of support from a spouse can influence the entire pregnancy along with child rearing. Each culture has their own customs that determine a woman's value regarding child rearing. In Renk, a region of Sudan, a woman's husband will be pleased when she contributes many children to the community, and the DRC has a similar view (Elmusharaf, 2017; Fortier, 2013). A woman's stability can be altered if her partner is displeased or wants to abort the child, or on the other hand, forces her to bear children. These women represent a common experience in the reproductive life of a woman. They feel trapped between appeasing their partner's wishes or choosing for themselves. For some women a sense of duty may sway their reasoning, but the choice is almost never without collateral damage.

Women look to other women, family members, and friends for support. The support of other women such as midwives, other mothers, and family members can also determine the medical and cultural knowledge passed down from other parents and help make decisions for the upcoming women in the community (O'Donnell, 2016). This can be a roadmap to improve women's reproductive health and experiences for the future.

Conclusion

Why do cultural particulars need to be considered in relation to women's reproductive choices? Women create and are a product of their culture. They have the amazing gift to create life and strengthen the community they are a part of. Some women are supported and celebrated, but others must survive the turmoil that is imposed by

their surroundings.

Choices are made in every aspect of life, and in this case, the unborn and born alike. Family Planning, Contraceptives, and Abortions are tools and skills that can be used when available, not only for prevention, but for reproduction. Negative events have shamed some women away from these practices, such as forced sterilization. However, all women should have the autonomy, educational resources, and accessibility to confidently make these choices. The world is constantly changing on every front, religion, government, economics, warfare, and now our environment. The time has passed for light conversations about women's healthcare, and ethnography must be conducted to truly understand the reproductive experiences of women and to hear their voices.

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CORA PEREIRA

General Anthropology

Cora Pereira is a Bridgewater State alumna who graduated in May 2023. Cora majored in General Anthropology, with minors in Global Religious Studies and Art History. She was mentored by Dr. Ellen Ingmanson, Anthropology Professor and Anthropology Department Chair. Cora grew up in Middleborough, Massachusetts and was influenced by the medical professions of her parents who worked in Saint Anne's Hospital. The influence of her parents' careers, along with her anthropological studies, created a drive for circulating, expanding, and elucidating medical knowledge. Cora Pereira's plans after Bridgewater State University are to complete Boston University's Medical Anthropology and Cross-Cultural Practice master's degree to further explore how medical systems can incorporate knowledge from other cultures to improve healthcare.

Speech-Language Pathologists Work in the Field: The Importance of Cultural Awareness When Providing Palliative Care

ANNE PIERRE LOUIS

Introduction

One of the responsibilities of a speech-language pathologist (SLP) is to increase an individual's communication skills no matter their race or cultural background. When the speech-language pathologist is working with a patient who needs palliative care, the pathologist's job is to ensure that the patient can effectively communicate their needs and preferences with healthcare workers and family members. While the treatment administered will not cure the patient, it is a means to elevate any communication issue that may arise primary or secondary to their disorder. The World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) stress the importance of considering the patients' physical challenges, their activities that have been affected, as well as their environmental context and beliefs about the situation (WHO 2001). However, around 91.5 percent of SLPs identify as white (ASHA 2021). Therefore, how competent are speech-language pathologists when working with culturally diverse patients? Since SLP services often serve the majority culture, challenges may arise with a pathologist's ability to service individuals from different cultures (Grandpierre et al., 2018). What are some key strategies that can be used to increase cultural competence?

Palliative Care Combined with Culture

Palliative care is a way to decrease a person's pain and increase their comfort while in those final stages of life. When treating a patient in palliative care, the entire healthcare team needs to account for their medical needs, whether physiological or psychological, and their preferences, whether the patient wants a feeding tube or not. Palliative care workers also need to account for the patient's spiritual, social and cultural identity, and beliefs (WHO 2021). However, minor discrepancies have been found in the people using these services and found that minorities are less likely to utilize palliative care services (LoPresti et al., 2014). Around 82% percent of Americans utilizing palliative care services are Caucasian, while only 18% are minorities (NHPCO 2020). The low percentage of minorities receiving this care may be attributed to the inadequate quality of palliative care catered to minorities (Boucher, 2016). Although speech-language pathologists cannot provide health care treatments not found in their credentials, SLPs are still an integral part of the multidisciplinary team that ensures the patient's comfort and ease of communication.

While working with palliative care patients within one's own culture may be somewhat simple, however working with a culturally diverse patient may be more complex. In addition, SLP may not know how

to comprehend or appropriately assess and treat culturally diverse patients. It has been noted that a lack of experience in the palliative setting may lead to inadequate care of patients (Gillian et al. 2013). Similarly, SLPs who are not well educated or experienced in palliative care may have a more challenging time within this setting, leading to compassion fatigue or burnout (Stead et al. 2020). If compassion fatigue is experienced, specifically with a culturally diverse patient, it will affect the clinician's ability to provide adequate treatment.

Coacting with Patients

As speech-language pathologists work with palliative care patients, the main goal would be to make it easier for patients to express their wants and needs to their healthcare provider- for example, a monolingual patient with cerebral palsy has minimal head movement. The clinician will have to develop a communication method to ensure that the patient can express his thoughts about the treatment and communicate with family members. However, if a bilingual patient has cerebral palsy and minimal head movement, the pathologist must develop a viable communication method encompassing both languages (Pollen 2020). While there are a few challenges when working with a diverse population, the first significant problem could be the language barrier.

Communication barriers such as language can result in consequential miscommunications between the patient, pathologist, and other health care providers. Referring to the ICF, this type of barrier hinders an individual to participate in the discussion about their treatment plan (WHO 2001). The language barrier will affect the clinician and patient's ability to understand one another, which will hinder the ability to build a

good rapport and trust foundation, leaving the patient frustrated. Patients who experience a language barrier with the clinician often are unwilling to participate or use whatever device the clinician recommends (LoPresti et al., 2014). This is also noted when the services and devices offered to the patient are not provided in their native tongue. Lack of services such as interpreters can also reduce the willingness to participate fully and sometimes show up for their therapy sessions (Grandpierre et al. 2018). Confidence is a recurring theme when healthcare workers are working with palliative care patients (Brighton et al., 2019). With the lack of trust of the patient, the clinician may not have enough faith in the treatment they administer.

A language barrier is certainly not the only challenge pathologists face when working with diverse patients in palliative care. In addition, SLPs need to consider the patient's cultural identity and beliefs. Every culture has its thoughts and ideas on the process of dying. For instance, African Americans and Hispanics have different views on hospice care, stating that African Americans have incorrect thoughts about palliative care (LoPresti et al. 2014). It was also mentioned that Hispanics believe that palliative care is not needed as family members are the ones to take care of their elders (LoPresti et al., 2014). In many cultures, religion is also considered a major driving force in the decisions in treatment planning. In Hispanic culture, it is more common to not receive palliative care, and, feeling some pain is a necessary part of the dying process (Laguna et al., 2014). Therefore, when working with diverse patients, it is essential to consider their religious beliefs when developing a treatment.

Coacting with the family

When working with palliative care patients, speech-language pathologists must involve the patient's family in the treatment plan. The connectedness of patients in palliative care with their families may relieve parts of the grieving process. Therefore, SLPs need to ensure that the patient can effectively communicate with their family. By including the family in the treatment plan, SLPs are essentially asking them what their communication goals are with the patient, offering them a wide range of communication options that will best fit their preferences and those of the patient. While wanting to incorporate the family member into the treatment, it is crucial to keep in mind the different cultural expectations making sure that they are appropriately included in the plan. For instance, one cultural population may want to be involved in every step of the treatment process, while another may seem distant and expect the pathologist to take care of everything. For example, Chinese families are less likely to engage in the session than families in the West (Verdon et al. 2015). Although different cultures have their levels of engagement, SLPs still need to establish a communicative connection between the patient and the family. Engaging with the family and having an open conversation to learn the family's culture and concerns related to the patient can increase an SLP's cultural awareness (Grandpierre et al., 2018). In addition, the SLP can figure out inventive ways to improve independent communication with this sort of communication.

The means of communication between family and patient can still be practical and creative. Patients can start with verbal communication depending on the disorder. As their communication deteriorates, patients and families can still use non-verbal communication, such

as physical contact. Family engagement is a time for the family and patient to share final words of affection and a sense of closure (Pollen 2020).

Coacting with the community

Even though the focus when working within the palliative service is on the patient and their family, it may still be essential to incorporate the community. Whether it is a religious or social community, the ICF suggests that clinicians should ensure that the disorder does not hinder the patient's ability to engage with their environment (WHO 2001). It was found that having the patient still feel like they are part of a community can benefit comfort and peace of mind (Verdon et al. 2015). One factor that influences an individual's belief system is religion (Laguana et al. 2014) (LoPresti et al, 2014). Religion is a fundamental aspect of a patient's belief. African Americans' and Hispanics' spiritual beliefs intensify near the end of their lives. When discussing with the patient, they express the want to be a part of a community still; SLPs must again develop a communication plan to increase the patient's ability to participate and autonomy within their community as much as possible (Verdon et al. 2015).

Engaging with the community is beneficial for the patient and the pathologist. For example, a speech pathologist working in a diverse community can have the opportunity to discuss with community members about their culture. This can help the pathologist and the patient be more congruous to their treatment plan, reducing any confusion that may reside in both parties (Boucher, 2016). Community interaction may also make it easier for the pathologist to assess whether the treatment method is culturally appropriate, using the information learned as a

reference for future patients (Boucher, 2016).

Increasing Awareness

If a speech-language pathologist does not have plenty of experience working with diverse patients, the best way to work around that would be to increase their cultural awareness when working with culturally diverse patients in palliative. Before meeting the patient, the pathologist needs to assess and reflect on their cultural beliefs and biases to avoid substituting their views for those (Verdon et al., 2015). Learning a patient's cultural background, keywords, phrases, and values can help the patient and family feel more comfortable with the treatment process. For instance, some cultures may not feel comfortable discussing sensitive topics such as death with a clinician of the opposite sex. If this is an issue, the pathologist needs to refer to another clinician that can appropriately take care of the patient (Grandpierre et al., 2018) (Verdon et al., 2015). To ensure that the patient is comfortable with their service, they can offer sources in their native language or use interpreters. It is also suggested explaining to the palliative care system and the views on death in the U.S. to alleviate some stigmatization the patient may have (Grandpierre et al., 2018). No matter the culture, the pathologist, keeps in mind the wants and preferences of the patient.

Training for the future

Working in palliative care can be emotionally taxing. If the SLP is not well prepared, becoming culturally competent may be challenging; future SLP will have to increase their knowledge of cultural diversity within palliative care with practice and education. For students who participated in an interprofessional education class,

most of the participants reported an increase in their knowledge and attitude regarding working with a diverse population in palliative care and with other healthcare workers (Liu et al. 2015). Similarly, it was also concluded that it would make a difference if future speech-language pathologists trained in those skills during their undergraduate and graduate schooling (Stead et al. 2020).

Educating students within palliative care can prepare future speech pathologists in this field. In addition, teaching future pathologists' strategies to use when working with diverse patients can increase their competence when delivering their services. Although teaching cultural competencies and palliative care in one setting may be challenging to teach in one classroom, it would be just as beneficial to teach those two subjects independently. New SLPs working in the palliative field may feel overwhelmed and may not be well prepared to deliver effective treatment (Stead et al., 2020). Having students study palliative care, including cultural awareness, can increase their self-efficiency in the field. Therefore, before raising the cultural competency levels, it would be essential to ensure that the pathologist.

Summary

When working in palliative care, speech-language pathologists must show competence when working with all types of patients, including those from a different culture. The SLP should also be aware of how the patient's disorder has affected their personal and social life, again referring to the ICF. However, some research has found that there is a dissonance in the ethnic population's use of palliative services due to a lack of knowledge of cultural diversity in clinicians (Boucher, 2016). Whether it is a language barrier or other cultural values, the job of a

pathologist is to ensure that the patient's communication ability remains intact until the end. If a pathologist is working with a patient from another country, they need to be aware of the cultural differences and issues. When developing the patient's treatment plan, the pathologist must communicate with the patient, family, and community members. Accomplishing this will offer the speech pathologist a baseline to correctly deliver the treatment.

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ANNE PIERRE LOUIS

Communication Sciences and Disorders

Anne Pierre Louis majored in Communication Sciences and Disorders with a Psychology minor. Her research was completed in the spring of 2022 under the mentorship of Dr. Karen Aicher. Anne presented this work at the 2022 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) national conference. She plans to pursue a master's in Communication Disorders to become a licensed Speech Language Pathologist after taking a gap year to travel and work as an assistant.

Byron's Orientalism: A Complication of the East-West Binary

LUCIENNE QUIRK

Abstract

Poet Lord George Byron reached his peak of fame in the early nineteenth century for his stories about the Near East. Until recently, his work was considered to be insular to his time, merely reflecting the interests of his time. However, modern scholars have revived interest in Byron through the lens of Orientalism, seeing how his work reflects ways in which Westerners create and control notions of race and identity. This work assesses three of Byron's poems covering the Near East, coupled with several primary historical documents detailing his and other British travelers' ventures into the Ottoman Empire. Both of these sources show that Byron complicates his portrayal of the East throughout time. While initially catering to Western expectations and audiences who have not visited the East, Byron later provides a more provocative and experimental portrayal of the East after the decline of Napoleon Buonaparte. This shift suggests that Western notions of Non-Western areas and peoples change in accordance with Western political stability, adjusting as needed to reflect a Western sense of order—or lack thereof.

I. Introduction: Byron's Brand of Orientalism

Lord Byron has received increased attention after the rise of postcolonial studies for his notoriety as an

Orientalist. Having published several poems and ballads concerning non-Western bodies and cultures, which he dubbed the *Turkish Tales*, Byron provides modern scholars with valuable contemporary sources that uncover early nineteenth-century British constructions of race and ethnicity. What Byron's work truly illuminates is the liminal space between what was considered "Western" and "Non-Western"; the gray area in which broad categories couldn't be liberally slapped onto an ethnic group that challenges categorization. Though he implied having authority over all Non-Western topics of interest, his actual travels were limited, and he spent most of his time in Albania: a region at the very end of the Ottoman Empire. During this time, he records being housed as a guest by Ali Pasha, the Albanian governor of Epirus (encompassing Albania and much of Greece). Rather than taking Byron's word and assuming his accounts—both real and fictional—are an accurate representation of the East, we are instead inclined to observe what Byron believes is authentic—and how these beliefs change over time. By viewing him as an Orientalist, we can question Byron's portrayal of the East, and how it may reflect the Western psyche.

After analyzing both his letters and his early poetry, it becomes clear that Byron initially simplifies the complex ethnic and racial identity of Albania and its people

by categorizing them as non-Western. Through doing so, he appeals to Western expectations and preconceptions of the Ottoman Empire, thereby attaining repute as an “authentic” source. We see Byron sticking firmly to this binary in his first *Eastern Tales*, namely Canto II of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. However, following major political upheaval after Napoleon's defeat, Byron later complicates his narrative on East and West. In the *Eastern Tales*, he publishes afterward— specifically *The Corsair* — Byron uses the medium not to mirror British expectations of the East, but willingly distort them to explore Western anxiety about maintaining identity in a post-Napoleonic age. Byron's changing portrayal of the Non-Western helps modern scholars understand how ideas about cultures and ethnic groups were constructed in the 19th century. Byron's work suggests that Western literature willingly sticks to comfortable binaries of East and West in times of stability, but complicates this very binary in an attempt to look for answers during a political upheaval.

This interpretation of Byron's work reflects the purpose of Orientalism as posited by Edward Said. He claims in *Orientalism*— the groundbreaking monograph that became the foundation for postcolonial studies— that the Westerners, also called the Occident, speak for and take intellectual control of the East, or the Orient. The true goal of the Westerner in speaking for the East is ultimately selfish in nature; the endeavor to control the East is not an attempt to understand the world at large, but rather to reflect on and explore the Occidental psyche. To achieve this goal, the West creates a definite line between themselves and those they do not identify with— an “Other” or group of Othered people. Other, Orient, East— all of these are terms that denote a “non-self”, one which is anything but Occident and Western.

By creating a “non-self” the West is at the same time creating a definitive identity: it is only through contrast that the West can become identified.¹ Therefore, Byron's shift from comfortably Othering the East to complicating all pre-existing notions of it is a stern reckoning for the Western identity in a time of chaos and uncertainty. Eliminating the very boundary required for Westerners to contrast and define themselves from the rest of the world, he opens up opportunities for Western anxiety to run free.

Previous scholars have looked thoroughly into Byron's time in non-Western territory. Much has already been discussed about his time in Albania with Ali Pasha— likely because Byron garnered fame for it. Byron gives himself moderate credit for documenting the country and its people in his notes to Canto II of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, which implies he is the first Englishman to truly know Albania.² Several scholars have understandably trusted Byron's assertions; indeed, even a contemporary biographer of the Pasha— a Richard Davenport— credits Byron with bringing fame to the Pasha and his demesne.³ However, postcolonialist scholars have begun to challenge the accuracy of the Occidental lens, revealing that his claims to authenticity are rooted in pre-existing Western expectations of the East.⁴ Byronist G.B. Rizzolo contributed greatly to the discussion by debunking myths that Byron himself had propagated about his Albanian experience. Contrary to what Byron likes to tout in his letters and imply in his verse, Rizzolo's work uses contemporary sources, both English and Albanian, to reveal that Byron's relationship with the Pasha was not as significant as described. The fabrications that Rizzolo brings to light are intriguing and bring awareness to Byron's shortcomings as a purportedly “accurate”

spokesperson for the East. It leads us now to wonder what other possible fabrications— emphases, omissions, and pure fiction— we can uncover in his writings concerning Albania.

Of course, some Byronists may not agree with Rizzolo's findings. Some have speculated that Byron had a sexual relationship with the Pasha, including Peter Cochran and Cecil Y. Lang. However, after considering Rizzolo's argument, inklings of a sexual relationship seem more likely a byproduct of Byron's own self-flattery and imagination than a compelling truth, which leads his audience into believing in a significant relationship between Byron and the Pasha. The psychological motives underpinning Byron's work lead us to wonder how his writing can reflect not just his own psyche, but that of the West at large.

II. Emerging Markets: Fact versus Fiction in Byron's Tales

The principal motive Byron had to inflate his relationship with the Pasha, according to Rizzolo, was a mix of both Byron's ego and fantasies. He both wanted the acclaim of being tied to a prominent leader— and he dreamed, it is speculated, of being his lover. However, different motives may possibly explain other intriguing fabrications in his work. We have a letter from Byron to Tom Moore in May 1813. Byronist Nigel Leask, commenting on Byron's advice to "Stick to the East", notes how the letter is laced with capitalist opportunism. He deserves full repetition: "Byron speaks like a Levantine or East India merchant who has tapped a lucrative source of raw materials in a newly opened up Orient which he feels will make a splash on the home market".⁵ This illuminates Byron's goals in publishing his *Turkish Tales*.

He aspires not just to build his own legacy, but to do so by having a keen awareness of his market and catering to the very demographic that will read and popularize his work. Of course, catering to any market necessitates the perfect product: one the audience will trust and consume. Knowing what the public wants could have easily affected Byron's portrayal of Albania.

In Byron's initial encounter with Albania, a Pashalik governed by the Ottoman Empire, Byron seems to have this market in mind. Byron writes details of Albania in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* that contradict knowledge that he shares in his travels, favoring a more Eastern portrayal of the region and omitting its Western elements. As a result, he creates media intended for British consumption and praise. Some discrepancies between Byron's fiction and the real Albania are too glaring to be mere mistakes. For instance, When Harold leaves for Albania at the beginning of Canto II, he "Bade to Christian tongues a long adieu".⁶ It implies that he is going to land entirely of non-Christians— which, as Byron knew, was not the case. The Albanian population practiced both Islam and Christianity. Ali Pasha is known to have spoken mainly Greek and maintained an advantageous relationship with the Greek Orthodox population in his domain.⁷ Byron expresses knowledge of this in his letters, where he says, "I like the Albanians much, they are not all Turks, some tribes are Christians...".⁸ He even states in a footnote to *Childe Harold* that there were Albanian soldiers who spoke Romaic, or Greek.⁹ His generalization in the *Pilgrimage* was therefore an artistic choice, one that the British audience would expect to hear from an Eastern travelogue. The very religious landscape of this complex culture has been Easternized to be gazed upon by the West as an exotic novelty.

Byron also Easternizes the Pasha of Albania himself. He makes the Pasha's character in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* conform to the preexisting Turkish stereotype, which is both predictable and "authentic" to Byron's Western audience. For instance, Byron describes Ali as "The bearded Turk, that rarely deigns to speak" (521).¹⁰ This would imply that the Pasha was standoffish. However, this does not quite follow through with Byron's account of the Pasha in his letters, which describes him as being conversational. Byron claims the Pasha "begged me to visit him often" and that "his manner was very kind" (228).¹¹ His own account of the historical figure does not match the version he created in his poetry. Even though the Pasha was amicable to Byron, he favored a more "Turkish" portrayal. Some may argue that Byron is not speaking of the historical Pasha in that *Childe Harold* line at all— perhaps he is making a generalization of all Turks. Yet the "bearded Turk" within the poem is described as "master of all around", implying otherwise. Byronists Marandi and Purnajmuddin are quick to point out that the Pasha is not a Turk, but an Albanian.¹² This Byron certainly knew, yet even in his letters he seems to pair Ali with the Turkish ethnic group more than once. He states that the Pasha has a dignity he deems "universal among the Turks",¹³ though Byron had at this point traveled no further into the East than Ioannina (within modern-day Greece). From grandiose statements of authority on the East to the more specific remarks he makes of the Pasha, it seems that Byron is imposing the culturally accepted traits of the "Turk", as conceived and understood by the English, onto a more complex historical figure— likely to secure a reputation for authenticity.

Byron's simplification of Albania into a predictably Eastern stereotype appears not only in *Childe Harold's*

Pilgrimage but also in *The Bride of Abydos*, published two years later in 1813. Here, we see discrepancies between Byron's impression of the historical Pasha and his fictionalized account. Byron states in his letters that the Pasha wanted Byron to think of him "As a father" and looked at Byron "as a son".¹⁴ He claims he was coddled by the Pasha and felt "like a child" when Ali's servants sent him sweets.¹⁵ However, the fictional Pasha in Byron's *Tales* is just the opposite. The Pasha named Giaffir in *The Bride of Abydos* is cruel and unfatherly. Not only is the Byronic hero of the tale revealed to not be the Pasha's biological son, but he is scorned by and later killed by the Pasha himself. It is interesting to note how the amiability and hospitality of the historical Pasha in Byron's letters are replaced by a far less gracious demeanor in the *Eastern Tales*. This is yet another example of how Byron is conforming to Western expectations of the East, knowing that his audience will more readily believe in a tyrant that is outright cruel than a cunning despot who knows when to charm.

III. The Pseudo-Eastern: Contemporary Accounts of the Pasha

Contrary to the *Tales*, contemporary British accounts of the Ali support that the Pasha in fact defied racial and ethnic categorizations. Ali Pasha seems to constantly be compared to the Other—the Turk— by Westerners, and then contrasted with those Turks in the same breath. For instance, Dr. Henry Holland from England served as the Pasha's doctor in Ioannina and documented his travels between 1812 and 1813, only one year after the publication of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Dr. Holland agrees with Byron that Ali Pasha does not have the stoicism of the stereotypical Turk: "There is not, either

in his countenance or speech, that formal and unyielding apathy, which is the characteristic of the Turks as a people; but more vivacity, humor, and change of expression".¹⁶ He later attempts to pin him into the "Turkish" category, but not without contradicting himself while doing so: "...his [The Pasha's] inquiries, though often showing the characteristic ignorance of the Turks in matters of common knowledge, yet often also were pertinent and well conceived...".¹⁷ He notes Ali's complexion, remarking that it is "...somewhat lighter than that usual among the Turks" (330).¹⁸ Both racially as well as culturally, the Pasha is difficult for Dr. Holland to categorize. He emphasizes the Pasha's surprisingly Western politics when stating he has "a degree of freedom from national and religious prejudices rarely to be found among Turkish rulers", and adopted "...improvements of more cultivated nations" (341).¹⁹ There was something confounding to Westerners about this Eastern ruler who applied Enlightenment ideals during his reign. Ali rendered the Westerner uncertain about the East, making it difficult for the Occident to speak for and categorize him.

This lack of empirical control over the East is unsettling to contemporary Westerners. This permeates the words of Thomas Smart Hughes, another Englishman, who also met the Pasha. His portrayal of him not only highlights the bifurcated persona of this Pseudo-Eastern Albanian but also the Western anxieties he creates through his mere existence: "With him faith and justice are but terms to dupe the ignorant or unsuspecting; and the most favorite art with which he is acquainted is that of deceiving all mankind".²⁰ Here we have language that paints the Pasha as a Freudian doppelganger or double, one who merely "deceives" the Occident with the guise of likeness. He is rendered vampiric when Hughes insists

that "No principles of religion, no ties of friendship, no dues of gratitude, will restrain him in his sanguinary career" (349). In a sense, it's the Pasha's likeness to the West that makes him such an anxiety-inducing figure: his land is at the very border of the West, threatening to usurp it.

This departure into the realm of history serves to color Byron's artistic choices. From the accounts of Holland and Hughes, it becomes clear that the Pasha as a historical figure was challenging to the West. At best, he confused the language of categorization that instills power into the observing Westerner; at worst, his very existence is a threat to the Western identity. As a result, conveying the Pasha as the complex figure he was would hardly have catered to the "market" Byron so desperately wanted to tap into. As a result, his *Eastern Tales* willfully interpret the Pasha as a strictly Eastern figure, to avoid discomforting his audience.

IV. "Sometimes Neither": Byron's Shift from Simplification to Complication

This seems to be the general trend in the earlier *Eastern Tales*, at least. Childe Harold and *The Bride of Abydos* find comfort in the expected and simplified Other. However, Byron himself cannot fully evade the growing contradictions he notices from his travels. He creates a paradox by calling the Pasha's reign "lawless law"²¹, creating a sense of disorder. Furthermore, he mentions in footnote B of Childe Harold that the Albanians did occupy a strangely undefinable space: "The Greeks hardly regard them [Albanians] as Christians, or the Turks as Moslems; and in fact they are a mixture of both, and sometimes neither" (131).²² He's conscious that the Albanians are a difficult group to categorize, and are perhaps the potential

for a complex, challenging story. However, the narrative in Canto II never deviates from its expected progression: Childe Harold sees the Albanians as barbarians and slaveowners, people untouched by Enlightenment ideals.

Though Byron shows an awareness of the complexity of Albania in his earlier *Tales*, this very complexity only becomes a central theme in his works later on. This begins in 1814— a year after *The Bride of Abydos* was published— with Byron's release of *The Corsair*. This story about a pirate saved by a Pasha's wife renders Albania a cultural and ethnic gray area. The complexity and contradictions within Albanian space are not merely an added footnote or learned observation, but rather the very heart of the tale. Instead of following British readers' preconceptions of what the East is, it purposefully turns those expectations on their heads. Take female empowerment, for example. When Byron visited Albanian territory in 1809, he was astonished by the lack of gender equality he saw. He remarked that Albanian women were treated like "slaves".²³ In Canto II of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Byron says that the Albanian woman is "tamed to her cage", her voice "never heard".²⁴ Westerners prided themselves on their acceptance of Enlightenment values of freedom and equality. Therefore, the East seemed the opposite: it was the dark edge of the world the Enlightenment did not illuminate.

This is a generally comfortable prospect for the West: if the East enslaved women, then it was easy to categorize them as Other. However, Byron complicates the enslavement of Eastern women in *The Corsair*. Rather than continuing the comfortable assertion that the East completely lacks female autonomy, and is merely a shadow of the West, Byron creates a situation where an Ottoman woman named Gulnare assumes

control. Not only does she penetrate her male superior with a knife— a phallic object—²⁵ but she then goes on to man a ship headed to safety, assuming Conrad's role.²⁶ Her existence in Byron's *Eastern Tales* provokes the British audience, challenging their ideas about the submissive, captive Eastern woman. Meanwhile, we see Byron himself challenging his own portrayals of Pashas in *Childe Harold* and *The Bride of Abydos*. Before, he was keen on emphasizing the expected traits of a powerful Eastern man: he would be suffocatingly patriarchal and insurmountable. Yet, through being killed in *The Corsair*, the Pasha stereotype becomes complicated. Certainly, the Pasha Seyd is patriarchal— we know this much from his treatment of Gulnare— yet his demise challenges his own masculinity, rendering him weak and incapable of defending himself against a woman.

This more complex portrayal of Albania notably aligns with a period of cultural instability in the West. Byron states in his letters that *The Corsair* had been "conceived, written, published &c." by February 18, 1814.²⁷ This aligns with the decline of Napoleon Buonaparte, a leader Byron deeply admired. On the same day Byron penned down his publication of *The Corsair* in his journal, he expressed anxiety about the emperor's future: "Napoleon! This week will decide his fate. All seems against him; but I believe and hope he will win— at least, beat back the Invaders".²⁸ Feeling this upheaval of power, and the sunset of a promising empire, Byron— consciously or not— reflected this very instability in his literature. Perhaps authenticity is not founded upon merely enforcing pre-existing conceptions— Byron could perhaps be more "authentic" by portraying the lack of stability in the world. Albania becomes a stage where the West rehearses its anxieties about shifting power dynamics, the potential regression of

Enlightenment ideals, and political and social upheavals.

This chaos also incited skepticism in Byron concerning all political orders. On January 16, 1814, he renounced any preferences in republics: “I have simplified my politics into an utter detestation of all existing governments... the fact is, riches are power, and poverty is slavery all over the earth, and one establishment is no better, nor worse, for a people than another”.²⁹ This cynical perspective on governance counters the linear and hierarchical narratives of his previous *Eastern Tales*, and foreshadows the chaos and shifting power dynamics within *The Corsair*. As Byron— and likely other Westerners— lost faith in the political systems they observed, literature about the East could become a space to voice it.

V. Historicity and Byron: A British-centric Legacy

Byron’s ability to evolve his work from mimicry of the East-West binary into a more open exploration of its gray areas won him national acclaim. However, his reputation as a leading source on Albania had not stretched outside the island, and the idea of Byron’s “authenticity” and role in speaking for the East has been propagated by English authors. For example, Rizzolo points out that Byron minimizes the historical influence of Major William Martin Leake. Byron only mentions him offhandedly in his notes and even drops his title in a letter to his mother Catherine, referring to him as “Mr. Leake” instead. However, Major Leake seems to have played a far greater role in Ali Pasha’s historical legacy than Lord Byron. In Alphonse de Beauchamp’s biography of Ali Pasha, published in French in 1822, he records the Major’s operation on the Ionian Islands in 1809 extensively. Meanwhile, Beauchamp did not even mention

Lord Byron’s visit, which should have coincided with his review of Ali’s feud with Ibrahim Pasha— an episode Byron mentions happening in his letters. Byron is only mentioned once to “happen upon” Janina as a “celebre poete voyageur” (also mentioning Hobhouse in the same sentence).³⁰ Compared to the twenty-five instances that Beauchamp mentions Mr. Poqueville by name, Byron seems to play an insignificant role.

Interestingly, an English biographer named Robert Davenport aspired to translate Beauchamp’s *Vie d’Ali Pacha* into English. However, he states in his introduction that “On examining it, however, I find it so inaccurate and incomplete in its statements... that I resolved to substitute a new work in its stead”.³¹ In his version, Davenport gives far more credit for the Western discovery of Albania to Great Britain, rather than France. He does so by minimizing the influence of the Frenchman Poqueville and elevating the travels of Byron and Hobhouse. Speaking of them both, he states, “The existence of Ali may almost, indeed, be said to have been first made known to the people of England by their writings”.³² When Byron is put on a pedestal for his work in Albania, it is not only tied in with his contemporary but it’s also confined to the British perspective. His legacy was aggrandized by contemporary British authors, who looked to their own countrymen as nationalist figures of influence in the East. Interestingly enough, even the British publisher of Alphonse de Beauchamp’s original French biography injected more of Byron’s legacy and influence into the work. In fact, the epigraph for the second edition (printed in London) are lines from Canto II of *Childe Harold*.³³

Dr. Holland’s account also mentions both the influence of Byron and Hobhouse. Yet, rather than inflating Byron’s legacy, his account seems to reveal his minimal

effect on the Pasha and his country. Holland recounts the time he spoke with the Pasha three years after Byron's visit: "I mentioned to him generally, Lord Byron's poetical description of Albania, the interest it had excited in England, and Mr. Hobhouse's intended publication of his travels in the same country" (331).³⁴ Dr. Holland himself seems to assign great importance to the work of Byron. However, the Pasha expresses only minimal interest in Byron. Dr. Holland recalls how the Pasha seemed quick to change the subject:

He seemed pleased with these circumstances, and stated his recollection of Lord Byron. He then spoke of the present state of Europe, enquired what was our latest intelligence of the advance of the French armies in Russia, and what the progress of affairs in Spain.³⁵

Clearly, from this passage, Byron himself is not of great import to the Pasha: he merely serves to remind the governor of his larger ambitions, which is to gain British military and political intelligence. Westerners are sure to believe Byron was an impactful figure in Albania, but this does not seem to be the case for the Albanian ruler. By peering outside of Byron's own self-aggrandizement, we can see that his fame for writing about Albania was merely insular to Britain.

Conclusion

The works of Lord Byron— from tales of traveling aristocrats to ballads of pirates and plunderers— may hardly seem to have substance in the 21st century. However, viewing these fantastic tales as a fantasy only detracts from the very real observations they offer about views on categorizing the East in the 19th century. By viewing Byron's *Tales* as an insight into the Western

psyche, modern readers can comprehend how "Eastern" ethnic groups were categorized to suit and reflect the current state of affairs in the West, and changed based on the West's own shifting identities and priorities. Further research could follow through with this interesting progression by analyzing how Byron's portrayal of the East continues to evolve past the abdication of Napoleon in Don Juan. Through further scrutinization, we can better understand the relativity of racial and ethnic categorizations, and possibly apply that lens to contemporary literature.

¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1978, p. 3.

² Lord George Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, note B, in *Selected Poems*, edited by Christopher Ricks, Penguin Classics, 2005, p. 130.

³ Richard Davenport, *Life of Ali Pasha, of Tepeleni, Vizier of Epirus: Surnamed Aslan, or The Lion*. Teg & Son, 1837, p. 318.

⁴ Seyed Mohammad Marandi and Hossein Pirnajmuddin, "Childe Harold's Journey to the East and 'Authenticity'", *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences*, 12, 14-27.

⁵ Nigel Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 13.

⁶ Byron, *Childe Harold*, ll.380.

⁷ Seyed Mohammad Marandi and Hossein Pirnajmuddin, "Childe Harold and 'Authenticity'", p.23.

⁸ Byron, 'Letter to Catherine Gordon Byron', from *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol. 2, edited by Leslie A. Marchand, p. 230.

⁹ Byron, *Childe Harold*, note B, 117.

¹⁰ Byron, *Childe Harold*, ll.117.

¹¹ Byron, 'Letter to Catherine Gordon Byron', p. 228.

¹² Seyed Mohammad Marandi and Hossein Pirnajmuddin, "Childe Harold and Authenticity", p. 20.

¹³ Byron, 'Letter to Catherine Gordon Byron', p. 228.

¹⁴ Byron, 'Letter to Catherine Gordon Byron', pp. 227-228.

¹⁵ Byron, 'Letter to Catherine Gordon Byron', p. 228.

¹⁶ Henry Holland, *Travels in the Ionian Isles, Albania, Thessaly, Macedonia, &c, During the Years 1812-1813*, Paternoster-Row, 1815, digitized by Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 333.

¹⁷ Holland, *Travels*, p. 335.

¹⁸ Holland, *Travels*, p. 330.

¹⁹ Thomas Smart Hughes, *Travels in Sicily, Greece &*

Albania, J. Mawman, 1820, digitized February 11, 2009, p. 347.

²⁰ Thomas Smart Hughes, *Travels*, p. 349.

²¹ Byron, *Childe Harold*, note B, 131.

²² Byron, *Childe Harold*, note B, 131.

²³ Byron, *Letters*, vol. 2, p.

²⁴ Byron, *Childe Harold*, Canto II, l. 541, 544.

²⁵ Byron, *The Corsair*, Canto III, l. 380-381.

²⁶ Byron, *The Corsair*, Canto III, l. 510-511.

²⁷ Byron, *Letters*, vol. 3, p. 243.

²⁸ Byron, *Letters* vol. 3, February 18, 1814.

²⁹ Byron, *Letters* vol. 3, January 16, 1814.

³⁰ Alphonse de Beauchamp, *Vie d'Ali Pasha, Visir de Janina, surnomme Aslane ou le Lion*, 1822.

³¹ Richard Davenport, *Life of Ali Pasha, of Tepeleni, Vizier of Epirus: Surnamed Aslan, or The Lion*. Teg & Son, 1837, vi.

³² Davenport, *Life of Ali Pasha*, 318.

³³ Alphonse de Beauchamp, *The Life of Ali Pasha, of Janina: Late Vizier of Epirus, Surnamed Aslan, Or the Lion*.

Including a Compendious History of Modern Greece, 2nd. ed. Lupton Relfe, 1823.

³⁴ Holland, *Travels*, 331.

³⁵ Holland, *Travels*, 331.

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How Gonorrhea Caused the Medicalization of American Blindness

ASHLEY SCHEPIS

In 1903, one-fourth of students in the Perkins School for the Blind, located in Watertown Massachusetts, were blind as a result of ophthalmia neonatorum, or conjunctivitis in a newborn. In the early twentieth century, many states passed laws that required all babies to be treated with silver nitrate drops at birth;¹ as a result of these laws, in 1913 only one student entered the Perkins School for the Blind with blindness caused by ophthalmia neonatorum. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, American blindness became medicalized because common causes of blindness became curable. When physicians took hold of blindness and claimed they could cure it; blindness became a medical condition. There are five main factors that prove the important role doctors had in preventing newborn babies from going blind: treating the child's eyes with silver nitrate drops, cleanliness, douching, treating the expecting mothers' gonorrhea, and giving and receiving an education on ophthalmia neonatorum.

Ophthalmia neonatorum is an infection that is a result of the eye coming into contact with the mother's infected birth canal. During the late nineteenth century, the term 'ophthalmia neonatorum' was used only for cases caused by *Neisseria gonorrhoea*;² whereas in the twenty-first century, the term encompasses all cases of conjunctivitis in a newborn. Ophthalmia Neonatorum

could cause blindness and in severe cases even death. Some children were born with the disease "well developed, and children have been born with eyes partially destroyed, demonstrating prenatal infection;" in a severe prenatal case a child can be "born with the corneae destroyed and irides prolapsed,"³ according to a Johns Hopkins nurse. The effects of ophthalmia neonatorum were devastating, if the child survived the disease they would have to deal with health and physical deformities for the rest of their life. There was a stigma that having both a physical deformity and a disability meant that the affected were worthless and unable to care for themselves.

Silver nitrate drops were considered the Credé method because Dr. Carl Credé first used them in 1880.⁴ Twenty-first-century medical professionals have acknowledged that the drops were a "significant preventative medicine triumph at the time when there was no effective treatment available for gonorrhoea."⁵ Credé was the Director of the Maternity Hospital connected to Leipsic University and, in 1881 "he announced that the instillation of silver nitrate solution into the eyes of all newborn infants would prevent ophthalmia neonatorum."⁶ Physicians were to apply "a single drop of two per cent. solution of silver nitrate to the eyes of children as soon as possible after birth."⁷ However, some physicians found "that 2 per cent silver nitrate is too irritating for to the

eyes of the newborn,” so they “reduced the strength of the silver nitrate to 1 per cent.”⁸ Physicians learned about the use of silver nitrate drops and Credé’s recommendations for application, however, with no widespread education or specific mandates requiring physicians to apply the drops as Credé instructed, many applied the drops at the percentage and means they deemed best. The application of silver nitrate drops varied from physician to physician which may have had an effect on the drops’ success.

In the late 1880s protargol (“a chemical combination of silver with a protein substance”⁹) was tested as a substitute for silver nitrate by Dr. Frederick Cheney. Cheney claimed that it produced “almost no irritation” and that it possessed “all the advantages of the nitrate of silver and none of its disadvantages.”¹⁰ However, he admitted that in some respects “the two remedies rank about equal.”¹¹ The protargol method was not as successful as silver nitrate but its research did aid the advancement of the silver nitrate drops and new discoveries during the initial process of curing ophthalmia neonatorum.

Although the drops would become mandated in most states, not all professionals in the field were convinced of their success. Carolyn Conant Van Blarcom, a graduate of Johns Hopkins Medical School and a part of the Executive Secretary Committee on Prevention of Blindness of New York Association for the Blind, sarcastically wrote in a 1910 article for *The American Journal of Nursing* that it was “incredible” that the discovery was made “nearly thirty years ago,” yet “44 per cent. of the children admitted to one school” in 1909 “were victims of ophthalmia neonatorum.”¹² She was not alone in her concerns but, Dr. Lucien Howe attempted to correct some of these concerns. Howe admitted that

the Credé method was “far from perfect, and not always reliable” but stood by the fact that “it is the best”¹³ they had.

Some doctors, including a Philadelphia ophthalmologist Louis Lehrfeld, M.D., believed that silver nitrate was not much more than an irritant and that treatment of the mother’s gonorrhoea led to a decrease in babies with ophthalmia neonatorum. Lehrfeld argued in a 1935 report that “in no phase of public health is the child knowingly exposed to an infection and then an attempt made to prevent that infection by a single drop of germicide.”¹⁴ Whether or not silver nitrate was a tool to cure blindness or to cause it, “in hospitals where a careful attempt was made to treat gonorrhoea in the expectant mother, the incidence rate of ophthalmia neonatorum was one-fifth that of hospitals where no attempt was made to treat the gonorrhoea.”¹⁵ Treatment of the expecting mother’s gonorrhoea is efficient in preventing ophthalmia neonatorum before the child is born.

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind [MCB] echoed this idea in its 1910 report *Ophthalmia Neonatorum: A Social Service Study of 116 Cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum Cared for in the Wards for the Treatment of Infections Ophthalmia of the Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary, October 1908-October 1909*. It found that of the 116 babies with ophthalmia neonatorum, very few of them were “from the various lying-in hospitals, where the cause of the infection must frequently exist in patients,” and they concluded that was likely “accounted for by the practically general use of prophylactics”¹⁶ in these hospitals.¹⁷ Since ophthalmia neonatorum can result in death, the death rate for children infected was “more than twice the percentage of infant mortality in the state;” which furthered the “argument for

the use of prophylaxis.”¹⁸ Curing gonorrhea would not only protect the mother from infertility and the uncomfortable medical symptoms of a sexually transmitted disease, but it would also save the child from the risk of ophthalmia neonatorum.

Yet at the time, as Lehrfeld pointed out, there were no federal laws requiring “the treatment of gonorrhea in the expectant mother in the prevention of ophthalmia neonatorum.”¹⁹ Helen Keller, an American deaf-blind author and disability rights activist of the 20th century, among others worked not only to call “for public support of the campaign against ophthalmia neonatorum,”²⁰ but also to make sure that the mother was not to blame for the disease – even though the transmission was between mother and child. In an article for *Ladies Home Journal* in 1901, Keller explained what ophthalmia neonatorum is, its consequences, and its cure. Keller was careful to point out the mother’s innocence because she received the gonorrheal infection from her husband and his “licentious relationships.”²¹ Keller called for the treatment of the mother’s gonorrhea because she thought that “every child should be protected before his birth,” and that “every child has a right to be well born.”²² Preventing infection was an important start to making sure no child suffered, and no mother suffered a lifetime of guilt. Blindness was not inherently bad but the stigma it carried, and the life created for the blind during the ninetieth and twentieth centuries led to struggle.

Another method that was successful in curing ophthalmia neonatorum was douching, when douching the babies’ eyes Holt and his team would spray or shower the eyes with water. E. E. Holt, M.D. wrote an article for the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1901

about how he treated a patient suffering from a severe case of ophthalmia neonatorum. Holt did not decide to douche the baby’s eyes because he thought that silver nitrate drops did not work, he douched the baby’s eyes because “it seemed to [him] that continuing the ordinary methods of treating eyes in such cases would preserve much sight for the child.”²³ He thought that “if the eyes could be thoroughly douched and all the secretions from the conjunctiva kept constantly washed away there would be some chance of saving the sight.”²⁴ After five days of frequent and consistent douching Holt reported that “the baby was opening its eyes and looking about the room,”²⁵ this was a remarkable breakthrough for Holt, his team, and the medical community. Holt reported that “the same method of douching [was] carried out on other cases in about the same critical condition with the same happy result,”²⁶ but he did not think that douching was the solution for ophthalmia neonatorum. Holt believed that silver nitrate drops should be used first as prevention, but douching should be used on babies in critical condition.

Unfortunately, physicians were not always aware of what ophthalmia neonatorum looked like in infants, resulting in the child going without treatment and a preventable loss of vision. The urgency and knowledge of both nurses and doctors played an important role in not only the survival of a child’s eyesight but also their lives. The MCB not only said that in almost every case the cause of disablement was a result of “failure on the part of the physician to recognize and give warning of the serious nature of the disease” but also that in the case of secondary infections, the physician should be held “responsible if the cause of infection was present and he [had] not properly warned the mother and attendants of the danger to the child’s eyes.”²⁷ As a result, there was a

Massachusetts law that stated that any nurse that failed “to report in writing to Board of Health within 6 hours any discharge, swelling, inflammation or redness in eyes of”²⁸ the child would be fined. The law applied to physicians as well, stating that physicians would be fined “for refusal or neglect to report case under his care of inflamed, red, swollen or discharging eye in” a newborn child.²⁹

The cleanliness of the doctors and nurses who cared for the infected children was also important. Van Blarcom stereotypes midwives as “hopelessly ignorant, dirty, and careless”³⁰ yet, she admitted that better educating these women was “an important factor in the suppression of a disease occurring at birth.”³¹ Unfortunately, not all midwives, especially Black midwives could read.³² Being unable to read affected their ability to learn about health concerns and conditions through printed text and how doctors viewed midwives and their ability to learn. Van Blarcom went as far as to say, “Seven thousand persons handicapped, blighted, deprived of the keen joy which comes through visual perceptions—blind as a result of ignorance and neglect.”³³

Blindness was seen as an embarrassment in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Van Blarcom explained how far parents would go to hide their embarrassing children in the article “Ophthalmia Neonatorum as a Cause of Blindness.” When a family had a blind child, they may not be sent to school or even registered in the census. Parents often assumed that blindness meant the child “must also be deficient in other ways, and neither mental nor physical activity is encouraged.”³⁴ Therefore, no “one hear[d] of children, live human beings, actually living in the bottom bureau drawers, in boxes under beds, etc.”³⁵ These children were sentenced to a life of “living less than a vegetable,”

because “vegetables do have air and sunlight.”³⁶ So, these “helpless, defenseless” babies “were cheated out of a birthright more precious than the spark of life remaining for them.”³⁷ The treatment of blind people and blind babies during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was devastating and society lacked the means to allow the children to live meaningful lives if they survived. Nor did it allow those children to acquire the knowledge and skills they needed to thrive in adulthood.

For the blind who did survive into childhood and adulthood, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind suggested that they were “perhaps less fortunate” than the babies who died because they would have to “grope their way through life.”³⁸ Even if they were not completely blinded by the disease it sentenced a “helpless baby”³⁹ to a life of hardship. Those made blind in one eye were “handicapped in sight and appearance” and because of that their “chance of going through life successfully is hardly more than half that of the person with normal vision.”⁴⁰ Others were “disfigured by scars on the eyes, and disabled by defective vision.”⁴¹ Public schools considered blind children “defective,”⁴² and not all families had access to a school for the blind. Even if the child was not left completely blind, they would likely face discrimination for the rest of their lives because of a visual impairment or a facial abnormality.

Many people assumed that the life of a blind person was full of “irrepressible loneliness and weariness, because, unable to read or write, and uninstructed in any form of useful employment, they are doomed to sit in idleness both of body and mind.”⁴³ However, Francis H. Rowley, an American Baptist Minister and animal welfare advocate, follows this statement by writing “Almost nothing [...] lies beyond the reach of the patience and

persistence of those deprived of sight.” Rowley was calling for proper aid for the blind: “Help to help themselves—that is what they long for.”⁴⁴ Without proper blind education, blind people were almost entirely dependent on their friends and family; yet they were fully capable human beings, they needed acceptance and inclusion.

Schools for the blind did allow blind students to gain a meaningful education they would not have gained otherwise, which set them up to be at least somewhat independent in life and have the possibility of gaining a job. An anonymous writer for the Boston Beacon pointed out that blind people struggled to provide for themselves whether or not they had a proper blind education, “blind mechanics and artisans [...were] unable to make a fair living, or to obtain living prices for their labor” because they had “to compete with prison labor.”⁴⁵ Sadly and ironically this seemed to point out that blindness was a prison to those it affected. The blind that managed to break free of some of the restrictions placed on them still struggled to make a living for themselves, yet they had to beg not for charity but “for protection and,” luckily, some believed that “their case [was] very strong.”⁴⁶ However, the change did not happen overnight.

Twenty years later (1906), the blind were starting to work in six Massachusetts factories. The stigma that blind people were mentally lacking was still prevalent, which can be seen through the works of an anonymous writer for the New York Press who wrote, “Such great strides have been made in educating the blind to overcome their deficiency that there is at present an astonishing variety of work which they are able to perform.”⁴⁷ Also, before the opportunity to work in these factories, “nothing ever opened up such hope to the thousands of poor people afflicted with blindness.”⁴⁸ This newspaper article views

the blind as second-class citizens in need of help because being blind is a condition of “misery which found relief only in death.”⁴⁹

Physicians wanted to cure ophthalmia neonatorum partially because of genuine care and because they wanted to save the state money. Blindness in the twenty-first century is not seen the same way as it was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the past, blindness had secured a person an undesirable life; people affected may not have received proper education, or any education which meant they were unable to provide for themselves. Although the state did not provide a very comfortable life for the blind, some people thought what they did provide was too much, and by curing ophthalmia neonatorum and mandating the cure the state could “protect itself against unnecessary taxation.”⁵⁰

Whether or not physicians truly believed that the blind were a burden on the state they certainly argued the idea to push for legislation that required treatment at birth. The “needlessly blind [have] amounted to millions of dollars”⁵¹ the state would have had if they treated the children at birth. Van Blarcom went on to say that the “cost of the needlessly blind” in New York state exceeded “\$100,000 a year,” but the “annual cost of not more than \$5000, would have saved all of those eyes.”⁵² Howe also argued this but said not spending money on silver nitrate drops was “to say nothing of the suffering of the victims of such negligence,” and that “it was the right and duty of the state to enforce such treatment.”⁵³ Physicians of the time were likely arguing that the blind was a burden of the state in order to prevent future children from “a lifetime of darkness.”⁵⁴ However, in doing so, they furthered the idea that blindness meant a poor life. Had blindness not carried a stigma of inability and a fate worse than death,

the state would not have had to take as much care of the blind, nor would their lives be seen as pitiable.

The consequences of the medicalization of blindness, particularly the discovery of the use of silver nitrate drops were both positive and negative. The discovery and success of silver nitrate drops led to the ability to cure ophthalmia neonatorum and in turn the discovery of other methods to cure the disease as well. However, skeptics were not wrong in questioning the silver nitrate drop method as the drops did cause chemical ophthalmia⁵⁵, nor did the method always work. Despite not being a perfect solution, silver nitrate drops were successful, and they also brought attention to the ophthalmia neonatorum epidemic and societal views of blindness.

The medicalization of blindness called many issues into question including, what it meant to be blind; how blind people should be treated; proper treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, particularly gonorrhea, in expecting mothers; and the transmission of those diseases. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, American blindness became medicalized because a leading cause of blindness, ophthalmia neonatorum, became curable. When physicians found a cure for ophthalmia neonatorum, blindness became a medical condition. Carl Credé's cure was a groundbreaking discovery that bettered the lives of thousands of children for decades.

¹ Minutes of House of Delegates: Atlantic City Session, "Progress of Ophthalmia Neonatorum Campaign in States and Territories, May 1909," in *Journal of the American*

Medical Association, 52, no. 25 (June 1909): 2050-2051.

² Dorothy L. Moore, Noni E. MacDonald and the Canadian Pediatric Society, Infectious Disease and Immunization Committee, "Preventing ophthalmia neonatorum," in *Canadian Journal of Infectious Diseases and Medical Microbiology*, 53, no. 3 (May/June 2015): 122-125.

³ A prolapsed iris is observed when the iris tissue is observed outside of a corneal wound.

Carolyn Conant Van Blarcom, "Ophthalmia Neonatorum as a Cause of Blindness," in *The American Journal of Nursing*, 10, no. 10 (July 1910): 724-734.

⁴ Moore, MacDonald and the Canadian Pediatric Society, Infectious Disease and Immunization Committee, "Preventing ophthalmia neonatorum," 122.

⁵ Moore, et al., "Preventing ophthalmia neonatorum," 122.

⁶ Van Blarcom, "Ophthalmia Neonatorum as a Cause of Blindness," 726.

⁷ Howe, "Credé's method for the Prevention of Purulent Ophthalmia of Infancy in Public Institutions," 52.

⁸ Louis Lehrfeld, "Limitations of the use of Silver Nitrate in Prevention of Ophthalmia Neonatorum: Report of a Survey of Nearly 28,000 Hospital Birth Records and 2,000 Cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum," in *Journal of the American Medical Association*, (April 1935): 1468-1469.

⁹ Frederick E. Cheney, "Protargol as a Substitute for Nitrate of Silver in Ophthalmia Neonatorum and Other

Conjunctival Diseases.," in *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 139, no. 8, (August 25, 1898): 194-195.

¹⁰ Cheney, "Protargol as a Substitute for Nitrate of Silver in Ophthalmia Neonatorum and Other Conjunctival Diseases," 194.

¹¹ Cheney, "Protargol as a Substitute for Nitrate of Silver in Ophthalmia Neonatorum and Other Conjunctival Diseases," 194.

¹² Van Blarcom, "Ophthalmia Neonatorum as a Cause of Blindness," 726.

¹³ Lucien Howe, "Credé's method for the Prevention of Purulent Ophthalmia of Infancy in Public Institutions," in *Transactions of the American Ophthalmological Society*, (1897): 52-63.

¹⁴ Lehrfeld, "Limitations of the use of Silver Nitrate in Prevention of Ophthalmia Neonatorum," 1468.

¹⁵ Lehrfeld, "Limitations of the use of Silver Nitrate in Prevention of Ophthalmia Neonatorum," 1468.

¹⁶ A medicine or course of action used to prevent disease.

¹⁷ Massachusetts Commission for the Blind [MCB], *Ophthalmia Neonatorum: A Social Service Study of 116 Cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum Cared for in the Wards for the Treatment of Infections Ophthalmia of the Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary, October 1908-October 1909*, (Boston: Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, 2010).

¹⁸ An action taken to prevent disease, especially by specified means or against a specific disease.

¹⁸ Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, *Ophthalmia Neonatorum*, 14.

¹⁹ Lehrfeld, "Limitations of the use of Silver Nitrate in Prevention of Ophthalmia Neonatorum," 1469.

²⁰ Frances Koestler, "The Perfect Symbol," in *The Unseen Minority: A Social History of Blindness in the United States*, (United States: AFB Press, 2004).

²¹ Helen Keller, "I Must Speak," in *Ladies Home Journal*, (January 1901).

²² Keller, "I Must Speak."

²³ E. E. Holt, "The Douche in the Treatment of Ophthalmia Neonatorum," in *Journal of the American Medical Association*, (January 1901): 35.

²⁴ Holt, "The Douche in the Treatment of Ophthalmia Neonatorum," 35.

²⁵ Holt, "The Douche in the Treatment of Ophthalmia Neonatorum," 35.

²⁶ Holt, "The Douche in the Treatment of Ophthalmia Neonatorum," 35.

²⁷ Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, *Ophthalmia Neonatorum*, 15.

²⁸ Minutes of House of Delegates, "Progress of Ophthalmia Neonatorum Campaign in States and Territories, May 1909," 2051.

²⁹ Minutes of House of Delegates, "Progress of Ophthalmia Neonatorum Campaign in States and Territories, May 1909," 2051.

³⁰ Van Blarcom, "Ophthalmia Neonatorum as a Cause of Blindness," 731.

³¹ Van Blarcom, "Ophthalmia Neonatorum as a Cause of Blindness," 731.

³² Van Blarcom, "Ophthalmia Neonatorum as a Cause of Blindness," 732.

³³ Van Blarcom, "Ophthalmia Neonatorum as a Cause of Blindness," 725.

³⁴ Van Blarcom, "Ophthalmia Neonatorum as a Cause of Blindness," 729.

³⁵ Van Blarcom, "Ophthalmia Neonatorum as a Cause of Blindness," 729.

³⁶ Van Blarcom, "Ophthalmia Neonatorum as a Cause of Blindness," 729.

³⁷ Van Blarcom, "Ophthalmia Neonatorum as a Cause of Blindness," 729.

³⁸ Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, *Ophthalmia Neonatorum*, 16.

³⁹ Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, *Ophthalmia Neonatorum*, 16.

⁴⁰ Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, *Ophthalmia Neonatorum*, 16.

⁴¹ Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, *Ophthalmia Neonatorum*, 16.

⁴² John T. Prince, "Defective Children and the Public Schools," in *Education* 24, no. 6 (February 1904): 340–43.

⁴³ Francis H. Rowley, "A Call to a Pressing Duty," in *Boston Transcript*, February 25, 1903.

⁴⁴ Rowley, "A Call to a Pressing Duty."

⁴⁵ Unknown, in *Boston Beacon*, March 20, 1886.

⁴⁶ Unknown, in *Boston Beacon*, March 20, 1886.

⁴⁷ Unknown, "Employment for the Blind: From the New York Press," in *the Union*, March 21, 1996.

⁴⁸ Unknown, "Employment for the Blind: From the New York Press," in *the Union*, March 21, 1996.

⁴⁹ Unknown, "Employment for the Blind: From the New York Press," in *the Union*, March 21, 1996.

⁵⁰ Howe, "Credé's method for the Prevention of Purulent Ophthalmia of Infancy in Public Institutions," 59.

⁵¹ Van Blarcom, "Ophthalmia Neonatorum as a Cause of Blindness," 731.

⁵² Van Blarcom, "Ophthalmia Neonatorum as a Cause of Blindness," 731.

⁵³ Howe, "Credé's method for the Prevention of Purulent Ophthalmia of Infancy in Public Institutions," 52.

⁵⁴ Van Blarcom, "Ophthalmia Neonatorum as a Cause of Blindness," 730.

⁵⁵ Chemical ophthalmia is conjunctivitis caused by a chemical.

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