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# Journal of Undergraduate Research

ROLE OF ACCOMPANIMENT  
ON THE REDUCTION OF  
STIGMATIZATION AND THE  
RENEWAL OF DIGNITY IN  
WOMEN BATTLING BREAST  
CANCER IN UGANDA  
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UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
COLLEGE OF ARTS & LETTERS



2016-2017 ONLINE EDITION

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, many thanks to the College of Arts & Letters, which has provided generous support to the production of this Journal. We are proud to represent the College and to showcase exemplary research drawing from more than sixty academic majors and minors in the College of Arts and Letters. Special thanks to Brenda Teshka for her steadfast encouragement and assistance throughout the year.

We take this opportunity to express immense gratitude and pride for our board of dedicated Editors. They have devoted respect and care to each of the papers we have considered throughout the semester, and we can only say that it has been an honor and a pleasure to oversee the *Journal* with them this year.

Lastly, it is the *Journal's* readership that makes this publication possible. Thank you!

## NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

This past year has been one of remarkable sociopolitical change and upheaval. As TV news and Facebook posts generally reflect gut reactions to events as they happen, academia continues to offer vibrant and thoughtful critiques on how these events shape and contribute to an existing body of work on how we understand the world.

Notre Dame's undergraduate scholars have responded to today's challenges with academic rigor and zeal, and we are proud to showcase more of their work than ever before in the history of the Journal. This year's publication includes a total of eleven pieces—four in print, and seven online, spanning a wide array of research areas, from immigration policy to World War II literature, and education policy to neuroscience. We have made an effort to publish pieces that represent the full range of disciplines within the College of Arts and Letters, and the vetting process for such a diverse array of papers has required both discipline and open-minded criticism from our Editorial Board.

We hope you enjoy.

Jenn Cha and Brendan Coyne  
Editors-in-Chief

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**SARAH FRACCI** is a senior graduating with a major in Biological Sciences and minors in Poverty Studies and International Development Studies. Sarah has strong interests in cancer biology research, as she is a member of the Zhang laboratory at the Harper Cancer Research Institute of Notre Dame, and also poverty and social policy research. As a Biological Sciences Honors student, Sarah pursued a thesis study on the tumor-microenvironment of breast cancer tumors. Moving beyond the lab, Sarah pursued her dual interests in biological and social aspects of health, specifically breast cancer, through a collaborative research investigation with the Uganda Cancer Institute. Upon graduation, Sarah plans to continue her work on breast cancer research for a year before pursuing medical school. Sarah expresses her extreme gratitude and appreciation for her research collaborators and mentors including: Dr. Siyuan Zhang, Sara Sievers, Father Robert Dowd, Ilaria Schnyder, Dr. Noleb Mugisha and Nanfuka Immaculate.



# **Role of Accompaniment on the Reduction of Stigmatization and the Renewal of Dignity in Women Battling Breast Cancer in Uganda**

**SARAH FRACCI**

## **Abstract**

The incidence of breast cancer in Uganda has more than quadrupled from 1961 to 2015 (Ainebyoona, 2015), yet stigmatization remains a significant barrier to tackling the disease. In this work, I seek to determine how certain interpersonal relationships can decrease stigmatization and enhance previously lost dignity within the lives of breast cancer patients. Based on interviews conducted with breast cancer patients and survivors between July and September, 2016 in Kampala, Uganda, I have found that certain characteristics of relationships with family members, friends, and other acquaintances often determine whether or not a woman will seek breast cancer screening and/or commit to a full regimen of treatment. The findings presented in this research article will aid Uganda Cancer Institute administration on the development of programs that encourage healthy relationships between breast cancer patients and caretakers.

## **Introduction**

When a Ugandan woman who survived breast cancer was asked about her initial reactions when she received her diagnosis, she responded by saying, “The thought I got, I thought of death. I will leave the children and now that these children are young, what am I going to do for them? Nothing else but to die only.” This woman’s initial response to her diagnosis illuminates an experience of fear that is all too common for many Ugandan women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. Women experience a strong sense of fear due to a lack of education and awareness of the disease in Uganda. Another survivor explained how she perceives cancer by saying, “Me I think about cancer, I define it as a disease that is confusing, not easily understood because everyone gets it in her own way. I take this cancer to be the worst of all diseases.” The lack of proper knowledge on the disease has led to a strong stigmatization of the disease in Uganda.

However, there is a reason for hope for the women who battle breast cancer in Uganda. The survivors who reflect on how their perceptions of the disease have changed throughout its various stages provide a sense of hope to those who may fear it. Although the number of breast cancer survivors is currently low in Uganda compared to more developed nations such as the United States, women like the previous respondent provide hope where there is often none, knowledge that previously failed to exist and compassion when it is needed most. Although the stories and outcomes told by breast cancer patients and survivors in Uganda often vary, there is often one common recurring theme; the care, both physical and mental, that a woman receives through various relationships while battling breast cancer in Uganda can significantly impact her physically and mentally overcoming this disease.

Unlike the survivors described above who were able to seek out cancer screening and care in order to overcome the disease, many women in Uganda and in other developing nations fail to reach these potentially life-saving interventions. Low and middle income nations are home to a disproportionate number of cancer-related deaths; approximately 70% of all cancer-related deaths occur in low and middle income nations (WHO Cancer Fact Sheet, 2017). As the world’s most common cancer in women, breast cancer takes a particularly harsh toll of approximately 1.6 million new cases a year and 450,000 deaths a year (WHO, 2016). These rates are on the rise in the developing world; it is estimated that there will be a 26% increase in incidence and mortality by 2020 (Tfayli et al, 2010). In Uganda, there has been an increase in the risk of developing breast cancer (Wabinga, 2013). A majority of

patients do not survive five years post diagnosis in Uganda due to issues such as lack of education, proper care, and stigmatization (Koon, 2013).

Social stigmatization surrounding breast cancer burdens Ugandan patients. The extensive stigmatization of the disease is due to the lack of little awareness or virtually no awareness at all surrounding breast cancer in Uganda (Koon, 2013). Many women do not seek early medical care because they believe that their disease is a death sentence and that they will be ostracized from their communities and relationships. This then leads to higher rate of mortality and diagnosis at later stages of the disease (Koon, 2013).

This study seeks to elucidate how relationships between breast cancer patients and family members, friends, and hospital caregivers affect the presence of stigmatization and, feelings of dignity, or personal worth and happiness within the lives of the women battling breast cancer. The study investigates both the presence and weight of stigmatization in the lives of women prior to diagnosis, through treatment, and following the completion of treatment. It then looks at various relationships in the lives of the women and how these relationships affect their feelings of dignity. Self-reported feelings of dignity and well-being from the patients and survivors will be used as indicators of the extent to which relational accompaniment improved the lives of the patients. This will then help illuminate the traditional culture of caring in Uganda and how this culture can be transformed in way that can positively impact women battling breast cancer in Uganda. This study was conducted at the Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI) in Kampala, Uganda. Key informant interviews were held with current breast cancer patients and focus group discussions were carried out with survivors of breast cancer in Uganda from July to September, 2016.

This research article will outline the current burden of breast cancer in the developing world and in Uganda; outline current literature that exists on stigmatization of breast cancer, accompaniment and self dignity; provide the framework for which the data collection was carried out; and end with an analysis and discussion on the findings of this research project.

## **Background**

### *Rise in non-communicable diseases, specifically cancer:*

A majority of international healthcare funding and efforts today and in the past have focused on acute communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. Despite the prevalence of NCDs, available research shows an insufficient and at times culturally inappropriate response to

patients with these communicable diseases, there must also be an appropriate response to patients across the globe who are struck with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular diseases, chronic respiratory diseases, diabetes, and cancers, as they are affecting a rising number of individuals across the globe. Of the approximate 38 million NCD-related deaths per year, approximately 8.2 million result from cancer (WHO, 2016). The rising incidence and mortality from cancers is due to a combination of factors, specifically rising life expectancies. As infectious diseases become better controlled in developing nations, populations are beginning to age. Thus cancer becomes a rising health concern with increasing numbers of aging individuals (Anderson et al., 2016). The rising incidence of cancers in developing nations has been speculated to result from better control of infectious disease, overall population growth, improved reporting of cases, changes in lifestyle, and other risks associated with economic development (Pritchard, 1972).

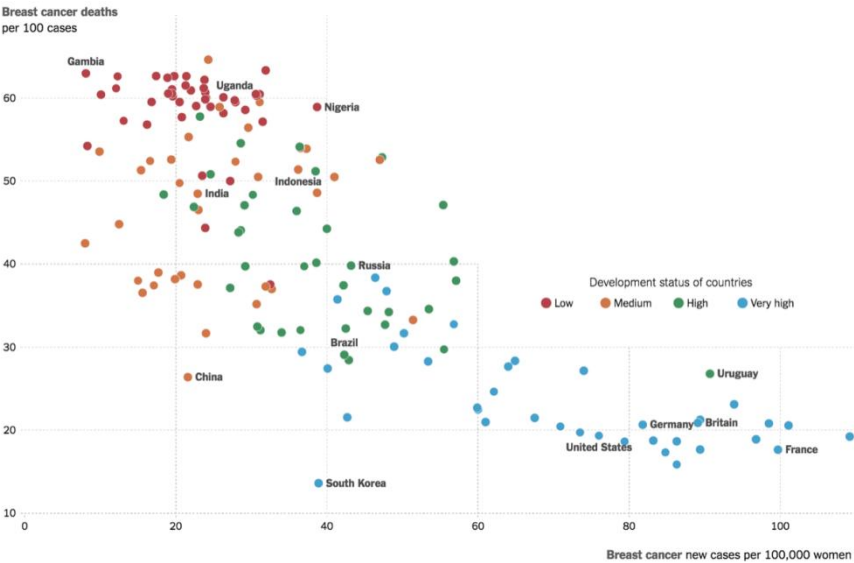
The rising incidence and mortality rates of NCDs, specifically incidence and mortality rates of cancers, in developing nations threatens the progress toward achieving the third Sustainable Development Goal-”Good Health and Well-Being”- and thus achieving a world with equitable health for all. Due to the strong focus on communicable diseases in health care agendas, cancer control efforts often fall behind other priorities and efforts on national health authorities’ agendas (Anderson et al., 2016). Despite its overwhelming presence, cancer is often not stated as a priority for health care expenditures in low income countries due to limited resources and funding (Anderson et al., 2016). The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that approximately 508,000 women globally, in a relatively even distribution across all countries, die every year of breast cancer; this is significantly higher than the 438,000 deaths by malaria across the globe, which occur in a greater concentration in developing nations, in 2015 (Anderson et al., 2016). Despite the difference in mortality rates, the money available for cancer prevention and treatment in the developing world is only a small portion of the large funds spent on diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria (Wragg, 2016). In order to begin reducing the incidence and mortality rates caused by NCDs, specifically cancer cases, affecting lives in developing nations, cancer must be thought of as a global disease rather than a disease that affects mainly high-income countries.

*Disproportionate rates of breast cancer incidence and mortality in developing nations:*

Among the various forms of cancer, breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among women in the vast majority (140/184) of

countries (Ferlay et al., 2010). In the past, breast cancer was considered a disease that affected solely Western women. However, this conception is severely flawed; over half (52%) of all new breast cancer cases and 62% of all breast cancer deaths occur in economically disadvantaged nations (Torre et al., 2015). It is estimated that of the 1.7 million women that will be diagnosed with breast cancer in the year 2020, a majority will be in the developing world (Wragg, 2016; See Fig. 1). In comparison to high-resource regions of the world, which have very high overall recorded cases of breast cancer due to effective recording systems in place, low-resource regions have lower numbers of recorded cases of breast cancer. However, the mortality rates are much higher comparatively in low-resource regions. This leads to the very high case fatality rates in developing, low-resource regions. Women in African countries are twice as likely to die from cancer as women in high-income countries (Koon et al., 2013). The disproportionate rates of mortality in relation to incidence in low-income regions result from a combination of issues, including but not limited to financial and organizational healthcare problems, lack of recognition of cancer as a public health priority by government, shortage of trained healthcare professionals and migration, public and health care provider educational deficits, and social barriers that impede patients entry into early detection and cancer treatment programs (Anderson et al., 2016). These factors often lead to higher breast cancer mortality rates compared to regions where these issues are not as prevalent.

**Fig 1: Higher mortality due to breast cancer in developing nations compared to developed nations.**



*Burden of breast cancer in Uganda:*

In sub-Saharan Africa, breast cancer is the most common cancer in women. In 2012, there were 94,000 new cases and 48,000 deaths resulting from breast cancer in the region (McKenzie et al, 2016). The breast cancer burden in sub-Saharan Africa is estimated to double by 2030 due to an aging and expanding population (McKenzie et al., 2016). Although research on survival outcomes in patients battling breast cancer in sub-Saharan Africa is limited, the data that has been collected estimates the five year survival from breast cancer to be at or below 50%, contrasting with 89% in the USA (21,22). Overall, this suggests that the burden of breast cancer is quite high in this region.

Uganda, a country in sub-Saharan Africa, currently faces these rising numbers of breast cancer cases that have been recorded in the region as a whole, in addition to the overall rising number of all cancer cases. The incidence of breast cancer in Uganda doubled from 1961 (11 per 100,000) to 1995 (22 per 100,000) (The Uganda Breast Cancer Working Group, 2003). However, this data may reflect the improved and comprehensive measurement efforts undertaken in the last 5 decades. In 2015, the breast cancer incidence rate in Uganda was approximately 45 cases per 100,000 individuals (Ainebyoona, 2015). According to Professor Henry Wabinga, the Kampala Cancer Registry manager, the annual rise in breast cancer incidence in Uganda is 6% (Ainebyoona, 2015). The mortality rate for patients with cancer in Uganda is also quite high; the survival rate is around 20% for patients that receive treatment at UCI, the sole provider of formal cancer care in the entire country (Watsemwa, 2016). The rising incidence rates of breast cancer in Uganda signal a need for higher quality care for the rising number of individuals burdened with this NCD in a region of limited resources.

*Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI):*

UCI is a public, specialized, tertiary care medical facility owned by the Uganda Ministry of Health. UCI was originally founded in 1967 as an 18-bed lymphoma treatment center for pediatric lymphoma patients (See Fig. 2). In 1969, UCI expanded to 40 beds, when the Solid Tumor Center was added to focus research on Kaposi's Sarcoma and liver cancer (Savage, 2007) (See Fig. 3). In 2011, UCI began expanding even further due to a new collaboration with the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center in the US. From 2011 to 2015, a new additional treatment facility was constructed through this collaboration. On May 21, 2015, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni officially launched the state-of-the-art cancer outpatient treatment and research center—the UCI-

Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center at Mulago Hospital (See Fig. 4)<sup>1</sup>. The new facility is home to an out-patient clinic, chemotherapy infusion rooms, research labs, and a training and data center. At the grand opening of the new facility, President Museveni committed to establish cancer screening centers at the lowest level of treatment in order to begin combating the rising cancer incidence and mortality rates in the country (Ainebyoona, 2015). In addition to the new facility providing the Institute with more space and resources for treatment, the new training programs aim to build human resource capacity in Uganda by training the next generation of Ugandan oncologists, infectious disease specialists, and psychological support employees (Anderson et al., 2006).

Both the original facility and the new UCI Fred Hutchinson building are located along Upper Mulago Hill Road, on Mulago Hill, Central Division, Kampala. UCI is a cancer treatment, research, and teaching center affiliated with the Makerere University School of Medicine and with the Mulago Hospital Complex. UCI's inpatient facility consists of 80 beds. UCI attends to approximately 200 patients per day. Cancer screening occurs every Wednesday and Friday. In 2009, Uganda had only one oncologist in the entire country who treated more than 10,000 patients a year (Nank, 2015). Today, the number of practicing oncologists at UCI has increased twelvefold (Nank, 2015). UCI serves patients from as far as Djibouti, Eritrea, Somalia, western Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan, and the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (Ainebyoona, 2015). The Institute currently collaborates with international research centers including The National Cancer Institute, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, and Case Western Research University.

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<sup>1</sup>This new facility was officially funded by Fred Hutchinson and the US government (US Agency for International Development-USAID).

**Fig 2: UCI's first facility.**



**Fig. 3: Expansion of UCI.**



**Fig. 4: Fred Hutchinson UCI.**



## **Literature Review**

### *Stigmatization of breast cancer in Uganda:*

Irving Goffman, one of the first to examine the relationship between stigma and disease, defined stigma as “the situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance” and any “attribute that is deeply discrediting” (Perez, 2014). Goffman further defined stigma by describing



three primary typologies of the general attribute of stigma: ‘abominations of the body’ (i.e. physical disabilities), ‘blemishes of individual character’ (moral failures), and ‘tribal stigma’ (race, religion and ethnicity) (Goffman, 1963). The stigma that surrounds breast cancer in Uganda reflects the cultural tropes and meanings that stem from physical disability or a reduction in overall physical health. Although the stigma may originally manifest from a physical disability of the body, it can begin to manifest in other ways as well. For example, stigmatized individuals can lose social status and lose credibility in the minds of their peers, family members, and friends (Fife & Wright, 2000). Illnesses, including breast cancer, often lead to such stigmatization because of association with particular negative images and myths and therefore encompass a dangerous symbolic meaning (Fife & Wright, 2000). As a result of these false and dangerous beliefs, others can quickly begin treating the ill individual in destructive ways. This unfortunate notion surrounding certain diseases often occurs in developing nations due to lack of awareness and education on the diseases. Specifically, it has been shown that breast cancer patients in Uganda face these challenges (Meacham et al., 2016).

Due to a lack of complete education and understanding regarding cancer in general in Uganda, and specifically breast cancer, many false perceptions of the disease exist. Attitudes toward breast cancer are similar to the ideas and attitudes regarding breast cancer in the United States about 50 years ago (Pritchard, 1972). For example, a qualitative study previously done with members of Uganda Women’s Cancer Support Organization (UWOCASO) uncovered the many negative associations many Ugandans have attached to breast cancer. All of the women interviewed used the same type of negative language to describe their perception of breast cancer prior to diagnosis. They used words such as “sickness,” “painful,” “distressing,” “no cure,” and “breast removal” (Pritchard, 1972). In addition to the extremely negative general perceptions of the disease, women also spoke of erroneous notions of the possible causes of breast cancer and potential prevention efforts. Some women in this study suggested that women can get breast cancer by carrying money in their bra, not having children, not breastfeeding, and damaged breast skin. To prevent breast cancer, the women suggested not using machines to grind nuts, avoiding carrying money in bras, avoiding second-hand clothes that are dirty, and avoiding steel wire brushes for washing dishes. These erroneous notions about breast cancer demonstrate the extensive misperceptions that exists in the country. These false ideas can then reproduce and reinforce stigmatization.

Cancer education and screening are lacking in Uganda (Pritchard,

1972). In addition to a lack of knowledge among the general population regarding breast cancer, there is also an extensive lack of understanding about the disease among elites of the Ugandan society.<sup>2</sup> Despite challenges surrounding stigmatization that Uganda currently faces, changes in perception as they occurred in the US in the mid- to late- 1900s could also be taking place in Uganda. In 2009, the Ugandan First Lady Janet Museveni began publicly referring to women's cancers as an emerging challenge facing Uganda. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni then responded by launching a public campaign against cancer.<sup>3</sup>

A recent study carried out at UCI investigated breast cancer stigma by conducting semi-structured interviews with 20 breast cancer survivors. Thematic analysis of this data show that perceived and internalized stigma associated with breast cancer influenced care given by caretakers throughout the illness (Meacham et al, 2016). Their data suggests that stigma delays women from engaging in early care and limits their continued engagement throughout their treatment regimen (Meacham et al., 2016). The most common age of breast cancer diagnosis for women in Uganda is 30-39 years, compared to an average of approximately 50 years of age in the US (Pritchard, 1972). A majority of breast cancer patients in Uganda (77%) manifest physical symptoms of breast cancer at late stage (stage III or IV) of the disease (Pritchard, 1972). The number of women in Uganda diagnosed with late stage breast cancer (stage III or IV) demonstrates the negative effects of stigma on the initial process of seeking out treatment. Many women fail to report breast cancer symptoms in order to avoid abandonment from their families and friends. Narratives by women battling breast cancer in Uganda often include accounts of abandonment by husbands, other family members, or friends. The study illuminated this idea after asking women why they may not undertake recommended early diagnosis measures. They responded that they may not participate in such early screening due to a fear of the cancer leading to their death, a fear of being cut during biopsy, a fear that the biopsy incision will cause the cancer to spread to other parts of the body, a fear that no one will like them, and a fear that their husbands or family would abandon them

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<sup>2</sup>The current president of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, publicly displayed his recently changed understanding of cancer by stating, "I have learnt that cancer has got four stages and in order to be neutralized it is good to have it detected early and it can only be detected through early routine screening" (Ainebyoona, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Just as First Lady Ford initiated a campaign against breast cancer and its stigmatization, it appears as if the leaders in Uganda could create change with the same degree of impact if they receive additional support.

(Pritchard, 1972). Another study done in Kenya that examined knowledge and attitudes about breast cancer found that after diagnosis, women fear losing their husband or the support of family members (Muthoni & Miller, 2010). Joyce Namubiru, a Ugandan breast cancer survivor highlighted in a news story in 2016, demonstrated how stigma can lead to abandonment by saying, "I was alone because I did not know what others would think if they found out I had cancer" (Lugaaju, 2016). Joyce went on to explain how the questions she faced from family and friends made her think that even her own family would resent her upon discovering her cancer status (Lugaaju, 2016). A recurring source of a fear is impending death. Approximately half of the women respondents believed that they would not survive the disease immediately after being diagnosed (Pritchard, 1972). However, these same women successfully survived breast cancer and are now in remission. The issue of stigmatization surrounding breast cancer is a clear and urgent issue that must be overcome in order to begin improving the quality of care for breast cancer patients and also to begin improving society's perspective on cancer.

#### *Accompaniment:*

For a Ugandan woman to begin overcoming the negative influence and effects of breast cancer stigmatization, not only must she be educated, but she also should understand that there will be guidance and support from her family, community, and in the treatment center for her. The accompaniment approach, or the development of lasting relationships, involves the nurturance of these support systems. This approach aids in the development of long-term relationships and mandates that all parties walk side by side, rather than one party leading the other, during a time of adversity (Gardner and Sedky, 2011). Accompaniment is a framework in which solidarity is practiced and grounded in relationships, and manifested by walking with communities and individuals who are suffering (Lamberty, 2012). The accompaniment approach is often used as a development practice to ensure holistic development and healing within individuals and communities. The approach moves beyond providing the basic necessities for living and includes mental and emotional support for individuals as well.

The Haitian Conference of Catholic Bishops released a statement in 2010 in response to the earthquake in Haiti which elaborated on how to provide holistic healing to those in need. It said, "More than food and shelter; chapels and schools; clinics and convents, we aim to build up every Haitian man and woman in his or her totality: physically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. If our work does not involve the whole person and every

person, it is not true development” (Lamberty, 2012). To accompany an individual and provide holistic healing is to be present in the relationship during both times of suffering and of healing. A few of the best practices in mission through accompaniment include praying for and with one another, participating in regular and reciprocal visits that focus on building relationships, mutual and ongoing decision making, and acknowledging the value of each other at all times (Lamberty, 2012). The value of accompaniment is that it often renews feelings of self-worth and dignity of the vulnerable individuals. The love experienced in these relationships often gives individuals the power and courage that they need to bear the physical and emotional burdens of disease, for example (Lamberty, 2012). This power that can be fostered through accompaniment often eliminates previously existing negative feelings. Robert Goizueta reflected on the power of solidarity through accompaniment by saying, “Solidarity in the midst of suffering is what reveals to us the ultimate powerlessness of suffering: our common life, manifested in our relationships of solidarity, overcome all attempts to destroy that lie. Suffering shared is suffering already in retreat” (1995).

Accompaniment can be utilized to assist individual growth in all sectors of development and life. In a recent study, subsistence farmers and miners living in a conflict zone in Colombia were interviewed and asked why they sought outside accompaniment and what accompaniment meant to them (Lamberty, 2012). For these individuals, accompaniment was the presence of outsiders connected to a larger network of support. The results of accompaniment in this case were feelings of trust and confidence experienced by the farmers and miners (Lamberty, 2012). Paul Farmer, author of “Partners in Help: Assisting the Poor Over the Long Term,” can attest to the theory of accompaniment:

To accompany someone is to go somewhere with him or her, to be present on a journey with a beginning and an end. The companion, the accompagnateur, says I’ll go with you and support you on your journey wherever it leads; I’ll share your fate for a while. And by ‘a while,’ I don’t mean a little while. Accompaniment is about sticking with a task until it’s deemed completed, not by the accompagnateur, but by the person being accompanied (Foreign Affairs, 2011).

Partners in Health (PIH) uses the accompaniment model as a framework for most of their healthcare initiatives across the world. In a recent issue of “PIH Reports,” Dr. Farmer explains the importance of

accompaniment in addressing global health concerns by saying, "...the notion of accompaniment can be applied to improve clinical outcomes and to strengthen our response to new and difficult problems in medicine and public health" (Farmer, 2016). In Russia, PIH encourages the Sputnik Program, a program in which MDR-TB patients are accompanied by a "life partner" or "special friend" during and following their treatment regimen (Farmer, 2016). In addition to this program's success in Russia, the accompaniment model is also largely emphasized in Chiapas, Mexico, another site where PIH leads various health initiatives. This program is called "Companeros en Salud" (CES). The program started its work in Mexico in 2011 and now operates 10 rural public clinics in one of the most marginalized regions of the country. The community health workers in these various clinics are called *acompañantes* and their role is to help patients better understand their conditions and adhere to medications. CES has demonstrated outstanding clinical outcomes through their ability to improve the quality of life for individuals with chronic diseases, mental disorders, and other health maladies (Companeros en Salud, 2016). Dr. Farmer attributes much of the success of the program to the *acompañantes* (Companeros en Salud, 2016).

If a woman experiencing breast cancer can receive mental and emotional support through accompaniment and education, she will be more likely to break down the stigmas of breast cancer and seek out proper treatment in a more timely manner. In this study, accompaniment will be defined as a relationship between a breast cancer patient or survivor and another human that allows the breast cancer patient to seek out guidance, help, and/or emotional support following the diagnosis. This relationship can develop between the patient and any individual with whom she interacts on a daily basis. The development of such a relationship may originate within the home, the hospital, and/or a social institution. For example, the patient may seek out emotional support from her friend, her family member, and/or her doctor or nurse. Indicators of accompaniment in this study will be consistent presence of one individual with the patient at all health-related appointments and treatment sessions, a consistent distributor of medication, and/or consistent reference by the patient of a person who provides her with emotional guidance and support. Although the patient may occasionally reference someone who has helped her through a difficult time, this should not be mistaken for accompaniment. Accompaniment is the unremitting support and guidance from an individual for the patient both during the illness and following the end of treatment. Accompaniment will be measured by the physical presence of this supporter with the patient and the reference to the

supporter by the patient.

Past studies have demonstrated the importance of accompaniment in the lives of women battling breast cancer in low-resources areas. In a study done by Michael Pritchard et al. on breast cancer survivors at UCI, the survivors reported that support through accompaniment provided them with the ability to attend support groups and receive further ongoing encouragement from a peer group (1972). However, the women in the study that did have this experience also explained how these experiences are atypical; according to these women, neither husbands nor family members would support their wives and sisters if diagnosed with breast cancer (Pritchard et al, 1972). Support from spouses and other family members was clearly an important indicator of survival in the study done by Pritchard et al., suggesting an imperative around involving partners and family members in any outreach and education programs (Pritchard, 1972). In addition to accompaniment working both in Russia and Mexico, the framework is now successfully being utilized to treat patients with cancer in Rwanda at the Butaro Health Center. At the Butaro Health Center, PIH leads a program called “The Right to Health Care” (RTHC). In this program, the nurse physically accompanies the patients at the referral hospital to ensure the providers have complete information and the patients receive appropriate care (Nkurunziza, 2015). The nurses book patients’ appointments and guide them to the clinic, pay their medical fees with funding from donors and the government, and facilitate exams and medical provision (Nkurunziza, 2015). At Butaro Hospital, PIH found that the RTHC program and accompaniment framework relieve the complication of health care logistics by supporting patients with a variety of collateral expenses (Nkurunziza, 2015). In addition, the accompaniment model provides hope. Although this is not a tangible outcome variable in and of itself, it can significantly impact patients in a positive manner by encouraging them to seek out treatment. The authors of a recent report on the RTHC program describe the importance of accompaniment while treating patients with cancer by explaining, “Solidarity, humility, and compassion are not necessarily technical expertise but are key attitudes that can help nurses and other accompagnateurs to bring hope to desperate people.”

#### *Dignity in the human experience:*

When treating a sick individual, the current research on accompaniment suggests that caretakers must not only assist in the renewal of physical health, but also implement quality care that renews mental and emotional health (Nkurunziza, 2015). An indicator of the latter form of care

can be the experience or loss of dignity. The concept of dignity is complex and can be described and experienced in different ways by different individuals. Dignity is a subjective variable that often depends upon changes between individuals, communities, and different populations. However, the complexity of this term should be embraced in all human experiences as it can provide humans a sense of agency and self-respect. Particularly, dignity should be embraced in the field of healthcare as it can provide an additional aspect of healing if it is experienced by the ill individual. Father Gustavo Gutierrez, a Peruvian theologian, described the power of recognizing dignity in the process of development: “To recognize the dignity of every human being, to value them as the center of their decision making and as the agent of their own destiny, implies an understanding that eliminating unjust structures is not enough. It is necessary at the same time to esteem and to transform the person from the inside” (1996).

Oftentimes, the concept of dignity is further distinguished by human dignity and social dignity. Human dignity is the inherent and inalienable value that belongs to every human being simply by virtue of being human (Jacobson, 2007). Religious scholars describe this as being the eternal protection from God that shields all human life. Secular counterparts describe the experience of human dignity as humans being equal and thus treated with certain minimum levels of decency and respect. Social dignity is then the consequence of the recognition of human dignity. According to Jacobson, most of the work on dignity in healthcare pertains to social dignity, which occurs when dignity of the individual is either maintained or threatened through social interaction. A human experiences social dignity through interactions. Besides social dignity, there are two further subdivisions of social dignity—dignity of self and dignity in relation. The dignity of self can be explained as a “kind of gravity or decorum of self-respect or self-confidence” that is held by an individual (Gewirth & Meyer, 1992). Michael Pritchard further explained dignity of self by describing it as a “concern to achieve and maintain various forms of integrity” (Pritchard, 1972). In contrast to dignity of self, which is the personal reflection and understanding of one’s own dignity, dignity in relation is the worth and value that one receives through word and deed in interaction with another individual. This form of dignity is embedded in time and place (Jacobson, 2007). These various definitions of dignity can be further broken down and analyzed. Likewise, the concept of dignity can also vary greatly in different cultures and places. Thus, the meaning of dignity in this study may vary from conventional, Western definitions due to the study taking place in Uganda. However, the general concepts of dignity as outlined above should be

taken into consideration when analyzing Ugandan women's perceptions of dignity.

Modern notions of dignity in healthcare stem from palliative and end-of-life care practices (Jacobson, 2007). These considerations have expanded to discussions on various health-related issues. Particularly, dignity is a focus when attempting to provide care to vulnerable and marginalized individuals of society such as the impoverished, elderly, and those with mental illnesses. This study seeks to understand the role of dignity in the lives of women experiencing breast cancer in a low-resource environment. It is advantageous to understand how dignity can be both attained and destroyed in women's lives in order to develop healthcare implementation and policy programs that ensure quality care and treatment for the women of Uganda. Health and human rights advocates have suggested that dignity may be the link between the promotion and protection of human rights and health status and thus is a relevant and critical topic in the field of global health that is focused on the global burden of oncology. The United Nation's assumption of a reciprocal relationship between health and dignity further confirms the importance of this topic.

## **Methodology**

### *Case Selection:*

During the study location selection process, developing nations exhibiting neglected care of non-communicable diseases, particularly breast cancer, were considered. Although present in nearly all African countries to some extent, breast cancer in Uganda presents a particularly troubling situation due to the national lack of education, awareness and care (Grady 2013, Koon 2013).

This study was carried out at UCI. Key informant interviews and focus group discussions were the tools used to collect data. Interviews and focus group discussions were chosen instead of surveys because of the need for open and active discussion in this study. Surveys would have limited clarification and follow-up questions that were necessary to understand specific responses to certain questions.

I conducted this study with the assistance of Nanfuka Immaculate and Dr. Noleb Mugisha. Nanfuka conducted interviews with both UCI patients experiencing breast cancer and survivors who had been "breast cancer free" for a year or longer sometime during July to September 2016. All respondents were 18 years-old or older, and either were receiving treatment for breast



cancer at the time of the interview or had received treatment for breast cancer at UCI. Key informant interview respondents were identified by reaching out to patients at UCI receiving breast cancer treatment. The focus group discussion respondents were found through UWOCASO. Nanfuka led key informant interviews with 13 patients. Thirteen patients were identified for the aims of this study due to a saturation and repetition of responses upon interviewing the tenth key informant. Nanfuka led two focus group discussions with survivors of breast cancer at UCI. Each of the focus group discussion groups had six participants. Two focus group discussions with six survivors each were conducted. These participants were survivors that were willing and able to engage in this study.

At the start of each interview or focus group discussion, Nanfuka introduced herself, the study and the consent form (Appendix IA/IB). Each respondent then completed the consent form either verbally or in writing before participating in the study. None of the respondents were paid for their participation, however the respondents were reimbursed for their time and the cost of transportation to UCI. Each participant received 20,000 Ugandan shillings. All data was collected in the form of verbal conversation in local dialects via a voice recorder. Key informant interviews and focus group discussions were carried out in private areas on the grounds of UCI. Nanfuka attempted to provide as much privacy as possible to all respondents in order to protect the patients' personal information and beliefs. The interview script remained the same for both the key informant interviews and the focus group discussions (Appendix IIA/IIB). Following interviews and focus group discussions with respondents, Nanfuka transcribed and translated the recordings to written English.

#### *Data Analysis:*

Transcripts for both the key informant interviews and the focus group discussions were then coded based on the code book provided in the appendix (IIIA). A grounded theory approach was then taken in order to uncover recurring themes in the qualitative data. This method of analysis allowed for the data to be classified through a transparent, coherent, and consistent coding strategy.

## **Findings and Discussion**

#### *Key Informant Respondent Demographics:*

The interviewers asked the respondents for personal information in order to provide a better context for the study participant demographics<sup>4</sup>. Two of the 13 respondents were 30-39 years of age; three of the thirteen respondents were 40-49 years of age; eight of the thirteen respondents were 50-59 years of age. The participants were from varying districts of Uganda (Luweero, Mbale, Rakai, Tororo, Mpigi, Soroti, Kampala, Ngora, Masaka, and Wakiso). In addition to representing various districts, the participants also represented various tribes (Mukiga, Mugishua, Munyankole, Itesot, Muganda, and Atesot). The participants completed varying levels of formal education. One participant studied up to primary 3, two participants studied up to primary 4, one participant studied up to primary 5, one participant studied up to primary 7, one participant studied up to senior 1, three participants studied up to senior 6, one participant received a diploma in IT, and three participants studied in the university level.<sup>5</sup> All of the participants have children. The participants have children ranging in number from one to eight. The participants also varied in terms of their marital status. Six of the participants are married, two of the participants are not married, two are widows, and three have divorced since their diagnoses.

#### *Stigmatization in Uganda:*

In order to either support or negate the findings in academic literature on stigmatization of breast cancer in Uganda, all respondents in this study reflected on their understandings and perceptions of breast cancer. The data collected in this study suggest that Ugandan breast cancer patients misunderstand the disease with regard to: symptoms, causes, treatment options, and survival rates for patients diagnosed with breast cancer. When asked to describe general perceptions toward breast cancer, respondents offered the following: “a slow killing poison,” “the worst disease,” and “a disease in which a person does not cure, but just dies.” A majority of the respondents in this study offered similar descriptions of the disease, indicating

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<sup>4</sup>Complete demographic information was not collected for the focus group discussion respondents due to a time limitation.

<sup>5</sup> Most Ugandan students start education at the age of 5 or 6 in primary school. In Uganda, there are 7 primary school years, from primary 1 to primary 7. Upon completion of primary school, students take the primary learning examinations (PLE). Those who pass the PLE move onto secondary school. Secondary school has 2 stages; the first 4 years, senior 1 to senior 4, is the O-level period and the higher levels, senior 5 to senior 6, makeup the A-level period. Students who pass their A-level examinations may then choose to go onto university or other tertiary institutions (Kavuma, 2010).

breast cancer's stigmatization in Uganda. The lack of complete and accurate knowledge on the disease often causes stigmatization.

The data collected in this study suggest that many women being treated at UCI do not understand the symptoms of breast cancer. Many women disregarded physical changes in their breasts as a sign of breast cancer due to the lack of pain: "Since it was painless, we paid no attention." Another described a similar situation, "It took some time to believe that it was really cancer. Because they said 'cancer is painful' but for me, I wasn't feeling any pain." These responses demonstrate that there is misconception on the symptoms of breast cancer.

Data also indicate a large misunderstanding of causes for breast cancer. One woman described how she did not want anyone in her family to touch her bathing sponge or basin, concerned that the disease could be transmitted through touching such objects. Another respondent described how family friends restricted their children from coming to her house once she had been diagnosed because they feared that sharing plates, cups, and other things would cause their children to contract the disease.

In addition to misunderstanding breast cancer symptoms and etiology, several of the respondents expressed their beliefs that breast cancer is an incurable disease. One woman stated, "I used to hear people say that cancer of the breast is incurable, and when they touch your breast, you can not heal when they do surgery." Another explained, "It is said that when you have cancer, there is no cure. There is no treatment but only death and you only wait for your day of death." These responses are largely the result of the lack of knowledge on the various stages of breast cancer. In addition, some individuals relate breast cancer to AIDS. One respondent said, "I associated breast cancer like AIDS" and the other described breast cancer as "worse than AIDS." These ideas often lead to individuals believing that there is no hope for survival for a patient with breast cancer.

One source of the perpetuation of these false ideas results from the stigmatization that surrounds those who confront the disease. One woman described how those around her whisper about her and her disease, "They like whispering. They like whispering a lot." Another woman described a similar experience when she said, "Oh they speak about you. One can come and greet you, but she turns behind you and speaks differently." One woman described her experience of being stigmatized for the disease by saying, "Some of them would chase you, stigmatize you when you enter a bathroom to bathe, they run away from it, when you handle on a cup, it is thrown away and because of such practices, I have failed and decided to come and stay at the hospital."

One patient honestly summarized what often occurs when a patient is diagnosed with breast cancer in Uganda by saying, “When people learn that you are suffering from breast cancer, they no longer association [associate] with you.”

Collectively, all of these false and incomplete ideas of breast cancer lead to a strong fear within individuals battling the disease. In this study, the women were asked to describe their first responses when they were told that they had breast cancer. Nearly all of the women, both current patients and survivors, expressed fear without any additional comments on hope for their futures. For example, one woman responded, “I was scared since cancer is a deadly disease, it is actually a killer disease, so I got worried and even cried.” In addition to the women expressing fear in their interviews, the counselors at the UCI Counseling Department also noted that many patients hide their faces when speaking with caretakers, counselors and family members. This action suggests a sense of shame, fear, and humiliation within the patients due to the disease. In order to begin overcoming the sense of fear and abandonment that is often tied to breast, the stigmatization of the disease must be eliminated.

*Patient solitude and lost relationships resulting from disease:*

At various stages of the journey with breast cancer, the women reported varying degrees of interaction with other individuals. There were a significant number of reports by current breast cancer patients on being alone during these various times. Six of the thirteen respondents reported being isolated at various stages of their journeys with breast cancer. These patients demonstrated that they felt that nobody was providing care for them and they did not have support. One such patient said, “I do not have anyone, I am alone. It is me who takes care of myself.” While some of these women did not express any attached negative emotion to being alone, two of the women did express negative sentiment towards their solitude. One of these two women expressed concern regarding the effects of her solitude on her children’s education. Due to her being the only one paying for school fees, she is concerned that any change in her health could result in nobody paying said school fees. The other woman expressed concern not for others regarding her solitude, but for herself and for her future. She explained, “[I] Am afraid and I pray to God that I may cure because [I] am worried that should it not cure and in my old age I do not have children to help me or even family to assist me after I have failed, then that is where there is a problem.”

Due to the number of women who expressed times of solitude, all study participants were then asked to discuss any relationships that were lost

during their journeys with the disease in order to determine if the diagnosis led to the times of solitude. The study participants discussed lost relationships within the family, the workplace, and among friends.

Many study participants described situations in which their family members left them due to the disease. According to the women, there were various reasons for the abandonment, including financial losses, the physical changes in the body following a mastectomy, loss of hope following a period of providing care, and a general sense of fear of the disease. A participant who experienced abandonment due to an impending mastectomy described, "When my people learned that I had cancer, they segregated me, they do not care for me." Another woman described such a situation when she explained her family's fear and resulting exit from her life, "Whoever hears about it says, 'with that disease, you are going to die.'" This again highlights how the fear that results from stigma can lead to solitude of the patients. A few other participants described situations in which their families lost hope after providing care for a short period. Such a participant echoed these stories when described her own:

As for me, my family members have been supporting and helping me with my sickness. However, time came and they thought that this disease can be treated like malaria and when they realized that I was visiting Mulago after every three weeks, they all got tired and gave up. I remained with no one.

The data in this study confirmed that it is not uncommon for women to lose their spouses completely following a diagnosis. In the cases in which the husbands left the women, the husbands left at various stages of the illness. For example, one key informant interview respondent described how her husband abandoned her immediately upon her return from the hospital, "When I went back, my husband had changed, so I made phone calls to relatives, sold my goats, and other things..." Six additional women in this study also lost their husbands following the diagnosis with breast cancer. After receiving test results that indicated breast cancer, one woman's husband said, "It is up to you because I warned you. Who told you to go there? I stopped you from going there and it is up to you who used family planning, so it is up to you." Another husband left his sick wife, found another wife and took all the family land, leaving the sick woman with no land to cultivate for her children's education. These outcomes demonstrate that the diagnosis may be viewed as a financial loss by the spouses. Another woman lost her boyfriend due to the physical changes that her body experienced from the treatment. She

described how her boyfriend left her after receiving treatment by saying, “After going through chemo, of course I was not myself, the way my appearances, I was so dark, the hair had dropped, so I had a boyfriend by that time when he looked at me, the relationship stopped there and he abandoned me completely.”

In addition to women losing relationships and support from the family as a result of the disease, women also shared experiences of lost relationships due to the loss of a job. With the loss of a job, many women lost relationships with former colleagues and bosses. One woman said that she lost a significant number of relationships due to her lost job. Others believe that they will continue to lose relationships into the future as a result of a lost job. One such woman shared her experience as a former farmer, “The relationships I have lost are very many more so that I have been a woman farmer who had started digging which I can no longer afford. I have to be in one place.” Another woman who also did similar work and had a similar experience described, “Yes, I have lost some relationships due to breast cancer. My work, I can no longer work and can not operate together. We used to sew clothes, cultivate crops and when it comes to support, am given less because I do not dig.” This explanation demonstrates how the diagnosis can negatively impact financial stability of the women and their families.

#### *Dignity:*

As stated previously, literature suggests that there are a variety of definitions and understandings of dignity in different regions and cultures of the world. Individuals in different communities have varying perceptions of their self and how they derive dignity. In order to elucidate how women in Uganda, and particularly women battling breast cancer in Uganda, understand dignity, the respondents in this survey were asked how they perceive and develop their own sense of dignity.

A large number of patients described a connection between dignity, well-being, and the care that they can provide for others, particularly their children. For example, one current UCI patient responded by saying “In the village, I have served as a counselor, a publicity leader and have started the introduction of some clubs, so I have been of self-worth to the people,” when she was asked to describe how she obtains feelings of worth and dignity. Another woman expressed how she achieves her self-worth, “The self worth I have, I explain it that the load I look after.” For patients who either were or are mothers, there was an expressed concern for their reduced or complete inability to care for their children as a result of the disease. To begin, the

women often feel dignified due to being mothers. For example, one current UCI patient responded “I am very valuable because I have children” when she was asked to reflect on her worth as an individual. Another woman described a similar feeling, “My self worth—I explain it that the life of my children.” However, the disease can often reduce this positive sense of dignity and worth. The women often experience reduced dignity and worth because they are not capable of providing the same level of care as what they were capable of providing before the diagnosis. One such current patient and mother described, “I am not able to help my family. And being a single parent, I was the only one paying school fees for my children through my struggle, but now I am having all this, am unable to do so.” The concerned mothers worry about the futures of their children and grandchildren without her complete presence and support in their lives. Overall, the data suggests that the Ugandan women in this study obtain strong feelings of dignity and worth from an ability to be useful in their respective communities and families, recognized for their actions, and respected for their work.

One of the most significant factors negatively impacting the women’s perception of their dignity is again the fear that comes from a physical change resulting from the disease. Oftentimes, this is in the form of a mastectomy. A current breast cancer patient expressed this sentiment when she said described her dignity, “It changed a lot. Immediately, it was diagnosed, I was operated and so I lost the dignity.” The loss of one or both breasts through mastectomy severely impacted some of the patients in a similar negative way. For the women in Uganda, keeping both breasts often corresponds with a greater sense of dignity and happiness. One interview respondent equated her breasts to her overall beauty. In contrast, the loss can largely negatively affect dignity. Many of the respondents described situations in which they began to cry when they realized they had to undergo a mastectomy. Another asked her physician if she would survive as a result of the mastectomy. A study respondent described this, “You may find a lady or woman when she is still youthful and unmarried, so if they remove her breast, oh I feel it is so hard because the breast also makes the young lady happy and even if you were old women like me, you would still feel happy having both of your breasts, so removal of a breast is so painful more so in the homes, our husbands. If they realize that you are now lame, some may not love you, they look at you as a no sense.” This demonstrates how stigma surrounding a loss of a breast can lead to abandonment from a husband and result in a loss of dignity. Another also expressed this same sentiment by saying in her interview, “when they told me they were going to cut off the breast, it changed my self-worth negatively.”

*Relationships that improved patients' experiences with the disease:*

While some women expressed feelings and times of solitude, these same women and other women as well also talked significantly on times when they were not alone. In these times, the women were in the presence of individuals who demonstrated some level of care and concern. The types of relationships varied between each woman but most often included relations with family members, friends from the past, and other breast cancer patients at UCI.

Despite many women describing solitude during the journey with the disease, some women reported receiving essential support from their family members. Eight out of the thirteen current patients reported being accompanied by husbands, siblings, children and aunts/uncles. Family members of the sick women provided various forms of care including home accommodations, financial support for drugs and food, and mental/emotional support. One such patient described, "My family has been supportive, especially my sister. In fact, if it were not for them, I would not have reached this level." An example of familial financial dependency would be a woman in this study who said, "The family members have done mightily to solicit money and buy for me medicines and to care for me." Another expressed a similar experience, "My family, they have acted so quickly, because if I ask for money, they give me the money and time." While financial support can ease the patients' fears of not receiving proper care, mental/emotional support on behalf of family members can also play a large role on the reduction of fear and anxiety among the patients. Two study participants had family members that were physicians. These family doctors advised the patient on where to get the proper treatment; having this guidance eased the women's fears. Other patients had family members who accompanied them to their appointments. Several of the study participants described how their children or siblings either attended all treatment appointments or were at home to receive her when she completed the treatment. One participant described the emotional support she was able to receive from her sister following her diagnosis, "But when I was going back home, that's when I felt the tears. I called my sister to tell her about the results."

In addition to patients receiving support from family members, more than half of the respondents shared experiences in which they developed relationships with other breast cancer patients once at UCI that improved their experiences. These reports suggest that fellow breast cancer patients at UCI



provide care for other relationships in various forms. The women can provide both mental/emotional and financial support for one another. One study participant said that she shares her funds with another woman also receiving outpatient breast cancer care. The friend who shares her funds said, "I got friends here, sometimes when I have 10,000 shillings, I share with her. She told me they sleep outside here in the compound." Another study participant shared her experience as being a woman who receives financial support from another patient not involved in this study. She explained, "As for friends, I get them from the hospital, the ones who have managed to support me for example, drinks especially when the blood level has gone down because of treatment and the nature of the disease. So I got friends while at the hospital who have helped me with foods and clothing." In addition to providing financial assistance to one another when it is necessary, the patients also provide mental/emotional support for one another during the various stages of the disease. The patients are at different stages of the journey with the disease and thus they can provide feedback to one another on the various stages as the other women undergo the same procedures. The patients can act as witnesses and companions for the others by providing tips based off their own experiences. One study participant said, "You converse and she is at a stage ahead in the treatment, [she] tells you about the next step, how drugs treated her, [and] so by the time it happens to you, you are helped and there is less fear because a lot happens such as color change, so if someone tells you it to you, that this and that happened to me, it helps you since you get to know that yes, that is what we all go through." By sharing experiences with one another, those who are new to a particular point in the process find peace in hearing others' stories. Testimonies and experiences of other patients help to eliminate fear where it was once so invasive. Through quality relationships, fear is reduced. One woman described this newfound sense of peace when she said, "When I visited and found women who had been operated on, I became stronger." Other patients go through the various stages at the same time and thus develop relationships through these similar experiences. Some patients go through surgery around the same time and others choose to get their treatment/drugs together. This suggests that many women as patients can journey together to foster togetherness and a sense of support that was previously unexpected by the women. These women can also provide financial support for one another where it is otherwise lacking within their families.

Other patients choose to use their experiences not only to gain new relationships that will positively impact themselves directly, but will also positively impact other potential patients. One woman described how she now

moves around to villages, finds potential patients and tells them to go to UCI to receive the proper form of care. This woman said, “I try so much to draw them close that they may also receive treatment.” Another woman who uses her experiences to positively affect the lives of other patients described her efforts by saying, “I have built and gained relationships with fellow patients and I counsel them. I order her not to fear or be afraid and that is how I encourage them.” Another study respondent described this desire to help other patients, “I try to ask and encourage her to be strong and I feel I want to help more people.”

*Relationships with caretakers at UCI:*

Physicians, nurses, and other caretakers at UCI are a potential source of mental/emotional support for the patients. In order to determine whether or not these caretakers provide meaningful mental/emotional support for the patients, the current UCI patients were asked to reflect on their perceptions of them. Twelve of the thirteen respondents all agreed that the caretakers at UCI provide meaningful physical or mental care. Many of the respondents provided similar responses when they were asked about their relationships with the physicians and other caretakers. Some of the general responses included: “my doctor is competent, helpful and caring,” “She cares a lot and I love her so much,” “I respect her,” and “They have comforted me, they do not mishandle me.” Others provided more detailed responses on their perceptions of the mental/emotional care that they are provided from caretakers. One current UCI patient described, “I feel my doctor and nurses have provided me with emotional support. When you come and explain your problem/concern, they attend to it as you wanted and you're helped.” These responses suggest that successful caring relationships, as provided by nurses and doctors, is defined by love, respect, and comfort delivered through mental/emotional care.

In addition to general positive reports on mental/emotional support provided by UCI caretakers, one particular theme recurred throughout the key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Several of the respondents in this study described situations in which they were not only supported by their caretakers, but largely dependent on their guidance and support. Many of the patients described how they did not fully understand various aspects of the issues they faced and gathered all of their information solely from their caretakers. In many cases, the doctors’ orders and requests were followed exactly due to lack of knowledge and information otherwise on behalf of the patients. Current UCI patients suggested such dependent relationships when they shared, “Whatever she tells me is what I do” and “Whatever I do not

know, I ask them and they guide me.” Another patient described her dependency on care takers through a specific situation in which she was lost at UCI, “sometimes you get stuck, for example, the first time I came here, I did not know where to go but it was the nurses who guided me where to begin from and after that, I was directed where to go and meet the doctor.” This suggests that patients seek out guidance and support from caretakers at UCI at various times of need and thus quality care delivered by doctors and nurses is essential for the patients.

Although a majority of the respondents in this study reported positive remarks and experiences on the mental/emotional support that is provided by caretakers at UCI, there were also complaints made. Three current patients in this study expressed some degree of dissatisfaction with the care they receive. All three of these dissatisfied patients thought that there are not enough caretakers to cover the need. The limited ratio of caretakers to patients often results in reduced care, according to some of the patients. One patient described her frustration with the limited number of nurses at UCI, “Ugandan nurses are all the same. They are overwhelmed with work and from being overwhelmed with work, they transfer that on the patients.” Another patient commented on a similar note, “The doctors or nurses have very many patients and no time for emotional support. Because patients are many, so can not concentrate on one alone for emotional support.” As a result of the large demand for care and limited supply of caretakers, patients often see different doctors and nurses on different visits. Seeing different doctors and nurses on different occasions did not meet the needs and desires of the dissatisfied patients. This lapse in quality care could potentially limit the sense of well-being and dignity within the patients, due to the previously described role of care takers on the outlooks of the patients.

One particular recurring example of reduced care due to a limited ration of caretakers to patients at UCI was the delivery of results to patients. Two of the survivors who participated in the focus groups discussed the manner in which they were given their results and diagnoses from their caretakers. Both of these survivors were largely disappointed by the way their physicians presented the negative results to them. The first survivor described her experience by saying, “the way the doctor broke the news was not good. Told me that you have cancer and now you have to write a will your children because you're going to die in 5 years. And so ahh the news was not good, I cried.” The second survivor described how she was confronted with the results of her tests without any background knowledge of the disease. Due to being unfamiliar with the disease at the outset, she did not feel well equipped

to respond to her medical test results. She said the physician presented the results to her and then followed with “Are you fine with the results?” She described how she responded to this mystifying question, “So I did not bother because I did not know the meaning of ductal carcinoma, I had never heard of cancer, so I think that my doctor did not present the diagnosis well.” The improper delivery of difficult medical news to patients can drastically inhibit the dignity and sense of well-being in the patients. As demonstrated by the patients’ testimonies, the poorly delivered news resulted in emotional stress on the patients.

*Improved dignity and sense of well-being resulting from relationships:*

Several respondents in this study offered insights into their relationships with their family members, friends, and fellow patient friends during their experiences with breast cancer that suggest that compassionate and devoted relationships improve the well-being and dignity of the breast cancer patients. These participants described how their relationships renewed a previously lost feeling of worth. As found and noted previously, the diagnosis often instills a deep fear within the patients, resulting in decreased dignity and self-worth. This study sought to determine how these negative feelings can be affected by relationships between the patients and other individuals. Most often, the deep fears were either eliminated completely or reduced due to the relationships between the patient and others. One woman described her transformation as a result of her relationships, “My feelings of self-worth changed following the diagnosis because I was afraid but time came when I became strong and felt self worth for my life. Those around me respect and love me.” Another patient said, “People still see worth in me and we move with them, it makes me feel of worth, and it has also helped a lot because formally, I could do many things and they also do theirs, but now whoever gets to know about it cares, which shows that I am still of worth to the people, they still need me.” Other patients also noted how visits by family members and friends during their illness made them feel desired and need, which then allowed them to feel strengthened internally. One current UCI patient reflected a sentiment held by many others in the study when she said, “Those who accompany me on my journey with this disease improves my feeling of self worth.” The patients’ insights into their relationships suggest that a sense of dignity and well-being develop when in the presence of quality relationships that provide the patients with love and affirmation beyond the disease.

In addition to general support from family and friends, support through relationships between current patients and survivors proves to be

largely successful at improving the emotional stability of the current patients. Breast cancer survivors and now current counselors are able to counsel the current patients in order to potentially restore their emotional strength and stability. One such survivor and now counselor explained her experience as someone who is now able to provide support for another woman, "When you talk to them and they hear your voice, loud and clear, they feel happy, so that once can make us, our relationship strong." A patient on the recipient end of such a relationship also provided positive feedback when she described her relationship with her best friend who survived cancer and who now provides her with support. She said, "When I told her that I had the disease cancer she encouraged me that I should not fear and since I am still alive to go. And she has been so supportive every time." Another patient reflected fondly upon her interaction with a survivor and how it positively impacted her journey with the disease. This patient had high blood pressure and anxiety prior to her mastectomy. The doctor then sent the patient to a survivor who was able to calm the patient and explain her experience with the surgery. This discussion allowed the patient's blood pressure to go down and for her to be emotionally prepared for the surgery. Another patient commented on a similar experience with a survivor, "When I visited and found women who had been operated on, I became stronger." These positive reflections on relationships between patients and survivors highlight the potential for compassionate and committed relationships to restore feelings of dignity and worth within the breast cancer patients during times of adversity.

*Reduction of stigma due to relationships:*

In addition to the data suggesting that relationships are able to restore feelings of dignity and worth within the breast cancer patients, the respondents' insights into their relationships also suggest that quality relationships have the power to reduce the stigmatization that surrounds breast cancer in Uganda. While many patients initially fear the disease, several patients described how their relationships with family, friends, survivors, or medical caretakers reduced this fear. One woman described how her relationships with a survivor reduced her sense of fear and stigma "I no longer fear the breast cancer disease but previously, I used to fear it. This is because what I used to think is different from what I have seen, for I now get treatment and am still living. So my heart is strong." Another woman said, "The relationships has changed the level of stigma that I feel because now, I do not feel so scared like I was before, now I feel the cancer is a disease like any other and is curable if you frequently visit the doctor and get the right

treatment.” Both treatment and encouragement are linked to patients’ satisfaction and positive feelings of self-worth. This suggests that a sense of hope is instilled in patients upon simply living, and not passing away, with the disease.

*Lack of counseling and support for UCI breast cancer patients:*

In order to reveal potential sources for the extensive lack of awareness and stigmatization on breast cancer in Uganda, the effectiveness of the counseling department at UCI and the breast cancer support group at UCI were investigated in this study. The current breast cancer patients of UCI were asked if they have ever actively sought out or attended events led by either the counseling department of UCI and/or UWOCASO. Only one of the thirteen study participants had ever received counseling from the UCI counseling department and only one of the thirteen attended an event led by UWOCASO. One such patient demonstrated the current lack in counseling and support that exists currently at UCI when she said, “I have never visited the counseling department at UCI. I do not know of any support groups for women with breast cancer. For I wish to join one of the support groups in case it existed.” Just as this patient expressed her desire and willingness to participate in a support group, all other patients who said they had never heard of or attended events led by UWOCASO similarly expressed interest in joining one. One patient even expressed an interest in joining a support group not only for her own personal knowledge gain, but also to aid those in the villages who do not have access to the group or UCI otherwise. She said, “I very much want to learn more about breast cancer since I very much desire to teach people in my village who sit back and do not go to the hospital.” The lack of participation in both the counseling department and UWOCASO suggests that these two inefficiencies could be a contributing source for the extensive lack of awareness and stigmatization surrounding the disease.

*Barriers to receiving care in Uganda:*

In addition to fear and stigmatization limiting breast cancer diagnosis and treatment in Uganda, there are also significant financial barriers and physical barriers limiting the diagnosis and treatment of the disease as well. Every key informant interview respondent demonstrated a struggle to receive care relating to finances. Financial barriers occurred at two very crucial points of the delivery of care. The first financial barrier that many breast cancer patients confront is the cost of travel to UCI in Kampala. Many of the women had to seek out financial support to receive enough money to travel to UCI for

their care. When asked about their ability to pay for their travel to UCI, the key informant interview respondents replied: “I could call people, ask for money so they would send me money and I come,” “The transport cost was a very high economic burden. I keep returning for treatment but it is not easy,” “the transport was a burden,” “It is a burden each time I come,” “it is a very high economic burden to me and my family.” The burden of travel costs even inhibited a few patients from seeking out their required treatment. Two patients in this study waited a year or longer to receive treatment due to this. One such patient described, “But because of limited support, I took another one year without visiting a hospital.”

The second financial barrier occurs when patients must pay for their drugs. Although the government is to pay for the chemotherapy drugs, there is often a shortage that requires the patients to subsidize the costs. One respondent describe this situation when she said, “Some drugs go missing and I do not buy them immediately. I make phone calls to my people and they solicit, then I add to what I have and they give me.” Many of the respondents described how this barrier decreased the level of care they received. One key informant interview respondent described, “It would have been of high quality, but because they tell us to buy drugs and when you reach there, you even shed tears because you won’t have the money so you will beg.” Not only must the patients purchase their own drugs at times, the drugs are also very expensive. One respondent described, “Medicine is so expensive, it is very costly, at times you may fail to buy.” Financial constraints often resulted from lost jobs due to the illness, limited support from family and financial responsibilities within the family such as paint for education of the children.

In addition to financial barriers limiting the patients from traveling to UCI to receive their treatment and limiting their ability to pay for drugs, there is often also a physical barrier to receiving care at UCI in Kampala. This physical barrier is the extensive distance to travel to UCI. Kampala, where UCI is located, is in South-Central Uganda. Thus, women living in North or West Uganda must travel great distances to receive care at UCI. Many of the respondents described travel times up to a day long. In addition to just arriving to Kampala, there is also a desire to arrive to UCI early due to the chaos that is present surrounding Mulago Hospital and UCI as patients seek out their required care. One respondent described this situation, “There is a lot of panic at Mulago and you must come very early, so it is a burden but there is nothing to do.” One key informant interview respondent described her experience, “My transportation was difficult. I would wake up at 5 AM and walk up the road using a walking stick. Then board a taxi, thereafter get a motorcycle from

town up to UCI gate since I was paralyzed on one side.”

In addition to asking the breast cancer patients and survivors about their own individual struggles in seeking out and receiving care at UCI, the respondents were also asked to reflect on their perception of the experiences of patients throughout the entire country. Every key informant interview respondent explained how they do not believe that all women across Uganda can receive the same level of care. Their beliefs on why this may be the case echoed experiences similar to their own in terms of financial and physical barriers to care. Many of the respondents explained that women in rural villages cannot receive the same level of care because they do not have the financial means of traveling to UCI for treatment and paying for their treatment. A current breast cancer patient expressed this sentiment by saying, “No, they do not get the same treatment. Because she may come and they tell her, go and buy drugs, but they will not buy because she does not have the money.” In addition to financial and physical barriers for care, the current breast cancer patients also explained how there is also a lack of awareness that limits the care outcomes for women in rural regions. In some of the rural villages in Uganda, there is a belief that the breasts should not be tampered with. And thus, the women fear medical treatment that would require the breasts to be tampered with. Others in the rural villages do not believe in the diagnosis and instead believe the patient is being bewitched, according to the study participants. This results in the women remaining quiet and without a desire to seek out care. One respondent in this study accurately encompassed all of these issues in her interview by saying, “Not all women across Uganda are able to receive the same type/quality of treatment like me because firstly, they are not aware of this disease, secondly, some are not sensitized and also finance is a problem to many since cancer is a very expensive disease.”

#### *Patients’ calls for action:*

Following the completion of the formal script questions in each key informant interview with the current patients, the patients were given an opportunity to express any personal and specific points of interest. Each patient that chose to take the opportunity to share a concern suggested that more funding and higher quality care should be provided for breast cancer patients in Uganda. One current breast cancer patient described her perception of the current state of care for cancer patients in Uganda and her belief on how the government should respond:

As patients of cancer, I think we have been so neglected. At least they would attend to us the way they did to those with HIV/AIDS because our



drugs are so tough and very expensive so at least, the government would us and get/survey for our drugs the same way it was done for those with HIV/AIDS. Secondly, I request the government to respect the medical personnel who attend to us because all life is in their hands. Expanding on this patient's plea for the government to take action, another patient proposed for the government to take all regions into account when developing a cancer plan. This patient said, "Let the regions of Uganda be considered, all the regions. Not only Mulago which is for central, let some services be taken to eastern or north eastern or even mobile clinics, that is our request."

One respondent noted the unavailable medications and high cost of paying for medications at times. This respondent explained the defeat she feels when she cannot afford her medications. Another woman also expressed similar feelings in terms of the inability to pay for treatment. This woman is seeking out advice on her to plan for her future. She described how she is unable to work and make an income, but yet she is still attempting to pay for her children and their schooling. She then asked for advice by saying, "Can there be good Samaritans or the ways they can tell us, of social life, diet, etc. and we also appear as though we have not yet been victims?" Another key informant interview respondent expressed her concern for not only herself, but also women who show symptoms of breast cancer but cannot afford the cost of travel to UCI for screening and treatment. She inquired how these patients can receive proper treatment.

In addition to pleas for more funding for sources of physical care, there was also a request for more mental and emotional support for patients. One key informant interview respondent said, "All I would say is to make an appeal or request that all doctors/medical personnel may try to provide emotional support because this illness deprives one of her knowledge and the thought."

## **Conclusion**

### *Final Remarks:*

The findings from this study suggest that women in Uganda diagnosed with breast cancer ought to be provided with the means to maintain two key components of their well-being in order to appropriately navigate the disease: mental and emotional support provided through key types of relationships and the ability to care for others and maintain previous roles in the home and society. The results from this study suggest that women who experience loving and engaging relationships, or who are accompanied, throughout the journey

of battling breast cancer experience reduced levels of stigmatization, and maintain a greater sense of dignity. Within this study, quality relationships, or relationships that helped eliminate stigmatization and renew dignity, were often times between fellow patients at UCI and/or survivors. Additionally, relationships between patients and family members provided the same positive results. However, within all of these relationships, there were recurring attributes. For example, these relationships involved frequent discussions filled with words of hope and love, rather than of fear and anger. Furthermore, these relationships often involved frequent interactions between the patient and other individual. Whether the other individual visited the patient at her home, visited the patient at the hospital or was at the hospital as well, the strongest relationships were those in which the patient could easily access the individual for support. Conversely, the women face marginalization and a sense of loneliness from society as a consequence of stigma. The care the women receive from others being present within their lives is a new sense of peace and acts as a new protagonist for facing the disease and rediscovering their dignity. A final commonality between these relationships was that those within the relationship aside from the patient were often well informed on the disease and could provide accurate information to the patients, and thus empower the patients to negate false information of breast cancer that may present in their lives or in society. These unremitting sources of loving support within the lives of patients align with the concept of accompaniment, without it being known to the patients. This suggests that some patients at UCI are experiencing accompaniment through organic relationship development within their lives. These healthy, supportive and informative relationships should be further studied and used as models for encouraging the development or more similar relationships.

In addition to the data suggesting that quality relationships can help to reduce stigmatization and renew dignity within the women, the data highlights that dignity can be restored within the breast cancer patients by ensuring the maintenance of their roles within the home and workplace. Many women in this study described a source of their dignity and well-being to be their role within the family and the workplace. Many women described how they feel dignified when they can care for their families and continue working. These two major recurring ideas from the data suggest that relationships can be used as a major source of positivity and growth within the patients throughout the journey with the disease. Through unremitting and loving relationships with informed individuals, women can develop the strength to contest stigmatization, maintain the love within their hearts that they need to provide

to others, and preserve a sense of dignity and well-being within their hearts and minds. The love the patients receive from these particular relationships keep their own hearts strong and full of love to share with others. Similarly, the knowledge the patients receive from these relationships fill their minds with accurate information needed to contest the misinformed individuals that perpetuate stigma. And finally, the mental guidance provides them with a framework towards a more dignified sense of well-being.

*Moving forward—Accompaniment Model:*

In order to begin accommodating the many needs of the breast cancer patients in Uganda, multiple systems must be put into place simultaneously. One possible solution to the many issues that the women battling breast cancer in Uganda face is an accompaniment system modeled off The Butaro Cancer Center that is sponsored by Partners in Health. This accompaniment model system would help eliminate several of the barriers to care that the patients and survivors in Uganda noted in their interviews and focus groups. The accompaniment model system would cover transportation costs for the patients to come to UCI for screening and treatment, the costs of housing and food while receiving care at UCI and any additional costs incurred through the treatment regimen. Funding for such a program would potentially come from the government, as UCI is a public, and government-run institution. In addition to covering the financial burden of receiving care, the accompaniment model system would also provide the mental and emotional support that is necessary for women attempting to overcome this difficult disease. In order to measure the success of such a model, the number of patients coming to UCI and receiving complete care would have to be measured before, during, and after the implementation of the program.

*Moving Forward—Hope Lodge:*

As a part of the proposed accompaniment model system, I propose a potential option for the coverage of housing costs. The option could be a home, a UCI Hope Lodge, on the grounds of UCI for outpatients to stay in through the duration of their treatment. This would limit the costs incurred by traveling to their homes and back throughout the duration of treatment. The respondents in this study expressed sentiments that suggest that such a home could aid in bettering their journeys with the disease at UCI. These sentiments are those that highlight the negative effects of having no such place to stay currently at UCI. Many patients at UCI who receive outpatient care and who have no relatives, friends, or place to stay in Kampala often end up sleeping on

the grounds of the hospital. A respondent in this study acknowledged such a scenario by explaining, “Cancer is very unkind because mostly, it catches the poor. Hmm the rich people, I do not seem to see them in the cancer institute here at UCI. It is the poor who are there, who sleep on verandas” explained a current breast cancer patient of UCI. Others choose to or cannot sleep on the veranda due to a lack of space, and resort to other options. Two options for these patients would be to ask for funding for housing or to ask Kampala residents to allow for a home-stay. A respondent in this study explained her experience with the latter by saying regretfully, “I just have to beg the people I know to allow me to stay in their homes.” Within this home, I propose that there would be a safe place for outpatients to rest at night, a place where outpatients can receive proper nutrition if it is lacking, and a place for outpatients to bring themselves and their family/friends to receive education and counseling sessions. By providing the patients a place to stay and a place for counseling and education, the Hope Lodge could potentially address two of the major concerns that current UCI Breast cancer patients expressed in their interviews-cost of traveling/lodging at UCI and mental/emotional support.

#### *Moving Forward—Expansion of UCI Counseling & UWOCASO:*

In response to the lack of awareness and participation in both the UCI Counseling Department and UWOCASO, there must be efforts taken to effectively change these current trends. The UCI Counseling Department was opened in 2013 and is currently housed in a small room within the Solid Tumor Ward of UCI. As of May 2016, there were three counselors working for the department. The department offers pre-chemotherapy counseling to inpatients, but not to outpatients. One of the current counselors was interviewed in this study and asked to discuss her role and her thoughts on any barriers to the care she attempts to deliver to patients. One of her largest concerns not addressed by any of the patients, was the lack of privacy that is available for the patients. The inpatients in the wards often times cannot move from their beds and thus they must receive counseling at the bedside. However, they are surrounded by many other patients, and thus the counselors find that the patients are hesitant to open up and address all of their concerns. This lack of proper space for counseling is a potentially large barrier on dignity within the patients.

In order to make the counseling services more well-known, better understood by the patients, more effective at eliminating stigma and more effective at renewing dignity within the patients, the counselors at UCI must

work to make themselves more visible to outpatients at UCI. They could do this by either being more physically present during outpatient appointments or by moving their office to a more visible location at UCI. In addition to relying on the department to become more visible, the doctors and nurses of UCI could also explain the counseling department's services to patients more frequently and clearly.

In addition to making UCI Counseling more visible and active, UWOCASO should expand their efforts as well. Perhaps the members of UWOCASO could be more physically present as well during outpatient appointments. The doctors should also explain the available resource to patients and how they can seek it out if they are interested. UWOCASO could also be utilized to help develop better and more active education programs on breast cancer.

*Moving Forward—Government funding/support:*

While UCI should be held accountable for the expansion of efforts surrounding breast cancer awareness and care, the government should also be held accountable for expansion of programs. As stated previously, the radiation machine at UCI is currently not in operation due to a breakdown in April of 2016. This has resulted in many patients who require radiation to be denied of the proper treatment. The government should be held accountable for getting the radiation machine replaced and in operation in a reasonable time frame. The government should also expand the funding for chemotherapy drugs. As the patients in this study demonstrated, there are occasions in which UCI runs out of drugs and patients are denied proper treatment as a result. The government should also take action to expand the training of oncologists and nurses in the field of oncology in Uganda. Some of the patients demonstrated a concern with insufficient care on behalf of a small number of doctors and nurses at UCI.

## **Appendix:**

### **IA. Consent form (English):**

Uganda Cancer Institute Research and Ethics Committee/University of Notre Dame

#### **CONSENT FORM TO VOLUNTEER IN A RESEARCH STUDY AND AUTHORIZATION FOR USE AND DISCLOSURE OF MEDICAL INFORMATION**

##### **Title of Research Study:**

Investigation of the Effects of Accompaniment on the Reduction of Stigmatization and the Renewal of Self- Dignity in Women Battling Breast Cancer in Uganda

##### **Principal Investigator Name and Contact Information:**

Sarah Fracci

University of Notre Dame

430 Cavanaugh South Bend, IN 46556 (440)897-4374

[xxxx@nd.edu](mailto:xxxx@nd.edu)

##### **Purpose of this research study:**

You are invited to participate in a research study about barriers to knowledge and the formation of dignity in Ugandan women ages 18 and older facing breast cancer. This study is being carried out to determine if accompaniment can act as a vehicle towards renewing dignity in Ugandan women battling breast cancer and thus reducing the stigmatization that surrounds the disease. This study is being conducted by Sarah Fracci from the University of Notre Dame. Kellogg Institute of the University of Notre Dame has funded this study.

##### **Duration of Research:**

You are being asked to participate in this research study. You were selected to participate based on your connection to breast cancer as either a patient or bystander of the disease. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate. Your participation in this research is expected to last for approximately 2 months with various optional modes of participation. Surveys lasting approximately 30 minutes may be distributed throughout this 2 month study. Focus groups and individual interviews will also be offered to participants. Focus groups and interviews may last 30-60 minutes.

##### **Risks or Discomforts:**

There are no possible physical injuries that could result directly from this study. Due to the sensitive subject matter of this study, mental stress may be inflicted on respondents. However, all participants are allowed to exit the study at any time and mental and emotional support will be provided by the Counseling Center at Uganda Cancer Institute if needed following participation in this study.

##### **Privacy and Confidentiality:**

All interviews and discussions will be held in private areas as to ensure confidentiality. All information provided by respondents will be recorded via an electronic voice recorder and electronically encrypted and password protected in addition to being coded as to eliminate all

possible patient identifiers. All signed forms will be kept at the Uganda Cancer Institute in a locked file cabinet for at least three years following the study. The forms will then be effectively destroyed and no longer accessible to anyone. All material provided by respondents in this study will only be accessible to Sarah Fracci, the principal investigator of this study.

**Benefits:**

Participants may gain psychological or emotional benefits, as they will be provided with information that could possibly allow them to better handle their breast cancer diagnosis. Patients may also gain a better understanding of the disease and thus gain learning benefits. This could reduce incidence and mortality rates in the future if women become more informed and thus more apt to seek out treatment sooner. Participants in this study will not be paid for their participation in the study. However, they will be reimbursed for their time and cost of transportation. Each participant will receive 20,000 Ugandan shillings for their time and transportation.

**Participant’s Rights:**

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and may be discontinued at any time. Withdrawal from participation will not result in denial of entitled benefits. If injury occurs due to this study or if confidentiality is breached, Dr. Noleb Mugisha may be contacted at (256) 414-540605 or [nmugisha@gmail.com](mailto:nmugisha@gmail.com). Participation in this research will not affect your relationship with the Uganda Cancer Institute. If you have any questions about your right as a research participant, please contact the University of Notre Dame Institutional Review Board (IRB), Office of Research Compliance, ([compliance@nd.edu](mailto:compliance@nd.edu)), phone (574-631-1461).

- ☐ I am 18 years of age or older.
- ☐ I have received a copy of this informed consent document.
- ☐ I have read/been read the information in this document and am voluntarily agreeing to participate in this study as a respondent.

Written Consent: I attest that I have read the information in this form and understand the purpose of the study, the procedures and the fact that my participation in the study is voluntary and thus I am accepting my position as a participant in the study.

Name of Participant (Print): \_\_\_\_\_  
Participant’s Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

or

Verbal Consent: I attest that the information in this form has been read to the participant and she understands the purpose of the study, the procedures and the fact that her participation in the study is voluntary and she has accepted to take part in the study.

Name of witness (Print): \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**IB. Consent form (Luganda):**

Uganda Cancer Institute/University of Notre Dame

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM AND AUTHORIZATION  
FOR USE AND DISCLOSURE OF MEDICAL INFORMATION

**Title of Research Study:**

Investigation of the Effects of Accompaniment on the Reduction of Stigmatization and the Renewal of Self- Dignity in Women Battling Breast Cancer in Uganda

**Principal Investigator Name and Contact Information:**

Sarah Fracci

University of Notre Dame

430 Cavanaugh South Bend, IN 46556 (440)897-4374

[xxxx@nd.edu](mailto:xxxx@nd.edu)

**Ekgendererwa ky'okunonyereza.**

Oyanirizibwa okwetabba mukunonyereza okukwataku biziya okumanya era n'okwebumbamu kwe kitibwa bakyaala abanauganda wakai w'emyaka 18 n'okudda wagulu abazingizidwa kkokolo wa mabeere. Okunonyereza kuno kukolebwa okulaba oba okuwerekebwa kuyinza okukola ng'omukutu eri okuzzaobugya okwewulira omuwendo mu bakyaala abanauganda abalwanyisa kkokolo wa mabeere era n'okukeendeeza kukusolebwa okwetolodde obulwadde bunno. Okunonyereza kuno kukoleba Sarah Fracci okuva mu university ya Notre Dame. Kellogg Institute of the University of Notre Dame y'etadde sente mukunonyereza kunno.

**Obudde obunatwalibwa mu kunonyereza**

Osabibwa okwetabba mukunonyereza kuno. Walondedwa okwetabbamu okusinziira ku kakwaate k'olina ne kkokolo wamabeere ng'omulwadde oba agoberera entambula y'obulwadde. Olina okubeera n'emyaka 18 oba n'okusingawo okwetabbamu. Okubuuzebwa ebibuuzo mukibinja okwawamu oba okwasekinoomu kujakuweebwa eri abetabbi. Okubuzzibwa mubibinja okwawaamu n'e sekinoomu kuyinza okumal ebanga lyadakiika 30-60.

**Obutyabaga oba Risks or Discomforts:**

Tewali buvune bwamubiri buyinza okuva buterevu mukunonyereza kuno. Olw'o.....bw'ensonga y'okunonyereza kuno, okulusanyizibwa kw'obwongo kuyinza okutuusibwa kubetabbi. Naye, abetabbi bonna bakirizibwa okuva mukunonyereza ekiseera kyonna era okubudabudibwa kujabuweebwa aba counselling centre ku Uganda Cancer Institute bwekinaaba kyetaagisa oluvanyuma lw'okwetabba mukunonyereza kuno.

**Okukuuma Ebyama.**

Okubuuzebwa n'enteseganya zonna zijjakukolebwa mubifo ebyekusifu okusobola okukuuma eyama. ....ebinaweebwa abetabbi, bijja kukwatibwa kutambi akakwata amaloboozi era All information provided by respondents will be recorded via an electronic voice recorder and electronically encrypted and password protected in addition to being coded as to eliminate all possible patient identifiers. Foomu zonna ezitekeddwako emikono zijjakuterekebwa ku Uganda Cancer Institute mukabada ya fayiro okumala emyaka ng'essatu oluvanyuma lw'okunonyereza. Awo foomu zijja kusanyizibwawo ddala era nga tezisobola kutuukibwako muntu mulala yenna. Ebintu byonna ebinavaeri abetabbi mu kunonyereza kuno bijja kubeera



nga bitukiibwako Sarah Fracci yekka, oyo akulidde okunonyereza kuno.

**Okuganyulwa:**

Abetabbi bayinza okufunamu mukubudabudibwa, nga bwe bageenda okuweebwa obubakka obuyinza okubasobozesa okukwatamu obulungi okuzuulibwamu obulwadde bwa kkokolo wamabeere. Abalwadde basobola natte okufunamu okutegera okusingawo okw'obulwadde era n'okufuna emiganyulo egy'okuyiga. Kino kiyinza okukendeeza ebiibaawo era n'omuwendo gwabafa mubiseera eby'omumaaso singa abakyaala beyongera okuba n'okumanya era n'okufaayo okufuna obujjanjabi ngabukyaali. Abetabbi mukunonyereza kuno tebajjakusasulwa olw'okwetabba mukunonyereza Wabula, bajakuyirilibwa obudde bw'abwe n'ebisale by'entambula Buli mwetabbi ajja kufuna 20,000 eza Uganda olw'obudde bw'abwe era n'entambula

**Eddembe ly'omwetabbi :**

Okwetaba mukunonyerezakuno kwona kwakyeagalire era kusobola okukomezebwa esaawa yona. Okuwanduka mukwetabba mukunonyereza tekujja kuvirako kugaanibwa by'obadde ofuna. Singa obuvuna bubaawo ngabuva mukunonyereza kuno, oba ekyama tebikuumidwa, Dr. Noleb Mugisha ayinza okutuukirirwa ku (256)414-540605 oba [nmugisha@gmail.com](mailto:nmugisha@gmail.com) Okwetabba mukunonyereza kuno tekujja kukosa nkolaganayo ne Uganda Cancer Institute. Singa olina ebibuuzo byona ebikwata kuddembe lyo ng'omwetabbi mukunonyereza, bambi tukirira University of Notre Dame Institutional Review Board (IRB), Office of Research Compliance, ([compliance@nd.edu](mailto:compliance@nd.edu)), phone (574-631-1461).

- ☐ Nina emyaka 18 n'okuddawagulu
- ☐ Nfunye kkopi y'ekiwandiiko kino eky'okukiriziganya.
- ☐ Nsomye oba bansomedde ebiwandiikidwa mu kiwaandiiko kino era nzikiriza kyeyagalire okwetabba mukunonyereza kuno ng'o mwetabbi.

Written Consent: Nkakasa nti nsomye ebiwandiikidwa mu foomu era ntegedde ebigendererwa ky'okunonyereza, emitendera era n'ekirambika nti okwetaba kwange mukunonyereza kuno kwakyeagalire era n'olw'ekyo nzikirizza ekiti kyange ng'omwetabbi mukunonyereza.

Amanya g'omwetabbi (mukyapa): \_\_\_\_\_

Olunaku omwetabbi lweyazaalibwa : \_\_\_\_\_

Omukono \_\_\_\_\_

Enaku z'omweezi \_\_\_\_\_

Oba

Verbal Consent: Nkakasa nti ebiwandikidwa mu foomu eno bisomedwa eri omwetabbi era ye ategedde ekigendererwa ky'okunonyereza, emitendera I attest that the information in this form has been read to the participant and she understands the purpose of the study, the procedures and the fact that her participation in the study is voluntary and she has accepted to take part in the study.

Amanya g'omwetabbi (mukyapa): \_\_\_\_\_

Omukono \_\_\_\_\_

Enaku z'omweezi \_\_\_\_\_

**IIA. Key Informant Interview Script (English):**

Uganda Cancer Institute/University of Notre Dame Key Informant Interview Guide  
Questions

**Title of Research Study:**

Investigation of the Effects of Accompaniment on the Reduction of Stigmatization and the Renewal of Dignity in Women Battling Breast Cancer in Uganda

**Demographic Information:**

1. What is your age?
2. What district of Uganda do you live in?
3. What level of formal education did you complete?
4. What is your religion?
5. What is your tribe?
6. Do you have children? If YES, how many?
7. Are you married?

**Diagnosis of disease:**

1. How did you first discover that you have breast cancer? What factors led you to believe you had an illness?
2. Who did you approach first with your health concerns?
3. When were you confirmed to have breast cancer? At what age? By who?
4. What were your first thoughts when you were first diagnosed with breast cancer?

**Process of Seeking Care:**

1. Why did you decide to come to Uganda Cancer Institute for your breast cancer treatment?
2. How long did it take you to travel from home to Uganda Cancer Institute?
3. What mode of transportation did you use to get here?
4. Was the cost of your transportation to Uganda Cancer Institute a heavy economic burden on you or your family?
5. Where will you be staying while receiving care at Uganda Cancer Institute?
6. How long do you expect to stay at Uganda Cancer Institute during this treatment visit?

**Access to Care:**

1. Do you believe there are effective treatments for breast cancer available to you?
2. Do you think women across Uganda all have access to the same type/quality of treatment? Please explain.
3. Do you think the care you receive at UCI is of high quality/low quality? Do you think your doctor is competent, helpful, caring?
4. Do you respect your doctor? Nurses? Staff of UCI?

**Stigmatization:**

1. What are some words you associate with breast cancer?
2. Please define cancer in your own words.
3. Do you believe there are certain risk factors or behaviors/actions that lead to breast cancer?
4. Do you fear breast cancer?
5. How has your family dealt with your illness?
6. How have your friends dealt with your illness?

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7. Have you lost any relationships due to this illness?
8. Have you gained any relationships due to this illness?
9. How do you think your illness will affect your relationships long term?
10. Are you interested in learning more about breast cancer?

### **Accompaniment:**

1. Have any of your family members or friends suffered from breast cancer?  
If YES, please describe their experiences with the disease.
2. If any of your friends or family members have suffered from breast cancer, what was your role in his/her life during her time of sickness?
3. How would you describe your relationship with your doctor? Nurses? Staff at UCI?
4. Do you feel your doctor and/or nurses have provided you with emotional support, in addition to physical support here at UCI? If yes, please describe.
5. Have you ever visited the counseling department at Uganda Cancer Institute? If yes, describe your experiences.
6. Do you have a best friend? If so, how has he/she dealt with this disease?
7. Who has provided you with the most support through your diagnosis and illness? (i.e. Who do you go to when you feel upset about your health?)
8. Who administers your chemotherapy drugs to you? Is it the same nurse at every administration? Who administers you painkillers at home if you take them?
9. Is there someone here at UCI with your or are you alone? Or does someone visit you often?
10. Does someone regularly provide mental, emotional or physical health support to you while at home?
11. If you have had such a relationship, how has it changed the level of stigma that you feel?
12. Do you know of any support groups for women with this illness? Would you be interested in joining one if one existed?

### **Dignity:**

1. How do you define self-worth?
2. Did your sense of self-worth change following your diagnosis?
3. Do those around you respect you? (i.e. Family, friends, doctors etc.)
4. Describe moments or situations in which you feel your self-worth has been changed, either positively or negatively.
5. Do family members, friends or caretakers who accompany you on your journey with this disease improve your sense of self-worth?

Final Question: Is there anything else you want me to know or would like to tell me? Would you like to add anything we did not discuss?

### **IIB. Key Informant Interview Script (Luganda):**

Uganda Cancer Institute/University of Notre Dame  
Key Informant Interview Guide Questions

#### **Omutwe gw'okunonyereza:**

Okunonyereza ku ..... mukuwerekabwa ku kukendeeza ku kweboola era n'okuzibwa obugya kw'omuntu mu bakyala abalwana n'e kkokolo wamabeere mu Uganda.

**Ebikukwatako**

1. Emyaka gyo giri emeka
2. Distrikiti ki mu Uganda gy'obeeramu?
3. Wasoma kwenkanaki mu butongole?
4. Oliwa diini ki?
5. Oli wa gwanga ki?
6. Olina abaana? Oba yee, bali bameka?
7. Oli mufuumbo?

**Okuzuula obulwadde:**

1. Ngeri ki gyewasooka okuzuula nti olina kkokolo wa mabeere? Bbiki ebyakuletera okukkiriza nti walina obulwadde?
2. Ani gwewasookera ddala okutuukirira n'ensonga z'obulwadde?
3. Ddi lwewakakasibwa oba n'ekkokolo wa mabeere? Ku myaka emeka? .....When were you confirmed to have breast cancer? At what age? By who?
4. Bbiki ebyali ebirowoozo byo ebyasooka bwe wasooka okuzuulibwa n'ekkokolo wa mabeere?

**Emitendera gy'okunoonyamu obujjanjabbi:**

1. Lwaki gwe wasalawo okujja ku Uganda Cancer Institute kulw'okujjanjabibwa kkokolo wa mabeere?
2. Kyakutwaalira bbanga kki okutambula okuwa ewaka okutuuka ku Uganda Cancer Institute?
3. Ntambula kikaaki gyewakozesa okutuuka wano?
4. Ebisale by'entambula okujja ku Uganda Cancer Institute byakutikka gwe oba famire yo obuzito obwamaanyi muby'enfuna?
5. Wa wogenda okubeera ng'ofuna obujjanjabbi ku Uganda Cancer Institute?
6. Osubbira kumala bbanga kki ng'obeer ki Uganda Cancer Institute kulukyaala luno olw'okujjanjabibwa?

**Okutuuka ku bujjanjabbi**

1. Okirizza nti waliwo obujjanjabbi obw'egassa obwa kkokolo wa mabeere mukiseera mwobwetaagira?
2. Olowooza nti abakyala mu okwetolooro Uganda bonna balina .....ku kika oba omutindo gwegumu ogy'obujjanjabbi? Bambi kigaziyeeko.
3. Olowooza obujjanjabbi bw'ofuna ku UCI bwamutindo gwawagulu oba gwawansi? Olowooza nti omusawo wo mukugu ekimala, akuyamba era afaayo gyoli?
4. Ossaamu ekitiibwa omusawo wo? Banaansi? Abakozi ba UCI?

**Okweboola /okwesosola**

1. Bigambo ki ebimu bwokuusa ku kkokolo wa mabeere?
2. Bambi tunyonyole kkokolo mubigambo byo.
  1. Okkiriza nti waliwo eby'ekuusa ku n'eyisa/ebikolwa ebiletera kkokolo wa mabeere?
  2. Kkokolo wa mabeere omutya?
  3. Ngeriki famire yo gy'ekuttemu obulwadde bwo?
  4. Ngeriki bakwaanobo gye bakuttemu obulwadde bwo?

5. Ofriidwayo enkolagana yonna ngakiviridde kubulwadde bunno?
6. Ofunyeeyo enkolagana yonna ngakiviridde kubulwadde bunno?
7. Osuubira obulwadde bwo bunayisa butya enkolaganayo mukiseera eky'omumaaso?
8. Wandiyagadde okuyiga ebisingawo ku kkokolo wamabeere?

**Accompaniment:**

1. Waliwo owa famire yo oba mukwano gwo yenna eyalwalako kkokolo wamabeere?  
Oba yee, bambi lambuluula byebayitamu n'obulwadde bunno.
1. Bwekiba nti mukwano gwo oba owa famire yo yenna yalwaalako kkokolo wa mabeere, buvunanyizibwaki bwewalina mubulamu bwemukiseera ky'obulwadde?
2. Wandini nyonyodde otya enkolaganayo n'omusawo wo? Banaansi? Abakozi ku UCI?
3. Owulira nti omusawo wo ne oba n'ebanaansi bakuwadde okubudabudibwa, ng'ogasseko okufaako mumubiri wano ku UCI? Oba yee, bambi nyonyola.
4. Waliokyaliddeko ekiwendda ky'okubudabudibwa wano ku Uganda Cancer Institute? Oba Yye nyonyola byoyiseemu.
5. Olina mukwano gwo n'firabulago? Singa kyeyo, obulwadde bunno abututte atya?
6. Ani akuwadde obuyambi obusinga okuyita mu kuzuulibwa kw'obuladde era n'emubulwadde? (okutegeeza: ani gwotukiirira bwowulira ng'osobeddwa kunsonga z'obulwadde bwo?)
7. Ani akuwa eddagala lyo erya kkokolo? Abeera naansi y'omu buli lw'ebakuwa? Ani akuwa eddagala erikeendeza kubulumi ng'oli waaka bwoba olitwala.
8. Waliwo omuntu yenna wano ku UCI alinaawe oba oliwoweeka? Oba waliwo akukyalira mubiseera ebigere?
9. Waliwo omuntu nga bulikiseera akuwa obuyambi muby'endowooza, oba eby'omubiri bwobeera ng'oliwaaka?
10. Singa obadde n'enkolagana eyo, kikyusiza kitya obuungi bw'okuboolebwa bw'owulira?
11. Omanyi yo ebibiina byonna ebibudabuda abakyaala n'obulwadde bunno? Wandiyagadde okwegatta kukimu kw'ebyo singa gyekiri?

**Dignity: Okwessamu ekitiibwa**

1. Okwewuulira nti oliwamuwendo okinyonyola otya?
2. Okwewuulira kwo nti oliwamuwendo kwakyuuka oluvanyuma lw'obulwadde okuzuulibwa?
3. Abo abakurinaanye bakussamu ekitiibwa? ( okuteza famire, emikwaano, abasawo nabalala.)
4. Nyonyola ebiseera oba embeera mwowulira nga omuwendo gwo gukyuuse, mungeri ennungi oba embi.
5. Aba famire, emikwaano oba abajjanjabbi abakuwerekerako kulugendo lwo n'obulwadde bunno bakuzzamu okwewuulira nti oliwamuweendo?

Ekibuuzo ekisembayo: Waliwo ekintu kyonna kyewandiyagadde manye oba kyewandiyagadde okumbuulira? Wandiyagadde okw'ongerako ekintu kyonna kyetutateesezaako?

**III. Code Book**

**Code Guide:**

**I. Burden of Treatment**

- A. Financial Burden to travel to UCI
- B. Physical Difficulty to travel to UCI
- C. Inability to purchase Drugs
- II. Relationships
  - A. Family Relations
    - 1. Family (general) positively impacting
    - 2. Family (general) negatively impacting
    - 3. Husband positively helped/helping
    - 4. Husband negatively impacted
    - 5. Children positively helped/helping
    - 6. Sibling positively helped/helping
  - B. Friend Relations
    - 1. Previous friend positively helped/helping
    - 2. Friend from UCI positively helped/helping
    - 3. Friend negatively impacting
    - 4. Church friend positively helped/helping
  - C. General relationships
- III. Stigmatization
  - A. Lack of proper education/awareness of breast cancer
  - B. Clear understanding and awareness of breast cancer
  - C. Negative effects of stigmatization
  - D. Failure to recognize stigmatization
  - E. Patient's/survivor's fear of mastectomy
  - F. Family member's fear of mastectomy
- IV. Response to Diagnosis
  - A. Fear
  - B. Bravery
- V. Dignity
  - A. Breast cancer increased
  - B. Breast cancer reduced
  - C. unsure
  - D. Connection of self worth to children
- VI. Care
  - A. Appreciation of doctor/nurses
  - B. Complaint of doctors/nurses
- VII. Call for Action
  - A. Complaint of not enough doctors
  - B. Desire for support group
  - C. Complaint of unavailable drugs

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**EMILY MIGLIORE** graduated from the University of Notre Dame in May 2016, having double majored in political science and peace studies and minored in poverty studies. She is currently finishing her year as a Fulbright grantee in Mexico. In the fall of 2017, Emily will attend law school, and upon graduation, she will begin her career as an immigration attorney. Her thesis played a major role in her decision to go into immigration law, and she would like to thank her thesis advisor, Dr. Ricardo Ramírez, and the lawyers for whom she worked, Rodolfo Monterrosa and Cecilia Lopez, for inspiring her to go into the field of immigration advocacy.

# **La Unión Hace La Fuerza: What Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Leaves Out and the Role of Communities in Addressing the Needs of DACA Recipients**

**EMILY MIGLIORE**

## **Abstract**

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, is a form of prosecutorial discretion to defer deportation of certain immigrants who unlawfully came to the United States as children. It grants qualified applicants protection from deportation for a renewable two-year period, but it does not confer legal status or provide a path to citizenship. As a result of their lack of access to legal status, DACA recipients face a unique set of financial, educational, and social challenges, with limited means of mitigating these obstacles.

This thesis is an evaluation of DACA with particular attention to the challenges that arise from a lack of legal status. It includes a summary of DACA, a detailed explanation of the aforementioned challenges, and a background on the policy, accompanied by an explanation of why legislative reform is unlikely in the foreseeable future. The crux of this thesis is a set of five interviews with local DACA recipients and a subsequent analysis of their responses. Finally, the thesis concludes with the suggestion that communities play a pivotal role in the short-term and long-term support of DACA recipients and recommendations for future steps in aiding DACA recipients as immigrants without legal status.

## **Writer's Preface**

**April 2017**

Monday, April 4, 2016, was the date that I found out that I would spend the 2016-2017 academic year in Mexico as a Fulbright grantee. Coincidentally, it was also the date that I submitted my senior thesis on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). When I left the United States last August, Barack Obama was still president. DACA, a program that former President Obama implemented by means of executive order, faced virtually no threat from a presumable President Hillary Clinton. This meant that the hundreds of thousands of immigrants without legal status who are protected from deportation by DACA, could almost certainly count on the program to continue to run, to continue to shield them from being deported from the country they call home.

On November 8, 2016, this all-but-certainty changed to absolute fear when Donald Trump was elected president. Trump's campaign promises with regard to DACA were unambiguous. He "repeatedly promised to end the program on 'day one' of his presidency and called the protections 'unconstitutional executive amnesty'" (Bennett & Memoli, 2017). And although President Trump himself has not acted on these promises, his advisors have been busily exploring alternatives for ending DACA that would not require action by the President (Bennett & Memoli, 2017). Two options appear to be particularly alluring to Trump's team, and both of them involve Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who has been unequivocal in his criticism of protections from deportation.

One option that has been explored is the creation of "new legal guidance that details who is a priority for deportation" (Bennett & Memoli, 2017). Attorney General Sessions could instruct the Department of Justice to conduct a review of DACA. If they were to find it to be an unlawful or ill-advised use of prosecutorial discretion (a policy that allows law enforcement officers to focus on the deportation of immigrants whose presence in the United States poses a substantial threat to public safety), DACA would cease to exist.

Another, perhaps more surefire option echoes back to the *Texas v. United States* (2015) lawsuit that is discussed at length in this thesis. Before elaborating upon this second option for Trump's team, it is important to discuss how the case unfolded, including its eventual outcome, in the year that

has passed since I wrote my thesis.<sup>1</sup> After the Fifth Circuit ruled in favor of the plaintiffs (Texas et al.), the federal government appealed the case to the Supreme Court. Because the federal government was appealing the Fifth Circuit's decision, they were now the plaintiffs. Thus, when it appeared before the Supreme Court, the case was presented as *United States v. Texas* (2016).

*United States v. Texas* (2016) was to be argued before the Court in the spring of 2016. However, on April 18, 2016, when lawyers for both parties presented their cases in front of the Supreme Court, it was heard by only eight justices instead of nine. One seat in the courtroom was left vacant: that of Antonin Scalia, who had passed away two months earlier, in February. On June 23, 2016, the eight-justice Court released the results of their deliberation. They had reached a split decision, or a 4-4 vote (*United States v. Texas*, 2016). When this happens in the Supreme Court, the policy is to affirm the decision of the lower court. Therefore, the decision of the Fifth Circuit—in favor of Texas et al.—was affirmed. Then-President Obama's expansion of DACA and creation of DAPA was deemed an unlawful use of executive power.

The success of Texas et al. in *United States v. Texas* (2016), perhaps unsurprisingly, inspired the aforementioned second alternative for President Trump's advisors to eliminate DACA:

A handful of governors are considering a challenge patterned on [*Texas v. United States* (2015), a] lawsuit filed by several conservative state officials against the Obama administration's expansion of deportation protections. If they sue, Sessions could instruct his lawyers not to defend the program in court, exposing it to indefinite suspension by a federal judge. (Bennett & Memoli, 2017)

This strategy would be likely to see success. Given that *Texas v. United States* (2015) yielded an outcome favorable to Texas et al. in the Fifth Circuit—a federal court—it is quite probable that a similar case brought before a federal judge would also result in a victory for the plaintiffs. An already-likely win for the plaintiffs would become virtually guaranteed if compounded with a defenseless defendant.

Furthermore, it is unlikely that Congress would intervene in defense of DACA and its beneficiaries. As I demonstrate in my thesis, there is a correlation between party affiliation and opposition to DACA: Republicans are more likely to oppose DACA and Democrats less likely. The party affiliation

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<sup>1</sup> For a summary of the events of the *Texas v. United States* (2015) case through March 2016, see p. 76-77.

of the members of Congress has hardly changed in the aftermath of the 2016 elections. Before the elections, 246 of the 435 members of the United States House of Representatives and 54 of the 100 members of the United States Senate were Republicans (Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives). Now, those numbers are 237 and 52, respectively (Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives). Though their numbers have decreased slightly, Republicans still control both the House and the Senate. It is therefore improbable that the legislative branch will take action to protect DACA recipients, should President Trump's advisors seek to end the program.

Consequently, the tragic reality is that DACA beneficiaries and their families must prepare for the worst. Given my analysis of the present political climate, I must retract the conclusion of my thesis, which suggested that DACA recipients "come out" as DACA in their communities. Although the individuals I interviewed expressed that their employers, professors, colleagues, classmates, and peers had been overwhelmingly supportive of them, the risk posed to DACA beneficiaries and their families by the Trump Administration now makes it imprudent to be "openly DACA." In light of the current political climate, it is no longer advisable that the priority for immigrants without legal status be financial, educational, and social advancement. The focus must now shift to survival, to protection from deportation.

With regard to the role of communities in supporting immigrants without legal status, there are two means of providing assistance to our DACA neighbors. On an individual level, constituents can write to their representatives and urge them to defend prosecutorial discretion. For voters who live in states that were involved as a plaintiff in *Texas v. United States* (2015), a letter to the governor might be particularly impactful in preventing a lawsuit intended to bring an end to DACA. The second course of action that might be taken to support immigrants without legal status is on a broader, city-wide level, and that is to become a sanctuary city. Although the designation "sanctuary city" has no legal significance, these cities are known for limiting their cooperation with the federal government with regard to deportation of immigrants without legal status. This can manifest itself in a variety of ways, from refusing to submit lists of undocumented immigrants that are registered as living in the state to barring immigration officers from inquiring about individuals' legal status. A city that becomes a sanctuary city puts itself at risk of losing federal funding, but to its residents that are immigrants without legal status, such a city sends a powerful message: "You are a valuable part of our community, and we are going to protect you."

For the hundreds of thousands of DACA beneficiaries in the United States, life is not as secure or certain as it perhaps was a year ago. And so, for the time being, immigrants without legal status and those who advocate for them must adapt to the current climate on immigration policy in the United States. It seems that the best course of action right now is simply to do what is feasible to keep our DACA neighbors and their families safe from deportation.

## References

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*United States v. Texas*, 579 U.S. \_\_\_\_ (2016).

## INTRODUCTION

Like many other high school juniors, Roberto<sup>2</sup> has begun the process of researching his options for college, weighing such factors as the quality of the academic programs, the size of the campus, and the availability of extracurricular activities. Unlike most high school students, however, there is another major factor that Roberto is forced to consider: the schools' policies on admitting immigrants without legal status. As a child, Roberto came with his family from Mexico to the United States, where they unlawfully overstayed their travel visas. Consequently, now nearing adulthood, Roberto does not have legal status in the United States. And, while, as a recipient of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Roberto is virtually safe from the threat of deportation, he does not enjoy the same privileges as legal permanent residents or naturalized citizens. His lack of legal status impacts nearly every facet of his life, from college applications to travel plans to his personal relationships. To be sure, DACA has opened many doors for Roberto, giving him access to employment authorization, a Social Security number, and a driver's license. But the door to legal permanent residency and eventual citizenship remain closed for Roberto.

Roberto's story is not an uncommon one. It is estimated that over two million people, or nearly one-fifth of all unauthorized immigrants (Krogstad & Passel, 2015), qualify for DACA. To do so, recipients must have come to the United States before the age of 16 (Department of Homeland Security, 2015), but the vast majority arrived even earlier. Nearly 7 in 10 DACA recipients came to the United States at or before the age of 10, and almost one-third were 5 or younger when they arrived (Singer & Svajlenka, 2013). As of 2012, 72 percent of all DACA recipients had been in the United States for 10 or more years (Singer & Svajlenka, 2013). Like their citizen neighbors, DACA recipients are active, integral members of their communities across the nation and are Americans in nearly every sense of the word. The only substantial difference is that they do not have legal status.

Despite their undeniable role as fundamental members of their communities, DACA recipients currently have no path to citizenship or legal permanent residency. This creates an overwhelming set of barriers for these

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<sup>2</sup> Due to the vulnerability of DACA recipients and their families (as immigrants without legal status), the names and certain personal details of all interviewees have been changed to protect their identities.



individuals, especially for the 76 percent of DACA recipients who are college-aged (Singer & Svajlenka, 2013). Without access to federal financial aid, they have a much harder time pursuing higher education; without a college degree, they have a hard time finding jobs that allow them to sustain themselves and their families. The feedback loop of financial barriers generating educational barriers (which, in turn, produce further financial barriers) is exacerbated by the social barriers faced by DACA recipients. Anti-immigrant rhetoric—from Donald Trump’s assertion that Mexican immigrants are rapists<sup>3</sup> to Iowa Congressman Steve King’s reference to a DACA recipient as a “deportable”<sup>4</sup>—creates an even more challenging environment for DACA recipients. Though the United States is their home—and for most of them, has been their home for at least a decade—DACA recipients are faced with a unique set of financial, educational, and social barriers to which American citizens or legal permanent residents are not nearly as vulnerable.

In light of the difficulties faced by these Americans without legal status, I have selected DACA as the subject of my thesis. At the most basic level, I intend to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on DACA by shedding light on the lived experiences of DACA recipients as immigrants without legal status. Going further, however, another goal of this study is to propose an immediate partial solution to some of the difficulties faced by DACA recipients: enhancing dialogue in communities. With these goals in mind, I begin with a concise but comprehensive summary of DACA, as it is a relatively new and frequently misunderstood policy. Secondly, I provide a detailed analysis of the financial, educational, and social obstacles that commonly result from a lack of legal status. Thirdly, I give a brief background of the political context from which DACA arose and explain why legislative reform is unlikely in the near future. Fourthly, as the centerpiece of this study, I include five in-depth interviews that I conducted with DACA recipients. Finally, after evaluating DACA’s impact on the lives of these individuals and the impediments that still exist for them as immigrants without legal status, I suggest means by which communities can play a role in providing supplemental aid while DACA recipients await much-needed policy change, change that will provide them with a path to citizenship or legal permanent residency. While many other studies on DACA have included interviews and proposed legislative reform, this is the first to provide an immediately

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<sup>3</sup> From Donald Trump’s presidential announcement speech on June 16, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> A Tweet from Representative Steve King’s official Twitter account on January 20, 2015.

attainable, community-based solution, drawn from the personal experiences of DACA recipients.

DACA's trajectory is an issue of utmost importance and urgency because the barriers impeding DACA recipients are not likely to be ameliorated in the foreseeable future by policy changes. Therefore, it is critical to find other means to address the needs of these vulnerable individuals while they await legislative reform. Communities, particularly those that are home to DACA recipients, have the ability to fill this role by fostering positive immigration dialogue, such as informational city forums. As the title of this thesis indicates, *la unión hace la fuerza*: unity creates strength. In supporting their DACA-recipient peers, communities foster a sense of unity that strengthens not only the recipients themselves, but the community as a whole.

## **OVERVIEW OF DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS**

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is a form of prosecutorial discretion, a selective enforcement practice that “recognizes the ability of a law enforcement agency or officer (i.e., an [Immigrations and Customs Enforcement] or Customs and Border Protection agent) to determine how to pursue a particular case” (Kosnac et al., 2014, p. 5). In other words, rather than mandating that every immigrant without legal status be deported, prosecutorial discretion enables law enforcement agents and officers to focus their limited resources on the deportation of immigrants whose presence poses a substantial threat to national security or public safety. It was decided that immigrants without legal status who arrived in the United States as children comprise a group worth specially considering for prosecutorial discretion practices.

However, not all unauthorized childhood arrivals to the United States are eligible for DACA. In order to qualify, applicants must:

- Be younger than 31 as of June 15, 2012 [the day that then-Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano announced the DACA program (Department of Homeland Security, 2015; Kosnac et al., 2014, p. 5)]
- Have arrived in the United States before the age of 16
- Have been physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012
- Have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007

- Be at least 15 years old at the time of application (or be in removal proceedings/have a removal order if younger than 15)
- Be a high school graduate (or have obtained a GED), be currently enrolled in high school (or in a GED program) or have served honorably in the military
- Have not committed a felony, serious misdemeanor, three or more misdemeanors, or pose a threat to national security (Kosnac et al., 2014, p. 7)

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) enumerates on its website the steps necessary for qualifying individuals to apply for DACA. Firstly, an individual must collect documentation as evidence for meeting all of the aforementioned criteria (Department of Homeland Security, 2015). DHS has published an extensive list of the types of documents necessary and examples of acceptable forms of these documents. This list is included as a table in the appendix. Secondly, the individual must complete three forms for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS): I-821D (Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), I-765 (Application for Employment Authorization), and I-765WS (a worksheet for the I-765 form) (Department of Homeland Security, 2015). Thirdly, the applicant must mail all supporting documents and forms, as well as a \$465 application fee, to USCIS (Department of Homeland Security, 2015). Once USCIS receives the documents, forms, and fees, the fourth step is for an applicant to visit an Application Support Center to obtain and submit biometrics (Department of Homeland Security, 2015). Finally, the applicant must wait (generally for a few months) to hear from USCIS with regards to the status of his or her application for DACA (Department of Homeland Security, 2015).

A successful applicant to the DACA program will then receive a written notice of both DACA approval and employment authorization (Department of Homeland Security, 2015). The primary benefit granted to DACA recipients is “temporary (two-year) relief from deportation,” which “can be renewed for another two years” (Kosnac et al., 2014, p. 7). There is no limit on the number of times a DACA recipient can apply for DACA renewal, but he or she must do so every two years, and renewal approval is never guaranteed. Secondary benefits of DACA include employment authorization, access to a temporary Social Security number, and, in some states, eligibility for

a driver's license<sup>5</sup> (Kosnac et al., 2014, p. 7). Of particular significance is that DACA does not provide lawful status to its recipients (Department of Homeland Security, 2015). It is this distinction that gives rise to a unique set of obstacles for DACA recipients.

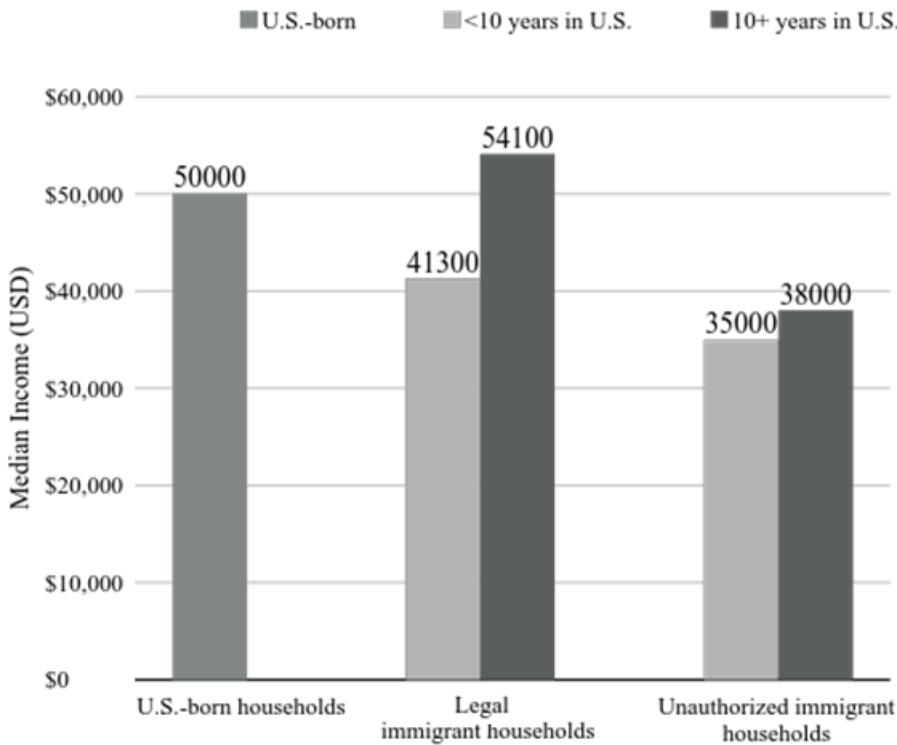
## **LIMITATIONS OF DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS**

There are a number of limitations to DACA's potential to aid immigrants without legal status. For instance, two problematic criteria for DACA eligibility are the requirements of proof of physical presence in the United States on June 15, 2012, and of proof of continuous residence in the United States since June 15, 2007. As enumerated in the appendix, among the documents that a DACA applicant might submit as proof of physical presence or continuous residence are rent receipts or utility bills, copies of money order receipts, passport entries, dated bank transactions, automobile license receipts or registration, deeds, mortgages, rental agreement contracts, and insurance policies (Department of Homeland Security, 2015). Each of these documents implies a certain degree of financial stability. It is costly to pay rent, travel by airplane, purchase an automobile, buy insurance, or other major financial outlay. Furthermore, some of the document examples (such as dated bank transactions or mortgages) assume that the applicant has access to formal banking. These assumptions of significantly established financial independence—and thus possessing the indicators thereof—would perhaps be less problematic if immigrants without legal status were not disproportionately affected by low incomes and poverty. On the contrary, however, Figure 1 below illustrates the stark discrepancy in median household incomes among U.S.-born households, legal immigrant households, and unauthorized immigrant households.

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<sup>5</sup> To clarify, though DACA recipients have access to such documents, they are still considered to be "undocumented immigrants." The terms "undocumented immigrant," "unauthorized immigrant," and "immigrant without legal status" are used interchangeably to identify an immigrant who came to the United States illegally.

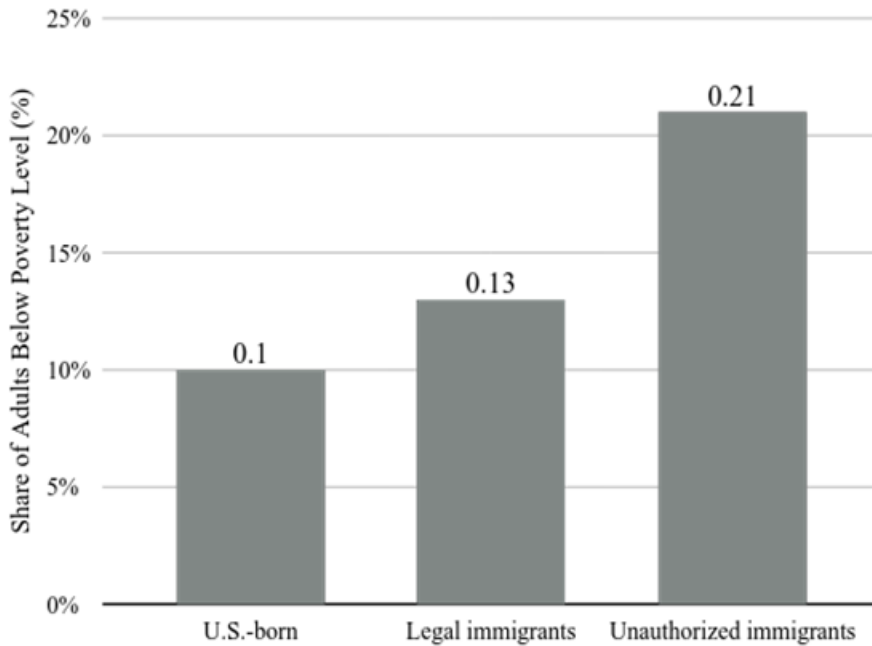
**Figure 1. Median Household Income by Legal Status and Length of Time in U.S., 2007**  
(Source: Passel & Cohn, 2009)



According to 2007 statistics as reported by the Pew Research Center (represented by the graph in Figure 1), unauthorized immigrant households have lower median household incomes than both U.S.-born households and legal immigrant households, regardless of the length of time they have been in the United States (Passel & Cohn, 2009). Similarly, unauthorized immigrant households experience poverty at a rate disproportionate to that of legal immigrant households and U.S.-born households, a phenomenon illustrated below in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Share of Adults Below the Poverty Level by Legal Status, 2007**

(Source: Passel & Cohn, 2009)



Though Figures 1 and 2 are based on pre-DACA statistics (and conditions are therefore different), the trends they exhibit can be safely extrapolated to the present. A 2014 survey of DACA recipients confirms that the financial vulnerability of immigrants without legal status has continued: “over three-quarters (77 percent) of [survey] respondents [reported] annual personal incomes below \$25,000 and only 20 percent [reported] having enough personal income to meet monthly bills and expenses” (Wong & Valdivia, 2014, p. 3). Moreover, a 2013 article indicated that “almost 40 percent of undocumented families live in poverty” (Schmid, p. 697).

Given the considerably lower median incomes and higher poverty rate among immigrants without legal status, it seems unreasonable that such a high proportion of the suggested documents for proof of physical presence and proof of continuous residence relate directly or indirectly to some degree of established financial independence. Although other documents that do not necessitate established financial independence—such as school or military records—can be substituted (Department of Homeland Security, 2015), the list of potential evidence documents is sharply curtailed for low-income or impoverished applicants. This poses a greater problem than might appear at first glance. As stated above, DACA applicants are required to demonstrate

proof of continuous residence in the United States since June 15, 2007 (Department of Homeland Security, 2015). At the time of this writing, that means that an applicant would have to provide documentation proving nearly a decade of uninterrupted residence in the United States. For applicants who, like many immigrants without legal status, are struggling financially, the already-challenging task of proving a decade's worth of continuous residence is made even more difficult by the aforementioned limitations imposed on the list of potential supporting documents.

Furthermore, DACA applicants are financially burdened by the costs involved in the process of applying for DACA. The financial burdens borne by potential DACA applicants were thoroughly evaluated in a groundbreaking 2013 survey:

Shortly after the beginning of [DACA], the National UnDACAmented Research Project (NURP) was launched in an effort to better understand how DACAmented young adults were experiencing their new status. In 2013, the NURP research team carried out a national survey of DACA-eligible young adults between the ages of 18 and 32. A total of 2,684 respondents completed the survey. NURP efforts represent the largest data collection effort to date on this population.

NURP respondents come from 46 states and the District of Columbia, and generally reflect the demographics of the U.S. undocumented immigrant population. Respondents' median age is 22.7, while 40 percent are male and 60 percent are female. (Gonzales & Bautista-Chavez, 2014, p. 2)

NURP's survey of individuals who were eligible for DACA but chose not to apply found that more than 43 percent of non-applicants did not apply for DACA because of the mandatory \$465 application fee (Department of Homeland Security, 2015; Gonzales & Bautista-Chavez, 2014, p. 6). Those who seek the help of an immigration attorney face additional legal costs: the same survey also found that 17 percent of non-applicants did not apply due to legal concerns<sup>6</sup> (Gonzales & Bautista-Chavez, 2014, p. 6). In total, then, at least 60 percent of DACA-eligible non-applicants did not apply for reasons relating either directly or indirectly to financial vulnerability (Gonzales & Bautista-Chavez, 2014, p. 6). These expenditures (the application fee and the legal costs), in conjunction with the limited options on the list of suggested

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<sup>6</sup> The category "legal concerns" was not defined in the Gonzales & Bautista-Chavez analysis of the NURP survey.

evidentiary documents, detrimentally impact the ability of financially insecure immigrants without legal status to apply for DACA. Given that immigrants without legal status tend to have lower incomes and higher poverty rates (Passel & Cohn, 2009), these financial barriers comprise one of DACA's primary limitations in potential to aid immigrants without legal status.

As discussed, lack of legal status is correlated with lower incomes and higher rates of poverty (Passel & Cohn, 2009). These economic indicators, in conjunction with the high financial barriers associated with applying for DACA, deter a number of DACA-eligible immigrants from applying (Kosnac et al., 2014, p. 15). Without DACA or legal status, these immigrants face greater hurdles in overcoming poverty. Of chief concern in this matter is their ineligibility for legal employment. Thus is born a cycle of poverty for many immigrants without legal status: due to their financial situation, they cannot apply for DACA, and due to their lack of DACA or legal status, they cannot ameliorate their financial situation by seeking legal employment.

Financial security is not the only facet of human development that is impacted by immigrant status. Restrictions on feasibility of educational attainment is a second example of DACA's primary limitations in potential to aid immigrants without legal status. As a result of the Supreme Court case *Plyler v. Doe* (1982), no state may deny funding for the education of immigrants without legal status, nor may immigrants without legal status be excluded from public schools (Schmid, 2013, p. 695). However, the application of *Plyler* has been limited to kindergarten through high school. Consequently, immigrants without legal status (such as DACA recipients) face higher barriers in pursuing postsecondary education.

Gonzales et al. (2014) enumerate some of the problems faced by DACA recipients seeking higher education:

Without access to federal or most state financial aid, undocumented youth face heavy financial burdens. They are also excluded from...study opportunities...and paid internships.... Oftentimes, these internships require...background checks, thus excluding undocumented youth from gaining applied skills and expanding professional networks.... (p. 3)

One might note that a small number of private colleges and universities, in response to the heavy financial burdens DACA imposes, have elected to offer substantial scholarships for students without legal status. While this is accurate, and these schools should be commended, there is still a major disparity



between the availability of scholarships and financial aid for U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents and the availability of scholarships and financial aid for students without legal status. This disparity is one of the primary obstacles continually faced by DACA recipients, according to an ongoing series of interviews conducted by the National UnDACAmented Research Project (the same organization that evaluated the financial costs of DACA in their 2013 survey). NURP began conducting interviews in 2015, three years after DACA was implemented (Gonzales et al., 2016, p. 5). In their “three year mark” study, they perform a thorough analysis of the impacts of DACA, including the persisting barriers for DACA recipients as immigrants without legal status. They find that access to higher education is one of the most pressing remaining obstacles (Gonzales et al., 2016, p. 13). Their interview sample exhibits demographic comprehensiveness notably comparable to their 2013 survey:

To date, our interview sample includes 467 young adult immigrants, 87.5 percent of whom are DACA beneficiaries. Of the remaining 12.5 percent, some have applied and are awaiting their approval, some are eligible for DACA, but have not applied (typically due to financial reasons or distrust of government authorities), and some are ineligible as they do not meet the education requirement. At the time of interview, 36.4 percent of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 21, meaning they were 18 or younger at the time of DACA’s announcement in 2012; 63.6 percent were aged 22 [through 34], meaning they were above age 18 when DACA was announced. 38.8 percent are male, while 61.2 percent are female. (Gonzales et al., 2016, p. 20)

Although there are currently fewer states represented in the interviews than in the survey (at present, interviews have been completed only in Arizona, California, Illinois, New York, Georgia, and South Carolina) (Gonzales et al., 2016, p. 5), the responses have led the researchers at NURP to conclusively determine that lack of access to financial aid is one of the most urgent issues facing young adult immigrants without legal status (Gonzales et al., 2016, p. 13). Figure 3 below is a brief summary of the primary disparities between DACA recipients and their peers of legal status, in terms of financing higher education.

**Figure 3. Disparities in Financing Higher Education,  
DACA Students vs. U.S. Citizens/Legal Permanent Residents**

(Source: Gonzales et al., 2016, p. 13)

DACA Students	Documented Students
Required to pay out-of-state tuition at public colleges and universities in most states (more than 150 percent of resident tuition)	Pay in-state resident tuition at public colleges and universities
Cannot receive federal financial aid	Can receive federal financial aid
Cannot receive Pell Grants or participate in federally funded work-study programs	Can receive Pell Grants and participate in federally funded work-study programs

Without access to federal financial aid, DACA recipients wishing to attend college “must work long hours, taking away from the time they can spend on schoolwork” (Gonzales et al., 2016, p. 13). Consequently, not only do DACA recipients have a more difficult time attending school continuously and full time, but they are also less likely to perform well in school, “especially compared to their documented peers who do not face this added financial hardship” (Gonzales et al., 2016, p. 13). Therefore, while some private institutions have created much-needed scholarships for students without legal status, these resources are insufficient to compensate for the absence of federal financial aid opportunities.

Indeed, immigrants without legal status experience a unique set of challenges in pursuing postsecondary education. While researchers have concluded that these challenges lead to lower educational attainment rates, the degree to which they deter unauthorized immigrants from attaining higher education is unknown because USCIS does not collect data on educational attainment (Gonzales et al., 2014, p. 9). The obstacles faced by DACA students seeking a higher education could be ameliorated through the availability of a path to legal status. Thus, barriers to educational attainment comprise another one of DACA’s primary limitations in potential to aid immigrants without legal status.

Difficult to quantify but no less important to discuss is a third primary limitation in DACA's potential to aid immigrants without legal status: the sense of being socially ostracized as an "illegal immigrant." The collective identity of DACA recipients relies, in part, on the shared set of challenges, frustrations, and fears that tend to accompany life as an undocumented young person (de la Torre & Germano, 2014, p. 452). Understanding this identity requires an understanding of the concept of "illegality" and the ways in which a lack of legal status impacts young people's daily lives (de la Torre & Germano, 2014, p. 452). This "illegality" "[reorganizes] immigrants' interactions with state and non-state actors and institutions, generating uneven social spaces shaped by historically, structurally, and biographically specific factors" (de la Torre & Germano, 2014, p. 453).

One example of a socially ostracizing experience shared by immigrants without legal status is a lack of legal personhood (de la Torre & Germano, 2014, p. 453). This can, in turn, lead to "a great deal of pressure on undocumented immigrants to obscure their own identity and existence" (de la Torre & Germano, 2014, p. 453). In the words of Felipe, a young immigrant without legal status, "I felt pressured by the fact that I was undocumented, that I had to pretend to be just like everybody else so people wouldn't notice that I was even in the room" (de la Torre & Germano, 2014, p. 454). Other immigrants without legal status often experience an acute sense of inferiority rather than the feelings of obscurity described by Felipe. For example, Patricia Carolina writes that she "was raised to believe that because of [her] undocumented status, [she] would have to learn to accept second, if not third-class citizenship" (Anderson & Solis, 2014, p. 35). The sentiments expressed by Felipe and Patricia are all too common among immigrants without legal status. Because of their lack of legal personhood, these individuals are regularly confronted with a sense of not belonging—a sense that can manifest itself in a variety of ways, as illustrated by the accounts of Felipe and Patricia. Immigrants without legal status thus oftentimes resign themselves to social invisibility (as described by Felipe), social inferiority (as described by Patricia), or any number of other expressions of not belonging in mainstream America.

Another socially ostracizing shared experience of immigrants without legal status is the rhetoric surrounding the immigration discussion in the United States (de la Torre & Germano, 2014, p. 455). Particularly problematic is anti-immigration rhetoric, which makes a distinction between "'desirable' or 'worthy' immigrants" and "'unworthy' or 'unwanted' immigrants" (de la Torre & Germano, 2014, p. 455). "Worthy" immigrants are generally characterized as having higher levels of formal education, particularly in STEM fields (de la

Torre & Germano, 2014, p. 455). “Unworthy” immigrants, contrarily, are depicted as a drain on public resources and sometimes even as criminals (de la Torre & Germano, 2014, p. 455). Paradoxically, pro-immigrant rhetoric can also be socially ostracizing, especially for immigrants without legal status. Edmund Hamann (2011) describes this rhetoric as “colonialist in dismissing the value of anything newcomers might want to retain that is not ‘American’” (p. 106). He elaborates upon what he describes as America’s “ambiguous social contract” with immigrants:

The United States offers immigrants an ambiguous social contract. It reads, more or less, as follows: “In order to participate in a non-marginal way in the U.S. economy, you must become an American by giving up your loyalty to your home country and language, and you must learn the language of the American elite. In order to become an American, you must meet certain standards. This country is in the process of raising its standards because, unfortunately, there are already too many Americans. *If you aren’t allowed to become an American, there’s still plenty of room for you in this country—at the bottom.* [Emphasis added] (Hamann, 2011, p. 106)

For immigrants without legal status, the last sentence of this “ambiguous social contract” is particularly salient. These immigrants are in a position where they feel compelled to assimilate in an attempt to be as “American” as possible, but are ultimately aware that, without legal status, their potential to be “American” is sharply limited. Hamann’s account of the “ambiguous social contract” harkens back to Felipe’s and Patricia’s descriptions of the sense of not belonging in mainstream America. Both anti- and pro-immigrant rhetoric, then, comprise another form of social marginalization of immigrants without legal status.

It is abundantly clear that DACA’s failure to provide a path to legal permanent residence or citizenship results in severe financial, educational, and social obstacles for DACA recipients as immigrants without legal status. An appropriate response to these impediments would be legislative reform to provide a path to legal permanent residency or citizenship. The following chapter describes the DREAM Act, a previous attempt at such a legislative reform, and the political context that makes the provision of a path to legal status highly unlikely in the near future.

## **POLICY BACKGROUND AND OBSTACLES TO LEGISLATIVE REFORM**

DACA is not the first policy of its kind, intended as it is to aid young unauthorized immigrants. In 2001, the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act was introduced in the Senate and House of Representatives (Kosnac et al., 2014, p. 4). Under the DREAM Act, applicants would apply for status as registered provisional immigrants (RPIs) but would be placed on an “accelerated track” toward permanent legal residency (Kosnac et al., 2014, p. 7). To qualify for RPI status, applicants must:

- Have been physically present in the United States on or before December 31, 2011
- Have continuously resided in the United States since December 31, 2011
- Be physically in the United States the date on which the individual submits the application
- Have not committed a felony, an aggravated felony, three or more misdemeanors or pose a threat to national security (Kosnac et al., 2014, p. 7)

Upon being deemed eligible for RPI status, an applicant could then be considered for the “accelerated track” to residency. Applicants for this track must:

- Have arrived in the United States before the age 16
- Be a high school graduate of a U.S. high school or have obtained a GED
- Have earned a college degree or have completed at least 2 years of a bachelor’s degree or higher in the United States (and remains in good standing) or have served for at least four years in the military (Kosnac et al., 2014, p. 7)

After five years of RPI status, an applicant could then apply for legal permanent residence (Kosnac et al., 2014, p. 7). Once the applicant was approved for legal permanent residence, he or she could immediately apply for U.S. citizenship (Kosnac et al., 2014, p. 7).

Though the proposed process for the DREAM Act was lengthy and had some of the same limitations as DACA (such as the problematic list of potential supporting documents for financially vulnerable applicants), its

primary function—the provision of a path to citizenship—was of greater impact than that of DACA. The DREAM Act would have opened financial, educational, and social doors that remain closed to DACA recipients, as immigrants without legal status. However, the DREAM Act repeatedly failed to attain the necessary approval to pass through both the House of Representatives and the Senate. It was put to a vote and passed the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2003-2004 and 2006 but failed each time in the House (Kosnac et al., 2014, p. 4). In 2010, it was approved by the House in a 216-198 vote, but fell five votes short of advancing past a Republican filibuster in the Senate (Kosnac et al., 2014, p. 4).

In response to the repeated failure of the DREAM Act in the legislative branch, the executive branch took measures to improve immigration policy in the United States, specifically for young unauthorized immigrants. A year after the last failure to pass the DREAM Act, John Morton, then-Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), issued a memorandum regarding the policy in June 2011 (Kosnac et al., 2014, p. 5). It laid out loosely defined priorities for immigration officers “to ensure that the agency’s immigration enforcement resources [were] focused on the agency’s enforcement priorities” (Kosnac et al., 2014, p. 5). Morton indicated that “immigration officers should focus on the removal of only the most serious offenders, i.e., those who pose threats to national security, public safety, or border security” (Kosnac et al., 2014, p. 5). Less than a year after Morton’s memo was promulgated, then-Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano released her own memorandum announcing another form of prosecutorial discretion: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA (Kosnac et al., 2014, p. 5). President Obama subsequently addressed the nation and explained that “because of Congress’ [sic] inability to pass the DREAM Act, his administration was undertaking new action to ‘mend our nation’s immigration policy, to make it more fair, more efficient, and more just—specifically for certain young people’” (Kosnac et al., 2014, p. 5). Thus, on June 15, 2012, DACA was born.

After two years of DACA, in November of 2014, President Obama announced a two-pronged executive action that would further benefit certain immigrants without legal status and their families (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2015). One component was a new program: Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents, or DAPA (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2015). The second component was an expansion of DACA, intended to make the eligibility criteria more

inclusive and to extend the work authorization from two years to three years (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2015).

This two-pronged executive action elicited not only criticism, but a lawsuit against the federal government (*Texas v. United States*, 2015). Twenty-six states and/or elected officials thereof comprised the plaintiffs (*Texas v. United States*, 2015, p. i).<sup>7</sup> In their suit, they argued that the executive branch had acted beyond the scope of its legal power in creating DAPA and expanding DACA (*Texas v. United States*, 2015, p. 2). A district court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs in February of 2015, prompting the federal government to appeal. The case then went to the Fifth Circuit, which, in November of 2015, ruled in favor of the same plaintiffs (*Texas v. United States*, 2015, p. 2; Ford, 2015). At the time of this writing, the federal government has appealed to the Supreme Court, but a decision has yet to be reached (Ford, 2015). Until this legal issue is resolved, USCIS cannot accept requests from applicants who would qualify under DAPA or the expansion of DACA (Department of Homeland Security, 2015). Consequently, countless families are left waiting on the outcome of a pending court case (*Texas v. United States*, 2015, p. 5).

A particularly salient observation throughout this legal battle is the political partisanship of the plaintiffs.<sup>8</sup> In short, the opposition to DAPA and the expansion of DACA has come overwhelmingly from Republicans. Figures 4 and 5 are juxtaposed to illustrate the political party affiliations of adults in the states that are plaintiffs (or from which an elected official is a plaintiff) in *Texas v. United States* (2015), compared to the political party affiliations of adults who live in the states that are not plaintiffs (nor have an elected official as a plaintiff).

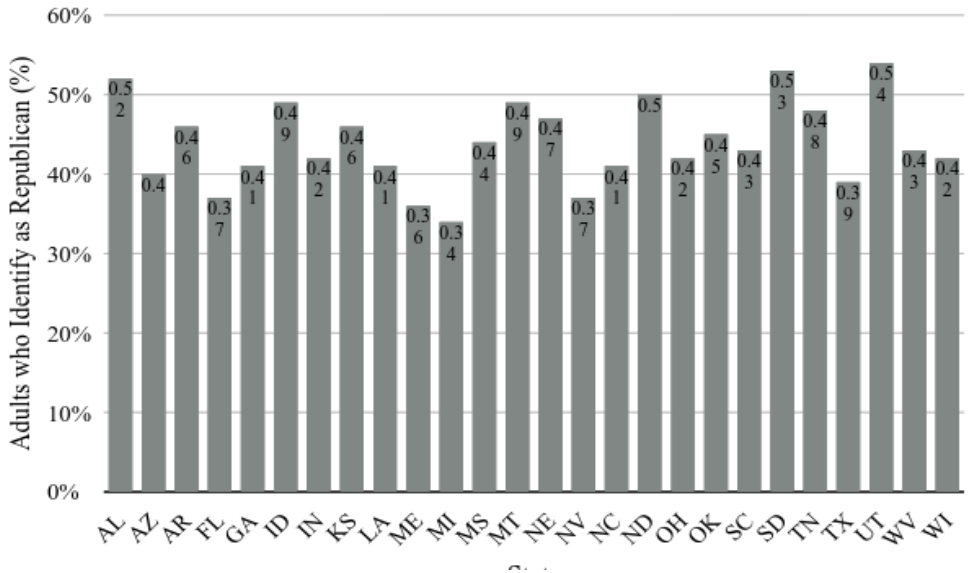
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<sup>7</sup> These states are: Alabama, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Montana, Nebraska, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Maine, North Carolina, Michigan, Mississippi, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Florida, Arizona, Arkansas, Nevada, Tennessee, and Texas.

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that this point is raised not as a criticism of the Republican Party for opposing the expansion of DACA, but rather to lay foundation for a subsequent point: that immigration reform is not likely to be feasible in the immediate future because of the power that Republicans have in the legislative branch. This contributes to my notion that proposals of legislative reform must be supplemented by means of addressing the immediate financial, educational, and social challenges faced by DACA recipients.

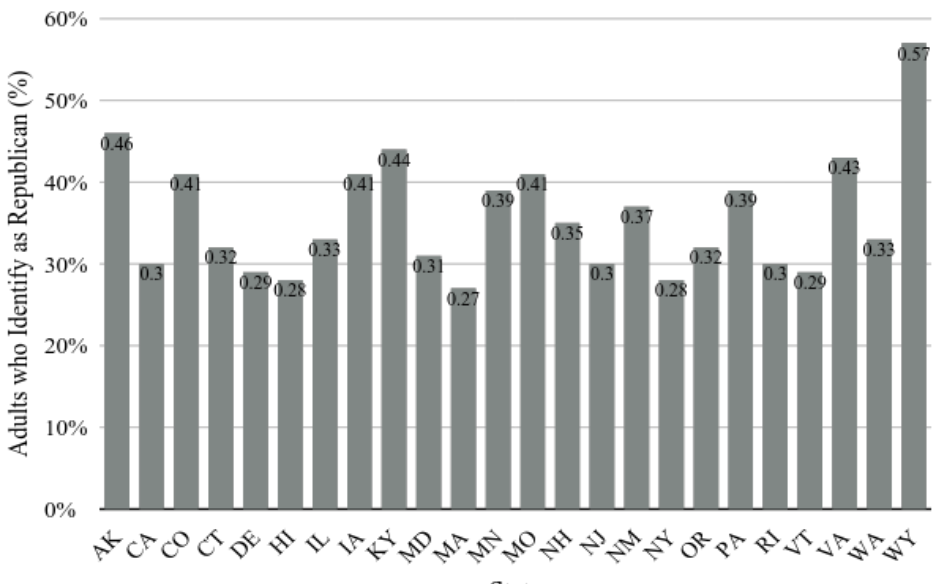
**Figure 4. Percentage of Adults who Affiliate as Republican by State, 2014**  
**(States that Are Plaintiffs or Have an Elected Official that Is a Plaintiff in Texas v. United States (2015))**

(Source: Pew Research Center, 2014)



**Figure 5. Percentage of Adults who Affiliate as Republican by State, 2014**  
**(States that Are Not Plaintiffs and Do Not Have an Elected Official that Is a Plaintiff in Texas v. United States (2015))**

(Source: Pew Research Center, 2014)





For the states included in Figure 4, the mean percentage of the adult population that identifies as Republican is 43.88 percent. Notably, for the states included in Figure 5, the mean percentage of the adult population that identifies as Republican is 35.62 percent, a difference of 8.26 percent. Furthermore, in 17 of the 26 states that are plaintiffs (or have an elected official that is a plaintiff) in *Texas v. United States* (2015), Republicans comprise the plurality of adults (Pew Research Center, 2014). This means that Republicans outnumber Democrats in 65.38 percent of the states included in Figure 4. In contrast, in only 5 of 24 states that are not plaintiffs (nor have an elected official that is a plaintiff) in *Texas v. United States* (2015) do Republicans comprise the plurality of adults (Pew Research Center, 2014). Thus, Republicans form the plurality in only 20.83 percent of the states included in Figure 5.

From Figures 4 and 5 and the aforementioned statistics, a correlation can be drawn between states' and/or their elected officials' participation as plaintiffs in *Texas v. United States* (2015) and a propensity for the adults in those states to affiliate with the Republican Party. The United States is a democracy; as such, individual states, as legal entities, tend to behave in accordance with the political leanings of their constituents. This propensity is based on rational political behavior. Voters generally elect officials whose politics align with their own, and these officials—who wish to maintain the support of their constituents—make decisions on behalf of the state. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the political affiliation of the plurality of adults in any given state can, to at least some degree, be transposed to the state level. In other words, it is rational to characterize states with plurality Republican adult populations as “Republican states.” Employing this rhetoric, nearly 70 percent of the states that are plaintiffs or have an elected official as a plaintiff in *Texas v. United States* (2015) are “Republican states,” while only 20 percent of the states that are not plaintiffs and do not have an elected official as a plaintiff in *Texas v. United States* (2015) are “Republican states.”

However, it is not necessary to rely solely on statistics regarding the party affiliation of states' constituents to reach this conclusion. Examination of the party affiliation of a state's elected officials can be telling as well. Two offices that are particularly worthy of discussion in the context of *Texas v. United States* (2015) (and therefore also of consequence in the broader discussion of obstacles to legislative reform for DACA) are each state's attorney general and governor. Acting on behalf of each state that is a plaintiff in *Texas v. United States* (2015) are its governor and attorney general (Leopold, 2016). This means that these 26 attorneys general and governors play a critical

role in the case and, consequently, bear examination, particularly with regards to their party affiliation. Also worth considering in the context of *Texas v. United States* (2015) and, more broadly, the issue of DACA policy change, is the composition of each state's legislature. The outcome of this case could impact states' policies regarding immigrants without legal status, and therefore, the members of the legislature (as the states' lawmakers) have a vested interest in the case's outcome. If, as the analysis of Figures 4 and 5 suggests, there is a correlation between party affiliation and status (or lack thereof) as plaintiff in *Texas v. United States* (2015), then an examination of the party affiliation of each state's attorney general and governor as well as the partisan composition of each state's legislature should similarly reflect this correlation. In other words, the officials and legislatures of states that are plaintiffs in *Texas v. United States* (2015) should have a noticeably greater tendency to affiliate with the Republican Party than officials and legislatures of states that are not plaintiffs. A state-by-state breakdown of attorney general and governor party affiliation, in conjunction with statistics on the partisan composition of each state's lower chamber of legislature and upper chamber of legislature, does, in fact reveal a correlation similar to that which is demonstrated by Figures 4 and 5 and the subsequent statistical analysis. Figure 6 is a compilation of this state-by-state data.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> A few notes on Figure 6: I compiled this table using information collected from the official website of each state's attorney general, governor, lower chamber of legislature (House of Representatives, House of Delegates, State Assembly, etc.), and upper chamber of legislature (Senate). It seemed frivolous to include 198 individual citations (one for each website) in my references. For this reason, I have chosen to omit citations for Figure 6.

For any chamber that had a vacant seat(s), I subtracted the number of vacant seats from the total number of seats to calculate the partisan composition.

Nebraska has a nonpartisan unicameral legislature. Therefore, I did not include statistics on the partisan composition of its legislature, and I exclude it from my subsequent figures and statistical analyses.

Figure 6. States’ Plaintiff Statuses in *Texas v. United States* (2015) and Partisanship Measures (Attorney General Party Affiliation, Governor Party Affiliation, Lower Chamber of Legislature Partisan Composition, and Upper Chamber of Legislature Partisan Composition), 2016

State	Plaintiff	Att. Gen.	Gov.	Lower Cham. % R	Lower Cham. % D	Lower Cham. % Other	Lower Cham. Maj.	Upper Cham. % R	Upper Cham. % D	Upper Cham. % Other	Upper Cham. Maj.
AL	Y	R	R	68.57	31.43	0	R	74.29	22.86	2.86	R
AK	N	R	I	57.5	40	2.5	R	70	30	0	R
AZ	Y	R	R	60	40	0	R	60	40	0	R
AR	Y	R	R	63	36	1	R	68.57	31.43	0	R
CA	N	D	D	35.44	64.56	0	D	35	65	0	D
CO	N	R	D	47.69	52.31	0	D	51.43	48.57	0	R
CT	N	D	D	42.38	57.62	0	D	41.67	55.56	2.78	D
DE	N	D	D	39.02	60.98	0	D	42.86	57.14	0	D
FL	Y	R	R	67.5	32.5	0	R	65	35	0	R
GA	Y	R	R	65.92	33.52	0.56	R	67.86	32.14	0	R

*La Unión Hace La Fuerza: What Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Leaves Out  
and the Role of Communities in Addressing the Needs of DACA Recipients*

<b>H I</b>	N	D	D	13.73	86.27	0	D	4.17	95.83	0	D
<b>I D</b>	Y	R	R	80	20	0	R	80	20	0	R
<b>I L</b>	N	D	R	39.83	60.17	0	D	33.90	66.10	0	D
<b>I N</b>	Y	R	R	71	29	0	R	80	20	0	R
<b>I A</b>	N	D	R	57	43	0	R	48	52	0	D
<b>K S</b>	Y	R	R	77.6	22.4	0	R	80	20	0	R
<b>K Y</b>	N	D	R	47	53	0	D	71.05	28.95	0	R
<b>L A</b>	Y	R	D	58.65	39.42	1.92	R	64.10	35.90	0	R
<b>M E</b>	Y	D	R	45.70	51.66	2.65	D	58.82	41.18	0	R
<b>M D</b>	N	D	R	35.46	64.54	0	D	29.79	70.21	0	D
<b>M A</b>	N	D	R	21.79	78.21	0	D	13.16	86.84	0	D
<b>M I</b>	Y	R	R	57.80	42.20	0	R	71.05	28.95	0	R
<b>M N</b>	N	D	D	54.48	45.52	0	R	41.79	58.21	0	D

M S	Y	D	R	60.66	39.34	0	R	60.78	39.22	0	R
M O	N	D	D	71.17	27.61	0.61	R	75	25	0	R
M T	Y	R	D	59	41	0	R	58	42	0	R
N E	Y	R	R	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
N V	Y	R	R	56.41	41.03	2.56	R	55	45	0	R
N H	N	D	D	59.40	40.35	0.25	R	58.33	41.67	0	R
N J	N	R	R	35	65	0	D	40	60	0	D
N M	N	D	R	52.86	47.14	0	R	42.86	57.14	0	D
N Y	N	D	D	27.89	70.07	2.04	D	50	41.94	8.06	R
N C	Y	D	R	61.67	37.5	0.83	R	68	32	0	R
N D	Y	R	R	75.53	24.47	0	R	70.21	29.79	0	R
O H	Y	R	R	65.31	34.69	0	R	69.70	30.30	0	R
O K	Y	R	R	70.30	29.70	0	R	81.25	18.75	0	R

*La Unión Hace La Fuerza: What Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Leaves Out  
and the Role of Communities in Addressing the Needs of DACA Recipients*

<b>O R</b>	N	D	D	41.67	58.33	0	D	40	60	0	D
<b>P A</b>	N	D	D	59	41	0	R	61.22	38.78	0	R
<b>R I</b>	N	D	D	16	82.67	1.33	D	13.16	84.21	2.63	D
<b>S C</b>	Y	R	R	62.90	37.10	0	R	60	40	0	R
<b>S D</b>	Y	R	R	82.86	17.14	0	R	77.14	22.86	0	R
<b>T N</b>	Y	R	R	73.74	26.26	0	R	84.85	15.15	0	R
<b>T X</b>	Y	R	R	66	34	0	R	64.52	35.48	0	R
<b>U T</b>	Y	R	R	84	16	0	R	82.14	17.86	0	R
<b>V T</b>	N	D	D	35.33	56.67	8	D	27.59	62.07	10.34	D
<b>V A</b>	N	D	D	66	34	0	R	52.5	47.5	0	R
<b>W A</b>	N	D	D	48.98	51.02	0	D	51.02	46.94	2.04	R
<b>W V</b>	Y	R	D	64	36	0	R	52.94	47.06	0	R
<b>W I</b>	Y	R	R	63.64	36.36	0	R	57.58	42.42	0	R

W Y	N	R	R	85	15	0	R	86.67	13.33	0	R
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It is most productive to first remark on general trends regarding plaintiff status and party affiliation, and then to evaluate each variable individually.

To determine whether or not there is a correlation between party affiliation and plaintiff status in *Texas v. United States* (2015), it is prudent to first examine the “most Republican” and “least Republican” states. I define “most Republican” as states which have the strongest Republican presence in the government: a Republican attorney general, a Republican governor, and a Republican majority in both chambers of the legislature. In other words, the “most Republican” states are those that have Republican control in all four areas. On the opposite end of the spectrum are the “least Republican” states, or those that have unified Democratic control in all four areas.

There are 20 states that fit the definition of “most Republican.” Of these states, 19 are plaintiffs (or have an elected official that is a plaintiff) in *Texas v. United States* (2015). The only one of the “most Republican” states that is not suing the federal government is Wyoming. This can be explained by examining Wyoming’s demographics. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, a mere 3.4 percent of the population in Wyoming is foreign-born (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Immigration, it would seem, is not a particularly salient issue in Wyoming. Consequently, on the basis of this understanding, it is unsurprising that Wyoming did not join the other “most Republican” states in suing the federal government: the contention brought forth in *Texas v. United States* (2015) is not of the same pertinence in Wyoming as it is in states that have more substantial immigrant populations. On the opposite end of the spectrum, not one of the seven “least Republican” states (those with unified Democratic control) is a plaintiff in *Texas v. United States* (2015), nor do any of them have any elected officials that are plaintiffs in the case. It seems that, at least at either extreme of the spectrum, there is a strong correlation between state officials’ party affiliation and their position on DAPA and DACA.

Also useful to consider is the composition of both chambers of the state legislature, in terms of party affiliation. Of the states that are plaintiffs or have an elected official that is a plaintiff in *Texas v. United States* (2015), an average of 66.47 percent of members of the lower chamber of legislature are Republicans, 33.15 percent are Democrats, and 0.38 percent are members of another political party. For states that have no involvement as plaintiffs in

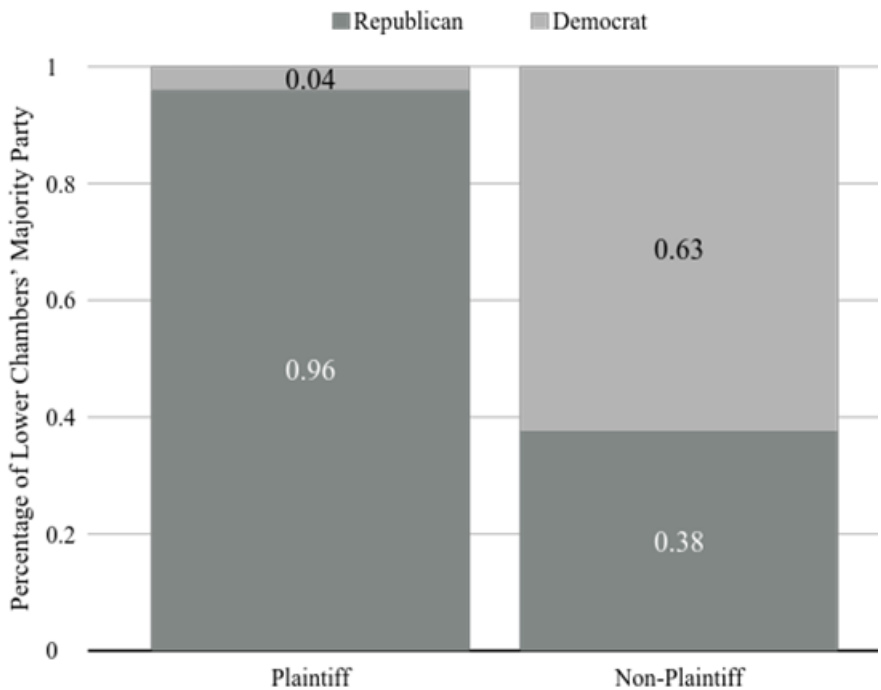
*Texas v. United States* (2015), an average of 45.40 percent of lower chamber members are Republicans, 53.96 percent are Democrats, and 0.61 percent belong to another political party. Similar averages are observed in the upper chamber of states' legislatures: for states that are plaintiffs or have an elected official that is a plaintiff in *Texas v. United States* (2015), an average of 68.47 percent of members are Republicans, 31.41 percent are Democrats, and 0.11 percent are affiliated with another political party. In states that are not plaintiffs in *Texas v. United States* (2015) and do not have elected officials that are plaintiffs in the case, an average of 45.05 percent of members of the upper chamber are Republicans, 53.87 percent are Democrats, and 1.08 percent are affiliated with another political party. Thus, an evaluation of the average composition of states' legislatures yields an observation consistent with the previously discussed data: a correlation between affiliation with the Republican Party and opposition to DAPA and the expansion of DACA.

Examining each variable independently produces evidence that further supports the notion of a correlation between party affiliation and stance on DAPA and the expansion of DACA. There is a striking correlation between the political party affiliation of a state's attorney general and whether or not that state (or an elected official of that state) is a plaintiff in *Texas v. United States* (2015). Plaintiff states are much more likely to have a Republican attorney general, while non-plaintiff states are much more likely to have a Democratic attorney general. Similarly, there appears to be a correlation between the party affiliation of a state's governor and whether or not that state (or an elected official thereof) is a plaintiff in *Texas v. United States* (2015). Nearly 9 in 10 plaintiff states have a Republican governor, while only 1 in 3 non-plaintiff states has a Republican governor.

Turning now to the composition of state legislatures by political party, one will find further evidence in support of the aforementioned correlation by examining which party holds the majority in states' lower chamber of legislature. The majority political party is, of course, the party that controls the chamber and thus has greater control of the fate of legislation therein, in terms of number of votes for or against any given bill. It is therefore particularly pertinent to observe which party comprises the majority in the states' chambers of legislature, in determining a correlation (or lack thereof) between political party affiliation and stance on DAPA and the expansion of DACA. Figure 7 is an illustration of states' lower chambers of legislature majority party by plaintiff status in *Texas v. United States* (2015).



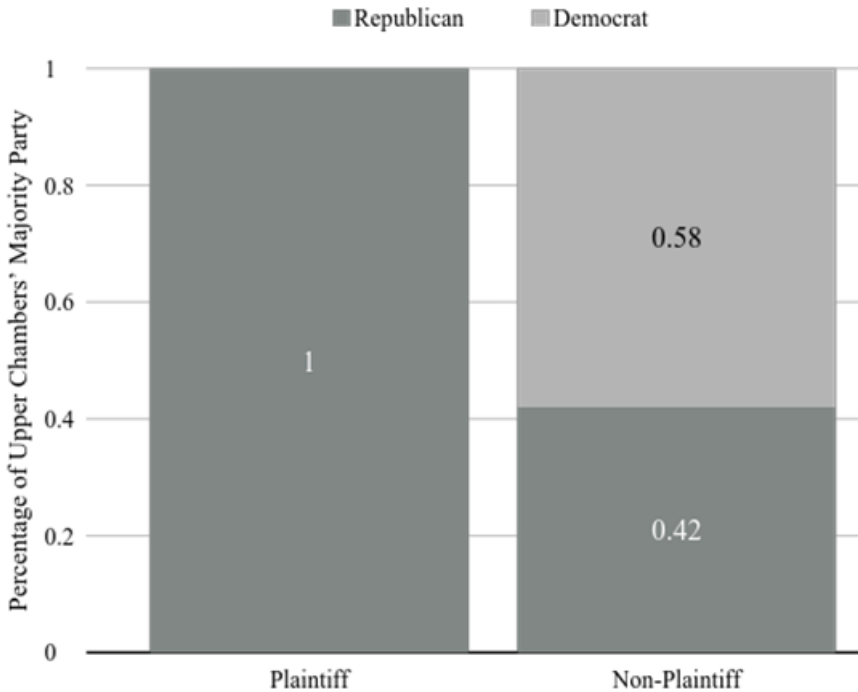
Figure 7. Lower Chamber of Legislature Majority Party by States' and Their Elected Officials' Statuses as Plaintiff or Non-Plaintiff in *Texas v. United States* (2015)



There is a striking apparent correlation between lower chamber majority party and plaintiff status in *Texas v. United States* (2015), particularly for the plaintiff states (and states with an elected official that is a plaintiff): only 1 of the 25 plaintiff states has a Democratic majority in its lower chamber of legislature, and the rest all have Republican majorities. Not as extreme but still discernible is the correlation between lower chamber majority party and status as non-plaintiff in *Texas v. United States* (2015). In these states, more than 3 in 5 lower chambers of legislature have a Democratic majority, while fewer than 2 in 5 have a Republican majority.

Perhaps the most pronounced correlation between political party affiliation and stance on DAPA and the expansion of DACA is noticeable in an examination of state upper chambers' majority party, based on status as plaintiff or non-plaintiff in *Texas v. United States* (2015). This is demonstrated in Figure 8.

**Figure 8. Upper Chamber of Legislature Majority Party by States' and Their Elected Officials' Statuses as Plaintiff or Non-Plaintiff in *Texas v. United States* (2015)**



As illustrated in the graph above, every single state that is a plaintiff and/or has an elected official that is a plaintiff in *Texas v. United States* (2015) has a majority Republican upper chamber of legislature. Though the correlation is not nearly as prominent in the majority party of upper chambers in states which are not involved as plaintiffs in *Texas v. United States* (2015), it is still the case that nearly 3 in 5 non-plaintiff upper chambers of legislature have a majority Democratic membership, while only about 2 in 5 have a majority Republican membership.

An unmistakable correlation between party affiliation and status as plaintiff or non-plaintiff in *Texas v. United States* (2015) becomes apparent in examining the political affiliation of states' electorates, attorneys general, and governors, as well as the composition of each chamber of the states' legislatures by political party. Affiliation with the Republican Party tends to be correlated with opposition to DAPA and the expansion of DACA. DAPA and the expansion of DACA are both considerably less revisionary programs than that which was proposed by the DREAM Act, in that neither provides a path to citizenship nor legal permanent residence. If affiliation with the Republican

Party tends to correlate with opposition to DAPA and the expansion of DACA, it logically follows that affiliation with the Republican Party would also tend to correlate with opposition to legislative reform that would lead to a path to citizenship or legal permanent residence for immigrants without legal status. Such a path would be a further development of DAPA and DACA. Since elemental programs as DAPA and DACA have been met with marked resistance from the Republican Party, it is safe to assume that more progressive legislative reform providing a path to citizenship or legal permanent residence would provoke even more ardent opposition.

At the time of this writing, 246 of the 435 members of the United States House of Representatives are Republicans (Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives). Of the 100 members of the United States Senate, 54 are Republicans (Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives). Holding 56.56 percent of the seats in the House of Representatives and 54 percent of the seats in the Senate, Republicans comprise the majority of members in both the House and the Senate. Given the executive branch's inability to legally expand DACA in the face of the present lawsuit, in conjunction with the legislative branch's majority Republican composition, policy reform to improve the financial, educational, and social situations of DACA recipients is unlikely in the foreseeable future. Even less likely is a renewed push for the DREAM Act or any similar policy that would provide a path to legal status for DACA recipients, as this would be an even further expansion of the present benefits of DACA. Because a revitalized effort to pass the DREAM Act (or a similar bill) is unlikely, "it is possible Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals has replaced the DREAM Act for the foreseeable future" (Warley, 2012, p. 465).

As previously discussed, DACA leaves much to be desired in terms of meeting the financial, educational, and social needs of young immigrants without legal status. Expansion of DACA is currently at a standstill until *Texas v. United States* (2015) is resolved. Policy that would provide a path to legal status for DACA recipients is unlikely to be adopted because of the political composition of the legislative branch. In other words, the executive branch cannot take action, and the legislative branch is highly unlikely to take action that would improve the wellbeing of young immigrants without legal status. Given the unlikelihood of any policy reform taking place in the immediate future that would ameliorate the difficulties faced by DACA recipients, it is critical to investigate other means of addressing their present financial, educational, and social needs.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Following the methods of Kosnac et al. (2014), I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with local DACA recipients. The purpose of making the interviews in-depth and semi-structured was to allow for the candid, detailed expression of life as a DACA recipient and immigrant without legal status. Though Kosnac et al. used this methodology in their research, my approach of providing detailed, qualitative profiles and analyzing them for guidance on how to address the immediate needs of DACA recipients is one that has not been taken in existing literature. By focusing on the stories of these five individuals in greater detail, my method facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of DACA recipients, which, in turn, allows for a more apt response to their immediate needs while they await immigration legislative reform.

During the interviews, I inquired about the individuals' financial, educational, and social situations prior to and in the aftermath of receiving DACA. I also asked about the role that community played in their experiences as immigrants without legal status. Finally, I asked what remaining obstacles they faced even after receiving DACA. Most interviews took 45-60 minutes to complete, and all but one were conducted in person, with one taking place over the phone).

Upon completion of the interviews, I analyzed the responses to determine any commonalities among the responses of the DACA recipients, in terms of their experiences as immigrants without legal status. Finally, after analyzing and discussing the interview responses, I form conclusions and recommendations based on the data. These conclusions and recommendations are meant to supplement immigration legislative reform, as I propose that the only long-term solution to the issues faced by DACA recipients is a path to legal status.

## RESULTS

I present the results of the interviews in the format of five profiles, one of each interviewee. Their names and certain personal details have been changed or obscured to protect their identities. These results are not in any particular order.

### *Francisco*

Francisco is, in many ways, a typical college senior. He enjoys playing disc golf with his friends, has an on-campus job, and recently completed his senior thesis. One attribute that sets Francisco apart from his peers, however, is that he is an immigrant without legal status. Born in Mexico, Francisco and his brother (who is three years older and also a DACA recipient) were brought to the United States by their parents when Francisco was five years old. The four of them have been living in the United States without legal status for nearly two decades now. In addition to an older brother, Francisco also has three younger brothers, all of whom are U.S. citizens by birth.

I talked with Francisco about what it was like to “come out as DACA” to his peers. “The disc golf guys were the first ones I told, and they were pretty much like, ‘That’s cool, I didn’t know that,’” he said. Francisco described a greater reluctance in “coming out” to some of his classmates. In one of his classes, there was an ongoing discussion about immigration, and some of Francisco’s classmates had expressed “pretty conservative backlash towards immigrants,” he said. “My professor asked me to tell my story to the class, and at first I didn’t want to. But I talked to my mom about it, and she said, ‘This is something people need to know. If they’re going to keep judging you, they need a face to put to the story.’” So he agreed to share his story with his classmates.

The feedback that Francisco received was overwhelmingly positive. “A lot of my classmates were basically like, ‘I didn’t know that. That was really brave of you.’” I asked Francisco how he had felt before sharing his story, and he said that he was “scared initially, but now I’m glad I did it.” One of his classmates’ responses particularly stood out to Francisco:

After I told my story, he came up to me and said, “I’m a Republican and I was completely against this issue, but your dad walked out on you and your mom is carrying all this weight. What can I do to help you?” I said, “If you have the chance to make the right vote or correct someone who is ignorant about immigration, say what you’re supposed

to say. Give your stance on immigration. Stay true to what you're telling me right now."

Shortly after "coming out" to his classmates, Francisco was asked to do an interview on being an undocumented student. When the article on Francisco was published, he received a wave of support from friends, teachers, and colleagues. "I didn't expect it," he said, "I thought I would lose a few friends, but my friends wanted to help however they could." As he put it, the vast majority of friends who contacted him after reading the article said, "I had no idea that was your situation. If there's anything we can do, we'll do what we need to do to get you there." Similar sentiments of support were expressed by the president and vice president of Francisco's college, who offered to write letters to politicians and volunteered financial support. Former employers also reached out to Francisco to see if they could be of any assistance. "Before I had DACA, I used a fake ID to get a job," Francisco said. "My old manager read the article and got in touch with me and said, 'I didn't know. If you're ever in a tight situation where you need employment, you can always come here.'" Francisco said that people often ask him what they can do to help, and his advice is always the same: "support [DACA recipients] through the right channels." By this, Francisco means that allies of unauthorized immigrants should stay informed on the issues, speak out when peers spread inaccuracies about immigration, and vote for candidates who will "do the right thing."

Not all of the feedback that Francisco has gotten has been positive though. "Despite being a student and being open about what I'm doing, some people have had the attitude of, 'This is not ok, we need to get this illegal out,'" he said. Francisco described a conversation that he had with a donor at his college:

I was talking with this guy who used to donate every year, and he went off on me and about the school's policy on accepting undocumented students. He said, "I used to donate every year, and you just lost this donation." I told the president of the college because I just thought he should know, and he got really mad. He told me, "We don't need his f---ing money. If he doesn't support the mission of the college, we don't need his money."

Some of the comments on the online version of the article about Francisco expressed similar sentiments to those of the ex-donor. "People told me not to look at the comments, but of course I had to anyway," he said. The comments were not particularly bothersome to Francisco because "the people making these comments are always the least educated on the topic. A lot of people like to hide behind the shadows, just sitting behind their computer. But if you have something to say, just approach me personally and tell me what resentment you have against me personally." According to Francisco, the biggest impediment to positive public perception of DACA recipients is ignorance. "One of the big questions I always get is, 'why don't you just become a citizen? You've been here since you were five.' They don't realize that there's no system that I can enter into to apply for citizenship. Even if I did, it would take years."

Despite some of the negative social feedback Francisco has gotten as a DACA recipient, he said that DACA has had an overwhelmingly positive impact on his life. "One of the biggest things was going to college. Prior to high school, I wasn't sure if I would be able to go to college because I didn't have a Social Security number and couldn't get scholarships." Francisco said that he is lucky to have gotten a privately funded, full scholarship at his college. The scholarship has enabled him to attend a school that "just felt like home from the second I walked on campus."

However, Francisco noted that he is an exception, and most DACA recipients have a very difficult time paying for college. "My brother doesn't have any scholarships. He's paying for college completely out of pocket," he said. "He's three years older than me, and he just barely has enough credits to qualify as a first semester sophomore, while I'm graduating exactly on time." There are still other significant limitations to DACA, according to Francisco. "Health insurance is a big one. I can't apply for Obamacare," he said. The requirement of renewing DACA every two years is also a major burden, especially considering that renewal approval is never guaranteed. If Francisco's application for DACA renewal were to be rejected, he would be at risk of deportation and thus would no longer be able to continue his education in the United States. "You have students who have been here for 20 years who consider themselves Americans, but you're just trying to kick them out. It's like, 'What, am I not a student anymore? Did my face change? Am I wearing a mask now?' Education is an American value, and we're all Americans," he said.

When I asked Francisco what he thought could be done to improve the situation of DACA recipients, he again stressed the importance of dialogue. "Before I 'came out,' immigration wasn't an open topic on campus.

People just kept it amongst themselves. Socially now, it's a conversation that people are open to dialogue about. Whether you agree or disagree, the dialogue is open now," he said. Francisco pointed to the presence of immigration-related on-campus events at his college as an indicator that immigration was becoming a more widely discussed topic. "The important thing about on-campus conversation, for a lot of students, is that it's a more educational, informational thing," he said. In terms of the national conversation on DACA, "as long as you can put a face on a problem, that makes a huge impact." Being able to serve as a "face" for DACA recipients has made Francisco "so glad," he said. "I really believe that society is measured by how people are at the margins are doing, and [DACA recipients] are definitely at the margins. What matters is when I tell people I'm DACA, there's a response. Whether it's negative or positive, it's a response, and that's what we need to get the dialogue going."

### *Teresa*

When Teresa was seven years old, her parents brought her and her sister to the United States. "We didn't understand the concept of why we were coming here," she said. She remembers being frustrated that she and her sister were only allowed to bring "one little bag, that was it." Though they did not understand their motives, she and her sister complied with her parents' instructions and embarked on their trip from Mexico to the United States. "I didn't understand that we came illegally, but I understood that we didn't do it the right way," she said, "I just didn't know what the right way was. But I got that this was a forbidden place where people didn't want us to get across to."

The family endured an arduous and terrifying trip, during which they were stopped multiple times. "At one point, I remember a gun being pointed at my dad's head," she said. Teresa said that adjusting to the United States was difficult both linguistically and culturally. "There was no ENL [English as a New Language] instructor at my school," she said. A keen and amicable student, Teresa became fluent in English and made friends at her new school. Due to her young age, she said, she was not yet impeded by her lack of legal status. "I saw that we were different, but I didn't understand how different we were from all of my friends," she said, "because you don't need much documentation to go to grade school and be with your friends."

In middle school and high school, however, Teresa started to feel the impact of being an undocumented immigrant:



All my friends started driving then and I remember being like, “Hey, I want to drive too. Why can’t I drive?” I would ask, “Can I get a job?” and my parents would say, “No, we would have to invest in some fake papers, and we don’t have money for that.” Or I would say, “My friends are doing a study abroad program. Can I go?” And they would say, “You can’t travel because you can’t fly.” It made me feel grounded, both literally and metaphorically.

Furthermore, Teresa had to be careful about how open and honest she was with her friends. “I couldn’t talk about where my parents work or what their names were at their jobs,” she said. She also became acutely aware of the limitations that would be imposed on her college career, recognizing that she might not be able to attend some of the schools to which she had already applied.

Nonetheless, Teresa did everything in her power to succeed academically and extracurricularly. A straight-A student athlete, Teresa was offered a soccer scholarship at one of her top schools. She excitedly accepted the offer and began preparing to move there, even taking the long trip through a blizzard to visit the dorm in which she would be living. Two weeks before she was set to move in, she received notice that she would not be able to attend the school because the Social Security number that she had given in her application was not valid. “Financial Aid caught it,” Teresa said. “It had gone through all of the other offices and no one saw it until Financial Aid. They said I couldn’t go to school there because I couldn’t get federal aid so I couldn’t promise to pay for everything. I had to back out and just say, ok, what school is the closest and the cheapest?”

So Teresa enrolled at a local college and began studying to become a social worker. Wanting freedom from home, she got married at the age of 18 and moved in with her husband. She continued her college education for a year and a half, at which point she could no longer afford it due to a change in state legislation that required undocumented students to pay out-of-state tuition rates. Teresa had no choice but to drop out of school and begin working. “I worked cash-under-the-table, entry-level kind of jobs,” she said, “like serving at restaurants and bussing. I couldn’t get any other jobs because I didn’t have a Social Security number or anything. But my employers who knew my situation were fine with it.” With her career aspirations put on hold, Teresa started saving as much money as she could in the hopes of eventually going back to school.

Teresa soon became pregnant and found herself being disrespected by doctors in her prenatal checkups as a result of her lack of legal status. “My husband and I would go to doctors appointments together, and they would always address him because they knew he was paying for it because he was the citizen.” Unfortunately, Teresa’s relationship with her husband became abusive, but she felt that she had to stay with him because he had promised to help her apply for citizenship. “He finally petitioned for me, but he kept threatening me with it,” she said. “Any time I didn’t do what he said, he would threaten to withdraw the petition. He would cheat on me all the time, and I just had to take it.” When her husband cheated on her on Mother’s Day, Teresa decided to leave him. “My daughter was one at the time, and I didn’t want that for her,” she said.

Having left her abusive husband, Teresa tried to go back to school. She enrolled at a community college in an effort to save money, but had to drop out after a year—despite earning straight A’s—because of financial difficulties. Later that year, however, DACA was introduced, and life took a notably positive turnaround for Teresa. When she found out that she qualified, Teresa applied immediately. “As soon as I got DACA and got a driver’s license, I could drive without fear of having my daughter in the car,” she said, “It was like, ‘I have a license. Finally, I can breathe.’ I had a freedom to take my daughter to school or day care without worrying about getting pulled over, and what would happen to my daughter if I had to leave.” With DACA, Teresa was also able to become a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), which enabled her to get a job at a nursing facility.

After a year of working for the nursing facility, the facility offered to partially finance her college tuition. This overlapped with the timing of a new piece of legislation, which allowed undocumented students who had been enrolled at a public college or university before 2009 to return to paying in-state tuition. With the financial aid of the nursing facility and the lower tuition rate, Teresa returned to the college she had been attending prior to the community college.

With the DACA work permit, Teresa was also able to get a better job, which allowed her to live on her own with her daughter and to put money toward her college education. Shortly after returning to school, she got a job at a local community center. She “started at a low wage, but it was a better job than customer service, and it was stable.” Two years after that, she was offered a position as a case manager at another community center. “This was a dream for me,” she said, “since my field is social work.” After six months of working at the second community center, the first community center offered Teresa a

higher salary to return to her position there, as well as health insurance and some assistance with day care for her daughter. Teresa gratefully accepted the offer. "It gives me the comfort of being able to provide for my daughter without having to worry," she said, "and it really helps out because school is so expensive." Nine years after initially enrolling in college, Teresa is a part-time student and still three semesters away from being able to graduate. Nonetheless, her disposition is one of overwhelming gratitude for where she is now: "I'm able to be independent, so I stay active volunteering for those who are not as fortunate. I am where I am by the grace of God, so I just try to return it and help others as well. I feel very blessed that I have that opportunity."

Though DACA has given Teresa "a little wind beneath my wings," as she put it, she expressed fear for what may come next. "I'm a single mom at the mercy of whatever the next president chooses," she said. Her daughter, a U.S. citizen by birth, will not be able to petition for citizenship on behalf of her mother until the age of 21. "God forbid something happen where they take DACA back. My daughter would be left without a parent," Teresa said. Furthermore, Teresa worries that her college degree might ultimately be in vain:

My sister is studying nursing and is about to graduate this May, but they keep putting off the date of her nursing exam. She keeps asking when it is and they keep moving it later and later because if she's only guaranteed to be here for two years, if she doesn't get her DACA renewed, they don't want to waste the exam on her. I'm worried that the same might happen when I go to take my social work exam, that they'll say, "We don't know if you'll be here for more than two years," or when I go to get a job, they'll want to know that I'll be there longer than two years. I just want to be able to work in the career that I choose.

I asked Teresa what she felt the greatest obstacle was that she faces as a DACA recipient, and she said, "Two things. Money and uncertainty." She explained that it is expensive to have to pay \$465 every two years, "especially since we're still students." Additionally, DACA recipients used to be penalized through taxes, she said. With regards to uncertainty, Teresa explained, "We all came here so young. If I were rejected for DACA renewal and sent back to Mexico, I don't know where I would go. I would be lost."

I asked Teresa what sort of feedback she had received when “coming out” as a DACA recipient. Occasionally, she said, she sees anti-immigration posts on social media, and when she comments on the posts saying that she is a DACA recipient, “people are usually like, ‘What? No way!’ I think they expect to see someone who knows no English, or whatever the stereotypes are—not someone that they grew up with and went to school with.” Teresa expressed feeling truly like a member of her community, but noted that her lack of legal status continues to pose insurmountable obstacles. She said with conviction that “immigration laws definitely need reform.”

### *Roberto*

Roberto, the student mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, is distinct in that he is the only high school student I interviewed. As such, he was able to provide the perspective of a DACA recipient who has not yet matriculated to college. A junior in high school, Roberto presently faces the dilemma of whether or not to take Advanced Placement (AP) classes. “I know that private schools look at that,” he said, “and I have to go to a private school to get better scholarships because I can’t get certain scholarships without citizenship. But it costs \$90 for each AP test, and if I don’t do well enough to put the score on my transcript, it costs money to cancel the score.”

Fortunately, Roberto has found a great deal of support in the staff at his school. “I’m openly DACA, and I was talking to my U.S. History teacher, and I explained why I had to take the AP test because of the private colleges,” he said, “so my teacher went to the counselors and came back with a list of colleges that accept community college credit without taking the AP test.” His college counselor has been equally supportive. Roberto said that “usually the counselors at school don’t do much to try to help out, but when I told my counselor about my situation, she made an effort to help and give me advice.” He also finds support in the community by remaining active in a local community center (which facilitated the DACA application process for Roberto) and a local youth group.

Still, Roberto feels that he is different from his classmates. He said that his classmates “are like, ‘You weren’t born here,’ and they separate me from them because we come from two different worlds.” Most of his peers, he said, do not understand the lengths to which Roberto must go in order to attend college. Roberto has instead become active in the clubs at his girlfriend’s high school, attending volunteering and pre-college events with her.

Despite feeling that, as an immigrant without legal status, he does not fit in at his school, Roberto feels that DACA has positively impacted his life. "It helped a lot in getting a job," Roberto said, "because I have a Social Security number. That gives me more opportunities." He described DACA as "a step forward, maybe toward citizenship in the future." However, Roberto said that DACA is "not fair as well":

It's like, "You can do this, but at the same time you can't do that. You can study, but you can't get this scholarship. You can work, but you couldn't go to school because of that, so you can't get a really good job in the future." So like admissions to college is one thing, but being able to pay for it is another. Maybe you're not a straight-A student. So you can get in, but you can't get scholarships to pay for it.

The biggest setback, he said, is the unavailability of financial aid in paying for DACA. "I'm glad they have DACA," Roberto said, "but I wish they had made it more fair."

### *Stefania*

Stefania's situation is markedly different from those of the other individuals I interviewed. In August of 2015, Stefania married a U.S. citizen and shortly thereafter became a legal permanent resident. However, prior to her marriage, she, too, was a DACA recipient. Before coming to the United States, Stefania's parents attempted to get a visa for both her and her brother through Stefania's godparents in the U.S. They were denied, and so Stefania's parents had no choice but to bring their family across the border illegally. She was 10 years old when they came to the United States. "Looking back," she said, "I now look up to my parents because I could never do that with my kids. Not in a bad way, but my parents were just so brave in taking us, and I don't think I could ever do that."

Upon arrival in the United States, Stefania's parents enrolled her in school. She said that she did not realize what it meant to be an immigrant without legal status until middle school or high school, when her classmates started talking about college. "I didn't really understand what it meant not to have a Social Security number," she said. The first instance in which Stefania was denied something because of her lack of legal status came when her parents tried to get her a city ID. "They announced that they were going to stop giving out city IDs and driver's licenses if you didn't have a Social Security number," she said, so her parents tried to ensure that everyone in their family got at least a city ID before the law changed and they would

become ineligible. However, they did not get the city IDs in time. “That’s when I understood what it meant,” she said. “That’s when I understood what might happen because of what we did.”

In high school, Stefania “started to realize that doors were going to keep shutting because of the Social Security number.” She worked hard in school, became involved in the community, and joined the soccer team to try to get scholarships for college. “When I saw how hard it was going to be to get into college and pay for it, I decided to quit soccer my senior year so that I could work,” she said. Stefania planned to save money to go back to Mexico because she thought she had no future in the United States. “I was always going to be rejected here,” she said.

Three weeks before her high school graduation, she started to get letters in the mail offering her college scholarships. They were small, she said, but they did not request a Social Security number. “My family encouraged me to stay,” she said, “and they told me these letters were a sign.” Stefania was accepted into a local college. There was another college that had been her dream school, but without federal financial aid, Stefania knew she would not be able to afford to go there. She enrolled in a work-study program in college, “where they don’t pay you but they help pay for your school.” Then a law was passed that required students without legal status to pay out-of-state tuition—the same law that forced Teresa to drop out of college. Consequently, the school could no longer afford to have Stefania in their work-study program, and she, too, was forced to drop out. “I was already enrolled in my classes for the next semester, and I had to cancel them because I couldn’t afford it,” she said. Feeling dejected, Stefania admits that she “almost said, ‘maybe college is not for me.’”

However, her family and friends motivated her to keep going. She began attending a local community college, where, at \$1,500 per class, she could only afford to take one class per semester. Stefania got a job at a retail store and began working part-time while taking the class at the community college. After a few months, she was offered a managing position at the retail store. Upon accepting the offer and completing the training, however, she received a letter from the retail store’s headquarters saying that the Social Security number she had used in the papers she had submitted for her promotion was not valid. “I had to choose between working there for another two weeks before they said something to me in person or approaching them and seeing what they would say,” she said.

Ultimately, she decided to tell her general manager her story, explaining that the number she used “was a real number, it was my tax ID, but it wasn’t a working number.” She was told that they could not continue to employ her. “My boss said, ‘I wish you hadn’t said anything. We could’ve just quieted our ears.’ I tried to explain it to them, but they had never encountered that. They said, ‘If you can fix this in a month, you can come back.’ But it’s not that easy,” she said. Stefania was left without a job and thus without the ability to pay for school. Her parents helped her pay for her remaining balance on the class at the community college, but after that, she had to withdraw for financial reasons.

After that, Stefania took the following semester off to start working and saving money to return to school in the hopes of finishing her degree. “Because I didn’t have a Social Security number, I could only work at restaurants and jobs that didn’t check for that,” she said. However, shortly thereafter, in 2012, President Obama announced a new program called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. “I had to be one of the first ones to apply, I was so excited,” Stefania said with a grin. Because her family could not afford a lawyer, Stefania completed the application herself. She gathered the necessary documents and went to a local community center to have them review her application. “They looked it over and said I did a really good job,” she said, “so I asked if they needed any help because I wanted to help students apply for this. I knew it had taken me forever, and I wanted to help other DACA dreamers.”

Due to lack of legal certification, Stefania could not help fill out paperwork, but the community center gladly accepted her help in organizing documents and making copies as a volunteer. While she was volunteering at the community center and helping others apply for DACA, Stefania herself was accepted for DACA:

The people that I know who got DACA said it didn’t feel real until they got their card, even after they applied. But for me, it was actually when I got my driver’s license that I was like, “Ok, this is it.” It wasn’t even the Social Security number that made it feel real but the driver’s license, because you get asked for that everywhere you go. It’s the ID that they take. I remember when I would go to Walmart, they would make a big deal about me showing my passport because it didn’t have a visa, and sometimes they wouldn’t take it. Or getting prescriptions for my parents, sometimes we would get in trouble because we didn’t have city IDs.

DACA undoubtedly opened doors for Stefania, and she continues to volunteer at the community center in the hopes of helping to open doors for other DACA applicants. “It’s been really awesome for me,” she said, “a really big part of my journey.”

With regards to the reactions of her peers when she “came out” as a DACA recipient, Stefania said that she was initially discouraged from being open about her legal status. As Stefania tells it, “Growing up, my mom always said I could never say I came here illegally. ‘You don’t make conversation about that.’” When she got to high school, however, she “realized there was nothing to hide,” and she found herself becoming somewhat of a spokesperson for the undocumented students around her. “There were other students like me that felt scared to come out as undocumented,” she said, “and everyone that knew me knew that I was undocumented, so my friends would text me asking for help with this or that.” Her peers were “very open to it,” she said, and she experienced very little negative feedback. The only instance that came to mind was “a Facebook post from a year ago about something about how illegal immigrants get welfare and get all this stuff, and I was just like, ‘You need to get informed,’ and I posted that, like ‘This is not true.’ Then she commented back, ‘Wow, thank you, I didn’t know about that.’” Stefania said that she tends to stay away from politics on social media, but “if it’s somebody I know, I’m going to say something.” She also expressed that people seem surprised to find out that she is not a citizen. “My coworkers would tell me, ‘You don’t look undocumented,’” she said, “or, ‘You sound like you were born here.’ What’s that supposed to mean?”

Now, of course, Stefania is no longer an undocumented immigrant. I asked Stefania about how life as a legal permanent resident was different from life as a DACA recipient. She said that the biggest difference for her was being able to travel. “I went to Jamaica for my honeymoon,” she said. “It’s really nice being able to know I can go anywhere. Like we’re planning to go to Mexico, and I haven’t been able to visit family in Mexico since like 14 or 15 years ago.” Though her legal status now qualifies her for federal financial aid, this eligibility came too late in her academic career, as she has already financed her college education through other means.

Her brother, however, is still a DACA recipient and thus an immigrant without legal status. “DACA is awesome, but I wish they gave a little bit more leniency for travel because my brother won’t be able to come see our family,” she said. She also expressed concern at the uncertainty that characterizes the DACA renewal process. “Knowing you can get rejected is the scary part,” she said. “He’s still living with a little bit of, ‘oh my gosh, what if I get rejected and



get deported?’ When you apply for DACA, you put yourself out there, so you’re on that list. If they want to, they can take you away and deport you.”

Reflecting on her earlier years as an immigrant without legal status, Stefania recalled being constantly asked when she would become a citizen. She said that people were frequently surprised to find out that the process is long and expensive. “I think being open with them about my situation helped them understand that it’s not that easy to immigrate legally,” she said. Furthermore, she reflected on her teenage years as being much less carefree than those of her peers. “Driving without a license, you had to be super careful,” she said. “Being undocumented really limited the things that you could do.” DACA inarguably opened doors for Stefania and gave her a “boost of confidence,” but she still expressed that she felt as though she suffered considerable financial and social losses during her time without legal status. “Just the other day, I got my Social Security,” she said, “and I realized, ‘what happened to all the years I worked?’ They had counted the years that I worked when I was DACA, but nothing before that. And I wouldn’t have gotten this money if I hadn’t become a resident, if I had stayed DACA. I’ve never gotten Social Security before this. It’s like I suddenly became a person.”

### *Javier*

When I asked Javier what the greatest benefit of DACA was, he said, “This is super easy: it’s helped financially because I was able to legally get a job and pay for my education. That’s the most important thing: I’ve at least had an opportunity to work and contribute to my community and education.” His answer to my question about the greatest limitation of DACA was equally readily available: “It’s very limiting in what you do in your education.” Javier explained that as a DACA recipient, he was, for a while, forced to pay out-of-state tuition at a public college as a result of the same legislation that forced Teresa and Stefania to drop out. “While my classmates who were citizens were paying \$5,000 a semester,” Javier said, “I was paying about \$15,000.” Financial aid is not easy to come across for immigrants without legal status, Javier noted, as they are ineligible for grants and federal aid.

The difficulties that Javier has encountered as an undocumented immigrant have inspired him to become an advocate for DACA recipients. “I used to be more quiet about being DACA, but I’m open about it now”—so much so that he created an organization to educate his community on the proposed DREAM Act and, later, DACA. This organization also provides resources to DACA students, showing them “who their allies are in schools, which private schools give more funding than others, that sort of thing.”

Javier described the reactions he received when he started to become vocal about being a DACA recipient. “They don’t expect it,” he said. “They don’t feel it because of my heavy involvement in the community.” He said that he has always volunteered, had an above average GPA, taken part in civil conversations, and completely avoided trouble. This, he said, is why people are surprised to find out that he is an undocumented immigrant:

The reaction I’ve seen is mostly surprised. A lot of people don’t understand what’s going on or what it is. I’ve become “Americanized.” I act within the social norms of a student at my school, so a lot of people are shocked to know that I’m not a citizen. They don’t associate someone who’s here undocumented with the way that I behave. When people think “illegal immigrants,” they think more of a poor, uneducated Mexican, the farm worker type. When they see I’m normal, I’m a lot like them, then they get surprised. They often ask why: “Why don’t you become legal?” I tell them it’s not that simple. “Well, that’s stupid,” they say. Another reaction I get a lot is, “Why are you undocumented? I have friends who did it the right way.” They assume it’s a choice, that I haven’t tried doing enough to become a legal permanent resident or citizen.

Despite feeling that he is no different from his peers in a social context, Javier expressed that he is at a significant disadvantage to them in the realm of employment. “One limitation of DACA is that I’m graduating this year from college, and there is very, very limited help on finding a career for DACA students,” he said. Career guidance, he said, tends to be geared towards upper middle class students in business, his field of study. “Degrees in STEM are easier to get career help for if you’re DACA since it’s in higher demand,” he said, “but in a business setting, you need to have more of an analytic or complicated skill set to be in high demand.” Furthermore, he noted that “a lot of positions say they will not sponsor any type of visa, so right off the bat you’re eliminated—they won’t even look at you.” Other times, Javier said, potential employers “don’t have the ability or financial means to sponsor an individual.” Potential employers, it seems to him, “don’t understand, and they’re not open to hearing or attempting to learn. Usually, the way it goes is that it sounds like a headache to them, so they stay away from learning more.”

In fact, the most negative feedback that Javier has received has been from his current employer. “When my manager found out that I’m here on a temporary basis, he started to play around with me,” Javier said. “He’s insulted

me sometimes. He'll say jokingly, 'Go back to Mexico.'" Javier takes issue with the fact that his manager is openly anti-immigrant, but says to Javier, "You're ok, it's everybody else—they're the problem." The issue with this sentiment, according to Javier, is "that he finds an exception with me because I fit his social norms," rather than recognizing that Javier is representative of DACA recipients in general, in just how "normal" he is.

I asked Javier if he felt that he had experienced any other anti-immigrant feedback. He said, "I'm sure there have been people that don't like me because of being DACA. I try to be someone who is outspoken and upfront about it. Usually people just remove themselves, or at least in social media they remove themselves from my presence." However, Javier has noticed other immigrants without legal status getting negative feedback in his community:

There was a double homicide of two Mexicans in the paper the other week. One of the kids was 27, and they paint him as an outstanding citizen, always quick to help. He was undocumented, but in the paper they didn't call him that—they said what part of Mexico he was from instead and talked about how they were making arrangements to send his body back to Mexico. Then it comes out that the people who killed him were Hispanics, undocumented. They blatantly said one of them was undocumented. In the comments section, people were talking about deportation, even the death penalty. So the paper just highlighted the negative side, what everybody thinks of "undocumented": "They bring rapists, they bring killers." People paint this as the norm of someone who's undocumented.

When I asked Javier if he thought DACA had any effect on the degree of social acceptance or the public perception of immigrants without legal status, he was unsure. "There's still a lot of limitations on social acceptance," he said. "Even though you have DACA, you still feel like a second- or third-class citizen."

Returning to the topic of Javier's organization and the provision of resources for DACA recipients, I asked Javier what he thought should be done to aid DACA students. "Something similar to FAFSA for DACA students," he said. He noted that the law preventing undocumented immigrants from paying in-state tuition at public colleges and universities—the law that forced Teresa and Stefania to drop out of school—had been a serious impediment for many DACA recipients. Javier expressed that his ambition was curbed only by the financial, educational, and career barriers that his lack of legal status imposes.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results yielded a number of commonalities among the lived experiences of DACA recipients, some of which I anticipated and others which I had not expected. All respondents experienced the financial, educational, and social barriers that I predicted. Each interviewee discussed his or her pre-DACA (i.e. pre-work permit) financial barriers in terms of job eligibility, which was among the results that I had expected. Some of the respondents explicitly mentioned post-DACA financial obstacles or absence of long-term job security that directly resulted from a lack of legal status (such as Teresa's potential inability to take her social work exam or Javier's difficulty in finding career guidance as a DACA recipient). Funding for college was, also as anticipated, one of the primary obstacles faced by each of the interviewees—an obstacle that constitutes both a financial barrier and an educational barrier. Additionally, all of the respondents expressed some degree of the social stigmatization that I predicted, whether personally and directly (such as the donor to Francisco) or impersonally and indirectly (such as Stefania's Facebook friend). Furthermore, community support was, as expected, an integral part of each interviewee's story (such as Francisco's college president, Teresa's employers at the nursing facility, Roberto's college counselors, the community center where Stefania volunteers, and the organization that Javier started).

However, some of the results of the interviews I did not foresee. With regards to financial challenges, I had not considered that DACA recipients do not have access to health care through the Affordable Care Act (as Francisco indicated) and must instead rely on health care provision through employers or relatives. This creates a great deal of uncertainty for DACA recipients who do not have access to health insurance through their employers or family members, as is Francisco's case. Furthermore, as Stefania noted, DACA recipients pay taxes, but do not receive Social Security, which was another financial impediment that I had not anticipated. In terms of educational barriers, many of the respondents expressed a sense of needing to excel in school in order to be eligible for scholarships to pay for college, yet at the same time feeling that exerting such effort would ultimately be in vain because of their lack of legal status. Teresa's story exemplifies this sentiment perfectly: she was a straight-A student with a soccer scholarship who was unable to attend her school of choice simply because of her inability to access financial aid, which directly resulted from her status as an undocumented student. I had not anticipated encountering this poignant paradox of a sense of urgency to

succeed academically accompanied by a realization that such success would be in vain simply because of a lack of access to legal status.

Among the results that I found to be the most unexpected were some of the commonalities in terms of social barriers as immigrants without legal status. Many of the respondents expressed feeling like a “typical American” and being perceived and accepted as such, yet having to continually correct misinformed peers even after “coming out” as DACA. It seems as though “coming out” to their peers created a sort of cognitive dissonance: the notion of being “normal” was inconsistent with being an undocumented immigrant. Another unanticipated but common phenomenon pertaining to social barriers was the urge to give back to one’s community. This seemed to stem from a sense of gratitude to the communities that helped the respondents to overcome social barriers (such as the community centers that had helped Teresa and Stefania).

Perhaps the most significant commonality that I had not anticipated was the importance of “coming out as DACA.” All of the respondents indicated that it was when they came out as DACA that they began to experience much-needed community support (such as the responses Francisco received in the aftermath of the article’s publication and Roberto’s teacher and counselors’ attempts to help him on his path to college). Furthermore, many of the respondents noted that one of the most important things was to educate people and, as Francisco put it, “get a dialogue going.” Whether correcting classmates, coworkers, or peers on social media, it seems that “coming out as DACA” was a source of empowerment for the interviewees in that it brought a human face to the issue, making it more difficult for peers to continue to incorrectly characterize undocumented immigrants as “rapists and killers” (as Javier put it) or even just “people who don’t speak English” (as Teresa put it). Nonetheless, as Javier expressed, some individuals, such as his manager, maintain the notion of immigrants without legal status as “the problem” and see undocumented immigrants who do not fit this negative perception (such as Javier) as “the exception.”

Based on the results of the interviews, it seems that “coming out as DACA” to one’s community is a pivotal step in mitigating the financial, educational, and social challenges of being an immigrant without legal status. This is because of the short-term and anticipated long-term effects of being “openly DACA.” In the short term, “coming out” makes friends, coworkers, and allied peers aware of one’s situation and leads to the immediate accessibility of a community support network, as evidenced by the responses of Francisco’s classmate, Teresa’s employers, and Roberto’s teacher. The

dialogue fostered by DACA recipients' openness as immigrants without legal status can lead to long-term amelioration of their financial, educational, and social situations in that it encourages supportive friends, coworkers, and peers to push for legislative reform for their undocumented loved ones. As Francisco told his classmate who asked how he could help, "If you have the chance to make the right vote or correct someone who is ignorant about immigration, say what you're supposed to say. Give your stance on immigration."

Thus, the task of improving the financial, educational, and social circumstances for DACA recipients falls on the shoulders of both DACA recipients and their communities. For DACA recipients, it is critical that they be open about their lack of legal status. This humanizes the issue of immigration by giving a face to undocumented immigrants and enlightens uninformed peers who oppose immigration reform. The responsibility of the community, then, is to be open to dialogue, whether in informal settings (such as on social media) or more formal settings (such as city forums). Community members who wish to take further action can also directly aid their undocumented peers (through contributions to private scholarships, provision of health care, career guidance, etc.) or participate in political advocacy (through letters to representatives and senators, attendance at local rallies, social media activism, etc.). There are infinitely many ways in which communities can support their members without legal status. What matters is that DACA recipients "come out" as a face for undocumented immigrants and that communities respond with, at the very least, receptiveness to dialogue. In the words of Francisco, "What matters is when I tell people I'm DACA, there's a response. Whether it's negative or positive, it's a response, and that's what we need to get the dialogue going."

## CONCLUSION

Approximately two million individuals in the United States qualify for DACA. This means that these individuals were brought to the United States illegally as children and—as a result of their lack of legal status—face insurmountable financial, educational, and social obstacles. The United States is their home. These young men and women are undeniably American in every facet but legal status.

DACA recipients are integral to the fabric of American communities. They are our classmates, our coworkers, and our friends. Their faces are, at once, the face of the undocumented and the face of America. As such, it is critical to foster a dialogue of inclusion and advocate for legislative reform. This dialogue can and should take place on both an informal platform, such as classroom conversations or comments on social media, and at a more formal level, through such mediums as city forums that include undocumented panelists or local rallies and educational events. Ultimately, the ideal outcome is a path to citizenship or legal permanent residence for DACA recipients. In the meantime, however, these individuals face financial, educational, and social challenges that must be addressed.

*La unión hace la fuerza*: unity creates strength. Encouraging dialogue on immigration in communities fosters a more inclusive and unified environment, which strengthens not only the community's immigrants without legal status, but the community as a whole. While these immigrants endure the obstacles and uncertainties that DACA imposes, it is critical that communities facilitate dialogue that creates channels of both short-term and long-term support for immigrants without legal status.

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## APPENDIX

Documentation Submissions Required for DACA Applicants and  
Examples of Acceptable Forms of Such Documentation  
(Source: Department of Homeland Security, 2015)

Documentation Requirement	Examples
Proof of identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passport or national identity document from your country of origin</li> <li>• Birth certificate with photo identification</li> <li>• School or military ID with photo</li> <li>• Any U.S. government immigration or other document bearing your name and photo</li> </ul>
Proof you came to U.S. before your 16th birthday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passport with admission stamp</li> <li>• Form I-94/I-95/I-94W</li> <li>• School records from the U.S. schools you have attended</li> <li>• Any Immigration and Naturalization Service or DHS document stating your date of entry (Form I-862, Notice to Appear)</li> <li>• Travel records</li> <li>• Hospital or medical records</li> <li>• Employment records (pay stubs, W-2 Forms, etc.)</li> <li>• Official records from a religious entity confirming participation in a religious ceremony</li> <li>• Copies of money order receipts for money sent in or out of the country</li> <li>• Birth certificates of children born in the U.S.</li> <li>• Dated bank transactions</li> <li>• Automobile license receipts or registration</li> <li>• Deeds, mortgages, rental agreement contracts</li> <li>• Tax receipts, insurance policies</li> </ul>
Proof of immigration status	<p>Form I-94/I-95/I-94W with authorized stay expiration date</p> <p>Final order of exclusion, deportation, or removal issued as of June 15, 2012</p>

	A charging document placing you into removal proceedings
Proof you are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the U.S.	Form DD-214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty NGB Form 22, National Guard Report of Separation and Record of Service Military personnel records Military health records
	country Passport entries Birth certificates of children born in the U.S. Dated bank transactions Automobile license receipts or registration Deeds, mortgages, rental agreement contracts Tax receipts, insurance policies
Proof of your student status at the time of requesting DACA	Official records (transcripts, report cards, etc) from the school that you are currently attending in the United States. U.S. high school diploma or certificate of completion U.S. GED certificate

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## **Sex Differences Moderate the Effect of REM Sleep on Emotional Memory Consolidation**

**MARISSA BOWMAN**

### **Abstract**

Sleep benefits the consolidation of emotional memory. While previous research suggests that rapid eye movement (REM) sleep may play a role in strengthening the memory traces of negatively salient information, it remains unclear if sex differences affect this relationship. The purpose of this study was to determine if the amount of REM sleep following encoding or retrieval of emotional stimuli would predict memory performance and if this effect was sex-specific. To test this, participants were randomly assigned into wake and sleep groups and viewed negative and neutral images. Twelve hours later they completed a recognition test following a delay of daytime wakefulness or polysomnograph-recorded nocturnal sleep. REM sleep did not predict better memory for negative images. Test of moderation indicated that the effect of REM sleep on negative emotional memory after the one-week delay depended on the sex of the participant. Specifically, REM sleep was positively correlated with memory of negative images for males, whereas REM sleep was negatively correlated with emotional memory for females. These findings corroborate previous studies indicating that females do not always experience the memory enhancing effect of sleep. This preliminary evidence suggests that sex may be vital to consider in future sleep studies.

## **Introduction**

Sleep in modern society is unduly undervalued, given the overwhelming data on the physical and mental health benefits of sleep. It has been demonstrated that sleep increases antibody levels (e.g. Lange, Perras, Fehm & Born, 2013), removes amyloid-beta buildup from cerebrospinal fluid in the brain<sup>1</sup> (Xie et al., 2013), and improves episodic (e.g. Inostroza & Born, 2013), procedural (e.g. van der Helm & Walker, 2009), and emotional memories (e.g. Payne, Stickgold, Swanberg & Kesinger, 2008). Further, it has been demonstrated that Slow Wave Sleep (SWS) seems to have a preferential role in the consolidation of declarative memories, and there is considerable consensus that rapid eye movement (REM) sleep preferentially consolidates procedural and emotional memories (Diekelmann & Born, 2010; Groch, Wilhelm, Diekelmann & Born, 2013; Inostroza & Born, 2013; Pace-Schott et al., 2011; Rasch & Born, 2007; van der Helm & Walker, 2009). While previous research suggests that rapid eye movement (REM) sleep may play a particularly important role in strengthening the memory traces of negatively salient information, it remains unclear **if** sex differences effect this relationship. The purpose of this study was to determine if the amount of REM sleep during the night following encoding or retrieval of emotional and neutral stimuli would predict long-term memory performance, and if this effect was sex-specific.

Sleep research has important implications for clinical science. A deeper understanding of the role of REM sleep in emotional memory consolidation could improve our understanding of why abnormal sleep architecture is present in individuals with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Often, individuals with depression transition into REM sleep earlier, longer, and with a greater density compared to non-depressed individuals (van der Helm & Walker, 2009). Individuals with PTSD frequently have increased REM density and heightened activity in REM sleep regulation centers and the amygdala during sleep (Germain, Buysse & Notzinger, 2007). Therefore, it is worth considering whether dysregulated REM sleep could contribute to the imperfect or inaccurate memory consolidation of a negative event, and whether this could possibly lead to the subsequent development of a mood disorder. For the purposes of this study, the percentage and quantity of REM sleep of individuals who do not meet criteria for any mental health disorder will be used as a predictor of emotional memory to ascertain whether increasing amounts of REM correlates with improved memory for the

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<sup>1</sup> Amyloid-beta buildup in the brain contributes to the development of Alzheimer's disease.

negative images. However, the clinical implications for depression and PTSD is the background of our study.

The theory driving this study is Walker's "Sleep to Forget, Sleep to Remember" (SFSR) hypothesis (van der Helm & Walker, 2009). This theory states that at initial encoding of a negative image, the aminergic system is highly activated, which causes an increase in norepinephrine levels and therefore induces a stress response. The memory for the emotional image is thus "blanketed" in an affective tone. After encoding, REM sleep specifically is believed to be the ideal biological theater for disentangling the sympathetic nervous system response from the memory content, largely due to the unique neurochemical milieu during REM sleep. During REM sleep, aminergic neurotransmitter levels are especially low, while cholinergic neurotransmitter levels are high. Previous research has demonstrated that blocking cholinergic receptors during REM sleep impairs the consolidation of emotional memories (Diekelmann & Born, 2010). Aminergic activity has been linked to states of high stress and anxiety disorders (Sullivan, Coplan, Kent, & Gorman, 1999). Therefore, this neurochemical environment decreases arousal response while simultaneously improves conditions for emotional memory consolidation. According to the SFSR hypothesis, at memory retrieval after sleep, the image will induce less physiological reactivity. Across subsequent nights, the affective tone that blankets the memory is hypothesized to decrease consistently, while the memory remains.

### **Isolating the Effect of REM Sleep**

The role of REM sleep in emotional memory consolidation has been isolated using various experimental designs. There are two alternative methods which will be reviewed. One method to measure the effect of REM sleep on emotional memory consolidation is to allow one group of participants to sleep undisturbed, while the experimental group is deprived of REM sleep specifically. In this design, experimenters watch the polysomnogram while the participant is sleeping and wake up the participant after a pre-determined amount of time spent in REM sleep. Lara-Carrasco et al. (2009) allowed participants in their experimental group to receive two periods of REM sleep as usual, and subsequently woke subjects up during each subsequent period of REM sleep after 5 minutes. Contrary to the SFSR hypothesis, Lara-Carrasco et al. (2009) found that individuals who were deprived of REM sleep adapted to the arousal of the negative images *more* than individuals who slept undisturbed.

Specific REM-sleep deprivation allows researchers to ensure that the participants are not spending much time in this sleep stage. Ostensibly,

differences between the control and REM-sleep deprived groups would be the result of the REM manipulation. However, this methodology does have limitations. Frequent awakenings from REM sleep causes emotional and cognitive disturbances, and these disturbances could be impairing memory retrieval (Wagner, Gais & Born, 2001). Thus, if an experimenter awakens the participant repeatedly, this could cause undue stress to the participant. The stress hormone cortisol fluctuates over the course of the night and exogenous increases of cortisol could affect memory consolidation and even dreaming (Payne & Nadel, 2004; Bennion et al., 2013). Moreover, this methodology is not ecologically valid because individuals' sleep cycle is not disturbed at the onset of REM sleep by an experimenter each night.

Humans spend a lot of time in Slow Wave Sleep (SWS) at the beginning of the night and spend a predominant amount of time in the REM stage during the end of the night. Thus, another way to test the effect of REM sleep specifically is to separate participants into an early sleep group (rich in SWS) and a late sleep group that is rich in REM sleep (Wagner, Fischer, & Born, 2002; Wagner, Gais & Born, 2001). In this paradigm, the SWS-rich sleep group learns a task or images, sleeps for approximately three hours, and then engages in a recognition session. The REM-rich sleep group sleeps for three hours, learns the task, sleeps for three more hours to obtain REM-rich sleep, and then engages in a recognition session. This method is preferable to the REM-sleep deprivation paradigm because it allows for relatively less disturbed sleep, and also allows for the dissociation between processes occurring during early and late sleep. However, encoding in the SWS-rich sleep group and the REM-rich sleep group occurs at different times, and therefore there could be circadian differences accounting for results. Sleep before learning is also important, and so differences in the REM-rich group could be attributable to pre-encoding sleep (Diekelmann & Born, 2010). Moreover, early sleep does contain some REM sleep, while late sleep contains some SWS – the paradigm does not parse out the sleep stages perfectly. Similar to the REM-sleep deprivation methodology, this method is also not very generalizable. It is unusual for someone to be awoken in the middle of the night and asked to either learn or recall a task.

In the present study, participants were allowed to sleep undisturbed throughout the night. This design is beneficial because it is ecologically relevant in that it is exactly the type of sleep people usually get. Some scientists do not conceptualize sleep as a SWS/REM sleep dichotomy, but rather they consider the natural oscillation between SWS and REM sleep to be most important. This theory is known as the sequential hypothesis of sleep based



consolidation (Giuditta et al., 1995); however, one disadvantage is that all conclusions are based on correlations, thus causality cannot be ascertained.

### **Sex Differences**

An emphasized covariate of interest in this study is sex. There are notable sex differences in both sleep and memory. Recently, Genzel et al. (2011; 2014) and Diekelmann, Born, and Rasch (2016) have demonstrated that sex is influential on the effect of sleep on memory. More specifically, females only benefited on declarative and procedural tasks in Genzel et al. (2011) when they were in the mid-luteal phase of the menstrual cycle. However, no study has examined the influence of sex differences on the effect of REM sleep and emotional memory consolidation.

Sex differences should be carefully examined in sleep studies because research suggests that men and women sleep differently. Women are more likely than men to sleep more than 9 hours per day, have shorter sleep latencies, and yet are more likely to report sleep disturbances, restless leg syndrome, or impaired functioning as a result of fatigue (Mallampalli & Carter, 2014; Ohayan, Reynolds, & Dauvilliers, 2013). Women are roughly 1.5 times more likely to receive a diagnosis of insomnia than men, as found in a meta-analysis of thirty-one studies (Zhang & Wing, 2006). Men, however, are twice as likely as women to be diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnea syndrome (Collop, Adkins, & Phillips, 2004).

A possible mechanism of sex differences in sleep are sex hormones. In young women, the menstrual cycle effects and is affected by circadian rhythms. Body temperature, melatonin, cortisol, and estrogen each have a unique rhythm as a function of the menstrual phase; each of these, in turn, affects sleep (Baker & Driver, 2007). During menopause, women report increased sleep difficulties that has been attributed to elevated beta EEG power, suggesting shallower sleep (Campbell et al., 2011). This difference has been explained, in part, by sex hormones, as the gender protection disappears in post-menopausal women (Kapsimalis & Kryger, 2002) and estrogen replacement therapy has been shown to improve sleep quality (Polo-Kantola et al., 1998).

Along with sleep differences, there are also quantifiable differences in emotional memory consolidation between the sexes, perhaps due to structural or connectivity differences in the brain. Research suggests that women experience both negative and positive emotions more intensely than men (Fujita, Diener & Sandvik, 1991), recall emotional memories more quickly than men (Robinson, 1996), and wives seem to have more vivid memories of past

relationship events than their husbands (Ross & Holmberg, 1992). fMRI studies have shown that during the encoding of emotional images, correlations in the amygdala are left-lateralized in women and right-lateralized in men, which could be attributable to sex differences in memory storage strategies (Cahill et al., 2001; Canli, Desmond, Zhao & Gabrieli, 2002). A meta-analysis of sixty-five neuroimaging studies determined that women also have more activation in basic regions of the brain, such as the brainstem and thalamus, in response to emotional images, whereas men show more activation in the higher order regions of the brain, such as the left inferior frontal cortex (Wager, Phan, Liberzon, & Taylor, 2003). This difference could be explained from an evolutionary perspective, in that women process emotional images in the context of social cues or as a threat, whereas men process the images in order to take action (Wager et al, 2003).

Given the evidence that sex differences have been found in sleep and emotional memory consolidation separately, it is important to consider how sex differences may impact this study. Indeed, the effect of sleep on memory consolidation has recently been demonstrated to be differentially effected by sex. Genzel et al. (2011) reported that while men improved on both motor and declarative tasks after a nap, women only improved when they were in the mid-luteal phase of their menstrual cycle. Moreover, estrogen levels in women positively correlated with performance on the declarative task, but not on the procedural task. In another study, women taking oral contraception did not show better performance on a memory task after a nap compared to a period spent awake (Genzel et al., 2014). The authors explained this by the hormones in the oral contraception improving memory consolidation, such that no further improvement could be obtained by taking a nap. Odor cueing during slow wave sleep, a paradigm that is successful in improving memory, improved performance on a procedural task in only men, but not women (Diekelmann, Born, & Rasch, 2016). Contrary to prior findings, further analysis revealed no statistical difference in task performance for women in the luteal phase, follicular phase, or taking oral contraception. Given the evidence that men, but not women, benefit from sleep on these tasks, we hypothesize that this will also be the case in our study. Despite a small emerging literature on sex, sleep, and memory, this study presents a novel approach to examining sex differences and the effect of REM sleep on emotional memory consolidation.

## **Study Overview**

Our study utilized polysomnography (PSG) data from eight hours of sleep in conjunction with skin conductance response (SCR) and

electrocardiogram (EKG) data to objectively measure reactivity to the negative images. Additionally, we explored how memory for the negative images changed across delays of 12 hours and one week. Testing of emotional memory after a one-week delay, to our knowledge, has not yet been performed. Based on the SFSR hypothesis, it would be expected that increasing amounts of REM sleep will be correlated with better memory for the negative images, and that this will be more prominent in the sleep-first relative to the wake-first group after a week-long delay. Stepernich et al (2007) designed a sleep-deprivation experiment wherein one group slept immediately after learning arousing images and one group was sleep-deprived. The sleep group had better recall both the next day, and after a 72-hour delay that contained two nights of recovery sleep for the sleep-deprived group.

## **Hypotheses**

Specifically, we have four hypotheses. The first three are based on aspects of the theory set forth in the SFSR hypothesis. The last hypothesis is based on recent studies demonstrating that males, but not females, benefit from sleep for memory consolidation.

- 1) The sleep-first group will have better memory for negatively salient stimuli compared to the wake-first group, both after a 12-hour and week long delay.
- 2) Percentage of REM sleep in the sleep-first group will positively correlate with recall of negative images during both recognition sessions.
- 3) Percentage of REM sleep in the wake-first group will positively correlate with recall of negative images during recognition session 2.
- 4) Males will benefit from increasing amounts of REM sleep, but females will not.

## **Method**

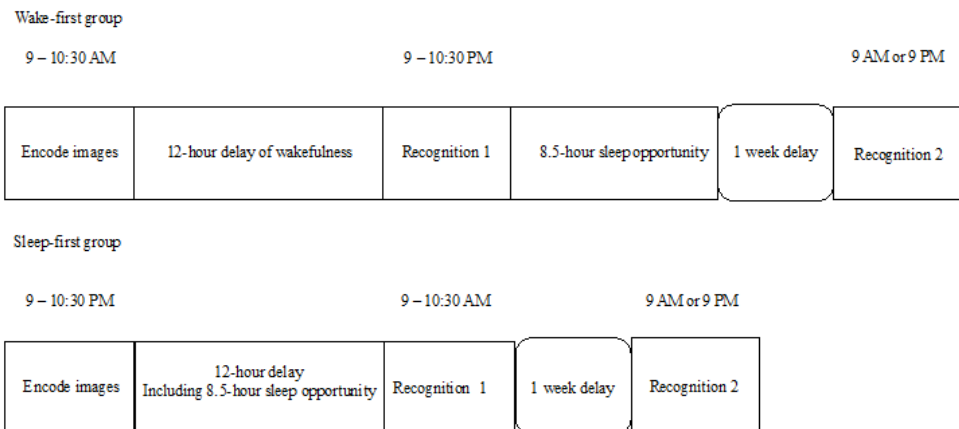
Thirty-four University of Notre Dame undergraduate students (ages 18-21; 22 females) participated for payment or class credit. The University of Notre Dame Institutional Review Board approved all testing procedures and written consent was obtained before the experiment. The treatment of participants was in accordance with the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association. All participants were instructed to refrain from tobacco, caffeine, alcohol, and recreational drugs for 24 hours prior to each

session. Participants were all native English speakers and had normal or corrected-to-normal vision. Four participants' data could not be used due to equipment failure; however, four new participants' data were collected to maintain a pre-determined group size based on power analyses (wake-first group = 17, sleep-first group = 17). The female participants in our study were either on oral contraception (n=11) or in the follicular phase of their menstrual cycle (n=12). This was pre-determined, as women in this phase have body temperature, cortisol, and melatonin levels most comparable to men (Baker & Driver, 2007).

## Procedures

**Scheduling and testing.** In the wake-first group, participants viewed images from 9 – 10:30 AM. After a 12-hour delay of wakefulness with no naps, participants returned for an unexpected recognition session at 9 PM. At the conclusion of the session, participants had an 8-hour sleep opportunity in the laboratory. In the sleep-first group, participants viewed images from 9 – 10:30 PM. After an 8-hour sleep opportunity in the laboratory, participants had an unexpected recognition session at 9 AM. One week later, both groups returned to the laboratory at 9 AM or 9 PM for an unexpected second recognition session (Figure 1). During the first sleep period for both groups, polysomnography (PSG) was recorded with a Grass Comet polysomnography system.

### Figure 1: Experimental Design



**Encoding tasks.** To perform the encoding and recognition tasks, participants were escorted to a soundproof viewing booth and were provided with noise-reducing headphones to minimize distraction. In the viewing booth, images were presented using E-Prime software (Psychology Software Tools, Pittsburgh, PA) on a rear-projected 64" Sony High-Definition Television located 59" away from the participant. Participants sat in a chair with padded arms, and rated the images using a computer keyboard placed on their lap. They performed this task with their dominant hand, as their non-dominant hand had sensors monitoring skin conductance. The viewing booth was equipped with a microphone that projected the participant's voice into a separate control room, from which the experimenter can communicate with the participant via headphones.

During the encoding task, each participant was randomly assigned to view one of two lists of 160 images (80 negative, 80 neutral) selected from IAPS and NAPS databases (Lang, Bradley, & Cuthbert, 2008; Marchewka et al., 2014). These images were a collection of normative color pictures that have been demonstrated to evoke emotional reactions and were therefore used widely in the emotion research. However, because emotions are subjective, participants rated every image, using a computer keyboard, on 1-9 Likert scales for valence and arousal. Valence was defined as how negative (indicated by a rating of 1) or positive (indicated by a rating of 9) the participant felt an image was. Arousal is defined as how calming/subduing (indicated by a rating of 1) or stimulating/activating (indicated by a rating of 9) the participant felt an image was. Data on participants' physiological response to each image were also collected, using a

BIOPAC MP 150 Data Acquisition System equipped with an ECG100C-MRI Electrocardiogram Amplifier and a GSR EDA Galvanic Skin Response Amplifier for heart rate and skin conductance data collection, respectively. Images were presented in a random order for one second, with a random interstimulus interval of 5 – 8 seconds between each image. The relatively long interval was chosen to allow the heart rate and skin conductance to return to baseline, and the intervals were changed so that the participants could not anticipate the presentation of images (Cunningham et al., 2014).

**Recognition tasks.** At recognition session 1, subjects returned to the laboratory after a twelve-hour delay of either day time wakefulness (wake-first) or nocturnal sleep (sleep-first). They viewed 160 images once again, of which 40 images were previously-seen negative stimuli, 40 were new negative stimuli, 40 were previously-seen neutral photographs, and 40 were new neutral images. After presentation of each picture they were asked to determine whether the

image was new or old image, and how confident they were in that judgment on a scale from 1 – 4 (1 being very certain, 4 being very uncertain). As in the encoding task, participants also rated each image on Likert scales from 1 – 9 for valence and arousal. Physiological data, specifically heart rate and skin conductance, were once again collected. The new negative and neutral images were from the list of images to which participants were not initially assigned to at encoding. This was done to ensure that results were not based on a singular list of images.

At recognition session 2, participants returned to the laboratory after a week delay. They viewed 160 images (40 old negative, 40 new negative, 40 old neutral, 40 new neutral) at either 9 AM or 9 PM, with the time randomly assigned to each participant. These two times were chosen to control for the influence of circadian rhythms. The old images at recognition session 2 were images that the participants had seen at the encoding session; that is, none of the images presented at recognition session 1 were presented at recognition session 2. As done at recognition session 1, participants determined whether they were new or old, how confident they were in their ratings, and rated the valence and arousal of each image. Memory retention of the images was calculated separately for negative and neutral items as the number of items accurately remembered (i.e. hits) divided by the number of images originally viewed. To correct for response bias, we calculated corrected memory by subtracting the proportion of false alarms ('old' judgments to new pictures) of each object type from the proportion of hits (Cunningham et al., 2014).

To obtain the overnight PSG, participants arrived at the sleep laboratory at 10:30 PM. Electrodes were applied while they watched a non-stimulating video. Sleep was recorded with Grass/Telefactor/Comet polysomnography systems. The montage included electrooculography (EOG), electromyography (EMG), and EEG leads (F3, F4, C3, Cz, C4), with each electrode referenced to the contralateral mastoid. Sleep data were scored according to the standards of Rechtschaffen and Kales (1968), and the sleep scorer was blind to the condition and sex of the participant.

## **Results**

Mean sleep time of all participants was  $460 \pm 27$  minutes, or 7.6 hours. As participants were offered an 8.5-hour sleep opportunity, this represents a sleep efficiency of approximately 90.1%. Mean time spent in each sleep stage was within the typical range for young adults. Table 1 shows the complete summary statistics for the sleep stages.

Table 1. Sleep Stage Summary Statistics.

Sleep variable (min)	<i>M (SD)</i>	minimum	maximum
Total Sleep Time	460.17 (27.16)	391.5	500.0
Sleep Latency	13.68 (13.01)	1.5	59.0
Stage 1	23.83 (11.01)	1.5	11.6
Stage 2	226.79 (47.04)	28.5	69.1
Stage 3	19.04 (8.07)	1.9	43.5
REM	122.58 (26.02)	14.1	39.5
REM Latency	108.15 (52.79)	53.5	268.5

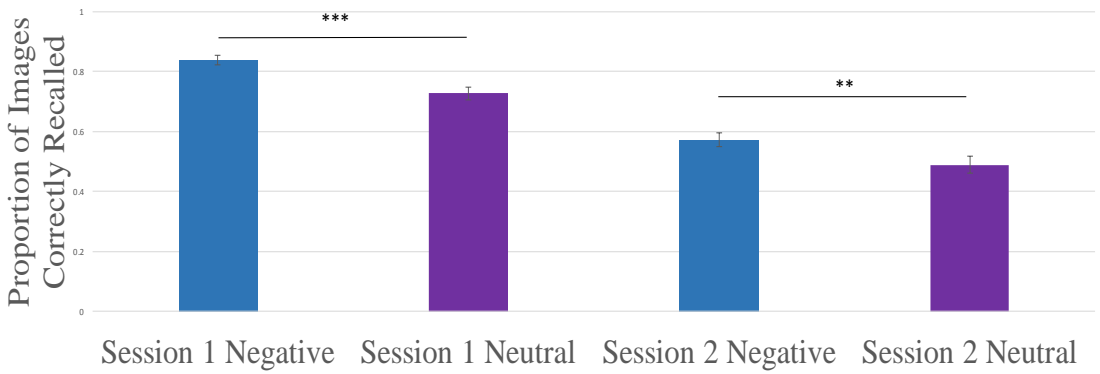
Hypothesis-driven testing

**Sleep versus wake.** Our first hypothesis was that the sleep-first group would have better memory for negatively salient stimuli compared to the wake-first group, both after a 12-hour and week long delay. A comparison of how memory differed between the two groups indicated that the sleep-first group had comparable memory for the negative images as the wake-first group after a 12-hour delay [ $t(66)=0.85, p=0.4$ ] as well as after a one-week delay [ $t(66)=0.42, p=0.7$ ].

There were also no differences between groups on memory for the neutral images after a 12-hour delay [ $t(66)=0.42, p=0.7$ ] and after a one-week delay [ $t(66)=0.32, p=0.7$ ]. The sleep-first group preferentially consolidated negative images relative to neutral after the 12-hour delay [ $t(31)=1.9, p=0.03$ ]; at the 1-week delay, the difference was no longer significant [ $t(33)=1.3, p=0.09$ ]. The wake-first group also preferentially remembered negative images relative to neutral after the 12-hour delay [ $t(31)=2.19, p=0.01$ ]; after one week, the difference was no longer significant [ $t(29)=0.92, p=0.2$ ]. The two groups combined had superior memory for negative relative to neutral images after the 12-hour [ $t(121)=4.44, p<0.001$ ] and 1-week delay [ $t(126)=2.6, p<0.01$ ] (Figure 2). Means, standard deviations, and 95% confidence intervals for memory performance are available in Table 2.

Figure 2. Memory results. Across both groups, negative images were better remembered than neutral images.

**Figure 2. Memory results.** Across both groups, negative images were better remembered than neutral images.



Note. \*\*\*  $p < 0.0001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

**Table 2. Comparison of Memory Performance between Sleep-first and Wake-first Groups.**

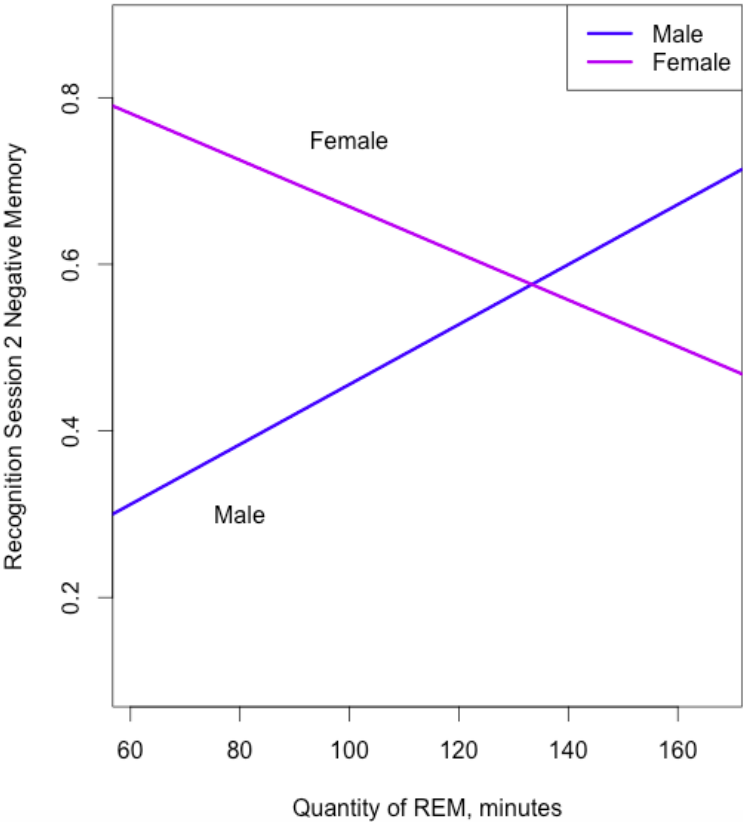
Valence/delay	Sleep (n=17)		Wake (n=17)		<i>t</i> ( <i>df</i> =66)	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Negative 12 hour	0.84	0.12	0.87	0.12	0.85	0.40
Negative 1 week	0.59	0.20	0.61	0.17	0.42	0.70
Neutral 12 hour	0.75	0.16	0.74	0.18	0.42	0.70
Neutral 1 week	0.50	0.23	0.50	0.25	0.32	0.70

**REM sleep correlations.** We predicted that percentage of REM sleep in the sleep-first group would positively correlate with recall of negative images during both recognition sessions. Percentage of time in REM sleep did not predict performance on the negative memory task after a 12-hour delay ( $\beta = 0.001$ ,  $p = 0.8$ ). Moreover, percentage of time in REM sleep did not predict performance on the negative memory task after a one-week delay ( $\beta = -0.004$ ,  $p = 0.7$ ). In the wake-first group, percentage of time in REM sleep did not predict memory performance on the negative memory task after a one-week delay ( $\beta = -0.007$ ,  $p = 0.4$ ). Percentage of REM sleep as a predictor of memory for negative images at recognition 1 was not conducted in the wake-first group. Because these participants had not yet slept, these correlations would have been uninterpretable. No other sleep stages correlated significantly with memory for the negative images.



**Sex differences.** Our final hypothesis was that males benefited from increasing amounts of REM sleep, but females would not. Multiple regression analysis using the entire sample ( $n=34$ ) indicated that sex significantly moderated the association between percentage of REM sleep and memory for negative images after a one-week delay ( $\beta = 0.032, p=0.03, R^2=0.19$ , see Figure 3); no such interaction was observed for just the sleep-first group ( $n=17$ ) for negative images after a 12-hour delay ( $\beta = 0.02, p=0.51$ ), which may be because the test was underpowered. Stratified analyses revealed that decreased quantities of REM sleep were associated with increased memory for negative images at time 2 for females ( $\beta = -0.003, p=0.05$ ). For male participants ( $n=12$ ), increased quantities of REM sleep were associated with increased memory for negative images at time 2, but not significantly so ( $\beta = 0.003, p=0.1$ ).

**Figure 3. Sex moderates the effect of REM sleep. Increasing percentage of REM sleep predicts higher memory for negative images after a one-week delay for men. Increasing percentage of REM sleep predicts lower memory for negative images after a one-week delay for women. This is a cross-over interaction.**



Post-hoc analyses tested whether these sex differences might be driven by any other factor. There was no significant difference in memory for negative images across males and females ( $p>0.9$ ). There was also no significant difference in the quantity of time spent in REM sleep ( $p>0.6$ ). There were no sex differences in memory performance at both recognition sessions (all  $p$ 's $>0.5$ ) and no differences in any of the time spent in a particular sleep stage (all  $p$ 's $>0.1$ ). Comparison of females on oral contraception to females who were not revealed that there were no differences in memory performance (all  $p$ 's $>0.3$ ) or sleep stages (all  $p$ 's $>0.6$ ). Table 3 presents these post-hoc comparisons by sex.

**Table 3. Comparison of the Sexes Across Memory and Sleep Measures**

Variable	Males n=12		Females n=22		95% CI	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
Negative image memory, 12-hr delay	0.84	0.15	0.87	0.10	[-0.04, 0.09]	0.74	46	0.5
Negative image memory, 1-wk delay	0.60	0.19	0.6	0.19	[-0.09, 0.09]	0.02	60	0.9
Total Sleep Time, min	462.10	23.91	459.07	29.36	[-22.35, 16.30]	0.32	27	0.8
Stage 2, %	50.09	8.02	48.60	9.78	[-7.96, 4.96]	0.48	26	0.6
Stage 3, %	16.60	6.75	20.46	8.57	[-1.63, 9.44]	1.45	27	0.2
REM, %	27.10	4.12	26.33	6.22	[-4.46, 2.91]	0.04	30	0.7
REM latency, min	100.20	45.89	112.69	56.92	[-24.77, 49.73]	0.64	27	0.5

## Discussion

Overall, negative images were remembered better than neutral images after the 12-hour and one-week delay. There was no direct correlation between REM sleep and memory for negative images, but sex of the participant moderated the effect of REM sleep on memory for the negative images. Specifically, males who spent more time in REM sleep had better memory for the negative images, while females who spent more time in REM sleep had relatively poorer memory for the negative images.

While negative images were better-remembered than neutral images, the first hypothesis that emotional memories would be preferentially consolidated during sleep was not supported. The lack of difference between the sleep and wake groups on memory consolidation could be because the task was too simple. This simplicity stemmed from the purposeful selection of negative images that were especially gruesome, and therefore more salient and likely to generate a physiological response. In addition, the interstimulus interval was 5-8 seconds, which is quite long relative to other studies testing memory for emotional images usually ranging from 1500 ms -4.5 seconds (Baran et al., 2012; Groch et al., 2013; Pace-Schott et al., 2011). These methodological decisions were made to elicit a large reactivity response and then allow the reactivity to return to baseline; perhaps doing so fostered memory performance at an overall high level and limited variability between individuals' performance levels.

Our hypothesis that the percentage of REM sleep would positively correlate with recognizing negative images was also not supported in the sleep-first group after a 12-hour and 1-week delay. Furthermore, this was not supported in the wake-first group after a 1-week delay. These null results may reflect the fact that participants were permitted to sleep undisturbed for eight hours. Past experiments have either deprived participants of REM sleep (Lara-Carrasco et al., 2009) or segmented sleep into REM-rich and SWS-rich sleep by having them sleep early and late in the night (Groch et al., 2013; Wagner et al., 2002). These results could have also emerged because correlating sleep stages with memory may not supply an integrated picture of the benefit of sleep. Instead, one may consider the importance of the whole night of sleep, rather than one stage in isolation (Giuditta et al., 1995).

Our hypothesis for emotional memory consolidation stated that males would benefit from increasing amounts of REM sleep, while females would not. This hypothesis was partially supported. We found that sex served as a statistically significant moderator of this relationship, such that higher quantities of REM sleep was correlated with relatively better recognition of

negative images for males, but the opposite was true for females. Stratified analyses revealed that lower quantities of REM sleep were associated with better memory for negative images at recognition 2 for females. One caveat related to this finding is that sex served as a significant moderator of the effect of REM sleep only for recognition memory at recognition 2, but not at recognition 1. We speculate that sex was not a significant moderator at recognition 1 because the sample size was smaller, there were only four males, and therefore we were underpowered to detect this small-to-medium effect. Recognition 2 data involved collapsing across the sleep-first and wake-first groups, and therefore half of the participants slept before and half of the participants slept after the first recognition task. Because we hypothesized that subsequent nights of sleep would further improve memory for negative images, the interaction effect is still deemed meaningful. The significant interaction after one week also makes the finding more generalizable than if the effect was just restricted to twelve hours post-learning.

Past studies have demonstrated that men benefited from a nap for procedural and declarative memory tasks, but women only benefited from the nap when they were in the mid-luteal phase of the menstrual cycle (Genzel et al., 2011). Women also do not receive the memory benefits from a nap when they are on oral contraception (Genzel et al., 2014). Because females in our study were either on oral contraception or in the follicular phase of the menstrual cycle, the finding that females were not benefiting from increased amounts of REM sleep extended the literature to emotional memory.

Investigations of the role of REM sleep in emotional memory consolidation have not carefully controlled for sex differences. Participants who obtained REM-rich sleep had better memory for emotional texts (Wagner et al., 2001) and emotional images (Groch et al., 2013). However, neither of these studies included any female participants (24 male and 16 male, respectively). A previous study that did not find a significant correlation between REM sleep and memory for emotional images had both male and female participants; moreover, testing for sex differences was not reported (Baran et al., 2012; 68 female, 38 male). A positive correlation between percentage of time in REM sleep during a nap and the offline difference in emotional memory consolidation has been reported in a sample of males and females (Nishida et al., 2009; 8 females, 7 males). This seemingly contradictory finding from the current study could have emerged because females may receive the memory benefit from naps in the mid-luteal phase of the menstrual cycle (Genzel et al., 2011); however, phase of the menstrual cycle was not reported in Nishida et al (2009). Moreover, the outcome variable in their study

measured the effect of a nap prior to encoding, whereas our study examined the effect of eight hours of sleep *after* encoding. Our study had differences from the Nishida et al. (2009) study based on the placement of sleep (before vs after learning), and the timing of sleep (daytime vs nocturnal sleep). Therefore, the current study is not in contradiction with their previous findings.

Our inability to support the SFSR hypothesis (van der Helm & Walker, 2009) does not necessitate a flawed theory. An important consideration in evaluating Walker's theory is whether REM sleep specifically should be viewed as the only important stage of sleep in emotional memory consolidation. Perhaps a sequential view of sleep is required, in which the cycles and ordering of sleep across a full night are taken into account, not merely correlations between specific stages (Giuditta et al., 1995).

There are several reasons to be cautious in interpreting this study's findings of sex differences moderating the effect of REM sleep on emotional memory. First, the sample contained an unequal number of males and females and the number of participants was quite low. Second, it did not contain any females in the mid-luteal phase of the menstrual cycle, the phase wherein females would be expected to experience a memory benefit from sleep. Future studies should improve upon these limitations, as well as measure sex hormones such as estrogen to determine if that could serve as a possible mechanism underlying these differential findings. Both a strength and a weakness of our study is that we allowed participants to sleep undisturbed for 8.5 hours. While this increases generalizability, it also limits us to correlational conclusions. Future studies should manipulate REM sleep specifically to make more causal statements.

REM sleep played a significant role in the consolidation of emotional memories, but only when sex differences were considered. A greater awareness of the role that sex differences can play in the sleep and memory literature should be applied going forward, such that future studies test sex as a covariate and report the number of male and female participants.

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## **Laughing in the Face of Death: Coping, Critiquing, and Constructing the First World War through Humor in *The Wipers Times***

**MARIA DO**

### **Abstract**

Within the large body of satirical trench magazines produced during the First World War, the immense popularity and sharp humor of *The Wipers Times* singled it out as a particularly influential publication. By examining the specific material that the editors chose to incorporate in *The Wipers Times*, this paper first and foremost contextualizes the satirical magazine within the social conditions that led to its inception and traces some of the published pieces from the magazine alongside the progression of the British military on the Western Front. Secondly, it examines the psychological, critical, and ideological functions of *The Wipers Times*. Through its unique and accessible sense of humor, the trench magazine operated as a psychological method of coping with the war, a critical tool used to voice the concerns and laments of the troops, and an ideological means of defining social norms and a particular vision of the war. This paper ultimately attempts to make sense of the dialectic between comedy and tragedy that made *The Wipers Times* so appealing to such a diverse readership both during and after the war.

## INTRODUCTION

Death rarely evokes laughter. Considering the number of deaths that occurred at the frontlines of the First World War, the trenches seemed an unlikely place to find much good humor. Yet for a group of British soldiers faced with the real possibility of their own deaths, the war inspired an abundance of laugh-inducing material that became published in one of the most popular trench magazines: *The Wipers Times*. A widespread phenomenon of the First World War<sup>1</sup>, trench magazines included the stories, poems, satirical articles, illustrations, and other works published both officially and unofficially by military units and service personnel on all sides of the warfront. Their intended readership comprised of men and women like themselves who not only understood but also appreciated the magazines' amusing references to their wartime experiences.

As one of the better known magazines of its kind, *The Wipers Times* displayed the psychological necessity and healing powers of good humor in times of intense violence and tragedy. Maintaining a sense of humor not only gave the men a way to reckon with death, but would prove vital in the war effort and outcome. Although *The Wipers Times*' witticisms portrayed trench life in a lighthearted way, the satirical magazine became a medium through which these men expressed some of their heaviest traumas. In this magazine, the editors and contributors not only poked fun at various aspects of their war experience, but also utilized this platform to criticize institutions near and far, from the authority of their commanders to the media at home. Thus, while the press operated as a tool to print their magazine, it also functioned as a political weapon that was arguably as powerful and destructive as their guns. Unlike the direct, physical hostility of a gun, however, the journal lambasted its targets under the elusive veil of mockery, giving these men plausible deniability since the journal was, after all, a joke. Beyond its psychological and critical functions, *The Wipers Times* also played a significant role in defining proper soldierly conduct and producing a vision of the war that the men believed to have best represented life in the trenches. Through this process, the editors instilled an ideology of toughness and endurance among the men in their division while participating in the construction of their own history. For the modern reader,

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<sup>1</sup> The ProQuest database, *Trench Journals and Unit Magazines of the First World War*, contains the largest online collection of these magazines, including over 1500 different trench publications produced between 1914 and 1919. While the majority of the collection contains material from English-speaking units, a large portion of the database include magazines in nine other languages, including Spanish, French, German, Polish, and Dutch.

*The Wipers Times* offers an important way to reimagine the war from a standpoint in which laughter in the face of death no longer seems unfitting.

## RE-ENVISIONING WAR THROUGH HUMOR

Attempting to understand how humor operates during times of war requires that one utilize sources outside the archive of official documents, diaries, and letters commonly used to construct the history of the First World War. As J.G. Fuller notes, these traditional sources are limited by what the authors deemed important enough to include and the serious manner in which they often discussed the war.<sup>2</sup> *The Wipers Times* and other similar works of popular culture therefore provides “invaluable contemporary testimony...they are not lightly to be discounted and, used in conjunction with other sources to serve as a check and balance, can make a valuable contribution to our understanding of the First World War.”<sup>3</sup> It should be noted, however, that although *The Wipers Times* was a product of and for the soldier mass, it should not be taken as the only nor the most reliable representation of the British soldier experience. Instead, it offers the historian a unique view of the intersection between British culture and military. If one is to attempt to make sense of the war experience at all, incorporating sources outside the conventional archive is not only beneficial but necessary.

In his analysis of the British influence on the literature and history of the First World War, Brian Bond examines the growing body of cultural work on the First World War which span from the literary to the cinematic.<sup>4</sup> While criticizing the way in which a number of these cultural productions can perpetuate myths, stereotypes, and misrepresentations of disillusionment, terror, and deprivation on the war front, he recognizes their usefulness in helping scholars and the public understand the conditions and legacy of the war. Nonetheless, essential to Bond’s argument is an avid call to reconceive the First World War beyond the literary. As he remarks, “Teachers of English rather than history still have more influence in the shaping of views on the First World War.”<sup>5</sup> This view not only assumes a distinction between the literary and the historical, but also discounts the literary as a useful source in our approach to understanding the history of the First World War. What Bond

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<sup>2</sup> J.G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Brian Bond, *The Unquiet Western Front* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 88.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

neglects in his criticism is the fact that cultural productions like *The Wipers Times*, produced by soldiers in the midst of battle, did not intend to document what had actually transpired during the war in the same way that official reportage did, but instead offered a tongue-in-cheek commentary on the war as they experienced it. Insofar as it allows us to step into the minds of some of the men on the battlefield and obtain a sense of the ethos of the warfront, the literary qualities of *The Wipers Times* should be considered equally historical.

Utilizing *The Wipers Times* moreover assists in expanding the collective memory of the war beyond a rhetoric of tragedy which continues to pervade in both academic and popular discourse. Such treatment of the First World War often obscures the other voices that may run contrary to conventionally solemn portrayals and conceptions of the war. As Karen Randell states, the voices expressed in many trench magazines suggest a narrative “that did not rely on tragedy but rather engaged with the ordinary experiences of ordinary people who served, who waited, who entertained and who...spoke ‘in the language of their time,’ a time before the mythology.”<sup>6</sup> As such, one must recognize that these materials can help reconstruct the war experience and historicize the war from the perspectives of those who participated in it. Rather than discounting a source based on whether it makes an effort to objectively represent the war, one should take the time to listen to the multitude of subjective yet equally valid voices that tell this history. By seriously examining a very un-serious document such as *The Wipers Times*, one can begin to comprehend the psychologies of the men and women on the warfront as one of many perspectives within the large and complex narrative of the First World War.

## SETTING UP THE JOKE:

### CONTEXTUALIZING *THE WIPERS TIMES*

At the outbreak of the First World War, trench newspapers appeared in unprecedented numbers across several units and divisions on both sides of the war. Among the sea of these cultural materials, *The Wipers Times* stood out for its remarkably sophisticated gallows humor and appeal to readers both on the war front and at home.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, a good joke depends on the context in which it is made. For the men involved in the production of *The Wipers Times*, their work resonated with both the magazine’s primary and secondary

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<sup>6</sup> Karen Randell, “Preface,” in Clementine Tholas-Disset and Karen A. Ritzenhoff, eds., *Humor, Entertainment, and Popular Culture During World War I* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. xii.

<sup>7</sup> Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918*, p. 7.



Figure 1 - The Ypres Salient and the Front Line (dashed in red) after the 1st Battle of Ypres, November 22, 1914. Image taken from <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/ypres-salient/>.

readership because it made constant reference to the aspects of warfare and British culture understood by fellow soldiers and countrymen. To appreciate the humor in this magazine and to understand how it functioned psychologically, critically, and ideologically, one must first understand the immediate conditions and circumstances that led these men to publish *The Wipers Times*. Upon picking up any volume of *The Wipers Times*, the first notable gag of the paper resides in its title,

“Wipers,” itself a play on the name of the city in which the editors had produced its first issue. Given the difficulties that many Britons seemed to share in pronouncing “Ypres,” these men nonetheless chose to embrace their phonetic incompetence as an ironic statement, setting the self-deprecating tone for the volumes to follow. Located in the Flemish region of Belgium, the Ypres Salient represented a strategic position on the Western Front during the First World War.<sup>8</sup> After pushing the German Army out of its occupation of Ypres at the start of October 1914, the British fought to maintain control of the city. For the British, the defense of Ypres would block the Germans from entering Belgium and invading France from the north. Surrounding the city on three different sides, the German army attempted to push through the British defense by commanding a series of minor raids throughout the first October and November months.<sup>9</sup> Following a period of back-and-forth engagements, both the Allied and Central powers held their ground along the Salient and found themselves trapped in a stalemate that lasted the longer duration of the war. The Salient, called such because of its strategic importance, stretched roughly nine square miles and curved into the German lines (see Figure 1).<sup>10</sup> Although the curve of the Salient required the Germans to secure a longer

<sup>8</sup> Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 39-40.

<sup>9</sup> William E. Fowler, *Battle Story: Ypres* (The History Press, 2011), p. 16.

<sup>10</sup> Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, p. 40.

portion of the frontline defense, their side of the front placed them on higher ground.<sup>11</sup> This gave them a positional advantage over the British, who fell under constant barrage as they took shelter in the ruined city of Ypres and the surrounding lowlands. As Edward Madigan notes, “Soldiers serving in or near the front line in France or Belgium often lived under the threat of death or serious injury for weeks or months on end.”<sup>12</sup> It was within this hostile environment that *The Wipers Times* came into existence.

In the early months of 1916, a little over a year after the formation of the Salient, Lieutenant Colonel F.J. Roberts of the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters and founder of *The Wipers Times* discovered an abandoned printing press at a ruined square in Ypres. Roberts immediately contacted his subordinate and soon-to-be sub-editor Captain J.H. Pearson who Roberts knew worked as a printer before the war.<sup>13</sup> Once Pearson helped refurbish the battered press, the two men then brought in other members their division to contribute pieces for the paper’s debut volume.<sup>14</sup> From there, they began to print their first copies.

Distributed among other members of the division and positively received by readers, the paper’s first hundred copies created a new demand for similar content as the editors worked to produce and print even larger quantities of the next volume. In order to get each volume printed on time, Roberts stated that he often “sat in a trench in the middle of a battle and corrected proofs.”<sup>15</sup> Precarious conditions in the Salient, even during breaks from combat, did not offer the most ideal setting to produce *The Wipers Times*. Roberts recalled a routine in which men “lived in rat-infested, water-logged cellars by day and at Hooze by night.”<sup>16</sup> A village located about two and a half miles east of Ypres and nearest the bulge of the Salient, Hooze became one of the most active sites of frontline battle as the British and Germans took turns taking possession of the village.<sup>17</sup> In July 1915, the Germans led a surprise attack at Hooze and also introduced the flamethrower as a weapon in combat,

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Edward Madigan, “‘Sticking to a Hateful Task’: Resilience, Humour, and British Understandings of Combatant Courage,” *War in History* 20 (2013), p. 87.

<sup>13</sup> Malcolm Brown, “Sommewhere in France,” *History Today* (July 2006), p. 23-24.

<sup>14</sup> F.J. Roberts, “How it Happened,” *The Wipers Times: A Facsimile Reprint of the Trench Magazines* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1918), p. v.

<sup>15</sup> Roberts, “How it Happened,” p. vii. Roberts may have made this statement with a bit of playful exaggeration given its placement in the Foreword of the reprinted volume of *The Wipers Times*. Nonetheless, the visual image in this statement offers the reader a sense of the men’s proximity to danger and death on the frontline.

<sup>16</sup> Roberts, “How it Happened,” p. v.

<sup>17</sup> Fowler, *Battle Story: Ypres*, p. 129.

making Hooge a particularly traumatic site for the men selected and stationed to fight in the area.<sup>18</sup> Within this setting, the men in Ypres often considered “Hooge” synonymous to “Hell.”<sup>19</sup>

Such horrors in the Ypres Salient turned into a recurring gag in *The Wipers Times*, where mock advertisements promoted the battles and landmarks along the Western Front as either spectacles of entertainment, leisure activities, or vacation destinations. One ad described the trek back to the ruined city of Ypres from the frontlines as a “Great Sensation.”<sup>20</sup> In this “15,000 feet long” excursion, “People have been so overcome when the final stages are reached as to necessitate help being given to enable them to reach home.”<sup>21</sup> Men were then told to “book at once,” or risk missing out on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.<sup>22</sup> The absurd urgency of this remark added to the humor of the ad since it seemed improbable that the march to and from the frontlines would incite such high levels of interest that reservations needed to be put in place. Similarly, the place where men took shelter in barricades and cellars among the city ruins was often endearingly referred to as “Hotel des Ramparts,” which consistently appeared in a number of mock holiday advertisements.<sup>23</sup> Inspired by their location in Ypres, the French name for the barricades offered an inappropriate element of romanticism that is at once jarring and comically out of place. A notice in the first issue of the volume furthermore spoofed a sale of these city ruins, appealing to the “slightly damaged” quality of the “large quantity of second-hand furniture” in Ypres.<sup>24</sup> Implied within this lighthearted advertisement is the sobering evidence of destruction brought on by warfare. By addressing the amount of abandoned furniture found in the ruins, the advertisement drew the reader’s attention away from what these abandoned objects actually signified: the displaced families and communities that formerly inhabited Ypres.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>19</sup> In the last issue of *The Wipers Times* (Vol. 2 No. 4), published before the editors left the Salient and rebooted their paper under a new name, a section titled “Military Definitions” offers descriptions for various terms, including “Hooge.” The definition provided here reads, “See Hell.” Redirected to the section titled, “Hell,” the reader finds the following statement: “See Hooge.”

<sup>20</sup> Front Ad, *The Wipers Times* Vol. 1 No. 1, in *The Wipers Times: A Facsimile Reprint of the Trench Magazines* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1918).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Back Ad, *The Wipers Times* Vol. 2 No. 4, in *The Wipers Times: A Facsimile Reprint of the Trench Magazines* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1918).

<sup>24</sup> Back Ad, *The Wipers Times* Vol. 1 No. 1, in *The Wipers Times: A Facsimile Reprint of the Trench Magazines* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1918).



Within this context, irony became the means through which these men re-examined their wartime experiences and found respite from the daily traumas of the warfront. Using the mock press format, the magazine successfully communicated its humor by capitalizing on “absurdity and incongruity in familiar situations.”<sup>25</sup> What spare time the members of the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters had outside of working or fighting in the trenches were dedicated to this paper, a symbolic gesture of negotiating trauma. The journal both grew out of and contributed to life in the trenches, helping the trenches become a defining icon of the First World War from the western perspective. Furthermore, the journal gave these men a voice within a new established soldier community along the front. *The Wipers Times* also became a way for these men to participate in the making of their own history and provides us a glimpse into what most preoccupied the minds of the British soldier during war.

## COPING THROUGH HUMOR

In times of extreme duress and in situations of limited physical and psychological comfort, laughter “can be an action rebuilding the normality of life.”<sup>26</sup> According to Clementine Tholas-Disset and Karen A. Ritzenhoff, “Many contemporaries perceived this coping mechanism already during the Great War, or looking back at the war times.”<sup>27</sup> While such a function of humor seems intuitive in understanding the role that trench magazines played in the war, *The Wipers Times* differed in many ways from other publications. Firstly, unlike other publications, the press traveled along with the division in the trenches. Given other possible activities that the men could have participated in while stationed at the front, these men partook in publishing, a feat that required great personal investments and sometimes added more risks than they had originally expected. As Fuller remarks, the “production of troop journals represented a considerable outlay of effort in a life which was already exhausting.”<sup>28</sup> Printing in the trenches did not always mean the men were safe

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<sup>25</sup> Jane Chapman and Dan Ellin, “Dominion Cartoon Satire as Trench Culture Narratives: Complaints, Endurance and Stoicism,” *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 103 (2014), p. 181.

<sup>26</sup> Clementine Tholas-Disset and Karen A. Ritzenhoff, “Introduction: Humor, Entertainment, and Popular Culture during World War I (WWI),” in Clementine Tholas-Disset and Karen A. Ritzenhoff, eds., *Humor, Entertainment, and Popular Culture During World War I* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> Tholas-Disset and Ritzenhoff, “Introduction: Humor, Entertainment, and Popular Culture during World War I (WWI),” p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918*, p. 10.

from danger either. Although trenches helped reduce the overall death toll, roughly 7000 British men and officers a day were either killed or wounded in them.<sup>29</sup> Even Roberts acknowledged the difficulties of running the trench press, noting that “once our works were within 700 yards of the front line and *above ground*” (emphasis in the original).<sup>30</sup> At other times, the constant movement to and from the frontline and during engagement with the enemy damaged their printing equipment and caused them to lose some of their manuscripts.<sup>31</sup>

Despite the technical madness that came with the men’s commitment to the trench magazine, each issue brought a greater number of readers both on the war front and at home. This points to a second major difference that made *The Wipers Times* a unique publication of its kind. Unlike other trench magazines, *The Wipers Times* found a following outside of the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters and reprints were made available even at the end of the war. The widespread circulation of the paper over the course of its unofficial syndication meant that it had successfully spoke to the interests and needs of both its primary and secondary readership. On the home front, total war and the mobilization of the entire population meant that humor could no longer be expressed in the conventional spaces in which entertainment took place, such as theaters, dance halls, and illustrated magazines.<sup>32</sup> *The Wipers Times* therefore offered a new source of entertainment for this reader base while still keeping the war effort at the center of focus. On the war front, the editors not only felt a responsibility to produce content relatable to their fellow soldiers, but also had to be responsive to their concerns and interests “because they were among them and could not ignore their state of mind.”<sup>33</sup> Keenly aware of how their work was received by the public, these men also felt compelled to dedicate what leisure time they had to produce a journal that offered the simple pleasures of laughter while simultaneously grappling with the deeper pains of war. In the latter case, humor in *The Wipers Times* created a space in which taboo topics such as death and violence could be more comfortably addressed.

The press, itself a modern invention and a symbol of human civilization, firstly provided these men with a token of the stable life they once

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<sup>29</sup> Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, p. 41.

<sup>30</sup> Roberts, “How it Happened,” p. vii.

<sup>31</sup> Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918*, p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> Jean-Yves Le Naour, “Laughter and Tears in the Great War: The Need for Laughter/The Guilt of Humour,” *Journal of European Studies* 31 (2001), p. 266.

<sup>33</sup> Chapman and Ellin, “Dominion Cartoon Satire as Trench Culture Narratives: Complaints, Endurance, and Stoicism,” p. 188.

knew before the outbreak of war and a way for them to hold onto their personal humanity. Wider concerns about how the atrocities of warfare would cause men to descend to barbarism presented itself in *The Wipers Times*' list of "Military Definitions." In this column, the editors defined "infantryman" as "An animal of weird habits, whose peculiarities have only just been discovered. It displays a strange aversion to light, and lives in holes in the earth during the day, coming out at night seeking whom it may devour. In colour it assimilates itself to the ground in which it lives."<sup>34</sup> This definition exemplifies a moment of profound self-awareness, one in which the editors critically examined their role and behavior in war. The disparaging tone of the description also alludes to the degrading conditions on the frontline that made the men feel less than human. By poking fun at the apparent violence of warfare, the definition directly addresses perhaps the gravest taboo—murder. The definition captures the rabid behavior that "infantrymen" found themselves exhibiting either out of their commitment to their military duties or out of their own dark volition.

Producing the paper on a consistent basis also helped take the men's minds off the violence occurring around them, and helped keep their spirits intact. This proved particularly crucial during the Battle of the Somme, a vital point in the war when participants on both sides began to realize that victory would depend on the total endurance of one side and the total exhaustion of the other. Marking one of the largest and bloodiest engagements in the First World War, the Battle of the Somme began in the summer of 1916 under the leadership of Sir Douglas Haig, who led the Allies in their attempt to push through into German territory on the Western Front.<sup>35</sup> The offensive strategy was simple: bombard the German defense with a massive artillery strike and allow troops to cross over and into enemy lines. The execution of this plan, however, did not result in the expected impairment of Germany's position on the front. As the British charged across German territory on July 1, 1916, they found themselves caught in the firing range of the German defense and lost 60,000 men on the first day of battle—the largest casualty the British faced in a single day.<sup>36</sup> The battle extended over a four-month period, during which over one million soldiers on both sides died.

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<sup>34</sup> "Military Definitions" *Wipers Times* Vol. 2 No. 4., in *The Wipers Times: A Facsimile Reprint of the Trench Magazines* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1918).

<sup>35</sup> Hew Strachan, "The Battle of the Somme and British Strategy," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 21.1 (1998), p. 80.

<sup>36</sup> Martin Middlebrook, *The First Day on the Somme* (Pen and Sword, 2006), p. 264.

The rallying coverage of the Battle of the Somme helped these men endure and cope in the face of the battle's overwhelming violence.<sup>37</sup> Despite the chipper enthusiasm that Roberts employed to make otherwise dismal announcements in the weekly paper, Roberts dedicated a portion of *The Somme-Times* opening editorial to provide some remarks to his division. Wishing "God-speed" to his men, he stated, "Here's to you all, lads, the game is started, keep the ball rolling and remember that the only good Hun is a dead Hun."<sup>38</sup> Cheerfully referring to the war as a sport downplayed the serious act of killing a Hun—the magazine's way of referring to the Germans. As the repercussions of the British military operations on the Somme grew more lethal with each day of battle, this cheerful way of wishing the men off to their potential deaths have been interpreted by some contemporary moralists as disrespectful, condemning humor "as an attack on the honour of those who were suffering and dying, an insult to those who were mourning the loss of someone they loved."<sup>39</sup> Roberts' attitude, however, appropriated humor in a way to sympathize and express support for the men who gave their lives in battle. The laughter induced by Roberts' sign-off to battle helped alleviate the fears of death violence by bringing them to a humored state of mind even if their reality reflected otherwise.

## CRITIQUING THROUGH HUMOR

From a separate vantage point, the mock content of *The Wipers Times* gave the contributors a unique political opportunity to express a wide spectrum of criticism against the war effort and to lambaste media institutions and military authorities with the assurance that their satirical approach would offer them plausible deniability. In his short vignette of the main contributors of *The Wipers Times*, Malcolm Brown argues that the main targets of the paper's criticism included the serious media outlets and journalists whose dispatches from the Front were "overblown, self-congratulatory...and who lauded themselves more than the men whose efforts they were meant to record."<sup>40</sup> A regular column by an imaginary pundit Belary Helloc, for instance,

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<sup>37</sup> By this time, *The Wipers Times* was renamed *The Somme-Times* to reflect the division's new location.

<sup>38</sup> "Editorial," *The Somme Times with which are Incorporated The Wipers Times, The "New Church" Times & The Kemmel Times* Vol. 1 No. 1, in *The Wipers Times: A Facsimile Reprint of the Trench Magazines* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1918).

<sup>39</sup> Le Naour, "Laughter and Tears in the Great War: The Need for Laughter/The Guilt of Humour," p. 270.

<sup>40</sup> Brown, "Sommewhere in France," p. 23.

simultaneously conveyed and concealed these men's disdain towards the way in which the war and soldiers were discussed and represented in the actual media. The pen name for this contributor plays on the name of an actual British writer and pundit named Hilaire Belloc.<sup>41</sup> Belloc received criticism for his overly optimistic views on war strategy which many believed to be absurd and impractical. Appearing weekly in a column titled, "How to Win the War," "Belary Helloc" parodied Hilaire Belloc by offering military recommendations that were equally as absurd and impractical. Reading any one of his columns, one would typically find unsubstantiated numbers and statistics passed off as logical calculations as well as unfeasible plans for victory and a distorted view of military operations. To give an example, in one of the columns, "Belary Helloc" suggested the commanders allot one soldier at each yard of the front line (the number totaling to 2,640,000 men, according to his calculations). After which, they should give "each man a bomb, and at a given signal let them all go over and...account for his own particular opponent."<sup>42</sup> Stating that "This is merely a rough outline of my plans, and superficially it may seem that there are objections," "Belary Helloc" reassured that "these may well be dealt with as they arise."<sup>43</sup> The column's veiled criticism of both the authoritative manner in which those at home discussed the war and the way they were represented in the media aided in the growing sense of detachment that soldiers in the trenches felt towards the home front.

Brown further argues that the paper "had no desire to perpetuate the distortions of the home press and quite to the contrary, one of the aims commonly expressed was to provide the people at home with a true picture of life on active service."<sup>44</sup> While readers from home made up a significant portion of the secondary readership, many of the paper's inside jokes and references suggest that the paper operated in the main interests of its primary readership—that is, fellow soldiers. For example, a regular section of the paper provided a list of "Things We Want To Know," where men included a collection of spoofs and rumors that reflected both the serious concerns and random curiosities of the troops. Some of these requests included things like, "The celebrated infantry officer who appears daily in the trenches disguised as

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<sup>41</sup> Adrian Smith, *The New Statesman: Portrait of a Political Weekly, 1913-1931* (Psychology Press, 1996), p. 72-73.

<sup>42</sup> "How to Win the War," *The "New Church" Times* Vol. 1 No. 2. in *The Wipers Times: A Facsimile Reprint of the Trench Magazines* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1918).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918*, p. 18.

a Xmas tree,”<sup>45</sup> and, “Are we as offensive as we might be.”<sup>46</sup> While both items appeared equally in the journal as jokes, the latter actually played on the widespread criticism that many soldiers received for not being more aggressive towards the enemy.<sup>47</sup> To a degree, this comment may be speaking to the pressure these men received from the home front. Recognizing the limitations of the media in reporting all aspects of war and the lacking representation of soldiers’ perspectives and attitudes, *The Wipers Times* ultimately took it upon itself to present the voice of the soldier.

The kind of truth that the writers of the mock magazine sought to express was not literal or overt by any means, but rather implied and hidden under deliberate fabrication. Despite this, humor has a way of naturally attracting attention. And since the “first function” of advertisement is to attract attention, the incorporation of humor in the advertisements of the *Wipers Times* suggests an underlying desire by the contributors of the journal to be heard by a wider audience.<sup>48</sup> One of the many fake products placed for sale in the advertisement section of *The Wipers Times* revealed social tensions within divisions by addressing the anger that many ill-treated soldiers held against their company’s commanders. This piece, addressed, “To Harassed Subalterns,” offers a cheeky solution to soldiers’ discontents: “Is your life miserable? Are you unhappy? / Do you hate your company commander? / Yes! Then buy him one of / our new patent tip duck boards / You get him on the end—the duck board does the rest / Made in three sizes and every time a ‘Blighty’ / ‘It once he steps on to the end, ‘Twill take a month his face to mend’ / Write at once & ensure happiness.”<sup>49</sup> Under different circumstances, such a display of aggression towards one’s commanders would have resulted in charges of treason. As humor sociologist Michael Mulkay proposes, however, humorous discourse had the protection of deniability.<sup>50</sup> By utilizing humor, these officers created a constructive space in which they could avoid any

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<sup>45</sup> “Things We Want to Know,” *The Wipers Times* Vol. 1 No. 1, in *The Wipers Times: A Facsimile Reprint of the Trench Magazines* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1918).

<sup>46</sup> “Things We Want to Know,” *The Wipers Times* Vol. 1 No. 3, in *The Wipers Times: A Facsimile Reprint of the Trench Magazines* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1918).

<sup>47</sup> Dave Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2009), p. 30

<sup>48</sup> Fred K. Beard, *Humor in the Advertising Business: Theory, Practice and Wit* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), p. 12.

<sup>49</sup> Front Ad, *The “New Church” Times With Which is Incorporated The Wipers Times* Vol. 1, No. 2., in *The Wipers Times: A Facsimile Reprint of the Trench Magazines* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1918). See Figure 2 for a visual of a duckboard.

<sup>50</sup> Michael Mulkay, *On Humor: Its Nature and Its Place in Modern Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), p. 26.

liabilities for attacking their authorities. The function of humor in this critical instance allowed soldiers to take up aggressive expressions of challenge.

Given the criticisms directed—albeit covertly—at the higher-ups in the military command, one may wonder whether these targets of the satirical blasts felt threatened by the men responsible for producing *The Wipers Times*, and whether these men sought to implement any political or social change or demand any concessions in turn. For all the complaints about their poor treatment by commanders and the grumblings about their minimal rations and poor living conditions, these men ultimately avoided directly usurping authority. To an extent, the use of humor in the magazine also had the opposite effect, helping authorities maintain their control of the order on the warfront by keeping troops entertained and preventing troop morale from approaching the point of rebellious action. As Jean-Yves Le Naour remarks, “Laughter was mobilized to help the war effort not only behind the lines, but also at the front, since military authorities quickly realized the need for humour to give the soldiers a chance to relax.”<sup>51</sup> Therefore, when humor was deployed in the trench newspapers as a means of criticism, it simultaneously helped to defuse it. Koenraad Du Pont takes a more extreme position by arguing that humor in trench magazines “ended up reinforcing the consensus on the necessity of the war, rather than sapping it.”<sup>52</sup> Jane Chapman and Dan Ellis also offer a more nuanced view of soldiers’ criticisms, claiming that “The self-mocking humour of anti-hero stories was an aspect of soldiers’ culture that can be misinterpreted as evidence of disloyalty.”<sup>53</sup> A crucial aspect of Chapman and Ellis’s argument is that trench magazines provided a space for men to voice their criticism, but only passively. Trench magazines were ultimately a “symbolic rebellion in cultural expression, articulated in communications.”<sup>54</sup>

Viewed in this manner, the use of satire in *The Wipers Times* thus has a more complex function. The paper operated as a safe space to purge soldier’s grievances. According to humor theory, this process can be described as “disparagement humor,” which “refers to remarks that (are intended to) elicit amusement through the denigration, derogation, or belittlement of a given target (e.g., individuals, social groups, political ideologies, material

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<sup>51</sup> Le Naour, “Laughter and Tears in the Great War: The Need for Laughter/The Guilt of Humour,” p. 269.

<sup>52</sup> Koenraad Du Pont, “Nature and Functions of Humor in Trench Newspapers,” in Clementine Tholas-Disset and Karen A. Ritzenhoff, eds., *Humor, Entertainment, and Popular Culture During World War I* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 112.

<sup>53</sup> Chapman and Ellis, “Dominion Cartoon Satire as Trench Culture Narratives: Complaints, Endurance, and Stoicism,” p. 183.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

possessions).”<sup>55</sup> Following this theory, *The Wipers Times* conveys its critical messages in a manner that was, above all else, meant to be taken humorously. Thus, the indirect, subversive criticisms found in these trench publications did not lead to direct acts of protest among officers. Rather, the act of disparagement helped alleviate these resentments and vocalize their frustrations in a constructive manner. Providing catharsis for soldiers and a way of measuring discontents on the front, *The Wipers Times* therefore worked to prevent the breakout of actual conflicts within divisions and between officers and their commanders.

## CONSTRUCTING THROUGH HUMOR

Reading through the highly entertaining items in *The Wipers Times*, one may find it difficult to imagine the *actual* horrors that these men faced during wartime. For the editors of the paper, describing anything *actual* about the war had not been their original aim. Rather, these men made the deliberate effort to reconstruct the war in a way that revealed the underlying concerns of the everyday soldier and offered a window into how they processed their wartime experience. Fuller rightly notes that the editors and contributors of the magazine “would record the human side of the war in a way that nothing else could. Their tone was held to be not a consciously assumed pose but a reflection of the reality.”<sup>56</sup> The opening editorial in one of the earlier issues of the paper presented itself in this manner by calling on its readers to, “Buy the paper that tells you the truth! All others are rotten, and the truth is not in them.”<sup>57</sup> This claim to truth, laden as it is with sarcasm, suggested that satire and parody can bring to light aspects of reality that would not otherwise be seen when approached in a serious manner. Furthermore, *The Wipers Times* effectively communicated such hidden truths to its readers by replicating a newspaper format. These men found the mock magazine’s form appropriate in helping them “preserve a record of their thoughts and experiences, both for themselves and for history.”<sup>58</sup> In other words, the contributors of the paper were aware of their involvement in a great historical moment and thus took full advantage of the agency they possessed to participate in the production of this history.

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<sup>55</sup> Chapman and Ellis, p. 184.

<sup>56</sup> Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918*, p. 15.

<sup>57</sup> “Editorial.” *The Wipers Times* Vol. 1 No. 2, in *The Wipers Times: A Facsimile Reprint of the Trench Magazines* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1918).

<sup>58</sup> Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918*, p. 15.



Claiming to be made by the soldiers and for the soldiers, *The Wipers Times* easily gained the trust of its readership, which gave the magazine and its creators power to influence the minds and thus actions of the men they represented. Editors remained cognizant of their readership and paid close attention to the way in which the media at home framed the war, competing against these contemporaries for the command in the construction of the soldier experience. The public nature of the journal can also provide another set of explanations for the ideological function of the trench magazine. Humor allowed men to mask their fears and “put a brave face” and ultimately worked “as a sustaining force in the resilience, and therefore the courage of British officers and men on the Western Front.”<sup>59</sup> To accomplish this, Roberts and the other men on the editorial board deliberately removed their own personalities from the paper. Instead, they sought to represent the voices of the entire body of British soldiers—Tommies—by encouraging any talented writers in the Division to send in a piece of their writing, and incorporating a selection of independent submissions they received.<sup>60</sup>

Furthermore, the contributors often adopted aliases and pen names in order to speak to a more generalized soldier experience while masking their individual viewpoints. This allowed for multiple writers to contribute to recurring columns such as “Belary Helloc.” By speaking to their readership as members of the same body, the paper also offered men a way to dialogue with other members of the paper while simultaneously masking the selective process by which these men chose to represent themselves and their experiences.

For all its subversive qualities and criticisms, *The Wipers Times* promoted a gendered ideology of toughness and endurance that ultimately worked in the interest of the state. As Benedict Anderson notes, trench magazines served as a precedent for citizen journalism and aided in the construction of an “imagined community.”<sup>61</sup> The formation of a new group identity among soldiers depended on “collective communication,” a language comprehensible exclusively among themselves—or at least, among those who could read.<sup>62</sup> The process through which this language developed in the trench

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<sup>59</sup> Madigan, “Sticking to a Hateful Task’: Resilience, Humour, and British Understandings of Combatant Courage,” p. 93.

<sup>60</sup> “Editorial,” *The “New Church” Times With Which is Incorporated The Wipers Times* Vol. 1 No. 1, in *The Wipers Times: A Facsimile Reprint of the Trench Magazines* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1918).

<sup>61</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London; Verso, 2006), p. 25.

<sup>62</sup> Chapman and Ellin, “Dominion Cartoon Satire as Trench Culture Narratives: Complaints, Endurance, and Stoicism,” p. 178.

magazines was cultural in nature, usually drawing references to well-known songs, popular places and other cultural marks. The communicative function of the publication thus “allowed them to recall and share experiences among themselves while also, in many cases, transmitting that experience to the people at home.”<sup>63</sup> Despite its subversive critiques, the editors maintained faith and commitment to Britain’s national culture.

While some of the pieces in the trench newspaper “signaled the shortcomings of the justificatory national discourses laden with images of heroism and sacrifice,” and often “sketched an ironical or even self-deprecating image of the soldier,” others worked to promote these same discourses.<sup>64</sup> This cultural mode of the journal informed men on proper soldierly behavior and conduct as well as the virtues of toughness and endurance. In a poem titled, “Minor Worries,” for instance, the anonymous writer offered some tips for coping and responding to the violence and dangers on the battlefield. The first verse reads: “If the Hun lets off some gas— / Never mind. / If the Hun attacks in mass— / Never mind. / If your dug-out’s blown to bits, / Or the C.O’s throwing fits, / Or a crump your rum jar hits— / Never mind.”<sup>65</sup> Each subsequent verse follows the same pattern of listing a gruesome scenario that many soldiers have faced and following the statement with a declarative “Never mind.” By the end, the poem reads, “Oh! You poor unhappy thing— / Be not sad. / Just remember when all’s wrong— / And you’re mad. / Though your worries may be great, / They’re but part, at any rate, / Of Old Fritz’s awful fate— / Buck up, lad!”<sup>66</sup> Although the writer sympathized with the soldier’s ailments and addresses the violence and death that soldiers participated in and witnessed, he nonetheless stood firm beside a principle of toughness. Regardless of the terrors of war, the poem suggests that in order to act as a proper soldier, one must endure the horror and tragedy. By encouraging the soldier to “buck up,” the writer of the poem not only attempted to amuse his readers, but also boost the morale and spirit of his fellow soldier. Furthermore, the second to last line of the poem, referring to the Germans, redirects the soldier’s attention away from his personal predicaments to the larger objective of the war: victory against the Central

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Du Pont, “Nature and Functions of Humor in Trench Newspapers,” p. 111.

<sup>65</sup> “Minor Worries,” *The “New Church” Times With Which is Incorporated The Wipers Times* Vol. 1 No. 2, in *The Wipers Times: A Facsimile Reprint of the Trench Magazines* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1918).

<sup>66</sup> “Minor Worries,” *The “New Church” Times With Which is Incorporated The Wipers Times* Vol. 1 No. 2,

Powers. Confronted with extreme danger and violence on the warfront, which the journal expounded upon in great detail, these grim aspects of war “are usually alluded to in a manner that suggest that soldiers, fed up though they may be, can endure them.”<sup>67</sup> More importantly, while concepts such as valor, heroism, gallantry, and dash that formed “the pre-war heroic ideal clearly survived the experience of the war, the military dynamics of the conflict prompted a re-imagining of courage on the part of those most directly involved in the conflict.”<sup>68</sup>

Humor extends beyond its coping and critical function, but also assisted in the instruction of soldierly conduct. As Madigan notes, “The ability to take violence and deprivation of the front-line service in one’s stride, or to appear to do so, represented a paradigm of everyday courage that soldiers both respected in others and attempted to cultivate in themselves.”<sup>69</sup> *The Wipers Times*’ effort to “capture the spirit of the army” furthermore gave these men an opportunity to establish a trench community and to redefine the soldier collective on their own terms.<sup>70</sup> Through this ideological project, the men helped build camaraderie and raise the “*esprit de corps*” or spirit of the community.<sup>71</sup> In a column dedicated to “Espirit de Corps,” produced by popular demand, the editors spoke in the interests of some members of the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters who requested greater interaction between units. Contemplating the advantages of inter-unit contact, the editors jokingly stated that “one’s thoughts immediately turn to inter-unit sport of various kinds.”<sup>72</sup> They argued that strengthening ties between units would not only “give us greater confidence in each other in circumstances which will certainly arrive one day, but it would make the work much smoother if one were doing a job with cricket friends rather than chance acquaintances.”<sup>73</sup> On one level, the desire for greater union between soldiers demonstrated a need to maintain human bonds in time of stress. On another level, the promotion of “Espirit de Corps” worked on an ideological level to bring the men together as a community.

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<sup>67</sup> Madigan, “‘Sticking to a Hateful Task’: Resilience, Humour, and British Understandings of Combatant Courage,” p. 91.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>70</sup> Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918*, p. 4.

<sup>71</sup> Chapman and Ellin, “Dominion Cartoon Satire as Trench Culture Narratives: Complaints, Endurance, and Stoicism,” p. 185.

<sup>72</sup> “Espirit de Corps,” *The “New Church” Times With Which is Incorporated The Wipers Times* Vol. 1 No. 2, in *The Wipers Times: A Facsimile Reprint of the Trench Magazines* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1918).

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

Seeing as *The Wipers Times* displayed an independent volition to present these ideologies, it may do historians well to avoid making overly broad generalizations about the soldier's experience from the popular productions that arose from the trenches. Although patterns exist across all trench magazines, the specific contexts and cultures that shape the making of *The Wipers Times* should be attributed to its contributors and local readers. Treating a source like this as an agent in its own right, one sees that it, too, falls into this tendency of speaking for a broader community. Thus, what the editors of the paper chose to include or exclude in their paper, suggests a construction of trench culture that values masculine notions of toughness in the face of adversary and an enduring commitment to the war effort.

## CONCLUSION

Turning each page of *The Wipers Times*, the involuntary chuckles that follow after reading a spoof advertisement or satirical column make one wonder how it may have felt to be a British soldier reading a copy while sitting in the wet mud of the trenches. One can only assume that the stark contrast between the paper's hilarious material and the soldier's grim reality must have made the jokes funnier than they might be in other circumstances. The 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters' dedication to the paper helped these men process their experiences in a way that rekindled an aspect of the life before the outbreak of war—reading the daily news. Furthermore, the paper functioned as a critical tool for the men to express their frustrations. Despite the subversive nature of the satirical journal, however, it did not ignite any actual effort to rebel against authority. The editors' humorous approach and the effort they put into increasing its circulation built a sense of camaraderie that functioned in many ways like a group therapy session. Like any cultural work, *The Wipers Times* attempted to promote a particular worldview. It attempted to sell a vision of the war that the editors believed aligned most with their conception of the soldier's experience. Humor thus played a crucial role in this ideological project by appealing to a wide readership and validating the paper's credibility. As Le Naour suggests, humor was mobilized “at the service of the war effort and national feeling which was something entirely new.”<sup>74</sup> As historians in their own right, the contributors of *The Wipers Times* competed

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<sup>74</sup> Le Naour, “Laughter and Tears in the Great War: The Need for Laughter/The Guilt of Humour,” p. 268.

with other voices among their contemporaries that likewise recognized the stakes of establishing their own vision of the war for posterity.

In many ways, the humorous content of *The Wipers Times* proved more enlightening than serious material.<sup>75</sup> The stories told in trench magazines provide a counter narrative to the stories often perpetuated by propaganda or manipulated by censorship, thus giving historians an indication of the gap between perceptions and reality. The contributors of *The Wipers Times* also seemed cognizant of the lasting impact of their presence in Ypres. One author who wrote under the pseudonym “The Padre” offered some foreshadowing thoughts about Ypres after finding himself lost in the city ruins during the early hours of the morning:

Ypres has died, but shall live again. Her name in the past was linked with kings; but to-morrow she will have a nobler fame. Men will speak of her as the home of the British soldier who lives in her mighty rampart caverns or in the many cellars of her mansions. And even when the busy hum of everyday life shall have resumed its sway in future days, still there will be heard in ghostly echo the muffled fumbling of the transport, and the rhythmic tread of soldiers’ feet.<sup>76</sup>

The certainty in which “The Padre” noted the historical importance of the British soldier in Ypres was perhaps an act of self-preservation. By the time these men chose to publish *The Wipers Times*, they have begun to participate in the history-making process, imposing onto the future (our present) a certain way of viewing and understanding their present (our past).

Now a full century later, the men responsible for *The Wipers Times* and for humorously portraying the collective soldier experience on the Western Front have been more or less brushed out of the collective imagination of the First World War. To even conceive the Great War in the present as anything remotely close to hilarious would be considered an act of disrespect to those valorized and solidified in memory as the models of courage and the saviors of democracy. One needs to look no further than at the social practices performed within the memorial spaces of the Great War to see this mode of thinking in action: traffic is stopped every night at exactly 8 p.m. at the Menin

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<sup>75</sup> Madigan, “‘Sticking to a Hateful Task’: Resilience, Humour, and British Understandings of Combatant Courage,” p. 90.

<sup>76</sup> “Reflections on Being Lost in Ypres at 3 a.m.,” *The Wipers Times* Vol. 1 No., in *The Wipers Times: A Facsimile Reprint of the Trench Magazines* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1918).

Gate Memorial, which lists the names of 54,394 missing officers and men who died in the Salient.<sup>77</sup> An ensemble of buglers then march out to play the Last Post. The atmosphere is solemn and serious. The silence that kicks in as the surrounding traffic comes to a standstill leaves no room for silly conduct. Such a heavy tone in the present-day treatment of the war runs against the lighthearted attitude that the contributors of *The Wipers Times* exhibited in the midst of war. The unintended irony here—and perhaps the last laugh—is that the men of the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters had only a slightly better reason to be serious.

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<sup>77</sup> “The Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres Belgium,” *The Great War 1914-1918*, <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/ypres-salient/memorial-menin-gate.htm>.

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# Nietzsche's Aestheticization of Politics: A Study of Napoleon as the Higher Man

ALEXANDER ARNOLD

## Abstract

This thesis seeks to examine Friedrich Nietzsche's political philosophy and, in particular, the connection between his conception of aesthetics and his conception of politics. Many of Nietzsche's statements attest to the centrality of aesthetics in his thought, not the least his express affirmation that "art, and not morality, is the true metaphysical activity of man" in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Nietzsche considers politics habitually through the lens of aesthetics and even conceives of a future in which artist-rulers present their political achievements as works of art. Following Walter Benjamin's terminology, I deem this project to be an "aestheticization of politics." Nietzsche identifies several historical figures with the practice of an aesthetic form of statecraft, most notably Napoleon Bonaparte, who especially exemplifies Nietzsche's political ideals and whom he invokes far more than any other political figure. He esteems Napoleon as a visionary commander who strove against the petty, nationalistic politics of his age and sought to create an entirely new political landscape by forcibly unifying Europe into one greater political entity. Alongside of explicating Nietzsche's political identification with Napoleon, this thesis seeks to provide an intellectual history of various aesthetic understandings of politics that were influential for Nietzsche. I find that Nietzsche's conception of an aestheticization of politics is heavily indebted to Jacob Burckhardt, Hippolyte Taine, and other cultural and intellectual figures whose writings shaped Nietzsche's understanding of Napoleon.

## List of Abbreviations

AC	<i>The Anti-Christ</i>
BGE	<i>Beyond Good and Evil</i>
BT	<i>The Birth of Tragedy</i>
CW	<i>The Case of Wagner</i>
D	<i>Daybreak/ Dawn</i>
EH	<i>Ecce Homo</i>
GM	<i>On the Genealogy of Morals</i>
GS	<i>The Gay Science</i>
HH	<i>Human, All too Human</i>
KSA	<i>Kritische Studienausgabe</i>
TI	<i>Twilight of the Idols</i>
WP	<i>The Will to Power</i>
WS	<i>The Wanderer and His Shadow</i>
Z	<i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i>

## A Note on the *Kritische Studienausgabe*

In 1961, Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari undertook the project of creating a complete anthology of Nietzsche's works based on his notebooks at the Goethe-Schiller Archiv in Weimar, Germany. Subsequently, the fifteen-volume *Kritische Studienausgabe* "Student Edition" was published in German and offered vast resources of previously unpublished material. Recently, Stanford University has published the first few English translations of that edition, but the most complete presentation of Nietzsche's works still remains the German *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* and the *Kritische Studienausgabe*.

## A Note on *The Will to Power*

This work in its printed form was arranged and published posthumously from a collection of notes and manuscripts by his sister, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, and Heinrich Köselitz (pseudonymously known as "Peter Gast"). For that reason, the work remains quite controversial. More than a few have questioned to what degree such a work can truly reflect Nietzsche's own thought uncompromised by the influence of his sister. However, this was a work that Nietzsche had long intended to write as he himself expressed on

numerous occasions (Cf. Note 23). Nietzsche's sister appears to have mostly arranged the notes thematically and slightly edited their grammar; that is the extent of her influence. The implication that usually follows questions of the work's validity is that it offers an extreme and distorted perspective of Nietzsche's thought at a time when he was mentally unsound. However, the fragments comprising the work come from notes composed at various points in Nietzsche's life, not only the very end of it, and none come from a date later than 1888, a year in which Nietzsche also composed and published five other works, his very last works, the soundness and authenticity of which are not subject to the same sorts of questions. For more on this issue, see: Thomas H. Brobjer, "Nietzsche's Magnum Opus," in the *History of European Ideas*, (2006).

## Introduction

From many standpoints, Nietzsche's thought does not appear to have any ostensible unifying principle. His works deal with widely divergent themes and subject matters and employ an aphoristic style and deeply ironic tone that seem to obfuscate his intentions. For these reasons, generations of scholars have long disagreed over the fundamental nature of his philosophy and especially his politics. Perhaps the most dominant tradition of scholars today interprets Nietzsche

as an apolitical or even anti-political thinker. Among the adherents of such interpretations are the late Walter Kaufmann, whose research contributed greatly to the resurgence of academic interest in Nietzsche, and scores of contemporary scholars like Alexander Nehamas, Paul Glenn, Peter Bergmann, Peter Berkowitz, and Leslie Thiele. These scholars deny that Nietzsche espouses any coherent political ideology or otherwise deem his political thought essentially metaphorical. However, another strain of interpretation that directly challenges the apolitical reading has gained currency with many scholars recently. Mark Warren, William Connolly, Bonnie Honig, and Lawrence Hatab are some of the major scholars who have forwarded this postmodern or liberal interpretation of Nietzsche. These scholars hold that the inklings of a radically egalitarian and pluralist vision of liberal or social democracy can be found in Nietzsche's political thought, if not expressly at least metaphorically. I will take issue with both of these strains of thought in this thesis and offer a third interpretation that seeks to consider Nietzsche's statements more closely as well as the intellectual and political milieu in which he lived.

A definitive interpretation of Nietzsche's political thought will naturally remain elusive. However, I do not hold that Nietzsche is an apolitical thinker

averse to politics outright, or that he offers no real political beliefs of his own, nor do I hold that he intends his political writings to be read metaphorically. Instead, following the recent work of scholars such as Don Dombowsky, Bruce Detwiler, Ruth Abbey, Keith Ansell-Pearson, and Robert Pippin, I hold that Nietzsche develops a real, substantial political ideology through his writings that is at its heart anti-liberal and anti-democratic.<sup>1</sup> Pervading every element of Nietzsche's political thought is profoundly anti-egalitarian sentiment: his emphasis on agonism, hierarchy, and his project of the transvaluation of all values are fundamentally elitist. Many among those scholars have argued that Nietzsche should be understood as an outgrowth of the tradition of thinkers like de Tocqueville and Hippolyte Taine, who held skeptical outlooks on democracy and romanticized an aristocratic social order, as well as more radical elite theorists like Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca, who drew inspiration from the thought of Machiavelli. From a historical perspective, Nietzsche's sentiments share much in common with that of many members of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, a social class within Wilhelmine Germany that cultural historian Klaus Vondung associates with a revival of neo-aristocratic thinking.

However, I would like to supplement this aristocratic interpretation of Nietzsche's political thought with consideration of another salient feature of his philosophy: an overarching concern for aesthetics. Furthermore, I hold that, despite the apparent inconsistencies, Nietzsche's thought does contain a real unifying principle. Aestheticism can be regarded as constituting the heart of Nietzsche's philosophy and even as the unifying principle of his thought. Nietzsche maintains the unwavering belief that "art, and not morality, is the true metaphysical activity of man" and that "the existence of the world is justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon," (BT 5) which is a notion that he first forwards in the *Birth of Tragedy*. Aestheticism represents his response to the deeply established metaphysical conceptualizations of the world as having a transcendent order and purpose. Nietzsche denies that the world has any transcendent order or purpose and considers philosophers who have made it their mission to discover such an order to be simply reinforcing their own prejudices. He thereby dismisses the majority of the history of philosophy

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<sup>1</sup> Dombowsky and Detwiler employ the term "aristocratic radicalism" to represent Nietzsche's political ideology. Dombowsky further argues that his politics can be most fully illuminated through the paradigm of Bonapartism. I mostly accept this reading, but do not employ the term frequently here so that the emphasis on the Nietzsche's aesthetic conception of politics remains at the foreground. Don Dombowsky, *Nietzsche and Napoleon: The Dionysian Conspiracy* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014), 2.

beyond the pre-Socratics as fundamentally misguided. For Nietzsche, the history of philosophy essentially represents the progressive advance of a crippling nihilism, which he seeks to overcome. Nietzsche holds that metaphysics only encourages a hatred of life and a denial of this world in favor of a chimeral world to come, which leads to deep discontentment with life. Nietzsche seeks above all to promote an embrace of life and an engagement with this world through his philosophy. Therefore, in lieu of metaphysics, he offers an aestheticization of life. Likewise, Nietzsche also formulates an aestheticization of politics. Just as he turns to aesthetics as a means of breaking out of the straightjacket of morality and metaphysics, he seeks an aesthetic form of political action to implement his vision. While Nietzsche's specific political stances shift over the course of his life, there remains a fundamentally unaltered underpinning represented in the conception of aestheticism.

Nietzsche's greater aesthetic project thereby becomes intertwined with a greater political project. Nietzsche considers politics through the lens of aesthetics and even conceives of a future in which visionary artist-rulers present their political achievements as works of art. Although Walter Benjamin first established the term, the "aestheticization of politics," the conception Nietzsche formulates of rendering politics aesthetic would certainly be embodied well in such a term. Intellectual enquiries into the intersection of aesthetics and politics had long used the language of aesthetics with reference to politics. Nietzsche read the works of many cultural historians and commentators who formulated aesthetic interpretations of politics, most notably Jacob Burckhardt, who conceived of "the state as work of art." Many other cultural critics of the era employed such language to invoke what they considered to be the quintessentially Renaissance and Machiavellian conception of politics wherein Italian lords and condottieri sought to legitimize their criminal immorality by presenting their actions as astonishing works of art. Figures like Hippolyte Taine, Germaine de Staël, and Madame de Rémusat are among such critics. When they applied this aesthetic language to Napoleon and his manner of statecraft, it carried a strongly negative connotation implying that Napoleon was a recurrence of the petty, egotistical feudal Renaissance tyrant. Nevertheless, Nietzsche read such damning critiques of Napoleon's immorality, militarism, and egotism, and conversely felt confirmed in his interpretation of Napoleon as a higher type of man beyond the understanding of men of the herd. Furthermore, Nietzsche redeemed the language of the aesthetic breaking and remaking mankind and adopted it as a critical part of his political philosophy of the future.

Nietzsche identifies Napoleon Bonaparte as an exemplar of the

realization of the aestheticization of politics. He presents the figure of Napoleon as heroically striving to overcome the degraded, petty nationalistic politics of his age and boldly seeking to forcibly unify Europe into one greater political entity. Therefore, Napoleon represents the herald of Nietzsche's politics of the future wherein decadent cultural values are overthrown and transformed into higher aristocratic values and decaying political institutions are razed down and replaced with enduring imperial institutions for the betterment of mankind. Seen in this light, the aestheticization of politics serves as one of the primary underpinning concepts of Nietzsche's political thought and unites it with his greater aesthetic project first begun in the *Birth of Tragedy*.

This thesis proceeds to analyze Nietzsche's the aestheticization of politics in three sections. The first section explores the highly contentious scholarly debate surrounding the nature of Nietzsche's political thought already alluded to here. I find that the prevailing paradigms of interpretation fail to give due consideration to Nietzsche's positive or constructive notions, and therefore a concept such as the aestheticization of politics must be analyzed under a different paradigm. The second section explicates the notion of the aestheticization of politics and examines the cultural figures such as Burckhardt, Taine, Gregorovius, de Staël, and Goethe who provided intellectual and historical context for Nietzsche's development of this notion. The third section considers the aestheticization of politics in relation to Nietzsche's greater political vision. I find that the aestheticization of politics forms an integrated political vision through which the political landscape and structures of political institutions are to be radically transformed.

## **§1: Interpreting Nietzsche's Politics: Authentic or Allegorical?**

From many standpoints, Nietzsche is an altogether idiosyncratic figure. His writings have a distinctly aphoristic and sarcastic tone unlike the writings of any other philosopher, and his conceptions often do not show a clear intellectual heritage like those of many other philosophers. Unsurprisingly for such an iconoclast, definitive interpretations of Nietzsche's political thought have naturally remained elusive. Nietzsche neglected to write any work explicitly dealing with political matters, and the few political comments scattered throughout his texts do not seem to offer any easily discernable pattern of political stances. He writes about subjects that are closely bound up with politics, such as morality, aesthetics, knowledge, and authority and institutions. But few have considered there to be any unifying principle underlying the philosophy throughout Nietzsche's works. Therefore, attempts

to determine Nietzsche's place along the political spectrum have been exceedingly contentious. Understanding of political interpretations that have been forwarded so far can serve as a useful starting point from which to analyze Nietzsche's thought.

Nietzsche himself warns that readers who might attempt to understand his thought within a comprehensive framework will only end up reinforcing their own interpretations rather than reaching a closer understanding of his thought: "Whoever thought he had understood something of me, had made up something out of me after his own image... and whoever had understood nothing of me denied that I needed to be considered at all" (EH Books 1). Nietzsche believes that readers who approach his texts as reservoirs of meaning to be tapped into or as blueprints for some sort of program will only validate the readings that they seek to make of them. These disclaimers clearly anticipate the prospect of appropriation, particularly political appropriation. In fact, many of the political statements Nietzsche makes are surrounded with a large number of disclaimers. Bearing Nietzsche's warning in mind, let us proceed to examine the various political readings of his works that have been forwarded.

Within the contemporary Anglosphere, among those scholars who are committed to identifying Nietzsche's place within the political spectrum, many tend to align him with the progressive left.<sup>2</sup> These scholars consider Nietzsche's critical assessments and deconstructions of morality, authority, and identity as part and parcel of the progressive project of unmasking the harmful fictions at work in society that ultimately enable systematic oppression. For scholars of the postwar generation, Nietzsche's polemical notion that moral and social structures are actually disguised structures of domination possessed a strong attraction.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, his prescient and bold critiques of nationalism and ethnic prejudice would have resonated particularly strongly with that generation. Out of a strong sense of social consciousness, these scholars felt it their obligation to address these social concerns in their writings and so many were drawn to Nietzsche as there were drawn to other cultural critics.

However, such an interpretation of the supposed progressive strains in Nietzsche's thought ignores the heavy current of anti-egalitarian and anti-liberal ideas that emerges throughout all of his works, even in his milder

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<sup>2</sup> Tracy B. Strong, "Nietzsche's Political Appropriation," *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, Ed. Bernd Magnus and Kathleen Higgins (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), 126.

<sup>3</sup> Strong, "Nietzsche's Political Appropriation," 127-128.



middle period in which he briefly courted positivistic ideas.<sup>4</sup> Countless stances that Nietzsche takes are blatantly reactionary from a modern progressive standpoint and would have been reactionary in his age too for that matter: for instance, his skepticism of universal education, his exaltation of the Hindu caste system, and his glorification of despotic figures like Caesar and Napoleon. Overall, such strains of thought, which by all indications are the prevailing strains throughout the various stages of his life, instead point to an either radically reactionary or radically visionary Nietzsche. How would scholars reconcile Nietzsche's seemingly progressive strands with this open avowal of hierarchy, domination, and autocracy?

Well, in fact, few have actually attempted to reconcile these two conflicting strands. Rather, many intellectuals infatuated with Nietzsche who have sought to align him with their political worldviews have done so mostly by denying that Nietzsche's thought is political at all. Instead, many of them have deemed intensely aristocratic strains of Nietzsche's thought to be merely metaphorical.<sup>5</sup> Under more radical forms of such an interpretation, essentially all of Nietzsche's particular political judgments are liable to be dismissed as irrelevant since, under such an interpretation, metaphorical readings would be the only form of interpretation that could yield his true message. Scores of keen, incisive thinkers have fallen into this trap of self-referential readings. These interpretations run the spectrum from consciously and, therefore, harmlessly self-referential to firmly self-perpetuating. William Connolly's work represents an example of the former. He seeks to appropriate Nietzsche's thought to develop a "reconstituted radicalized liberalism," but at the same time recognizes that this relationship is one of admittedly "antagonistic indebtedness."<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, Mark Warren more brashly and baselessly asserts that if one delves into Nietzsche's philosophy and liberates it "from its political straightjacket," one will find the support for the "progressive values of modern rationalism."<sup>7</sup> Leslie Thiele reinforces a more traditional version of the apolitical interpretation. He contends that Nietzsche's politics are restricted to a "politics of the soul."<sup>8</sup> However, Nietzsche himself appears to outright deny

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<sup>4</sup> GS 37: "We are by no means 'liberal'; we are not working for 'progress'; we don't need to plug our ears to the marketplace's sirens of the future: what they sing—'equal rights,' 'free society,' 'no more masters and no servants'—has no allure for us."

<sup>5</sup> Strong, "Nietzsche's Political Appropriation," 128.

<sup>6</sup> William Connolly, *Political Theory and Modernity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1989), 169-175.

<sup>7</sup> Mark Warren, *Nietzsche and Political Thought* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1988), 247.

<sup>8</sup> Leslie P. Thiele, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of the Soul: A Study in Heroic Individualism*

the legitimacy of this reading, writing: “my philosophy aims at a new order of rank, not an individualistic morality.”<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps all of these well-meaning, but ultimately misguided interpretations can be excused when one considers the kind of political appropriation of Nietzsche that has been carried out historically along the right wing of the political spectrum. Radical right wing political appropriations have undermined genuine scholarly efforts to engage with Nietzsche for decades. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Nietzsche’s thought had become variously associated with the ideologies of social Darwinism, racial anthropology, and reactionary nationalism like that of Charles Maurras and Maurice Barrès.<sup>10</sup> However, no appropriation of Nietzsche’s philosophy remains more infamous than that of the Nazis. National Socialists claimed to find many of their ideological roots in Nietzsche’s notions of the *Übermensch*, the will to power, and master morality. They brazenly used Nietzsche’s remarks on race and ethnicity and his aggrandizements of war and violence to characterize him as a harbinger of National Socialism. Yet in spite of all of the disclaimers Nietzsche made against potential misappropriations of his ideas, many of his comments are also so shamelessly lurid that they simply seem to invite this kind of appropriation.<sup>11</sup> However, such appropriation also depended upon brazen suppression of the numerous statements that Nietzsche makes in disparagement of German nationalism.<sup>12</sup> Of course, Nietzsche’s thought has also been claimed for ideological support within more mainstream conservative circles such as in Allan Bloom’s *The Closing of the American Mind*.

Through an examination of the prevailing interpretations of Nietzsche’s supposed ideology, one can see that certain interpretations privilege certain aspects of Nietzsche’s thought. Namely, those who consider Nietzsche’s politics as ultimately progressive mostly emphasize Nietzsche’s deconstructive or critical elements rather than his constructive or positive strains, which they almost completely neglect or otherwise consider as merely metaphorical. I find that that proves to be a problematic paradigm for the analysis of the Nietzsche’s philosophy, particularly his conception of aesthetics. As has already been indicated above with *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche *does* consider himself to be offering constructive ideas for society, such as the idea of life as an aesthetic experience. Furthermore, these

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(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 180.

<sup>9</sup> WP 287 and 1883-1888 KSA 12 7[6].

<sup>10</sup> Strong, “Nietzsche’s Political Appropriation,” 129.

<sup>11</sup> For an example, see Nietzsche’s comments on the Jewish character: BGE 256.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. See also, GS 377.

constructive elements are just as essential to his thought as the deconstructive elements. In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche depicts himself as a thinker who philosophizes with a hammer; however, he does not only wield that hammer to smash and tear down idols, but he also uses that hammer build as well. Consider what sort of vision we would be left with if Nietzsche's constructive strains are simply ignored or unaccounted for. We would have a picture of a philosopher who aggressively tears down idols but have no clear picture of why and to what end. Nietzsche would be a purely iconoclastic figure who destroys merely for the sake of destruction. Instead, I regard the deconstructive elements of Nietzsche's as being intimately connected to the constructive elements that he puts forward. For Nietzsche, deconstruction is the necessary prerequisite for creation. Therefore, I interpret Nietzsche as advocating for the creation of new philosophical edifices. I maintain that the aestheticization of politics represents a positive notion and constitutes one of Nietzsche's real political goals. Therefore, the metaphorical interpretation will not suffice for the exploration of Nietzsche's aestheticization of politics.

## §2: The Aestheticization of Politics

Nietzsche frequently invokes the figure of Napoleon as a representative and herald of his politics of the future. In fact, Nietzsche refers to Napoleon one hundred and seventy times throughout his works, far more than any other political figure.<sup>13</sup> He extensively and voraciously read the available literature on Napoleon and was familiar with the entire spectrum of political evaluations of him.<sup>14</sup> Nietzsche certainly presents a very stylized portrait of Napoleon, but consideration of the accuracy of his portrait would be beside the point. Nietzsche clearly identifies Napoleon as an exemplar of the realization of the aestheticization of politics and an embodiment of his ideal of the *Übermensch*.

Nietzsche consistently depicts Napoleon as master commander who epitomizes the will to power throughout his actions. Moreover, Nietzsche finds true brilliance in the way that Napoleon remakes the world into his own image and translates political achievements into aesthetic phenomena. For Napoleon, the world was the raw material, like a canvas or marble, out of which he produced his political works. Therefore, Napoleon achieved an

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<sup>13</sup> Don Dombowsky, *Nietzsche and Napoleon: The Dionysian Conspiracy*, 127.

<sup>14</sup> For more on Nietzsche's library and readings of Napoleonic literature, see Dombowsky, *Nietzsche and Napoleon: The Dionysian Conspiracy*, 125-127.

aestheticization of politics and, in doing so, harkened back to the Renaissance princes of Italy. However, Nietzsche identifies a further implication in the aestheticization of politics: the autonomous individual who establishes his identity as a work of art thereby adheres to aesthetic rather than moral categories. For Nietzsche, Napoleon's manipulation of democracy and religion, his ferocious treatment of political enemies, and his aggressive warfare defy any kind of moral censure. Rather, they justify themselves as aesthetic phenomena and even serve as a testament to Napoleon's artistic genius. According to Nietzsche, Napoleon masterfully reshaped Europe in his own image and his failure can be attributed to the way that he eventually relinquishes his autonomy and allows democratic forces to remake him in their own image.

Nietzsche not only dissociates Napoleon from the French Revolution but also even establishes him as a firm adversary of its ideals.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, Nietzsche maintains that Napoleon stood against modern civilization and its decadent spirit of *ressentiment*. Instead, Nietzsche aligns him directly with the Renaissance and with classical civilization:

Napoleon, who saw something of a personal enemy in modern ideas and in civilization itself, proved through this enmity to be one of the greatest continuators of the Renaissance: he brought back a whole piece, a block of granite, perhaps the decisive one, of antiquity's essence. (GS 362)

Nietzsche maintains a strong association between the aestheticization of politics and the Renaissance, which can be seen through his repeated use of the metaphor of granite and the art of sculpture to symbolize Renaissance politics.

Nietzsche expresses a particularly strong admiration for France and its culture throughout his works. In fact, he singles out France as the "nation which has up to now given modern mankind its finest books and its finest men" (WS 216). Nietzsche also speaks of France to be the sole living inheritor of the Renaissance.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, France's artistic and cultural achievements are so noteworthy because they represent the natural outgrowth of the

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<sup>15</sup> GS 362

<sup>16</sup> WS 216: "The French have continued on in the worthiest way the task of the Renaissance." Despite his superlative praise of France here, Nietzsche later writes of France as experiencing the most acute spiritual crisis in contemporary Europe and being the place where "the will is sickest" (BGE 208). Yet even in the same book Nietzsche still extols France as "bearing an indelible mark of ancient cultural superiority" and for being a perfect "synthesis of the north and the south" (BGE 254).

Renaissance spirit unconstrained by the forces of the Reformation. Nietzsche holds that the Reformation had deprived Europe of the fruits of the Renaissance and frequently offers contemptuous appraisals of the decadent cultures of the nations in which the Reformation had progressed most fully, namely his native land, Germany, and England. It would only be natural that a true figure of the Renaissance should arise out of a noble Tuscan family on the island of Corsica and rise to power in a nation such as France.

Nietzsche associates the aestheticization of politics with both the Renaissance and classical civilization, which had inspired the Renaissance. In that way, Napoleon not only hearkens back to the Renaissance, but back to the greatest and noblest age of that peninsula: Ancient Rome. Nietzsche positively venerates the Roman Empire, which he calls “the most grandiose form of organization under difficult conditions which has hitherto been achieved... this most admirable of all works of art in the grand style.” He goes on to praise the durability of the Roman Empire and claims that its “organization was strong enough to withstand bad emperors: the accident of personality has nothing to do with such things—the first principle of all genuinely great architecture” (AC 58). Under the masterful rule of Julius Caesar, the Roman Empire became the first state that stood as a work of art.<sup>17</sup> Nietzsche identifies many natural connections between Napoleon and Caesar and often even speaks of Napoleon as if he were the true heir to Caesar, much like Stendhal, an impassioned admirer of Napoleon whom Nietzsche read extensively, does in his novel *The Charterhouse of Parma*.<sup>18</sup> Nietzsche deems Napoleon in essence to be a revival of Caesar and considers the artistry of their forms of statecraft as fundamentally akin: “In natures like Caesar and Napoleon we are able to divine something of the nature of ‘disinterestedness’ in their work on their marble, whatever be the number of men that are sacrificed in the process” (1885-1886 WP 975).

Nietzsche’s identification of Napoleon with the Renaissance, and not merely its artistic heritage but also its political heritage, conforms well to the cultural views of the historians whom he read for information about Napoleon. Many cultural critics of Nietzsche’s era employed the language of the aestheticization of politics to invoke what they considered to be the characteristically Renaissance conception of politics wherein Italian lords and

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<sup>17</sup> AC 59: “[The Imperium Romanum] was a grand style that was beyond mere art.”

<sup>18</sup> “On May 15, 1796, General Bonaparte entered Milan at the head of that young army which had lately crossed the Lodi Bridge and taught the world that after so many centuries Caesar and Alexander had a successor.” Stendhal (Marie-Henri Beyle), *The Charterhouse of Parma*, Trans. Richard Howard (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 1.

condottieri sought to legitimize their immoral deeds by presenting them as works of art. The Renaissance had strongly negative political connotations among historians, who associated it with uncontrolled egotism, the cult of personality, and immoralism. Thus when figures like Hippolyte Taine, Germaine de Staël, and Madame de Rémusat apply such aesthetic language to Napoleon, it implies a thorough censure of his actions. Nevertheless, Nietzsche would have read such damning critiques of Napoleon's immorality, militarism, and egotism, and conversely felt confirmed in his interpretation of Napoleon as a higher type of man. According to German historian Ferdinand Gregorovius, a contemporary of Nietzsche's, in Renaissance Italy:

Human life was held to be of little value and criminal egotism was often qualified by greatness of mind (*magnanimitas*), so that a bloody deed prompted by avarice and ambition was often condoned... The Italians always recognized the force of personality... They examined not the moral but the political man, not his motives but his acts. The terrible was not terrible when it was the deed of a strong will, nor was crime disgraceful when it excited astonishment as a work of art.<sup>19</sup>

With the Renaissance, the idea of an autonomous individual who forms his identity as a work of art first came into being. These Italian Renaissance princes and condottieri exemplify the Machiavellian notion of *virtù* and their actions would not be subject to either the law or moral codes. Therefore, the aestheticization of politics supplants the moral order and legitimizes immoral and even criminal actions as exemplary works of art.

Nietzsche claims that higher men must necessarily create a new order upon the violation of the old order.<sup>20</sup> Nietzsche conceives of Napoleon as seeking to violate the degenerate order and morals of modern civilization in order to reinstate the kind of higher ideals that existed during the Renaissance and classical civilization before it. According to Nietzsche, "the Renaissance remains the climax of this millennium; and what has happened since then is the grand reaction of all kinds of herd instincts against the 'individuals' of that epoch."<sup>21</sup> Napoleon occupies a pivotal role in Nietzsche's conception of the moral history of the world because he represents the most recent and awe-

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<sup>19</sup> Ferdinand Gregorovius, *Lucretia Borgia: According to Original Documents and Correspondence of Her Day*, Trans. John Leslie Garner in 1874 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1903), 97-98.

<sup>20</sup> See BT 9 and GS 4.

<sup>21</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, Ed. Christopher Middleton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 195.

inspiring revolt against slave morality and heralded a brief revival of the aristocratic order. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche examines the moral paradigm of “good and evil,” which he contends has been the dominant moral framework for Western society since the advent of Christianity. Nietzsche concludes that slave morality produces a breed of men who demand little of life and aspire to even less. Under these conditions, societal decay will be inevitable and disgust with the direction of the world will lead to the embrace of nihilism, which Nietzsche vehemently opposes. Nietzsche fundamentally seeks to galvanize the higher aristocratic instincts within men’s spirits and recreate the historical moments in which the aristocratic order prevailed over slave morality. He seeks to end once and for all the war between Rome and Judea, the Renaissance and the Reformation, and Napoleon and the French Revolution.<sup>22</sup> For Nietzsche, Napoleon represents the very culmination of this world-historical struggle of moral values. He offers a vision of a new politics that can provide a path out of this endless strife and aporia of values and towards a new future for Europe.

Perhaps the strongest formulation of Nietzsche’s conception of the aestheticization of politics comes from one of his notes, which was later incorporated in *The Will to Power*.<sup>23</sup> Here Nietzsche explicitly associates Napoleon with Renaissance artists of the highest stature:

Suddenly the *faculté maîtresse* unfolds: the artist enclosed in the politician emerges *de sa gaine*; he creates *dans l’idéal et l’impossible*. He is once more recognized for what he is: the posthumous brother of Dante and Michelangelo: and in truth, in view of the firm contours of his vision, the intensity, coherence, and inner logic of his dream, the profundity of his meditation, the superhuman grandeur of conception, he is like them *et leur égal: son génie a la même taille et la même structure; il est un des trois esprits souverains de la renaissance italienne*. Nota Bene: Dante, Michelangelo, Napoleon. (WP 1018 and 1886 KSA 5[91])

Nietzsche does not indicate the source of the lines in French, but those are actually the words of French historian and cultural critic Hippolyte Taine.<sup>24</sup> Taine lived during the same period as Nietzsche, a generation removed from

<sup>22</sup> GM First Essay 16.

<sup>23</sup> Nietzsche suggests a “pilgrimage” to Corsica in a letter to his friend Heinrich Köselitz (Peter Gast) in preparation for writing *The Will to Power*. Sander Gilman, *Conversations with Nietzsche: A Life in the Words of His Contemporaries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 203-204.

<sup>24</sup> Hippolyte Taine, “Napoléon Bonaparte”, *Revue des deux mondes*, Tome 79 (February 15, 1887), 721-752.

the historical life of Napoleon Bonaparte. Although Taine certainly commended Napoleon for his ingenuity and deft statecraft, evident in comments such as those above, he actually remained a staunch critic of Napoleon. Taine's writings sparked a resurgence of interest in Napoleon among the European public and served as a particularly strong source of inspiration for Nietzsche.<sup>25</sup> After running across this comment asserting Napoleon's kinship with artists of the Renaissance, Nietzsche wrote to Taine and thanked him for providing an "explanation and solution of that immense problem of the inhuman and the superhuman."<sup>26</sup> Hence, Taine clearly formed a major source of influence for Nietzsche's conception of the aestheticization of politics.

While Nietzsche never truly offers his own full elucidation of the aestheticization of politics, accounts of such a concept can be gleaned from the works of many of the cultural historians and scholars whom he read for information on Napoleon. Additionally, although Walter Benjamin first established the term, "aestheticization of politics," it can be applied rightly to the vision of rendering politics aesthetic that Nietzsche contemplates. Returning to Taine, in the proper context of his remarks above, he had been discussing Napoleon as a figure whose violent instincts and despotism harkened back to age of the Italian Renaissance. Taine looked upon Napoleon as "a descendent of the great Italians, the men of action of the year 1400, the military adventurers, usurpers, and founders of life-governments." He considered Napoleon to be cast from the mold of the Renaissance tyrant in a very real sense; in fact, he conceived of this as an actual physiological recurrence: "[Napoleon] inherits in direct affiliation [the] blood and inward organization [of the Italian tyrants], mental and moral... transmitted from one generation to another, renewed and invigorated by interbreeding... producing the same fruit as on the original stem." After Taine's comment that Napoleon can be regarded as the "posthumous brother of Dante and Michelangelo," he further expounded that "while the first two operated on paper and on marble, Napoleon operates on the living being, on the sensitive and suffering flesh of humanity."<sup>27</sup> Taine thereby directly associates Napoleon with an aestheticization of politics, but he attaches primarily negative connotations of

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<sup>25</sup> Pieter Geyl, *Napoleon: For and Against*, Trans. Olive Renier (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1982), 137.

<sup>26</sup> Nietzsche, Letter to Hippolyte Taine, *The Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 267. For Nietzsche's statements on Napoleon as the "synthesis of the superhuman and inhuman," see GM First Essay 16 and WP 1027 and KSA 12 9[154].

<sup>27</sup> Taine, *The Origins of Contemporary France*, 336.



tyranny and immorality to such a concept.

The French cultural critic Germaine de Staël makes similar associations between Napoleon and the Italian tyrants of the Renaissance. She writes that “Bonaparte was intoxicated with the vile draught of Machiavellianism; he resembled in many respects the Italian tyrants of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.”<sup>28</sup> De Staël actually lived through the French Revolution and experienced the reign of Napoleon firsthand. Like Taine, she considered Napoleon to be a calculating and egotistical despot. De Staël openly voiced scathing criticism of Napoleon in her works, which provoked Napoleon to censor them and send her into exile.

Perhaps the most important cultural historian to formulate a conception of the aestheticization of politics was none other than Nietzsche’s colleague at the University of Basel, Jacob Burckhardt.<sup>29</sup> Burckhardt was one of the first thinkers to create a term that directly concretized the concept through his notion of “the state as a work of art” in the eponymous essay from *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*. Burckhardt contends that Renaissance civilization heralded the emergence of truly autonomous individuals who translated their political achievements into works of art.<sup>30</sup> He argues that those singular individuals revolutionized statecraft by making into an art and raised the state itself to the status of an artwork. Burckhardt evaluates this revolution as turning point in political history and a profound cultural contribution to humanity. Because of the cultural value of their statecraft, Burckhardt further asserts that great individuals cannot be judged according to any moral criteria or human law. Instead, he believes that they justify themselves and their actions as aesthetic phenomena.<sup>31</sup> He even goes so far as to proclaim that the crimes of such higher men could be validated because of their “greatness and genuine political capacity.”<sup>32</sup> Burckhardt’s thought and this conceptualization, in particular, exerted profound influence on Nietzsche.

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<sup>28</sup> Germaine de Staël, *Considerations on the Principal Events of the French Revolution*, Ed. Aurelian Craiutu (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2008), 517.

<sup>29</sup> For more on Nietzsche’s relation to Jacob Burckhardt, see: Thomas H. Brobjer, *Nietzsche’s Philosophical Context: An Intellectual Biography*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 103-104.

<sup>30</sup> Jacob Burckhardt, “Part I: The State as a Work of Art,” in *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, Trans. S. G. C. Middlemore, Vol. I (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1958), 22.

<sup>31</sup> Burckhardt, “Part I: The State as a Work of Art,” in *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, 35-36.

<sup>32</sup> Jacob Burckhardt, *Reflections on History*, Trans. M. D. Hottinger (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1943), 307-310.

Ultimately, the first iteration of a conception of the aestheticization of politics can be found in the opening letter of dedication from Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Machiavelli speaks of a prince standing from his lofty position of power over his subjects and likens him to a painter ascending the heights of a mountain to create a picture of the surrounding valleys:

For just as those who paint landscapes [*coloro che disegnano*] place themselves down in the plain to consider the nature of mountains and high places and to consider the nature of low places place themselves high atop mountains, similarly, to know well the nature of peoples one needs to be prince, and to know well the nature of princes one needs to be of the people.<sup>33</sup>

Through the metaphor of the prince as a painter, Machiavelli lays out the fundamental need for artistry in the prince's statecraft.<sup>34</sup> Machiavelli's prince selectively presents reality to his subjects through his acts of portraiture in order to awe them into passivity. Furthermore, he is a calculating and amoral figure who embodies a martial ethos or *virtù*, all of which are qualities on which his efficacy in commanding his subjects depends. Nietzsche specifically evokes Machiavelli's conception of *virtù* as an example of an unqualified good, which he summarizes as "not contentment, but more power; not peace at all, but war; not virtue, but skillfulness (virtue in the Renaissance style, *virtù*, virtue free of moraline acid)" (AC 2). For the prince, his subjects are both the audience of his art and the malleable material with which he makes such art. Much like Nietzsche and Taine, Machiavelli conceives of the prince working with his subjects as if he were an artist working with marble to form the finished product of his politics. However, like Nietzsche and unlike Taine, Machiavelli expresses little concern for what ultimate end the prince's objectification of his subjects serves.

Nietzsche undoubtedly attaches much significance to the highly symbolic moment of Goethe's meeting with Napoleon at the Congress of Erfurt. In effect, it constitutes the union of artistry and politics and an artistic legitimization of Napoleon's political machinations. In 1808, Napoleon and Tsar Alexander I convened the Congress of Erfurt, which was memorably depicted in *War and Peace*. In fact, Goethe's meeting with Napoleon bears many similarities to Tolstoy's account of that moment. Napoleon sought to gain

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<sup>33</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Trans. Harvey C. Mansfield (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), Dedication.

<sup>34</sup> For more on Nietzsche's identification with Machiavelli, see WP 304 and 1887-1888 KSA 13 11[54].

favor with the titans of German intellectual and artistic circles and, to that end, he awarded the Cross of the Legion of Honor to Goethe. Goethe in response offered the following lofty paean in honor of Napoleon:

Napoleon's life was the stride of a demigod, from battle to battle, and from victory to victory. It might well be said that he was in a state of continual illumination. On this account, his destiny was more brilliant than any the world had seen before him, or perhaps will ever see after him.<sup>35</sup>

Much along the lines of Hegel, Goethe held Napoleon up as a supernatural power or an embodiment of the force in history that could not be judged according to the standards of ordinary men. On the contrary, Goethe, like Nietzsche, even associated Napoleon's immorality as necessary for the advancement of culture:

Extraordinary men, such as Napoleon, place themselves outside morality. They act, after all, like physical causes such as fire and water. Indeed anyone who steps out of the position of subordination—for that is what morality is—becomes to that extent immoral. Whoever by the use of his intelligence injures others, or even so much as restricts their freedom, is to that extent immoral. Every virtue exerts compulsion, just as every idea acts like a tyrant when it first enters the world.<sup>36</sup>

For Nietzsche, Napoleon was not a demigod but a “return to nature,” an ascent “into a high, free, even frightful nature and naturalness” (II Expeditions 48).<sup>37</sup> Nietzsche also considers Goethe to represent a “return to nature” and a “a going-*up* to the naturalness of the Renaissance” and thus “a grand attempt to overcome the eighteenth century.” Nietzsche writes that Goethe “had no greater experience than that *ens realissimum* called Napoleon” (II Expeditions 49).<sup>38</sup> Nietzsche would have held such an encounter between these two representatives of the Renaissance to have the utmost significance.

Just as Nietzsche interprets Napoleon's rise to power through the prism of the aestheticization of politics and remaking the world in his own

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<sup>35</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Conversations of Goethe with Johann Peter Eckermann*, Trans. John Oxenford (Boston: Da Capo Press, 1998), 246.

<sup>36</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, “Conversation with Riemer 3 February 1807,” in *Goethe: Conversations and Encounters*, Ed. and Trans. David Luke and Robert Pick (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1966), 67.

<sup>37</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, II Expeditions 48.

<sup>38</sup> Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, II Expeditions 49.

image, Nietzsche interprets Napoleon's fall from power from the same aesthetic standpoint. Historians offered numerous compelling arguments for Napoleon's failure and forced exile. Sir Walter Scott explained that "unjustifiable aggressions and an unlimited extent of slaughter," coupled with the "abominable murder of the Duc d'Enghien" in 1804 proved to be the last straw among his comrades.<sup>39</sup> Burckhardt follows similar lines in arguing that his excessive egotism and lust for power embodied in his installment of himself as "Consul for Life" in August 1802 and his coronation of himself as emperor in December 1804 paved the path for his downfall. He opines that Napoleon did not have "greatness of soul" after the Coup of 18 Brumaire at which point "he proceeded to treat France as a prey."<sup>40</sup> While Nietzsche never condemns Napoleon for any sort of predation, he does express similar sentiments that Napoleon became overawed with his own power and "regarded himself as something superhuman," with the consequence that this belief "went over into an almost insane fatalism, robbed him of his acuteness and swiftness of perception, and became the cause of his destruction" (HH 164).<sup>41</sup> However, Nietzsche also contradicts this statement later in *The Will to Power*, where he instead chalks up Napoleon's failure to his relinquishment of individual autonomy. Napoleon ultimately lost his own identity as he allowed democratic forces to remake him in their own image. According to Nietzsche:

The mightiest man, the creator, would have to be the most evil, inasmuch as he makes his ideal prevail over all men in opposition to their ideals, and remolds them according to his own image. Evil, in this respect, means hard, painful, enforced. Such men as Napoleon must always return and always confirm our belief in the autocracy of the individual: he himself, however, was corrupted by the means he had to stoop to, and had lost noblesse of character. If he had had to prevail among another kind of men, he could have availed himself of other means; and thus it would not seem necessary that a Caesar must become bad. (1883 WP 1026)

Nietzsche here suggests that if Napoleon had existed in another age, one not so corrupted by democracy, slave morality, and *ressentiment*, he could have remained at the height of power. But Napoleon did not have the fortitude to withstand the decadent forces he confronted and thus succumbed to

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<sup>39</sup> Sir Walter Scott, *The Life of Napoleon Bonaparte with a Preliminary View of the French Revolution* (Philadelphia: E. L. Carey and A. Hart, 1839), 665-668.

<sup>40</sup> Burckhardt, *Reflections on History*, 299.

<sup>41</sup> Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, HH 164.

modernity.

Nietzsche's suggestion that democratic forces remade Napoleon in their image does have some support from historians. According to Sudhir Hazareesingh, Napoleon consciously sought to construct a liberal image of himself during the aftermath of his fall.<sup>42</sup> Emmanuel Las Cases, Napoleon's secretary, provided the beginnings for the democratic image of Napoleon with the biography *Memorial of St Helena*. Interestingly enough, for a period of one hundred days, Napoleon briefly escaped exile and returned to France seeking to reestablish his rule on liberal principles. With the help of Benjamin Constant, he drafted the *Acte additionnel aux constitutions de l'Empire de 1815*, which was to serve as his new democratic constitution and which included freedom of the press. Not long after, Napoleon's descendants, Napoleon III and Prince Napoleon would both publish works furthering this liberal image of him. At this point, Napoleon's association with liberalism, egalitarianism and democracy began to emerge, though they would never fully become mainstream perspectives in France.<sup>43</sup>

### §3: Nietzsche's Political Vision

Now that the notion of the aestheticization of politics has been explicated and considered in its intellectual and historical context, we must explore the question of what constitutes the distinguishing feature of Nietzsche's conception of it. Moreover, we must consider the aestheticization of politics in relation to Nietzsche's greater political vision, which likely still appears inchoate at this point too, in order to get a fuller conception of either.

Despite the fact that Nietzsche does not present his political philosophy in a systematic manner, that does not mean that he lacks an integrated political vision. If we accept that aestheticism constitutes the unifying strand of Nietzsche's thought and that Nietzsche argues for an aestheticization of politics, then it must be possible to establish a greater political vision integrating these elements. To that end, I will maintain that Nietzsche conceives of politics, specifically grand politics, as the culmination of aesthetics, and the state as the crowning work of art of the higher man. Nietzsche's promotion of an aestheticization of politics does not merely imply the call for the transformation of abstract cultural values (if that were all that was being argued for, there would only need to be a change in hearts and

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<sup>42</sup> Sudhir Hazareesingh, *The Legend of Napoleon* (London: Granta Books, 2004), 37.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

minds), but necessarily involves a concrete transformation in the physical structure of political regimes and the creation of new political institutions. Therefore, the aestheticization of politics would begin with the emergence of a higher man who overthrows decadent values and institutions and would not end until he has created new values, aesthetically remade mankind in new forms, and established a new enduring political structure to uphold those institutions for millennia; thereby the artist-ruler will have transformed the state into a work of art. Far from holding an antipathy towards politics, Nietzsche offers a vision of aesthetics and morality that necessarily demands political action, that can only reach fruition through politics.

For Nietzsche, Napoleon was the embodiment of the higher man whose every action brought such political aims closer to realization. He would have successfully united Europe into one whole, one great work of art, were it not for the German Wars of Liberation and the ill-fated invasion of Russia that caused this undertaking to come undone. From this, it already appears that Napoleon holds a more than symbolic significance for Nietzsche. However, others have maintained that Napoleon simply represented a great force of personality or an embodiment of the will to power for Nietzsche and deny that Nietzsche actually admired Napoleon's political accomplishments. Certainly one must recognize the strength of Nietzsche's symbolic identification with Napoleon. Nietzsche confers Napoleon exceptionally preeminent status within his philosophy, which is revealed nowhere more clearly than when he writes of Napoleon as the culmination of the millennia-long clash of master and slave moralities. For Nietzsche, Napoleon occupies a pivotal role in the moral history of the world because he represented the most recent revolt against slave morality. Nietzsche writes that Napoleon had nearly brought an end once and for all to the war between Rome and Judea and the Renaissance and the Reformation:

Like a final sign-post to other ways, there appeared Napoleon, the most unique and violent anachronism that ever existed, and in him the incarnate problem of the aristocratic ideal in itself—consider well what a problem it is: Napoleon, that synthesis of the inhuman [*Unmensch*] and superhuman [*Übermensch*]. (GM First Essay 16)

Despite the fact that Nietzsche writes of Napoleon's synthesis of the inhuman and superhuman as constituting a problem, everything suggests, to the contrary, that he believes that Napoleon had bypassed the ordinary human condition of mediocrity and reached the pinnacle human condition. He clarifies this perspective later:

Man is beast [*Untier*] and superbeast [*Übertier*]; the higher man is both inhuman and superhuman: these belong together. With every great increase of greatness and height in man, there is also an increase in depth and terribleness: one ought not to desire the one without the other—or rather: the more radically one desires the one, the more radically he achieves precisely the other. (WP 1027 and KSA 12 9[154])

Nietzsche's application of the terms "inhuman and superhuman" to Napoleon appears to directly evoke a self-appellation that Napoleon had adopted himself; Napoleon was recorded as saying that "a man such as I am is always either *un dio* or *un diavolo*."<sup>44</sup> Considering that Nietzsche makes use of Napoleon's own language to refer to him, a real political attachment seems evident.

Nevertheless, there are some scholars, such as Paul F. Glenn, who assert that Nietzsche cares about Napoleon only as an aesthetic and symbolic figure. Glenn makes the argument that:

Napoleon is a great figure because of the power and vitality of his soul, not because of anything he accomplished. In his praise of the French emperor, Nietzsche never mentions the Code Napoleon, the bureaucratic reforms he enacted, or his military conquests. Instead, he focuses on who Napoleon was—his forceful character... The measure of an artist is his power, and artists of government are no different. The French emperor acted on the government as a piece of marble, and the resulting creation, if fleeting, reflected his power and elevation.<sup>45</sup>

Implicit in Glenn's statement is his interpretation of Nietzsche's political thought as fundamentally metaphorical, and therefore essentially apolitical. Like some other adherents of this apolitical line of interpretation, Glenn contends that most of Nietzsche's philosophy, especially elements like his delineation of the value conflict between master and slave moralities, should be read as primarily allegorical, representing something like a metaphor for the internal conflicts within an individual. Accordingly, Napoleon's placement at the climax of this moral struggle would merely be symbolic in that only serves to represent the human spirit writ large. For Glenn, Nietzsche's higher man

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<sup>44</sup> Ernst Bertram, *Nietzsche: Attempt at a Mythology*, Trans. Robert E. Norton (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 181-182.

<sup>45</sup> Paul F. Glenn, "Nietzsche's Napoleon: The Higher Man as Political Actor," *The Review of Politics*, 63, (Winter 2001), Cambridge University Press, 144-145.

can be understood as representing the individualistic struggle to achieve harmony within oneself or, in terms of aesthetics, as a metaphor for the struggle of the higher man to create a work of art that truly reflects the greatness of his soul and inspires others to strive after greatness. Indeed, Glenn says as much:

Politics, then, should be viewed aesthetically. As noted before, a piece of art is inferior to the artist because it is the brilliance of the creator that shines through and that lures others to greatness. Similarly, what is important is not the outcome of political action but the act itself. The value of Napoleon's political deeds to life was inherent in the act itself, regardless of the result. His deeds exhibited his power and character, just as a painting or poem exhibits the strength of the artist. This means that Napoleon did not act simply to bring about a particular objective... Nietzschean politics is expressivist, not outcome-oriented.<sup>46</sup>

However, I find Glenn's interpretation of Nietzsche quite flawed in several regards. First of all, Nietzsche writes extensively of Napoleon's military accomplishments, even extolling his "militarism" the "cure" for decadence.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, Nietzsche explicitly dismisses any readings of his philosophy as a metaphor for internal, individual conflict, writing: "my philosophy aims at a new order of rank, not an individualistic morality."<sup>48</sup> Likewise, if Nietzsche's political statements were only intended as metaphors for an esoteric, individualistic process of self-overcoming, then what sense would it make for Nietzsche to write expressly of the need for building new political structures that will "endure for thousands of years?"<sup>49</sup> Surely one could not read the statements expressing Nietzsche's desire for a politically and economically unified Europe and his critiques of romantic nationalism as merely metaphorical too.<sup>50</sup> He is most attached to Napoleon on precisely those counts. A political unification of Europe is one of the most definite and concrete outcomes that Napoleon sought to advance and for which Nietzsche lauded his efforts.

Furthermore, if Nietzsche truly had no concern for Napoleon's political achievements, why would he make such polemical statements

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> 1888 WP 41.

<sup>48</sup> WP 287 and 1883-1888 KSA 12 7[6].

<sup>49</sup> WP 960 and 1885 KSA 12 2[57]. See also 1885-1886 WP 730 and BGE 203 and 208.

<sup>50</sup> BGE 208 and 256.



disparaging the German Wars of Liberation (1813-1815) in contrast to nearly every other German cultural figure (with the notable exception of Hegel)? Fichte fervently opposed Napoleon's invasion of Germany and called upon the German people to resist subjugation to the "Rome of today" and to "annihilate the rule of brute physical force in the world."<sup>51</sup> By contrast, Nietzsche claims in absurdly contrarian fashion that:

The Germans have robbed Europe of the harvest of the last *great* era, the Renaissance era... Finally, when there appeared on the bridge between two centuries of decadence, a *force majeure* of genius and will, strong enough to create a unity out of Europe, a political and economic unity for the sake of a world government, the Germans, with their "Wars of Liberation" robbed Europe of the meaning, the wonderful meaning of the existence of Napoleon. (EH CW 2)

Nietzsche holds the Germans responsible for thwarting the Napoleonic undertaking of uniting Europe through military conquest, and moreover for undermining the burgeoning conception of Europe as an association of states. Nietzsche's particularly strong hatred of German nationalism was most likely rooted in this lingering resentment at Germany's role in the downfall of Napoleon decades after the fact. For all of these reasons, I still maintain that Nietzsche regards Napoleon not only as an embodiment of the will to power, but moreover as an intellectual kinsman in terms of his shared outlook and political objectives. All of the evidence suggests that Nietzsche's attachment to Napoleon must not have been merely metaphorical or symbolic, but rather must have been an authentic identification with the political values that he espoused and the concrete political actions that he took.

Nietzsche finds an aestheticization of politics advanced through all of Napoleon's undertakings. His political actions were not merely taken out of expedience, but rather they were consciously created political *works*. There appears to be a definite end towards which Napoleon and all such artist-rulers aim, namely the aestheticization of the state. Like the finest marble, the state constitutes the highest object with which an artist can work, because it embraces all of the lesser objects with which he works—his subjects and, for that matter, himself—as one. Hence, the creation of an aesthetic regime would be the highest work that any individual could produce. All of this is no abstract dream. Nietzsche envisions the establishment of such a regime as a real

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<sup>51</sup> Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, Ed. George Armstrong Kelly, Trans. R. F. Jones and G. H. Turnbull (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968), 225.

possibility—indeed, he thinks that it nearly happened with Napoleon. For Nietzsche, the creation of a politically unified Europe would be the highest work of political art ever produced, and the artist-ruler who could achieve such a deed through his statecraft would be the greatest artist ever to live. Napoleon was naturally the man who came closest to bringing about this feat. It is for this reason that Nietzsche apotheosizes Napoleon more than any other figure.

Embodied in the notion of the aestheticization of politics, one can find Nietzsche's greater political vision revealed. I have already argued that Nietzsche's notion of the aestheticization of politics presents a positive political vision, but now I will make the case that it proceeds in a very specific way. Before one can reach the highest aesthetic goal of making the state a work of art, there must be intermediary degrees of aestheticization. Therefore, the aestheticization of politics should be conceived of as unfolding through progressive stages. All of the various political, moral, and aesthetic ambitions that Nietzsche espouses can all be arranged into certain stages within this process. Nietzsche's aestheticization of politics would begin first with the overcoming of morality, then continue on with law-giving and the assignment of value, then the artistic refashioning and selective breeding of mankind, then finally it would culminate in political unification and the establishment of a new state. Each stage, respectively, consists of the overthrowing of decadent values, the creation of new, higher values and the assertion or imposition of those values, and finally the upholding of those values in a durable political structure that itself constitutes a work of art. All of these elements have a firm foundation within Nietzsche's philosophy and should be regarded as his authentic political goals. Despite how abstract or symbolic the first elements, the ones dealing with morality, may appear on their face, they appear all the more real when considered as providing the necessary foundation for Nietzsche's most concrete goals, those of political unification and establishment of an enduring political state. Each one naturally leads into the next and therefore must be taken as a whole.

Nietzsche envisions the culmination of aesthetics as lying in the political realm. Nietzsche's aesthetic vision, his conception of life as an aesthetic experience, thus necessarily calls for political action. Accordingly, the aestheticization of politics is an integrated political vision for how to transform people and ultimately the state into works of art. Despite all of the ostensible emphasis on the state, Nietzsche does not apotheosize the state, in contrast to Hegel, but rather he apotheosizes the individual man—the higher man—at the helm of the state. Napoleon represents this higher man for Nietzsche, and with each of Napoleon's accomplishments one can see the progressive

aestheticization of politics unfolding until his pan-European vision was finally thwarted. Let us now trace the course of this aestheticization of politics through the successive stages of overthrowing traditional morality, law-giving and refashioning mankind, and political unification to see how each fits together as an element of Nietzsche's greater political vision.

Starting with the first stage, the campaign against morality must certainly be the most widely acknowledged aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy. Along with aestheticism, it constitutes the most consistent idea of Nietzsche's philosophy. Nietzsche offers polemical critiques of conventional morality throughout every one of his works, at every period of his life. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche, speaking of Sophocles' *Oedipus*, states: "The noble human being does not sin, the profound poet wants to tell us: though every law, every natural order, even the moral world may be destroyed through his actions, his actions also produce a higher magical circle of effects which found a new world on the ruins of the old one that has been overthrown" (BT 9). Nietzsche continues this line of thought in *The Gay Science*, declaring that: "The strongest and most evil spirits have so far done the most to advance humanity" (GS 4). Nietzsche's later works express the same sentiment unadulterated: "It is the same with the human as with the tree. The more it aspires to the height and light, the more strongly its roots strive earthward, downward, into the dark, the depths—into evil" (Z Part One: On the Tree on the Mountainside); "Man must grow better and more evil.' Thus do I teach" (Z Part Four: On the Higher Man 5); "Zarathustra, the first psychologist of the good, is consequently a friend of the evil" (EH Destiny 5).

Nietzsche naturally associates Napoleon with this kind of positive immorality. Napoleon's actions reveal an unmistakable despotic strain and scorn for the established morals of society. At the very outset, Napoleon founded his reign upon a *coup d'état* on 18 Brumaire. He immediately proceeded to arrogate power to himself as an autocrat, consolidate the government, and inaugurate a military dictatorship embodied in the consulate and established in the Constitution of the Year VIII, 13 December 1799. According to Geoffrey Ellis, "military structures formed the hard basis of Napoleon's power."<sup>52</sup> Napoleon thereafter initiated a full conscription of citizens to participate in the Napoleonic Wars and perpetual warfare became the defining feature of Napoleon's regime. I have already mentioned earlier that Nietzsche speaks positively of Napoleon's militarism.<sup>53</sup> Nietzsche further

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<sup>52</sup> Geoffrey Ellis, *The Napoleonic Empire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 58.

<sup>53</sup> Note 47

associates Napoleon with the visionary form of immorality that Zarathustra possesses.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, Nietzsche writes of Napoleon's profound violation of the moral order as a necessary attribute of and testament to his greatness:

Every man with great convictions has perpetrated *all* crimes... That one does and bears many bad deeds, carried away by the greatness of one's way of thinking and unafraid of condemnation of one's *reputation*... Likewise Napoleon... *One does not understand great men*: they forgive themselves every crime but no weakness. How many do they kill! Every genius—what a wasteland surrounds him! (1884 KSA 11 25 [259])

By these standards, Napoleon's actions are not merely sanctioned, but even sanctified.

Unsurprisingly, there has been a wide consensus that this iconoclastic notion of tearing down decadent values constitutes a significant and authentic goal of Nietzsche's philosophy. However, the question of what end such violation of morals is meant to serve becomes more contentious. Many have argued that Nietzsche seeks the overthrow of all forms of morality and has no desire to establish anything in its stead. However, such assertions seem patently false in light of Nietzsche's statement that "herd-animal morality is only *one* kind of human morality beside which, before which, after which many other, above all *higher*, moralities are possible" (BGE 202).<sup>55</sup> Consequently, the overthrow of the conventional moral order does not serve solely iconoclastic purposes; Nietzsche does not condone the destruction of values and institutions simply for the sake of destruction. Instead, the overthrow of the decadent moral order and decaying political institutions allows for the possibility of the creation of new values. Therefore, this second stage of lawgiving marks a transitional stage from the deconstructive aspect of Nietzsche's vision to the constructive aspect of his vision. Nietzsche writes that the natural privilege and superiority of the higher man demands that he "*create values*" (BGE 211). Furthermore, he explains that "all great artists of government [*Regierungs-Künstler*] so far (Confucius in China, the Imperium Romanum, Napoleon, and the papacy at a time when it had the courage of its worldliness and frankly pursued power) also made use of spiritual

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<sup>54</sup> 1884 KSA 11 26[142].

<sup>55</sup> See also BGE 187, which speaks of the different ends various moralities seek, some positive, some negative, and BGE 228, which speaks of the order of rank between "man and man" and "morality and morality."

enlightenment [*geistigen Aufklärung*].”<sup>56</sup> Upon the devastation of the old, decadent order, new, healthier values can finally come into being. New philosophers and leaders need only recognize their “intrinsic right to create values” (BGE 26) and innate capacity for lawgiving in order to assert these values:

*Actual philosophers, however, are commanders and lawgivers: they say “thus it shall be!” It is they who determine the wherefore and whither of mankind—they reach for the future with a creative hand, and everything that is or has been becomes for them a means, an instrument, a hammer. Their “knowing” is creating, their creating is a lawgiving, their will to truth is—will to power. (BGE 211)*

While Napoleon would not constitute a philosopher in the traditional sense, Nietzsche envisions him as the embodiment of this master-type who represents the pinnacle of human development and thus has the responsibility to assign to the rest of mankind values and roles corresponding to their natural status.<sup>57</sup>

Through the higher man’s remaking of values suitable for a thriving society, he beings to undertake the initial work of the aesthetic project of constructing a new society. By the actions of the higher man in the second stage, the aestheticization of politics is tangibly advanced and it continues to advance further in the third stage. With the third stage, comes the need to shift from working upon values to working upon man himself. Nietzsche envisions that the higher man will herein engage in eugenic experiments to selectively breed and refashion mankind. For artists of government to mold man into something higher, they must first regard him dispassionately as raw material to be worked upon, raw material that stands in need of an artist to come along and give it shape. To that end, Nietzsche asserts that “man is formlessness, material, an ugly stone which requires a sculptor” (EH Z 8). However, Nietzsche maintains that Christianity had hindered the attainment of this purpose. Christianity has produced “men not high or hard enough for the artistic refashioning of mankind; men not strong or farsighted enough for the sublime self-constraint needed to allow the foreground law of thousandfold failure and perishing to prevail; men not noble enough to see the abysmal disparity in order of rank and abysm of rank between man and man” (BGE

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<sup>56</sup> WP 129 and 1885 KSA 11 36[48].

<sup>57</sup> See 1885 KSA 11 35[47] and 1885 KSA 11 35[45] and BGE 9.

62). By contrast, Nietzsche calls for new philosophers who will take it as their duty to reshape mankind and impose their will through such refashioning. Furthermore, he elucidates that all higher men strive to form “great communities in their own image; they would fain give multiformity and disorder definite shape” (1884 WP 964).

Nietzsche professes that such “great enterprises and collective experiments in discipline and breeding” will ultimately “put an end to the gruesome dominion of chance and nonsense that has hitherto been called ‘history’” (BGE 203). One cannot have any doubts that what Nietzsche argues for here must be some kind of eugenics. For Nietzsche, the “gruesome dominion of chance and nonsense” in history can only come to an end when a comprehensive system of eugenics is instituted to reflect the naturally ordained hierarchy among different types of man. He cites the Code of Manu, which provides the foundation for the Hindu caste system, as an exemplar nonpareil of how to implement such a system of breeding. Furthermore, he identifies it as a supremely natural and healthy model of eugenics, conducive to the flourishing of an aristocratic society, which sets it in contrast to Christianity, which is inimical to such hierarchies of rank. Nietzsche writes:

To draw up such a law book as Manu’s means to lay before a people the possibility of future mastery, of attainable perfection—it permits them to aspire to the highest reaches of the art of life... The order of castes, the highest, the dominating law, is merely the ratification of an order of nature, of a natural law of the first rank... In all this, I repeat, there is nothing arbitrary, nothing “made up”; whatever is to the contrary is made up—by it nature is brought to shame... The order of castes, the order of rank, simply formulates the supreme law of life itself; the separation of the three types is necessary to the maintenance of society, and to the evolution of higher types, and the highest types—the inequality of rights is essential to the existence of any rights at all... Life is always harder as one mounts the heights—the cold increases, responsibility increases. A high civilization is a pyramid: it can stand only on a broad base; its primary prerequisite is a strong and soundly consolidated mediocrity. (AC 57)<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> For brevity’s sake, I have cut out a section with remarkable echoes of Aristotle’s *Politics* where Nietzsche speaks of technical professions and specialization as vocations fit only for the mediocre and the intellectual domain as fit only for the higher man. For further explication of the closely related concept of the pathos of distance, see BGE 257 and GM First Essay 2. For further exploration of the Law of Manu, see the rest of AC 57, TI The “Improvers” of Mankind 3, and WP 142-145. Passages from WP in particular (which

Clearly, Nietzsche regards the reconfiguration of social hierarchies to reflect the naturally ordained order among men as an important aesthetic undertaking. Only when society aligns itself with the rigid, hierarchical structure of nature can “the art of life” be uncovered.

Nietzsche finds that despite all of Napoleon’s purported actions to promote liberal democracy and human rights,<sup>59</sup> his undertakings actually had the effect of advancing anti-liberal and essentially aristocratic principles in line with the need for lawgiving and the reinstatement of an order of rank, like that set out in the Code of Manu. For instance, Napoleon declared himself First Consul for Life in 1802 and then hereditary emperor in 1804 with Pope Pius VII officiating his coronation, in effect, reinstating the aristocratic principle of hereditary succession, which was formalized in the Constitution of the Year XII. Earlier, Napoleon had established his Concordat of 1801 with the Catholic Church, formally seeking reconciliation, but in fact anesthetizing the threat of religious opposition and enlisting the Church to provide moral support for his regime, as Napoleon was recorded as privately admitting.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, while Napoleon’s government ostensibly had the form of a representative democracy based upon popular consent through the use of plebiscites, plebiscites were only convened four times during Napoleon’s ten-year reign.<sup>61</sup> Hence, there was no universal suffrage and the plebiscitary system appeared only to promote the image of democracy. Moreover, the Napoleonic Code granted no significant rights to women and actually constrained workers’ rights.<sup>62</sup> Later, the Penal Code of 1810 deepened economic disparities through

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were written contemporaneously in 1888 with the passage from AC quoted here), reveal Nietzsche’s polarized attitudes towards the Law of Manu. He variously calls it a “priestly lie” and a corrupting “Aryan” influence, and an invention of the warrior castes and an affirmative “Aryan” religion. I think it may be fair to say tentatively that Nietzsche would object to the Law of Manu only insofar as it represents the will of the priestly castes, but otherwise does not have a problem with the essential nature of it.

<sup>59</sup> Napoleon inaugurated the Civil Code in March 1804, which reinforced the principles set out in the National Constituent Assembly’s *Declaration of the Rights of Man* during the French Revolution. The Napoleonic Code, as it was later renamed in 1807, sought to uphold “personal freedom, equality among citizens, suppression of privileges attached to title or social class, and the end of feudalism.” Roger Dufraisse, *Napoleon* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1992), 73. Napoleon also included support for universal male suffrage as a chief provision of the Constitution of the Year VIII.

<sup>60</sup> Napoleon asked the philosopher Pierre Cabanis, “Do you know what this Concordat is which I have just signed? It is the vaccination of religion, and in fifty years there will be none in France.” According to De Staël, *Considerations on the Principal Events of the French Revolution*, 454.

<sup>61</sup> Dufraisse, *Napoleon*, 147.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

the implementation of anti-union laws.<sup>63</sup> Now these facts do not necessarily warrant any claim that Napoleon sought to subvert democracy and reinstall an aristocracy, rather they only show his despotic character. Nevertheless, Nietzsche found much ground to conclude that Napoleon's political ideology was aristocratic in all but name. Nietzsche would have lauded Napoleon's proclamation of himself as emperor as a positive assertion of the will to power. Likewise, considering that Nietzsche's advocacy of the manipulation of democratic and religious institutions in order to advance one's private goals, he certainly would have lauded Napoleon's Concordat as a brilliant act of dissimulation.<sup>64</sup>

Ultimately, the forces that demand an aestheticization of politics through the destruction of morals, lawgiving and the creation of new values, and the selective refashioning of mankind, demand the instatement of all such institutions and values in a strongly centralized state. Hence, Nietzsche's vision of the unification of Europe, which he offers in such lofty language,<sup>65</sup> may actually be much less of a progressive vision of overcoming petty nationalistic politics and more of a radical statist vision of politics. Nietzsche explicitly recommends the formation of a ruling caste to supply this united Europe with a single will and provide a structure that will last for millennia:

The reverse would be more after my heart—I mean such an increase in the Russian threat that Europe would have to resolve to become equally threatening, namely to *acquire a single will* by means of a new caste dominating all of Europe, a protracted terrible will of its own that could set its objectives thousands of years ahead—so that the long drawn-out comedy of its petty states and the divided will of its dynasties and democracies should finally come to an end. The time for petty politics is past: the very next century will bring with it the struggle for mastery over the whole earth—the *compulsion* to grand politics. (BGE 208)

Nietzsche identifies this conception of a unified Europe as Napoleonic: Napoleon was “the only one hitherto strong enough to create a political and economic unity out of Europe.”<sup>66</sup> He further explains that such a state the

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> For Nietzsche's statements on the manipulation of democratic and religious institutions, see WP 132 and 1885 KSA 11 35[9]. On the cultural value of dissimulation, see WP 544 and 1887 KSA 12 10[159].

<sup>65</sup> BGE 256 and 1885 KSA 11 37[9].

<sup>66</sup> *The Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, Letter to Franz Overbeck, 1888, 315.



depends ultimately upon “such an artistic will of the first order that has the power in its hands and can make its creative will prevail over long periods of time in the form of legislation, religions, and morals” (1885 WP 957). Upon the emergence of the higher man or a ruling caste like Nietzsche describes above, the state comes to represent the will of the persons behind it and translates their wills into a lasting aesthetic-political structure:

That something longer-lasting than an individual should endure, that a *work* which has been created by an individual should endure and outlive the individual who has created it: to that end, every possible kind of limitation, one-sidedness, etc., must be imposed upon the individual... How is such a complex of power maintained? By the fact that many generations sacrifice themselves for it. (1885-1886 WP 730)

In that light, Nietzsche ultimately arrives at a conception of the state as the organized will to power; that is what constitutes the essence of his greater political vision. Each of the elements of the previous stages of the aestheticization of politics—morality, lawgiving, and eugenics—are marshaled together to support the existence of such a state.<sup>67</sup> Consequently, the aestheticization of politics reaches its culmination.

However, this still leaves the question of which form of regime this state will take and what constitutes the essential nature and characteristics of such a structure. Not surprisingly, Nietzsche asserts that the form of his ideal state will of necessity not be democratic:

I have already, in *Human, All too Human*, characterized modern democracy as the *decaying form* of the state. For institutions to exist there must exist the kind of will, instinct, imperative, which is anti-liberal to the point of malice... If this will is present, there is established something such as the *Imperium Romanum*... The entire West has lost those instincts out of which institutions grow, out of which the *future* grows. (II Expeditions 39)

Instead, Nietzsche affirms that the only healthy form for such a political regime would be an aristocracy, for “aristocracy represents the belief in an elite humanity and in a higher caste,” while democracy represents the negation of that belief.<sup>68</sup> As for the state’s basic nature, we have already seen that it will be founded upon violation of the current moral order, autocratic imposition of

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<sup>67</sup> 1887 WP 719.

<sup>68</sup> 1884 WP 752

values and stratified social hierarchies, and eugenicist experiments in the breeding and the remaking of mankind. But Nietzsche's vision of what the state should seek to accomplish becomes even more chilling. Nietzsche holds that the justification for such a state will lie in the way in which it sets out to achieve grand political aims that individuals could not or would not dare to attempt on their own:

Only individuals feel themselves responsible. Multiplicities are invented in order to do things for which the individual lacks the courage... Society has never regarded virtue as anything but a means to power, strength, and order (1888 WP 716)... The state is organized immorality—internally as police, penal law, classes, commerce, family; externally as will to power, to war, to conquest, to revenge. How does it happen that the state will do a host of things that the individual would never countenance? Through the division of responsibility, of command, and of execution; through the interposition of the virtues of obedience, duty, patriotism, and loyalty; through upholding feelings of pride, severity, strength, hatred, and revenge—in short, all typical traits that contradict the herd type (1887-1888 WP 717)... None of you has the courage to kill a man or even to whip him. But the tremendous machine of the state overpowers the individual, so he repudiates responsibility for what he does (obedience, oath, etc.). Everything that a man does in the service of the state is against his own nature. Similarly, everything he learns with a view to future service of the state is contrary to his nature. This result is achieved through division of labor so that no one any longer possesses the full responsibility. (1887-1888 WP 718)

Therefore, Nietzsche's greater political and aesthetic project ultimately leads to the justification of an unconscionably immoral and totalitarian behemoth of a state. His vision of an aesthetic regime belongs among the most radical and shocking conceptions of the state ever to have been forwarded within mainstream political philosophy.

## **Conclusion**

Walter Benjamin, who first established the term, the "aestheticization of politics," and contrasted it with a "politicization of art," declared that: "all

efforts to render politics aesthetic culminate in one thing: war.”<sup>69</sup> Benjamin goes on to connect this to the perpetuation of exploitative property systems, but such a statement of the fundamental kinship between the aestheticization of politics and warfare and persecution also bears significance here, especially in light of the conclusion reached above. From its inception with Machiavelli, to its retroactive application among nineteenth century cultural critics and historians to the feudal princely states of the Italian Renaissance, the creation of an aestheticized politics has always been associated with warfare, repression, and the darkest sides of life. In fact, the ideal of an aesthetic regime only appears to be used towards the end of legitimation of an amoral oligarchy or autocracy of the individual. In all too many ways, Nietzsche’s political vision of the aestheticization of politics represents essentially the same political vision offered in fascism. All of the remarkable and disturbing resemblances cannot simply be dismissed. Nevertheless, I think that a crucial observation may clarify the one possible way in which Nietzsche’s perspective may be different. While I have presented Nietzsche’s political vision as a series of successive stages, I do not necessarily believe that Nietzsche would conceive of it as a program for any individual man or any nation to pursue. For Nietzsche, the aestheticization of politics depends on the emergence of a special type of man, some higher man, and instead of laying out a program that any ordinary political figure can seize upon and seek to implement, he most likely seeks to set out the path that the higher man will take to achieve his aims when he appears in the world. Nevertheless, I also do not think that Nietzsche seeks to deny the human agency to effect political change either, but rather such a political structure would still be something towards which he believes that society as a whole can and should strive.

Keith Ansell-Pearson finds in Nietzsche “a deep incompatibility between the historical insights of his inquiry into the problem of civilization and the political vision he develops in response to the particular historical problem of nihilism.”<sup>70</sup> One must be compelled to agree with this statement in light of the foregoing revelations. Nevertheless, it is worth bearing in mind that Nietzsche conceives of his philosophy as providing an affirmation of life in response to nihilism. He believes that contemporary society, with its pervasive decadence, produces a breed of men who demand little of life and

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<sup>69</sup> Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Illuminations*, Ed. Hannah Arendt, Trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 241.

<sup>70</sup> Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Nietzsche contra Rousseau* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 223.

aspire to even less. Under these conditions, societal decay will be inevitable and disgust with the direction of the world will lead to the embrace of nihilism. However, Nietzsche ultimately seeks to find something to affirm his belief in man.<sup>71</sup>

There remains one significant counterargument that could be made against the core argument of this thesis: that Nietzsche understands his himself and his project as anti-political in nature and, thus, such an interpretation of the constructive strains of his political thought would be inherently flawed. As adherents of this anti-political reading point out, Nietzsche does express the sentiment that:

Culture and the state—one should not deceive oneself over this—are antagonists: the “cultural state” is merely a modern idea. The one lives off the other, the one thrives at the expense of the other. All great cultural epochs are epochs of political decline: that which is great in the cultural sense has been unpolitical, even *anti-political*... [sic] Goethe’s heart opened up at the phenomenon Napoleon—it *closed* up to the “Wars of Liberation.” (TI Germans 4)

However, while such a statement may appear deeply problematic for the foregoing argument that this thesis has advanced, it would be mistaken to read this statement as a disavowal of politics altogether. Nietzsche makes an critical caveat to his statement when he acknowledges the special relationship between Goethe and Napoleon. Their mutual goodwill demonstrates that there are exceptions to the antagonistic relationship between culture and politics. Indeed, Nietzsche writes:

There were two great attempts made to overcome the eighteenth century: Napoleon, in that he reawakened man, the soldier, and the great struggle for power, and conceived of Europe as a political unit; Goethe, in that he imagined a European culture which would consist of the whole heritage of what humanity had attained to up to his time. (1888 WP 104)

Nietzsche does ultimately consider a synthesis of culture and politics to be possible and, moreover, he puts forth such a synthesis as exceedingly desirable.

Whether one deems Nietzsche to be a political or apolitical thinker may be also merely a matter of perspective. Nietzsche *is* apolitical with regard to his absolute lack of desire to engage with the politics of his age. He does not

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<sup>71</sup> GM First Essay 12

have any interest whatsoever in engaging with representative democracy or the causes of socialism or nationalism. Nietzsche does not seek to transform politics through the traditional institutions and socially accepted mechanisms of political engagement for the citizen of a democratic society. Instead of promoting traditional means of engagement, Nietzsche seeks to transform politics through radically different means and to establish a new politics and a new culture, and, in that sense, he is absolutely political.

Nietzsche affirms his commitment to politics with the utmost strength when he makes the portentous statement that “the time is coming when one must relearn politics.” Through this statement and the passage in which it occurs, Nietzsche offers perhaps the most definitive and explicit representation of his radical neo-aristocratic, imperialistic political vision of an aesthetic regime and all that it entails:

From now on, there will be such favorable preconditions for greater ruling powers as have never yet been found on earth. And this is by no means the most important point. The establishment has been made possible of international race unions which will set themselves the task of breeding a master race, the future “masters of the earth”—a new, vast aristocracy based on the most severe self-discipline, in which the will of the philosophical men of power and artist-tyrants [*Künstler-Tyrannen*] will be made to endure for thousands of years: a higher type of men which, thanks to their preponderance of will, knowledge, wealth, and influence will avail themselves of democratic Europe as the most suitable and supple instrument they can have for taking the fate of the earth into their own hands and working as artists upon man himself. Enough, the time is coming when one will relearn [*umlernen*: to change one’s ideas] politics. (WP 960 and 1885 KSA 12 2[57])

For such a grandiose political vision to become a reality, it would require a massive tectonic shift in the political landscape that would raze democratic institutions to the ground and would lay the foundation for durable, imperial institutions to be built in their stead. It would leave an utterly devastated cultural and social wasteland in its wake, but, nonetheless, Nietzsche insists that this grim new landscape would be one in which society would be transformed beyond recognition and politics would be reshaped into something higher and much closer to art. From any other perspective, however, it is a vision of a future that would be harrowing to behold.

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# **Teaching Asylum Seekers to Fish: Fiscal Sustainability in Germany via Job Training for Asylum Seekers**

**MARISSA BOWMAN**

## **Abstract**

Motivated by the large influx of refugees to the European Union in 2015, this paper employs cost and revenue analyses to examine the fiscal impact of asylum seekers relative to natives in Germany in 2002 and 2014. Further, the specific changes in expenditures on asylum seekers from 2002-2014 are evaluated. Asylum seekers in 2002 and 2014 were receiving more in benefits than they paid in taxes, and this value was greater per asylum seeker in 2014. More specifically, the government spent significantly more per asylum seeker each year, yet spent significantly less on job training. The decision to spend more on social assistance rather than on job training for asylum seekers has long-run implications for their contribution to the budget. A greater emphasis on job training benefits in future fiscal policy could increase the rate at which asylum seekers move into the labor force, such that they could begin to positively contribute to Germany fiscally.

## **I. Introduction**

In 2015, the European Union (EU) received more than 1.2 million asylum seekers – over double the applicants from the previous year. Most of these individuals traveled across the Mediterranean Sea from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq to seek asylum from war-ridden homelands, and religious and political persecution. Germany has attracted the greatest number of refugees in the EU in the last two years; these refugees are enticed by the thorough welfare benefits available in the strongest European Union economy. An estimated 800,000 asylum seekers applied for asylum in Germany last year. Germany accepted more asylum seekers in 2015 than the United States, three times its size, has accepted in the past ten years (Garza, 2015).

The German government has created benefits and resources for asylum seekers to assist them as they apply for official asylum. However, German citizens are concerned that the asylum seekers will burden their financial system. A thorough analysis of how German fiscal expenditure on asylum seekers has changed between 2001 and 2014 is necessary to determine what policy changes should be considered to alleviate this financial strain, if such a strain exists.

In this paper, I analyze the 2014 budget of the German government by comparing the shares of public revenues and public costs of the asylum seekers relative to natives. Then, these values are evaluated relative to the fiscal budget in 2002. I show that the asylum seekers in 2014 received a larger share of benefits than they contributed in public costs, and that this gap has increased in size since 2002. Then, I analyze changes in spending, and changes in spending on job training specifically, for asylum seekers. I find that while the German government has significantly increased spending per asylum seeker per year, job training expenditures for this group have significantly decreased. Focusing spending on job training could allow asylum seekers to positively contribute fiscally to the German budget via taxes, and even fill a need for low-skill workers in Germany's manufacturing sector.

This paper will examine the past and current fiscal impact of asylum seekers to inform the development of future fiscal policy. The structure of the paper is as follows. First, a sociocultural background of the issue will be provided. Then, the fiscal impact of foreigners in Germany will be analyzed. "Foreigners" is the broader category of individuals who are not residents or naturalized to Germany. Public revenues from foreigners are assessed, as they may be representative of asylum seekers' future contributions if the asylum seekers move into the labor force. I will present a review of evidence on the

impact of immigration on the German economy as well as a cost-benefit analysis of the impact of asylum seekers on Sweden's economy, the country that received the greatest number of asylum seekers per capita in 2014. The heart of this paper details the subcomponents of public costs/revenues in Germany on/from asylum seekers and natives in 2002 and 2014. In addition, changes in expenditure on asylum seekers in general, and on job training for asylum seekers specifically, from 2002-2014 will be presented. Finally, the implications of these findings will be summarized to inform future fiscal policy decisions in Germany.

The title of this paper is based on the ancient Chinese proverb: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." The German government could give the asylum seekers fish – in the form of social assistance – to feed them for a day. Moreover, they could teach asylum seekers to fish – via job training – to allow them to provide for themselves in Germany. This study focuses on teaching asylum seekers to fish as a means to improve both their lives and the economy of Germany.

## II. Theoretical Framework

The substantial increase of asylum seekers in Germany in 2015 is unprecedented. However, it is unsurprising that Germany has become the most desirable country for those seeking asylum, given the benefits available. Since 1993 Germany's *Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz*, or Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act, has regulated the provision of food, housing, household goods, clothing, and healthcare to all asylum seekers that are in the process of officially applying for asylum in Germany ("The Asylum-Seekers' Benefits Act", n.d.).

While the influx of asylum seekers is unprecedented, the German economy has been highly affected by immigrants since Germany's unification in 1871 (Butterwege, 2005). Before World War I, an estimated 1.2 million foreign migrant workers were employed in Germany. During World War II, while hundreds of thousands of Jews were forced to depart the country, approximately 11 million foreign citizens were forced to work in the German war economy. Germany's unwillingness to repeat National Socialist policy that excluded out-groups is cited as one cultural factor that contributes to government officials' willingness to include and integrate immigrants today. After World War II, millions of foreign guest workers, primarily from Mediterranean countries, were recruited to help rebuild the Federal Republic, or west Germany. There was even immigration within what are now the modern political borders of the country, as 2.7 million people migrated from

the socialist state of the former German Democratic Republic, or east Germany, to west Germany (Butterwegge, 2005).

Chancellor Angela Merkel and her cabinet have been quite welcoming to the large influx of immigrants, but have faced heavy opposition from some political groups. In 2013, a right-wing anti-immigration political party, Alternative for Germany, was formed. In March, 2016 the Alternative for Germany party received double-digit percentages of the vote in three states, now filling seats in eight state legislatures (Eckardt, 2016). In 2014, a citizens' group calling itself Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West, or *Pegida*, formed in Dresden and organized rallies across the country. An estimated 25,000 supporters attended a rally in January, 2015 ("Why are thousands protesting?", 2015). In the first six months of 2015, more than 200 arsons of asylum shelters were reported (Eddy, 2015).

Beyond the religious and cultural differences between asylum seekers and native Germans, one of the most frequently cited concerns of citizens is that the asylum seekers will take taxpayers' money without giving anything back (Ulrich, 2015). Indeed, economists estimate that Germany spent about 10 billion euros in 2015 to feed, house, teach, and train asylum seekers for the work force. The rate at which the asylum seekers move into the German labor force will determine whether they will, in the long run, contribute positively to German gross domestic product (GDP), thus making the large expenditures on asylum seekers beneficial from a purely fiscal perspective.

Asylum seekers could be crucial for the German economy if they move into the labor force. In 2015, the birth rate in Germany was at a historic low of an estimated 8.2 births per 1,000 people, and the percentage of residents of working age is predicted to shrink from 61% to 54% in the next 15 years (Chu, 2015). By comparison, predictions based on population data in the United Kingdom indicate that for each one-percent net increase in population due to immigration, the aged dependency ratio<sup>1</sup> falls by 0.64 percent (Rowthorn, 2008). This means that asylum seekers could affect the age structure of Germany and by moving into the workforce could balance the ratio of workers to retirees.

Moreover, Germany currently has a low unemployment rate and a shortage of workers in low-skilled jobs (Cottrell, 2015). The influx of asylum seekers could be precisely the exogenous shock the country needs to continue to break world records in trade surpluses ("Germany hits export surplus record", 2015).

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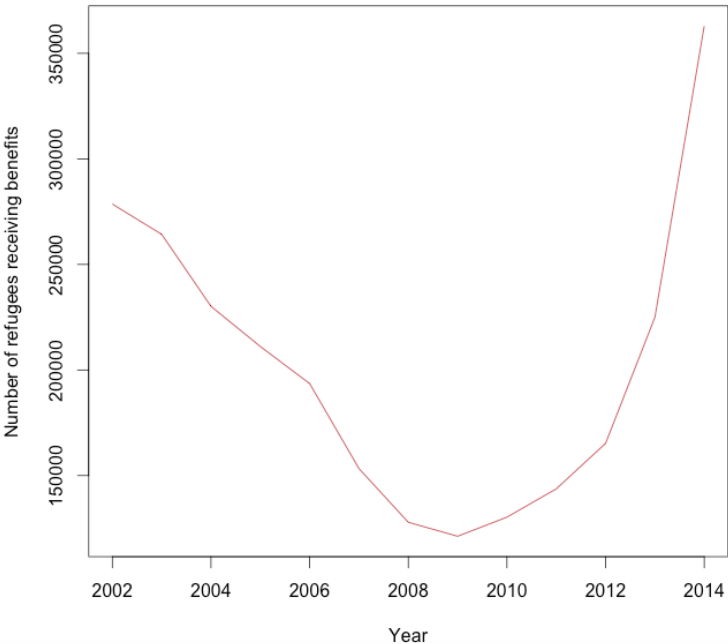
<sup>1</sup> aged dependency ratio= (number of people aged 65 and older/number of people aged 15-64)x 100

However, it remains difficult to measure at what rate asylum seekers move into the labor force due to the imprecise nature of the question. Therefore, this paper focuses on job training expenditures as a proxy for measuring the value the German government places on asylum seekers' movement into the labor force.

Asylum seekers in this study are defined as those receiving benefits under the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act. To receive benefits, asylum seekers must apply for asylum when they enter Germany and demonstrate that they have experienced political persecution in their native country. Political persecution, according to the Federal Office for Migration and Asylum seekers in Germany, is the violation of an individual's political or religious beliefs, such that they are excluded from the state unit (2011). In addition to fleeing circumstances in one's own country, an asylum seeker might preferentially seek asylum in Germany because of the available benefits ("Migrant Crisis", 2016). Importantly, asylum seekers are not equivalent to refugees, although the terms are often used synonymously. In Germany, asylum seekers are those refugees who have legally applied for asylum (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees). Refugees do not have any rights to receive benefits until they have registered themselves with the appropriate reception center.

Another important fundamental distinction to make is the differentiation between asylum seekers and foreigners. Foreigners are often motivated by the job or education opportunities available in Germany that are not present in their home country. Foreigners hold the passport of a country that is not Germany, and must apply for a work permit and residence permit to legally obtain a job. Asylum seekers are motivated by the violent situations in their home countries to travel to Germany. They have legally applied for asylum, but have not yet been granted that asylum. In this waiting period, they receive benefits from the government. They reside in provided housing and do not work. However, asylum seekers and foreigners in Germany are not altogether incomparable. Longitudinal data of asylum seekers indicates that there is not merely a steady increase in dependents on the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act, but rather there are yearly changes (see Figure 1). This could be because asylum seekers are moving into the labor force; alternatively, asylum seekers could be leaving the country to seek asylum elsewhere. If one believes that at least some of these asylum seekers do move into the labor force, then they would be somewhat comparable to foreigners in terms of public revenues.

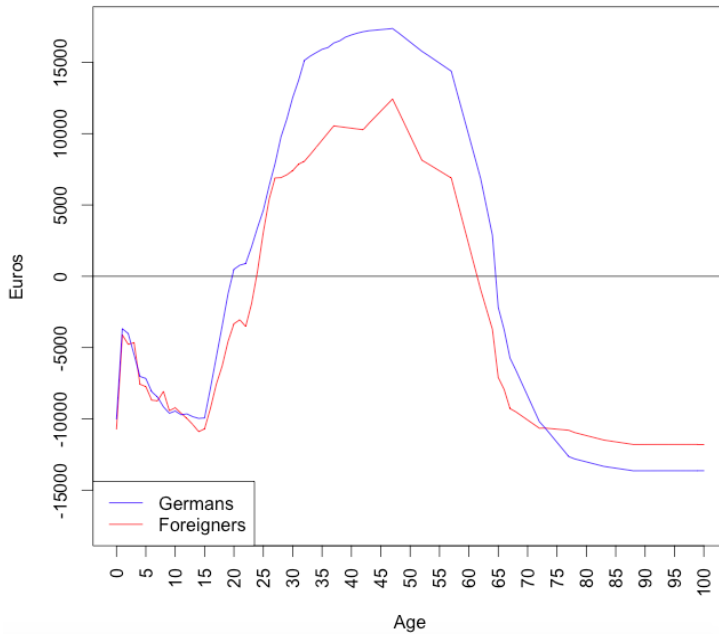
**Figure 1. Asylum seekers receiving benefits from the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act, 2002-2014.**



Source: Federal Office of Statistics in Germany. The number of asylum seekers dependent on the benefits received by law from the German government does not steadily increase, indicating that asylum seekers are not remaining dependent for several years. Rather, they are either moving into the labor force or leaving the country to seek refuge elsewhere.

In fact, previous studies have utilized foreigners as a proxy for understanding what asylum seekers could mean for the German economy in the future. For example, Bonin (2014) argues that asylum seekers are an untapped resource that could contribute fiscally to Germany. To measure this, he compared fiscal contributions of foreigners to native Germans in Germany (Figure 2). Foreigners in his study were defined by means of citizenship; if an individual was living in Germany in 2012 and had citizenship or dual citizenship in another country, they were classified as a foreigner. Individuals who were born to German parents abroad and then moved to Germany and individuals who were former citizens of another country but had given up this title in lieu of German citizenship, or naturalized, are classified as German (Bonin, 2014).

**Figure 2. Fiscal contributions of Germans and foreigners by age, 2012.**



Source: Replicated from Bonin, 2014. Original data obtained from the Center for European Economic Research, and permission received from Bonin. The average net fiscal contribution of Germans is compared to that of foreigners. Age is a continuous variable.

The gap between payments from native Germans and foreigners is of particular interest – foreigners are paying less in taxes during their working-age years but also receiving less in transfer payments in the retirement years (see figure 2). The average German begins contributing more in taxes than she receives in transfers at age 20; this occurs later for foreigners, beginning at age 24. This difference could indicate a relative slowness of foreigners to enter the labor force; it could also be driven by foreigners staying in university longer than natives. Foreigners not only begin contributing positively later in life than Germans do, but they also retire earlier. However, at age 73 the difference flips, such that Germans begin receiving more in transfers than foreigners. On average, each of the 6.6 million foreigners living in Germany in 2014 was found to contribute 3,000 euros more in taxes and premiums than they received from the government in benefits. Increasing numbers of foreigner



immigrants in the future was demonstrated to lead to a significant decrease in the high aged-dependency ratio in Germany (Bonin, 2014).

The comparison of the contributions of foreigners relative to native Germans is significant in an analysis of asylum seekers' contributions, because this paper looks at job training expenditures to understand whether asylum seekers no longer dependent on their legal benefits have moved into the labor force. If asylum seekers do move into the labor force, according to Bonin (2014), they could be expected to follow a similar pattern in fiscal contributions as foreigners. Thus, in the long-run, asylum seekers could enter the labor force and begin paying taxes, thereby positively contributing to public revenues in Germany.

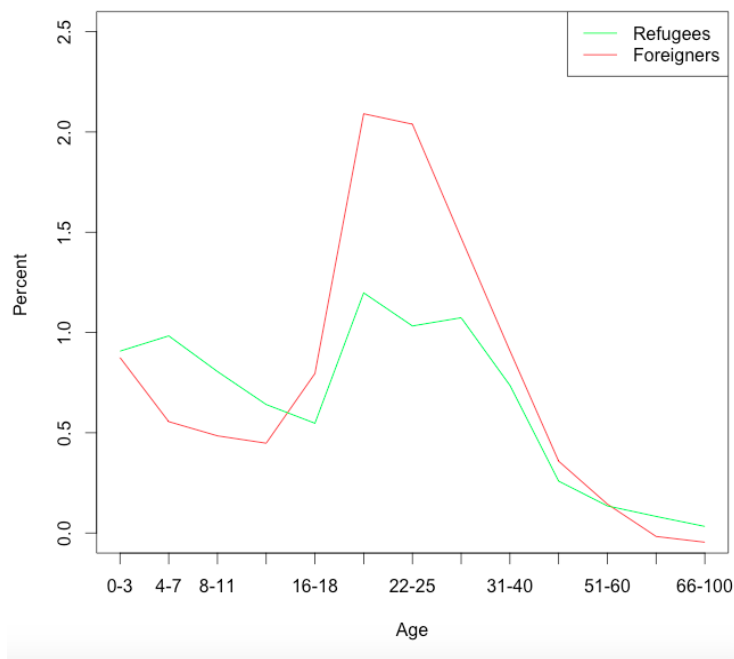
To determine if foreigners' fiscal contribution can be plausibly applied to asylum seekers, the decomposition of age in both groups is compared (Figure 3). It is important to note that these age groups are of varying sizes; that is, some contain an age range of three years, some of 10, and the oldest age range contains 34 years.<sup>2</sup> There is no statistically significant difference in the number of foreigners and asylum seekers in each age range ( $p = 0.22$ ). This indicates that while asylum seekers and foreigners may be motivated to move to the country for different reasons, they are not different in age composition.

It was noted previously that foreigners, on average, begin positively contributing to the fiscal budget at age 24 and enter retirement at age 62 (see figure 2). Therefore, working age for foreigners is from 24-62, a range in which most foreigners (70%) are categorized (Figure 3). The majority of asylum seekers (59%) are also in this working age category. Therefore, the majority of asylum seekers could move into the labor force, were they to obtain the skills necessary to do so. This capacity to work is of interest in this paper, because job training for asylum seekers could have a strong impact on their movement into the workforce.

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<sup>2</sup> Data on age of asylum seekers is only available in this format from the Federal Office of Statistics in Germany. Data on age of foreigners is continuous; the ages were organized into the same age groups available for asylum seekers to make the comparison.

**Figure 3.** Foreigners and asylum seekers by age as a percentage of total population of Germany.



Sources: Federal Office of Statistics in Germany, Center for European Economic Research. The percentage of foreigners and asylum seekers relative to the total number of Germans is separated into generational bins. The majority of asylum seekers are in the working age range.

**III. Literature Review**

The fiscal costs and benefits of foreigner immigrants to the German budget has been measured (Bonin, 2000). Previously, predictions of the future contributions of foreigners living in Germany have been calculated to better understand asylum seekers’ fiscal potential (Bonin, 2006; Bonin, 2014). Moreover, the cost-benefits of asylum seekers to Sweden’s fiscal budget has been examined (Ruist, 2015). This current study is unique, in that it analyzes the cost-benefit of asylum seekers to Germany’s fiscal budget in 2002 and 2014, examines expenditure changes on asylum seekers over time, and specifically considers the effect of spending on job training.

After World War II, there was a shortage of young, healthy native males and crumbling infrastructure in Germany. Therefore, a large influx of immigrant workers was crucial to the reconstruction of a broken country. Blitz

(1977) conducted a cost – benefit analysis of these *Gastarbeiter*, or guest workers, to West Germany. These primarily Turkish immigrants comprised 10% of the labor force. Using a model including summations of public benefits received and taxes paid, Blitz concluded that the Turkish immigrants from 1957-1963 were imported foreign capital that benefited West Germany fiscally because their child rearing and educational costs were financed abroad.

Several studies document the positive net tax revenue from foreigners and the decreased tax burden on natives (Mayr, 2005; Bonin, 2010). Foreigners in Austria are predicted to decrease the lump-sum tax burden on natives by 3730.30 euros per person over their lifetime (Mayr, 2005), while in Germany the tax burden on natives will decrease by approximately 30% (Bonin, 2006). One caveat of these studies is that they analyze the impact of foreigners as defined above, and not the impact of asylum seeker immigrants specifically.

The fiscal impact of asylum seekers, rather foreigners, is newly being studied. In Sweden, where the cost of assimilation can be quite high, Ruist (2015) examined the asylum seekers' fiscal costs relative to the total population's fiscal contributions. He determined that 1% of GDP was being redistributed from the rest of the population to the asylum seekers, concluding that higher employment rates among asylum seekers could reduce the fiscal burden of asylum seekers in Sweden. The current paper employs a similar fiscal cost-benefit analysis to asylum seekers in Germany to understand whether increasing job training for asylum seekers may close the gap between the high public costs and low public revenues of asylum seekers.

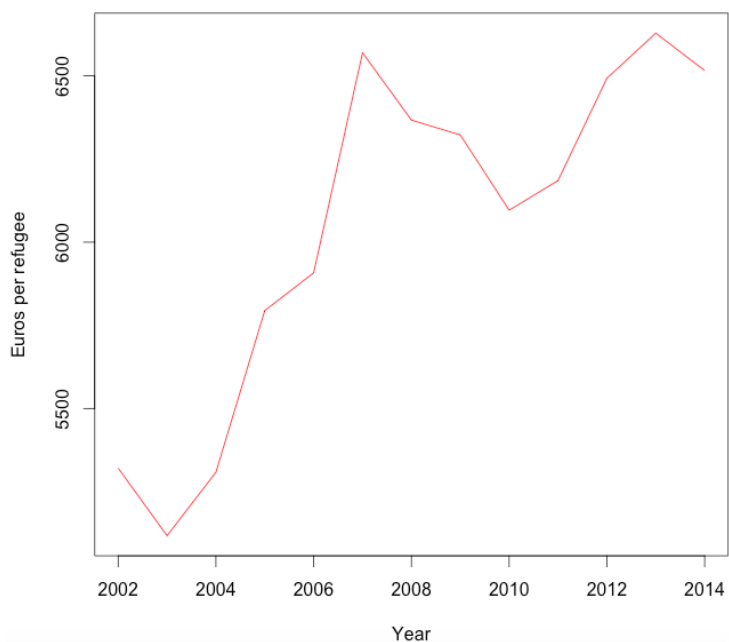
#### **IV. Data analysis of the German budget and the role of asylum seekers**

Although the number of asylum seekers receiving benefits from the government has not increased over time, the amount the German government spends per asylum seeker per year has increased (Figure 4). Multiple linear regression analysis indicated that the German government spends an estimated 110.02 euros more each year per asylum seeker than the previous year ( $B=110.02, p < 0.0002$ ) and this is not dependent on how many asylum seekers there are ( $B = -0.001856, p = 0.1, R^2$  of full model= 0.79).<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it would be expected in this model that in 2015, even with an unprecedented large influx of asylum seekers, spending per asylum seeker still increased.

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<sup>3</sup> These numbers are the result of a multiple linear regression analysis using number of asylum seekers and year to predict government expenditure on asylum seekers. After finding that year was a significant predictor, testing revealed that this not the result of autocorrelation (Dickey-Fuller  $Z(t) = -1.27$ , 1% critical value= -3.75).

**Figure 4. Net euros spent per asylum seeker in Germany, 2002-2014**



Source: Federal Office of Statistics in Germany. German government expenditure per asylum seeker for the past thirteen years.

Because the German government has been spending significantly more each year on asylum seekers, fiscal analyses in the years 2002 and 2014 are compared.<sup>4</sup> This allows for a more comprehensive understanding of what specifically increased spending is financing.

Table 1 is a decomposition of the public costs and public revenues of the German government in 2014. The first column describes, in millions of euros, what the total population of approximately 82 million in Germany in 2002 contributed to public finances. The second column represents asylum seekers' share of these costs and revenues in 2002 and serves as a reference point for current asylum seekers' share. The third column is asylum seekers' share in 2002 as a percent. Because asylum seekers were 0.34% of the population in 2002, a value greater than 0.34 in this column means that they are over-

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<sup>4</sup> 2002 is the earliest year for which asylum seeker spending data is available; 2014 is the most recent year.

represented in this item<sup>5</sup>. The fourth column represents, in millions of euros, the total population in Germany’s contribution to public finances. The fifth column is asylum seekers’ share of costs/revenues in 2014. Column 5 is the asylum seekers’ share in 2014 expressed as a percentage. The percentage of asylum seekers receiving benefits from the government is 0.45%, calculated by dividing the number of asylum seekers by the total population of Germany<sup>6</sup>. Thus, if a value in column 4 is greater than 0.45, asylum seekers are over-represented in this item, and they are receiving (for benefits) or paying (for revenues) in percentage terms more than they represent as a percentage of the population. Conversely, if a value is less than 0.45, the asylum seekers are under-represented in this item.

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<sup>5</sup>  $(278,592/82,536,680)*100$   
<sup>6</sup>  $(362,850/81,197,537)*100=0.45\%$

Table 1. Relative cost of asylum seekers in Germany, 2002 and 2014.

	Column 1. Total population in 2002 (million euros)	Column 2. Asylum seekers' share in 2002 (million euros)	Column 3. Asylum seekers' share 2002 (%)	Column 4. Total population in 2014 (million euros)	Column 5. Asylum seekers' Share 2014 (million euros)	Column 6 Asylum seekers' Share 2014 (%)
Number of people	82,536,680	278, 592	0.34	81,197,537	362, 850	0.45
<b>Public costs</b>	<b>249,286</b>	<b>1,584.7</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>295,486</b>	<b>2,401.5</b>	<b>0.81</b>
Social Assistance	85,557	1,237.7	1.45	101,019	1,873.3	1.85
Job training*	15,408	13.3	0.09	32,510	8.7	0.03
Health insurance	6,443	306.9	4.76	10,500	456.6	4.35
Other	141,878	26.7	n/a	151,457	62.9	n/a
<b>Public revenues</b>	<b>249,286</b>	<b>102.3</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>295,486</b>	<b>37.3</b>	<b>0.01</b>
	132,190	0.0				
Income Tax			0	167,983	0.0	0
Tax on capital	14,024	4.8	0.03	17,423	3.3	0.02
Sales Tax	105,463	22.6	0.02	154,228	17.3	0.01
	2,864	74.8				
Corporate tax			2.61	20,044	16.7	0.08
Other	-5,255	n/a	n/a	-64,192	n/a	n/a
	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-1,482.3</b>	n/a		-	
Net result				<b>0.0</b>	<b>2,364.3</b>	n/a

Sources: Ministry of Finance of Germany and Federal Office of Statistics in Germany. Asylum seekers' fiscal contribution to several categories of public costs and revenues is compared to the total population of Germany's contribution, to demonstrate relative values. Column 1 serves as the baseline with which to compare the asylum seekers' share. Column 2 represents what asylum seekers were receiving in 2002. Column 3 is the column of specific interest, as it is the most recent data available on asylum seekers. Column 4 indicates the asylum seekers' share as a percentage; values higher than 0.45% indicate that they are over-represented in that category. Notes: \* Job training is the category of particular interest in this paper.

### **Public costs<sup>7</sup>**

"Social assistance" is the largest fiscal category under public costs for both the total population and asylum seekers. The German government spent 85,557 million euros for the total population, comprising of housing assistance, welfare and pensions. Averaged over the total population of Germany, this is roughly 1,036 euros per person. For the asylum seekers, social assistance is composed of food, housing, heating, and clothes. In 2002, each asylum seeker received 4,443 euros in social assistance; in 2014, this number increased to 5,163 euros per person. The 2014 percentage share of social assistance awarded to asylum seekers was 1.9% of the total, while they only represent 0.45% of the population. Therefore, asylum seekers are receiving four times the amount of social assistance relative to their population share.

"Job training" is the category of particular interest for this paper. Job training is categorized as unemployment benefits for natives. For the asylum seekers, the money is utilized to provide language and job training. For the total German population, unemployment benefits more than doubled in 2014 relative to 2002 from 15 to 32 million euros. For asylum seekers, the amount spent on job training decreased from 13.3 to 8.7 million euros from the year 2002 to 2014, indicating that the government is now spending less on training asylum seekers for the labor force. Indeed, job training is the only public cost component where asylum seekers are under-represented; Germany spent four times less on asylum seekers' job training in 2002 and 15 times less in 2014 relative to what expected expenditures would be, if asylum seekers received benefits at the rate of the total German population.

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<sup>7</sup> The descriptions are the author's personal translations from data in German from the Ministry of Finance (2016) and the Statistical Federal Office (2015).

“Health insurance” expenditures for the total population increased from 6,553 million euros in 2002 to 10,500 million euros in 2014. The amount spent on health insurance for asylum seekers has increased from 1,101 euros per person – a total of 306 million euros – in 2002 to 1,258 euros per person – a total of 456.6 million euros. Asylum seekers are over-represented at 4.35%, which is 10 times more than they would be, were they to be supported at the rate of the total population.

“Other” is a catch-all category for public expenditures not of particular interest to this study. For example, expenditure on the military, energy research, and public transportation are collapsed into this category. For the asylum seekers, this a vague category of extraneous cash and non-cash benefits. Given that these benefits are not directly comparable, the relationship between the values in column 1 and column 2 for this measure is uninterpretable, and is therefore indicated by “non-applicable” (n/a) in the table.

## Public revenues

“Income tax” is the largest category of public revenues for the total population. The government earned 132,190 million in 2002 and 167,983 million euros in 2014 from taxes on wages and income. Asylum seekers receiving benefits from the government according to the Asylum Seekers’ Benefits Act are, by definition, not earning an income. Thus, asylum seekers are contributing nothing to the largest category of public revenue.

“Tax on capital” is the tax on capital and revenue outside of income. For the total population, this amounts to 14,024 million in 2002 and 17,423 million euros in 2014. For asylum seekers, this is any type of revenue on which they may be taxed.<sup>8</sup> Asylum seekers have contributed less to this component of public revenue since 2002 than in 2014. Moving from 4.8 million to 3.3 million euros, asylum seekers are contributing 22.5 times less than what they should be on this component in 2014, relative to their size.

“Sales tax” generated 105,463 million euros in 2002 and 154,228 million euros in 2014 from the total population. As a byproduct of consumption using the social assistance provided by the government, this is the largest category of public revenue from asylum seekers in 2014. Still, asylum seekers are underrepresented in this category, contributing 22.5 times less than expected. Moreover, there was a decrease in sales tax earnings from asylum seekers from 22.6 million euros in 2002 to 17.3 million euros in 2014.

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<sup>8</sup> It is unclear what specifically this capital may be.



“Corporate taxation” was responsible for 2,864 million in 2002 and 20,044 million euros in public earnings in 2014. For the asylum seekers’ share, this category is comprised of the taxes paid by the facilities that provide social services to asylum seekers, and is therefore not a direct contribution from the asylum seekers themselves. This was the largest category of public revenue in 2002 at 74.8 million euros; in 2014, this value was one-fourth the size at 16.7 million euros.

“Other” is the category of extraneous other revenues received via taxes, such as withholding taxes and import sales taxes. This number is negative in our table for the total population, even though Germany ran a current account surplus in both years. This is complicated by our utilization of multiple sources to create Table 1, therefore giving us an imprecise measurement of the exact “other” category. There is no “other” categories for public revenues for asylum seekers, and is therefore denoted as “non-applicable” (n/a).

### **Job training expenditures**

Ruist (2015) noted that 1.0% of GDP was being redistributed from natives to asylum seekers in Sweden, who comprised 5.1% of the total population. This percentage was calculated by dividing the net cost of asylum seekers by the summation of total public costs and total public revenues. In our study, 0.3% of GDP in Germany was being redistributed from natives to asylum seekers in 2002<sup>9</sup>; they comprised 0.34% of the population. In 2014, 0.4% of GDP was being redistributed from natives to asylum seekers, who comprised 0.45% of the population<sup>10</sup>. This is a ratio of approximately 1:1, whereas asylum seekers in Sweden in 2007 were receiving benefits at a ratio of 1:5.

From a fiscal perspective, for the expenditures on asylum seekers to be sustainable, asylum seekers would need to move into the labor force to contribute positively to the economy<sup>11</sup>. That is, to balance the burden of their relatively high public costs when asylum seekers initially enter Germany, working in Germany and paying the requisite income taxes would allow them to contribute to public revenues. Thus, government spending on job training

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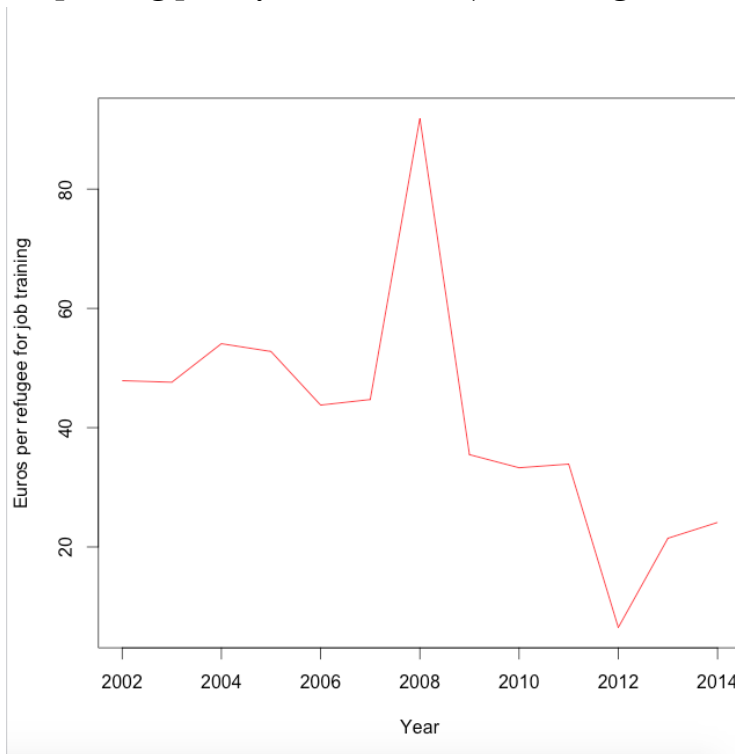
<sup>9</sup>  $1,482.3 / (249,286 * 2) * 100$

<sup>10</sup>  $2,364.3 / (295,486 * 2) * 100$

<sup>11</sup> This assumes that the German government would want to, in the long-term, receive an approximately equal amount in public revenues from asylum seekers that they received in public benefits when they arrived in Germany. However, this argument may not hold. Helping asylum seekers could be viewed as a moral obligation, and the host country should not expect anything in return, fiscal or otherwise.

for asylum seekers is of particular interest in this paper. Job training spending is viewed as a way to measure the government's desire to move asylum seekers from a position of fiscal dependence to fiscal independence. I assume here that increased spending on job training means a greater emphasis on training as well as better training. Spending in 2002 on job training was much higher than in 2014, but examining two data points may not tell the full story. Therefore, spending on job training for asylum seekers for all available years (2002-2014) was examined in detail (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5. Spending per asylum seeker for job training, 2002-2014**



Source. Federal Office of Statistics. The amount that the German government has spent per asylum seeker on job training from 2002-2014.

Figure 5 displays how spending on job training per asylum seeker significantly decreases each year. A regression analysis indicates that the amount the German government spends per asylum seeker on job training has significantly decreased over the years ( $B = -3.026, p = 0.03$ ). Crucially, I found earlier that asylum seeker expenditure has been increasing significantly during the same time period (2002-2014; see Figure 4). Thus, expenditure has increased for other services for asylum seekers, such as health care and social

assistance, while less money is being spent on job training.<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, in Figure 5 there is a large spike in job training spending in 2008, the same year as a global economic crisis. Moreover, spending on job training has been increasing since 2012, but in 2014 this category of public costs is still not at the level seen in 2002.

This paper focuses on job training, as I believe that job training is a crucial investment mechanism for asylum seekers. While the government should provide health care and social assistance for asylum seekers, I argue that job training should also be a governmental focus. Job training for asylum seekers is important, as it would allow asylum seekers an avenue to contribute in public revenues in the future to offset the large public costs incurred by the government when they initially arrived. Given that expenditure on job training has been increasing since 2012, it will be important to monitor whether this number continues to increase in the future. This is especially relevant given the large influx of asylum seekers, who are expected to be an even larger economic burden than past years.

## V. Conclusion

A better understanding of the fiscal impact of asylum seekers in Germany is necessary to make policy decisions. To achieve this goal, this paper compares expenditure on asylum seekers in Germany in 2002 and 2014. I find that asylum seekers receive more fiscal benefits from Germany than they provide in return in public revenue in both instances. In 2014, this gap had increased. Over the years 2002-2014, spending per asylum seeker increased significantly, while spending per asylum seeker on job training decreased significantly.

A significant decrease in spending on job training for asylum seekers over the years seems counterintuitive. Job training could be the best form of investment in asylum seekers. Given that the majority of asylum seekers in 2014 were in the working age range, it seems that a large proportion of this population could be capable of working. To harness the untapped resource of asylum seekers (Bonin, 2014), the focus of expenditure should be on job training. This could increase the rate at which asylum seekers move into the German labor force, and these individuals would then begin positively contributing to the budget.

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<sup>12</sup> It is important to consider that it might not be the case that decreased spending on job training necessarily means that this component of benefits has a decreased emphasis. For example, perhaps job training is more efficient now and costs less than before.

If the German government increased spending on job training and decreased spending on social assistance per asylum seeker, perhaps it would improve the rate at which asylum seekers move into the labor force. Therefore, the focus of future fiscal expenditures on asylum seekers should be on job training, rather than increasing social assistance benefits. Then, the asylum seekers could move into the labor force quickly and efficiently. Restructuring the components of expenditure on asylum seekers would make more sustainable the so-called “refugee crisis.” If asylum seekers continue to seek asylum at a high rate, well-budgeted spending on job training would allow them to increase the size of their labor force. Job training expenditures could be the key to maximizing the potential of asylum seekers and a method for sustaining economic growth in the country.

“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” Social assistance should be provided, and indeed is, to asylum seekers when they first arrive. This study suggests, however, that asylum seekers are not receiving enough resources for job training. This training serves a dual purpose, in that asylum seekers would be able to learn the language and skills necessary to provide for themselves, as well as contribute fiscally via taxes to repay the amount that they received in public benefits initially from Germany.

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## **School Choice and Human Dignity: Education Policy Theory and Practice**

**KATE HARDIMAN**

### **Abstract**

America's public education system has remained virtually unchanged since its inception, and it has helped advance our nation into the modern age. After comprehensive studies revealed systematic weaknesses in the 1980s, however, reformers have taken a closer look at the education system through the lenses of accountability, test scores, and funding. This thesis concentrates on the post-1990 school choice movement which seeks to expand access to quality education for disadvantaged families, allow for school-level innovation, and sustain high performing schools. The paper proceeds in four parts to argue that school choice programs, insofar as they expand access to quality education for low-income families, recognize those families' human dignity by ensuring equality of opportunity and freedom of religion. First, it traces the evolution of the American education system to explain how free-market economists and equity-focused inner city reformers converged to create a movement that is now sweeping the nation. Second, it discusses the legal and moral backdrop of the school choice movement. Third, because education is primarily a state-level policy issue, it turns to Indiana and explains the program design, legal standing, and benefits of the Indiana Choice Scholarship — the nation's largest voucher program. Fourth, the paper turns to two Catholic schools in Indiana to provide principal and parent testimonials about using the voucher. The paper concludes with an appeal to respect well-designed, means tested school choice policies such as the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program for their own sake; their ability to assure human dignity through providing religious freedom and equality of opportunity affords them distinction as a beneficial public policy.

“Getting an education in America guarantees you nothing, but I guarantee you, you will have nothing without an education.”

“We must love our children’s hopes, dreams, and prayers more than we love the institutional heritage of the school system.”

- Howard Fuller  
No Struggle, No Progress

## I. Setting the Stage

The word “education” appears nowhere in the United States Constitution. This important omission renders education a local affair; instruction of the nation’s citizenry is left up to the direction of the states. The varied language of state education clauses exemplify the differing philosophies and methods states have adopted in pursuit of this end. Though drafted separately, state education clauses describe public schools in similar language. Common phrases include “thorough and efficient,” “uniform,” “a general diffusion of knowledge,” and “free.” Eighteen states label education a democratic imperative.<sup>1</sup> Though the clauses range from general to specific in their semantics, none specify exactly *how* the state must convey knowledge. This raises a crucial question: why have we chosen to provide public education through zip-code based enrollment in district-operated public schools for most of our nation’s history? The verb “to educate,” from the latin *educere*, means to lead, draw, or take out. Knowledge is not meant to be a standardized, homogenized entity implanted in students, and the system that instills it need not be either. The complex process of extracting and cultivating students’ cognitive, reasoning, and creative abilities necessitates an equally fluid and adaptable system.

Since the dawn of public education and Horace Mann’s creation of the first common school in Massachusetts, local districts have operated and controlled public schools. School boards comprised of elected or appointed members govern each district and students are assigned to a public school on the sole basis of their residential zip code. Public schools receive the bulk of their funding from local property taxes, some funds from the state at amounts

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<sup>1</sup> Molly Hunter. "State Constitution Education Clause Language." (n.d.): n. pag. *Education Law Center*. Web. 24 June 2016.

determined by each legislature and a small amount of federal money.<sup>2</sup> Education writer and activist Jonathan Kozol calls this system of financing public education “arcane machinery.”<sup>3</sup> After studying the vast disparities in the American public education system, Kozol wrote, “The property tax is the decisive force in shaping inequality...a typical wealthy suburb in which homes are often worth more than \$400,000 draws upon a larger tax base in proportion to its student population than a city occupied by thousands of poor people...Typically, in the United States, very poor communities place high priority on education, and they often tax themselves at higher rates than do the very affluent communities. But, even if they tax themselves at several times the rate of an extremely wealthy district, they are likely to end up with far less money for each child in their schools.”<sup>4</sup>

Until recently, this century-old system has remained largely untouched, unquestioned, and unchanged. In the 1960’s, acclaimed economist Milton Friedman pointed to America’s “state monopoly in education,” believing that it inhibited private providers of education.<sup>5</sup> Friedman’s argument, and others like it, helped formed the basis of future critiques.

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan convened the National Commission on Excellence in Education that seized public attention with the publication of a report called “A Nation at Risk.” The report sounded a loud alarm, declaring “The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people...If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war.”<sup>6</sup>

A wave of reforms that focused on inter-system change then ensued as Reagan’s state and federal government(s) imposed more stringent accountability requirements, called for the professionalization of teachers, and poured money into public schools.<sup>7</sup> Individual public schools, rather than the entire school system were the target of the first reforms. Issues at the systemic

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<sup>2</sup> Kozol finds that the federal contribution is often quite small — about 6% of total elementary and secondary expenditures — and that state contributions do not make up for funding disparities.

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Kozol. *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*. New York: Crown Pub., 1991. Print. 66.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>5</sup> Milton Friedman. *Capitalism and Freedom*. Chicago: U of Chicago, 1962. Print.

<sup>6</sup> “A Nation At Risk.” Archived: US Department of Education (ED), Apr. 1983. Web. 08 Sept. 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Peter W. Cookson. *School Choice: The Struggle for the Soul of American Education*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1994. Print. 15.

level had been largely ignored both by elected officials unwilling to make political enemies of unionized public school teachers and social scientists whose research focused only on specialized topics such as teaching training, funding, and testing results.<sup>8</sup> By the end of the decade, however, reformers recognized the need for systemic change and created the movement now known as “parental choice.”<sup>9</sup> The shift in thinking did not happen overnight. The principles of the new movement, notably autonomy, consumer sovereignty, and competition are intrinsic to the American experiment.<sup>10</sup> As Peter Cookson writes, “the national debate not only has a political and educational context but also a deep philosophical and moral subtext. The context is about school improvement, but the subtext is about values, identity and freedom.”<sup>11</sup>

Several societal shifts that began in the mid 1900s brought the above ideals to bear on public education. The first change was both geographic and demographic: wealthier, predominantly white families moved from the cities to the rapidly expanding suburbs. A number of factors contributed, including school integration, segregative housing practices, rising levels of inner-city crime, and the desire to settle in neighborhoods with more space.<sup>12</sup> Moral philosopher Michael Sandel analogizes this decline of socio-economically diverse neighborhoods to the stratification of ballparks, once places of class amalgamation that now separate into cheap seats and skyboxes. He writes, “at a time of rising inequality, the marketization of everything means that people of affluence and people of modest means lead increasingly separate lives. We live and work and play in different places. Our children go to different schools. You might call it the skyboxification of American life.”<sup>13</sup> The second shift, linked to the first, was a change in the definition of community from its traditional basis of family, neighborhood, church and school, to that of race, gender, and occupation.<sup>14</sup> The third shift, spawned in part by the declining efficacy of inner-city public schools highlighted by “A Nation at Risk,” was a

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<sup>8</sup> John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe. *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1990. Print. 13.

<sup>9</sup> “School choice” is the more common classification of the movement, however I prefer the designation of “parental choice” because the heart of the movement seeks to empower parents to choose the educational option that best meets their child’s needs. For the intents and purposes of this thesis the two will be used interchangeably.

<sup>10</sup> Cookson, 7.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>13</sup> Michael J. Sandel. *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012. Print. 116.

<sup>14</sup> Cookson, 8.

weakening of the consensus that “public schools are the mediators of merit and the cradles of democracy.”<sup>15</sup> As Cookson writes, “the social, economic, and educational context from which the school choice movement arose was unlike any other period in American history...the rootlessness of much American life became transformed into lifestyles based on consumption and status, and social commitment to public institutions virtually disappeared.”<sup>16</sup>

Politicians involved with the 1980s “Reaganomics” movement called upon the power of the free market to be the panacea for most of society’s ills; encouraging those forces to enter into the marketplace of education was a natural progression. Civil libertarian and legal theorist Stephen Arons framed the debate as one over individual freedom, maintaining that “compulsory education [in public schools] violates individual conscience and the First Amendment to the Constitution. When we force children to attend state-run schools, we are creating a tyranny of mind that hides behind the mask of supposed cultural neutrality.”<sup>17</sup> Free-market principles, complemented by desires for individual liberty and consumer choice underlie the parental choice movement as we know it today. Purely economic arguments from the late 1980’s and today advance that enabling parental choice in the marketplace of education will increase competition for students among schools. The movement seeks to cut through the bureaucracy found in traditional school districts to allow for school-level innovation. Various mechanisms to accomplish this end exist, and most reduce the state’s role in education from operator to regulator, effectively decentralizing the public school system.

Parental choice itself involves empowering and enabling parents through the provision of funds to choose among many school options, public and private, regardless of their zip code. For, as Cookson notes, “in a world where consumption and choice are considered essential for the good life, the idea that children are required to attend a particular public school in their neighborhood seems anachronistic, even reactionary.”<sup>18</sup> Choice has technically always existed in education, as wealthy families may choose to send their children to private school or decide to move into a certain school district because of its successful public schools. Poorer families often are not able to exercise either of these choices, and must send their children to their zoned public school. Thus, the debate today is not between choice or no choice, but

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 6.

rather between choice for the financially secure or choice for all, regardless of income.

Using economic theory to explain certain mechanisms of the school choice movement is helpful to a point. Yet, markets work to achieve efficiency whereas America as a nation promises equality of opportunity. Schools are not factories, and children are not widgets; the market metaphor does not acknowledge that education is a human service provided to society rather than a tangible product. Moreover, market theory assumes that all families have complete, reliable information on school options, that providers can create and sustain high-performing schools, that bad actors will never slip through the cracks to enter the market, and that enough schools will exist in districts to enable choice and competition. School choice opponents are justified in raising concerns about the underlying assumptions and rhetoric driving purely economic arguments applied to education. The assumptions that economic theory requires do not hold true within a system designed by fallible humans in an imperfect world. Moreover, semantics matter, and the way debate is framed can be beneficial or detrimental to the achievement of an end. As Howard Fuller notes, “choice proponents always want to cite Friedman, but it [the parental choice movement] isn’t academic like this. It’s a street fight.”<sup>19</sup> Though the market metaphor has merit, it is not sufficient to encapsulate the movement’s connection to the human person. Theories produced by academia do not in themselves effect change; rather, well-designed policies fought for and won by advocates committed to helping children make the real difference. Though economic arguments drove the movement in the 1980’s and continue to be invoked today, the parental choice conversation has evolved. Expansion of choice now targets lower-income inner-city children whom the public schools are repeatedly failing; thus, the arguments centering upon equity and social justice prove stronger than those about efficiency and markets.<sup>20</sup> “School reform policies that are not driven by a sense of educational and social justice are bound to fail,” Cookson argues. “For excellence and equity are not meaningful alternatives, because without equity there can be no excellence.”<sup>21</sup> Though our nation has assigned students to schools by zip-code for over a century and maintained strict separation between public and private schools,

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<sup>19</sup> Parental Choice Symposium, New Orleans, June 2016.

<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, the first argument aligns more typically with the Democratic political party — whose lawmakers are showing increasing support for choice — while the second argument is a classic cornerstone of the Republican party — whose lawmakers initiated the movement at the federal level.

<sup>21</sup> Cookson, xi.

the future of urban education lies in recognizing the current system's inhibition of freedom and equality of opportunity. The idea of "sector agnosticism,"<sup>22</sup> or ambivalence about both who operates a school and the sector with which it is associated, counters the entrenched idea that state funds for education may only flow to public schools. Educational thinker John Coons writes, "shifting educational authority from government to parents is a policy that rests upon basic beliefs about the dignity of the person, the rights of children, and the sanctity of the family; it is a shift that also promises a harvest of social trust as the experience of responsibility is extended to all income classes."<sup>23</sup> School choice reforms that seek to better urban education by creating new schools, sustaining the presence of high performing schools, and enabling low income families to choose among a wide range of options attest the higher moral claim of supporting the unalienable rights of freedom and equality present in our God-given human dignity.

## II. The Evolution of the American Education System

Horace Mann founded the first free public schools, called "common schools," in Massachusetts in 1837. Mann envisioned school as a place for all students that would cultivate a better citizenry to strengthen the American democratic experiment.<sup>24</sup> Proper schooling, Mann believed, had great promise for inculcating values important to sustaining our young nation. To this end, common schools not only transmitted knowledge, but also culturally and religiously assimilated immigrant children. Though Mann stated his commitment to non-sectarianism, his curriculum required students to read the King James Bible and recite Protestant prayers in school.<sup>25</sup> Mann recognized the role that religion could play in "cultivating morality and civic virtue among the immigrant masses,"<sup>26</sup> and thus made it a centerpiece of his school model. Yet, the notion of Mann's common school has greatly evolved since its inception due to various groups seeking a different education for their children.

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<sup>22</sup> Andy Smarick. *The Urban School System of the Future: Applying the Principles and Lessons of Chartering*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2012. Print. xx.

<sup>23</sup> John E. Coons. "School Choice as Simple Justice" *First Things*. N.p., 01 Apr. 1992. Web. 09 Oct. 2016. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Paul E. Peterson and David E. Campbell. *Charters, Vouchers, and Public Education*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2001. Print.

<sup>25</sup> Diane Ravich. *The Great School Wars: A History of the New York City Public Schools*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 2000. Print. 18.

<sup>26</sup> Peterson & Campbell, 124.

Various religious sects wishing to teach their respective faiths formed their own schools in response to Mann's Protestant institutions. Catholic immigrants gained a foothold in the education debate as their numbers swelled in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Archbishop Hughes of New York City was the first to make the establishment of a Catholic school system the priority of the Church.<sup>27</sup> Serious about the task at hand, in 1866 a Plenary council of New York bishops ordered all parish priests to open schools or face removal from their posts.<sup>28</sup> As immigrants self-segregated into neighborhoods, parochial schools attached to their churches became the centerpieces of community life. Families knew that their local school would further instill the same religious and moral values taught at home. Yet, amendments to state constitutions passed in the late 1880's driven by anti-Catholic sentiment denied parochial schools public funding.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the American education system fractured into publicly funded schools instilling "common" values and privately funded parochial schools teaching a curriculum that includes religion — a dichotomy that still exists today.

The bifurcation of the education system stemmed in large part from a power struggle over the nation's first schools. Religious and community leaders sought democratic control of their schools so that they might instill religious truths, while reformers on the other side of the spectrum sought consolidation and centralization of the system in the hands of experts to form a certain type of American citizen. The parochial school model has not changed greatly since its inception, while Mann's "common school" has undergone a series of revolutions in governance. In the early 1900s, Progressive reformers centralized individual schools into districts to enable better management and administration. Centralization was also a political decision, as reformers sought to mitigate the political power struggles present within local control of school governance.<sup>30</sup> Defenders of local control appreciated the "grass-roots interest in the schools and widespread participation in school politics," whereas reformers viewed the decentralized

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<sup>27</sup> Margaret F. Brinig and Nicole Stelle Garnett. *Lost Classroom, Lost Community: Catholic Schools' Importance in Urban America*. Chicago: U of Chicago, 2014. Print. 15; see also Ravitch, Diane. *The Great School Wars*. 80.

<sup>28</sup> Brinig and Garnett, 15.

<sup>29</sup> These laws will be discussed in detail in the subsequent section to argue that they are immoral in their denial of public funds to a specific population on the grounds of their religion. Recent cases have also suggested the unconstitutionality of these laws due to their anti-Catholic founding and anti-religious animus, see *Douglas County School District v. Taxpayers for Public Education*.

<sup>30</sup> Joseph M. Cronin *The Control of Urban Schools; Perspective on the Power of Educational Reformers*. New York: Free, 1973. Print. 1.



system as fraught with “corruption, parochialism, and vestiges of an outmoded village mentality.”<sup>31</sup> Progressive reformers thus sought to “delegate almost total administrative power to an expert superintendent and his staff so that they could reshape the schools to fit the new economic and social conditions of an urban-industrial society...the subsequent history of these schools has been in large part an unfolding of the organizational consequences of centralization.”<sup>32</sup> Efficiency in education was the goal in the rapidly industrializing nation, and to that end the prime candidates for school board appointments were those who had “proved their capacity in private business” and school control was given to “the progressive expert — a man who, knowing the shortcomings and defects in his business, is eager to try experiments in overcoming them.”<sup>33</sup>

As the 20th century progressed, the urban school district continued to expand and centralize, evolving into the bureaucratic machine of today. Ironically, the district has become privy to the very political pressures the Progressive reformers sought to prevent, and its efficiency is questionable. Fuller writes that, “for most of our traditional public schools, mountains of red tape and rules and regulations as well as overly powerful unions, stifle the kind of creativity and innovation needed,”<sup>34</sup> a sentiment echoed by Chubb and Moe who say, “the most important prerequisite for the emergence of effective school characteristics is school autonomy, especially from external bureaucratic influence...the public school system has a bureaucracy problem and a politics problem, and the two are closely related.”<sup>35</sup> Late 20th century reformers became frustrated with the obstacles created by district bureaucracy and centralization, such as the difficulty of removing tenured teachers despite poor performance, the lack of innovation, and the persistent failure of urban schools to deliver an adequate education. Chubb and Moe write, “bureaucracy vitiates the most basic requirements of effective organization. It imposes goals, structures, and requirements that tell principals and teachers what to do and how to do it...they key to effective education rests with unleashing the productive potential in schools and their personnel.”<sup>36</sup> Education reformers began to recognize that all efforts to improve public education have worked

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<sup>31</sup> David B. Tyack. *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1974. Print. 127.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>34</sup> Howard Fuller and Lisa Frazier Page. *No Struggle, No Progress: A Warrior's Life from Black Power to Education Reform*. Milwaukee: Marquette UP, 2014. Print. 283.

<sup>35</sup> Chubb & Moe, 23-26.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

*within* the system while none had been introduced *alongside* the system as alternative options. The posited that perhaps the organization structure of the system was the problem and began creating innovative solutions. Above all, they concluded that just because states have always educated children based on the zip code in which they reside, this does not mean we should be wedded to a failing system.

The first charter law passed in Minnesota in 1991 was an effort to circumvent district bureaucracy in a new way. This policy innovation fundamentally altered traditional notions of the state's role in public education. As charter schools are publicly funded but privately operated, the law sanctioning them divested Minnesota from the responsibility to operate each school that it regulates. Charter operators can be educators, non-profit organizations, business owners, or universities<sup>37</sup> — essentially any entity that can prove to the regulating state or district that they are able to create a viable school. Proponents of charter schools view them as “classically American” as they “emphasize individualism and promote a maverick sensibility that suggests that a handful of pioneers can create an imaginative, effective educational system through small-scale local reform.”<sup>38</sup> Their decentralized model is reminiscent of the education system's structure prior to the progressive reforms. The different form of governance structure characterizing charter schools gives administrators more liberty over school-level decisions, in part returning public education to its earliest conception as a local undertaking. Since 1991, forty-three states and the District of Columbia have passed charter laws. In a mere twenty-six years, the sector has exploded; now, nearly more than three million students — 6% of US public school pupils — are enrolled in a charter school.<sup>39</sup> The long-term impact of chartering goes beyond the swelling numbers of student enrollment, however. Charter schools rendered the dichotomy between the public and private sectors that began in the early 20th century obsolete. Though called “public” schools, that designation is arbitrary as charters receive state funds but are operated by private entities. The first charter law profoundly impacted our education system; it simultaneously paved a policy pathway for choice, helped to support

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<sup>37</sup> States may place restrictions on the type of entity allowed to operate a charter as the laws differ by state. Pennsylvania, for example, prohibits the granting of charters to for-profit entities.

<sup>38</sup> Peter W. Cookson and Kristina Berger. *Expect Miracles: Charter Schools and the Politics of Hope and Despair*. Cambridge, MA: Westview, 2002. Print. 1.

<sup>39</sup> "Charter School Enrollment." *The Condition of Education*. National Center for Education Statistics, Apr. 2016. Web. 14 Oct. 2016.

the legality of future choice programs, and initiated the dissolution of the public and private education sectors as we know them.

### III. Sector Agnosticism

The passing of the first charter and voucher laws ushered in a new era of state-subsidized choice in American education; some parents may now choose among a variety of schools regardless of their income. The key to ensuring equal access to all families by passing more choice laws rests in recognizing the false dichotomy that persists between the public and private school sectors. “Sector agnosticism,” a phrase coined by education policy leader Andy Smarick to describe a new conceptualization of our education system, breaks down the barrier between the public and private school sectors. Sector agnosticism denotes a sort of ambivalence toward who runs a school and the sector with which it is associated, while remaining deeply concerned with the quality of all types of schools. For many years, the prevailing conception of public education was that it must be both provided and overseen by the state, from bricks and mortar buildings, to textbooks, to general funding, to audits, to performance assessments. Court decisions such as *Engel vs. Vitale* and *Lee v. Weisman* that prohibited voluntary prayer in schools, along with many other cases, contributed to this “bifurcation of the K-12 system of a judicially protected private school system permitted to teach faith but excluded from nearly all forms of public support and public accountability and a public school system devoid of religion but fully supported by public funds.”<sup>40</sup> The charter school movement completely undermined this notion, in that it absolved the state of its duty to operate every school that it regulates and allowed public funds to flow to schools not operated by the state. Smarick argues that these fundamental principles of chartering laid the groundwork for the future of urban education; the state’s role can be recast as that of a regulator overseeing a variety of different school providers. Public funds can be made available for students to attend all participating schools — public or private — and a centralized office can coordinate outreach to parents to inform them of school options, in addition to ensuring that all schools are held accountable.

Private and public schools are similar in more ways than they are different. Both the public and private sectors seek to instill the education necessary for citizenship, have an important responsibility to students and

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<sup>40</sup> Smarick, 112.

parents, and are keystones of neighborhoods.<sup>41</sup> Before the advent of chartering, it would have been reasonable to argue that private schools deserve different treatment (i.e. the withholding of public funds) because they are operated by entities other than the school district. The first charter school bill rendered this argument illogical.<sup>42</sup> From a pragmatic standpoint, it makes little sense to pour more public funds into consistently failing public schools rather than enabling students to attend schools that are providing a quality education. Successful inner-city faith based schools have been driven to closure simply due to rising costs and falling enrollment; inner city students could no longer afford to attend, and the schools could not operate for free. Since 1999, 2,397 Catholic schools filled with a total of 737,202 students have closed their doors.<sup>43</sup> From a practical standpoint, these open seats in high quality private schools are simply being wasted when they could be filled by low-income students seeking a faith-based education or wishing to leave a failing, dangerous, or otherwise undesirable public school. Sector agnosticism, insofar as it enables the state to better provide education to all of its residents, also accords better with the language of state education clauses. The free, thorough, and efficient system promoting widely diffused knowledge that these statutes require is better realized in a system which determines access to public funding based on school quality rather than the nature of their management. Thus, it is neither logical nor practical to perpetuate our current unnecessary division between the public and private school sectors. As the next section will explain, the expansion of school choice in a sector agnostic system also claims a higher moral ground.

### *The Morality of School Choice in a Sector Agnostic System*

In the Christian tradition, as beings created in the image and likeness of God, our first and most fundamental possession is our dignity; this worth is intrinsic to us as humans.<sup>44</sup> The preservation of our dignity requires that we treat one another with the same infinite love bestowed upon us by our creator. From this dignity flows the unalienable rights of freedom and equality, ideals that our nation has promised to uphold since its founding and integral parts of the school choice movement. The Declaration of Independence affirms that,

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>43</sup> Dale McDonald and Margaret Schultz. United State Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools 2015-2016. Rep. N.p.: National Catholic Educational Association, 2016. Print.

<sup>44</sup> "Genesis 1:26-27." The New American Bible: Revised Edition. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2012. N. pag. Print.

“all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” These words initiated a discussion about the role of the state vis-a-vis equality and freedom that pertains to the school choice movement. The Declaration’s vision of equality has evolved with our federal republic over time because the American conception of the state’s role has also expanded. A new understanding of the state’s relationship to equality is that “government must play a positive role in ensuring that each individual possesses the minimum social requisites to participate effectively in public life.”<sup>45</sup> Education falls within this domain, as the states have guaranteed its provision. Yet, our system of state-supplied education in its current form assures neither equality of opportunity nor freedom. The stakes are high, because beyond its existence as a necessary social good, education is inextricably linked to our human dignity. Learning allows us to reach our full potentials, discern our future path, and recognize our existence in this world as free and equal beings. As Coons writes in an essay,

This society is deeply pluralistic, not merely concerning the aims of education but even regarding the proper means to convey effectively that content on which we do agree. On this ground alone our constitutional traditions should support parental sovereignty. What excuse have we for frustrating the interest of the low income parent to select any of the experiences that we concede to be appropriate for the fortunate? Surely the public educator claims no offsetting liberty right of his own to conscript somebody else’s child for the bureaucrat’s private vision of the good life.<sup>46</sup>

The school choice movement itself, as a proposed systemic remedy, tangibly embodies these two founding principles: it promotes equality of opportunity and enables freedom through choice.

Concerns about equality in education have been at the forefront of reform efforts during the past half century. The landmark Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* was our nation’s largest legal step toward mandating equitable access to education. The decision in this case reads, “such an opportunity [an education], where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right that must be made available to all on equal terms.”<sup>47</sup> Though written specifically about racial equality, these words can serve to inform current

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<sup>45</sup> Joseph P Viteritti. *Choosing Equality: School Choice, the Constitution, and Civil Society*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2001. Print. 25.

<sup>46</sup> Coons, 7.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

debates about school choice. Choice, enabled in a system that allows access to many types of schools, is the best guarantor that education will be made equally available to all regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or other factors. Different discussions of equality in state spending among districts and in school governance have also appeared, displaying the modern evolution of calls for parity in educational opportunities. Yet, states continue to educate by zip code, assigning low-income families to neighborhood schools, even if they persistently fail students. Sixty-two years after *Brown*, our nation continues to wrestle with providing education on an equal basis. As long the current lack of equality persists, especially to the detriment of predominantly low-income students, individual human dignity continues to suffer.

In states without choice, the current method of providing education also deprives families of a second right inseparable from the human person: freedom. Parents with the means to send their children to more expensive private schools or relocate to a neighborhood with better public schools freely direct the education of their children in this way. This opportunity is denied to low-income parents who do not have access to any form of state-sponsored choice; every day their child remains stuck in a failing public school. Viteritti writes, “as a group, poor people exercise relatively little choice...we know that to be true because it is inconceivable that so many parents would send their children to the kinds of schools the poor typically attend if they had an alternative.”<sup>48</sup> Moreover, the current system of assigning students based on their location of residence does not only deny general freedom of choice, but also the particular freedoms of speech and religion. Coons writes, “the real case for choice begins with the significance it places upon free expression and the effects of that emphasis. Raising our children to represent our own values is the most important form of speech most of us will ever experience.”<sup>49</sup> Low-income parents often cannot afford to send their children to schools that further inculcate the religious values taught in the home. Scholars have described modern public schools as bastions of “avid secularism,” noting that they communicate the message to “leave religion home.”<sup>50</sup> Though the state is obligated to provide an education to all children, a series of court cases has rendered this education wholly divorced from religion. A paradox arises through First Amendment jurisprudence: that of giving non-religion priority

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>49</sup> Coons, 3.

<sup>50</sup> Diane Ravitch. "Education and Democracy." *Making Good Citizens: Education and Civil Society*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2001. 15-29. Print. 128.

over religion as a way of protecting religious freedom.<sup>51</sup> The history of these legal decisions displays the perpetuation of a deeply flawed understanding of the Establishment Clause; one that is both divorced from the intentions of the founders and is currently denying religious families certain rights. Unfortunately, this folly continues to impede religious freedom via the denial of educational choice today.

After the 14th Amendment incorporated the Bill of Rights against the states, the first amendment effectively reads “States,” rather than “Congress,” “shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.” In his majority opinion for *Everson v. Board of Education of Ewing* (1947) Justice Black used the phrase “the wall of separation” when describing church state relations. Drawn from an obscure letter written by Thomas Jefferson to a group of Baptists sympathizing with their opposition to the state’s established religion, this misplaced metaphor continues to cloud judicial interpretation of the two parts of the First Amendment despite neither the government nor the Constitution explicitly requiring any such wall. Rather than viewing the Establishment and Free Exercise clauses as two parts of a whole that guarantee religious liberty, the courts have increasingly interpreted them as juxtaposed statements requiring balance. In other words, the courts began to “confuse freedom of religion with freedom from religion.”<sup>52</sup> Viteritti thoughtfully writes, “the Bill of Rights was written to protect individuals from excessive government by delineating the legal boundaries of personal freedom. The thought of employing it to narrow the range of choices available to individuals appears to be somewhat self-defeating.”<sup>53</sup> Ironically, *Everson* itself affirmed the constitutionality of choice programs and introduced helpful precedent that supported the enactment of future choice programs.

The manufactured removal of religion from public education occurred even earlier than *Everson* in the form of Blaine Amendments, which are now the primary means by which low-income families are deprived of their religious freedom. In 1875, Speaker of the House and presidential hopeful James Blaine proposed a Constitutional amendment that read in part, “no money raised by taxation in any state for the support of public schools, or derived from any public fund therefore, nor any public lands devoted thereto, shall ever be under the control of any religious sect.”<sup>54</sup> Born from the Know-

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<sup>51</sup> Viteritti, 126.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>54</sup> Patrick Loughery. "Inhibiting Educational Choice: State Constitutional Restrictions on School Choice." *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics, and Public Policy* 30 (2016): n. pag. Print. 7.

Nothing Party's nativist and anti-Catholic sentiment that sought to "Americanize" recent immigrants and diminish the power of parochial schools, Blaine's proposed amendment failed to pass at the federal level. Yet, a majority of states decided to enact their own versions, which, like state education clauses, vary in language and level of detail. All can be broadly classified as restricting the flow of public money to religiously affiliated schools. Between thirty-seven and forty-two states have adopted a Blaine amendment since 1875, and some have been amended as recently as 1970.<sup>55</sup> Most states have rejected challenges made to private school choice programs on Blaine amendment grounds, though there are states whose amendments are so strong that it is unlikely a voucher program could ever be implemented unless Blaine amendments are ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. Blaine amendments continue to inhibit the freedom of the same population as at their creation: families seeking a religious education for their children. Thus, much like the pervasive inequality in education, Blaine amendments at the state level and misguided Establishment Clause jurisprudence at the federal level that negate freedom impede human dignity.

### *Misplaced Criticisms on Moral Grounds*

Opponents of school choice have not entered into significant debate about how the current lack of parental choice for all low-income parents detracts from their human dignity. Rather, critics have questioned flaws in past policy design rather than choice in theory. The criticisms of past programs should not inhibit the creation of future programs whose designs address these concerns. Though opponents of the school choice movement question its legality, effect on unemployment, accountability measures, et cetera, three common criticisms made on moral grounds deserve careful examination. Framed broadly, the first objection accuses choice of eroding the democratic nature of the public school system by siphoning off high-achieving students to charter and private schools espousing different values. This argument asserts that this phenomenon, also called "cream skimming" weakens our political system as a whole by leaving the most vulnerable students behind in failing public schools. The second complaint fears that allowing a free marketplace in education will lead to marketing schemes by schools incentivized to attract

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 8 ("Michigan's amended Blaine Amendment was passed with the support of teachers' unions in the 1970's rather than with the support of the Know-Nothing Party — which helps explain why the text of Michigan's Blaine Amendment is significantly different from others. Because of this difference in history and text, in part, scholars differ as to the number of states that have Blaine Amendments").



students; parents will be misinformed by the market. The third criticism concerns the overhaul of educational systems by corporate entities imposing top-down reforms without necessarily communicating with the people most affected: community leaders, parents, and school leaders. Yet, as mentioned, all of these criticisms are retrospective; they point out flaws in already established programs. Moreover, the arguments underlying the critiques are suspect, and even if they were to be sound, should not prevent the establishment of future choice programs. If anything, ex post facto analysis of this kind will enable policymakers to better structure future choice programs to avoid past mistakes.

Critics of school choice programs concerned with the erosion of public schools' democratic character and creation of inequality point to charter and private schools who siphon off high achieving students to bolster their rankings, thus leaving low performing students in public schools. In *Defending Public Education*, Gabbard and Ross write that, "the first principle of democracy is providing means for giving power to the people, not to an individual or to a restricted class of people."<sup>56</sup> They argue that public schools best ensure this, and other principles such as freedom and shared commitment to the nation. Private schools and innovative schools, according to these critics, champion values of the neoliberal tradition such as consumer sovereignty and individualism. They go so far as to state that neoliberalism in education creates "savage inequalities"<sup>57</sup> that the public school system with its commitment to furthering democracy prevents.

Unfortunately, extreme inequalities exist in American public education, and research increasingly shows that "the great flaw in the American public school system is its systematic and pervasive denial to poor (and disproportionately nonwhite) children of the chance to get a good education."<sup>58</sup> Though the total amount of monetary resources and human capital devoted to public education is the highest in history, the distribution is stratified, as schools in districts with high property taxes possess a fiscal advantage. In fact, Robert Putnam finds that parental socio-economic status is now considered the most effective guarantor of a child's access to quality

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<sup>56</sup> David Gabbard and E. Wayne Ross. *Defending Public Schools*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004. Print. x.

<sup>57</sup> Ironically, this phrase is identical to the title of a later expose of the inequities in our nation's public education system by Jonathan Kozol.

<sup>58</sup> Jennifer L. Hochschild and Nathan B. Scovronick. *The American Dream and the Public Schools*. New York: Oxford UP, 2003. Print. x.

education.<sup>59</sup> On average, poorly funded schools have fewer academic and AP course offerings, fewer extracurricular offerings, and higher rates of truancy, delinquency, and disorder.<sup>60</sup> Thus, the current structure of the public school system enables a different variety of income-based “cream skimming” that critics of choice policy fear. Worse, the perpetuation of these inequalities is state mandated, and will continue as long as choice is denied to families. Finally, there is a paucity of evidence supporting the intentional practice of “cream skimming,” while research exists to support the opposite claim: that choice schools are enrolling previously low-performing students. A state-commissioned researcher found that students taking advantage of Florida’s expansive tax credit choice program “tend to be among the lowest-performing students in their prior school, regardless of the performance level of their public school.”<sup>61</sup>

Moreover, most public schools are no longer the melting pots of race and socio-economic status important to the democratic project in Mann’s day. In “The ‘Common School’ Fallacy,” Ritter and Lucas write that, “we need to disabuse ourselves of the notion that our public schools are truly common schools in which the offspring of CEO’s sit next to those of line workers, where the children of the rich freely associate with the children of the poor. This is a romantic idealized myth.”<sup>62</sup> Similarly, education reformer Howard Fuller once said in a discourse with then-senator Barack Obama that, “a lot of people are living in ‘la-la land’ if they think that public education is the place where all the races and classes come together in America...what’s coming together are the poor kids who are forced to stay in places that do not work for them and people who have money are pontificating about the goodness of the public schools while they themselves are putting their kids in schools that work for their children.”<sup>63</sup> As Ritter writes, “there is something perverse about demanding that poor parents assume a disproportionate share of the responsibility for safeguarding the democratic character of public schooling while the more affluent are under no such obligation.”<sup>64</sup> Thus, critics who fear that choice immorally creates inequalities and erodes democracy need only look to the current system to observe these problems as already endemic.

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<sup>59</sup> Robert D. Putnam. *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Web. Ch. 1.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 4.

<sup>61</sup> "Basic Program Facts about the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program." Step Up For Students. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Oct. 2016.

<sup>62</sup> Gary Ritter and Christopher Lucas. "The 'Common School' Fallacy." *Education Week*. N.p., 23 Oct. 2002. Web. 27 June 2016.

<sup>63</sup> Fuller & Page, 247.

<sup>64</sup> Ritter & Lucas.

Expanding educational choice to parents provides a voice to all families, regardless of their neighborhood or income bracket.

The second moral contention highlights a drawback of applying the free market model to education: imperfect information. Charter schools that focus on student recruitment, have been critiqued for their use of marketing strategies that lure students away from district public schools. Though the charter may not be outperforming the district public school, it actively markets itself to potential parent consumers as different and better with vague slogans such as “success,” “committed to greatness,” and “college prep.”<sup>65</sup> Engaged in competition with both other charter schools and district public schools for students (and the public money attached to each one), schools are incentivized to market themselves as effective and develop their brand. A study produced by the Chicago Teachers Union reads, “whereas charter schools do not have a magic formula for improving public education, by using professional marketing plans to sway public opinion, they do have a formula for convincing people they are magic.”<sup>66</sup> Critics argue that current marketing strategies seek to attract parents as consumers rather than inform them about the school’s successes and failures to enable their rational decision making. Yet, this argument does not consider that certain marketing strategies might be effective in both demonstrating real results produced by the school and enabling parents to make informed decisions regarding their child’s education.

In addition to misinformation through marketing, critics assume that low-income parents are not able to navigate the perceived or actual complexities of the enrollment process. Ravitch quotes in her blog, “in the low-SES areas — where virtually all charters are located — many parents are too unconcerned/dysfunctional to pursue/complete a charter application.”<sup>67</sup> Coons approaches the issue more positively in writing, “I have not argued that parents are necessarily good deciders. They are merely the best.”<sup>68</sup> To help inform parents, some state Departments of Education, notably Louisiana and Florida, have begun issuing grades and report cards for all charter and traditional district schools each year.<sup>69</sup> These practices by state DOEs

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<sup>65</sup> Christopher Lamberti. "Selling 'Choice': Marketing Charter Schools in Chicago." Chicago Teachers Union, n.d. Web. 09 Oct. 2016.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Diane Ravitch. "The Charter School Threat to American Society." Diane Ravitch's Blog. N.p., 07 Aug. 2012. Web. 12 Oct. 2016.

<sup>68</sup> Coons, 9.

<sup>69</sup> Marta Jewson. "See a Full List of New Orleans Parish Public School Report-card Grades in One Place." The Lens. N.p., 17 Dec. 2015. Web. 10 Oct. 2016. *see also* "School Accountability Reports." Florida Department of Education, n.d. Web. 12 Oct. 2016.

exemplify the benefits of recasting the state's role as regulator rather than operator of schools. Non-profit entities have also begun forming centralized information dissemination office such as the New Orleans Recovery School District's "Family Resource Centers" and Indiana's "Enroll Indy." These efforts recognize that, "navigating choice is complex...a complicated system of deadlines, applications and requirements that would leave any parent's head spinning — let alone some of our most vulnerable families who are faced with daily challenges like keeping the lights on and food on the table."<sup>70</sup> Thus, current choice programs are responding to critics who claim that marketing and imperfect information creates a less moral system than the traditional public school district, and future choice programs could be designed to negate these issues.

The third criticism relating to the morality of school choice involves a concern about allowing corporate reformers to drive education reform without obtaining sufficient buy-in from community leaders, parents, and children. Ravitch named these corporate reformers "The Billionaire Boys Club" and questions "the extent to which it is appropriate for a mega-rich foundation to take charge of reforming public schools, even though it is accountable to no one and elected by no one."<sup>71</sup> She argues that African American and Hispanic parents and local community leaders — insofar as it is their children being affected through the reforms — should direct change at the local level. African American community members in New Orleans echoed this sentiment in stating that the reforms brought by advocacy group New Schools for New Orleans were "done *to* us, not *with* us."<sup>72</sup> Researchers similarly critiqued corporate educational reforms in New York City, writing, "like other neoliberal, or market-driven, school reform projects, the New Century Schools Initiative (NCSI) has been implemented by a group of business and political elites able to pour millions of dollars into an initiative without carefully considering the complexity of the work of creating schools."<sup>73</sup> Community leaders of all backgrounds drove some of the earliest movements for choice, however, especially the voucher program established in Milwaukee. Critics of corporate reformers do not acknowledge this fact, and point only to incidences

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<sup>70</sup> "School Choice Made Easier for Indy Parents." Indianapolis Star. N.p., 03 July 2016. Web. 10 Oct. 2016.

<sup>71</sup> Diane Ravitch. *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education*. New York: Basic, 2010. Print.

<sup>72</sup> Parental Choice Symposium, New Orleans, 2016.

<sup>73</sup> Jessica Shiller. "Marketing Small Schools in New York City: A Critique of Neoliberal School Reform." ResearchGate. Educational Studies: A Journal of the American Educational Studies Association, 2011. Web. 09 Oct. 2016.

in which reform has been driven primarily in a top-down fashion by businesses. Non-profit entities and coalitions of community leaders<sup>74</sup> should be at the forefront of reform efforts, and their potential partnership with corporate entities for funding and advocacy capacity could be fruitful. Again, these retrospective criticisms lament flaws in past policy design. Exclamations of immoral school system destruction by Wall Street billionaires only tell part of the story and miss a crucial lesson that should inform school choice programs: the importance of involving community members to the greatest possible extent. The following case study of Indiana's school choice policy displays that critics' fears can be assuaged. Moreover, Indiana's choice law, in providing vouchers to all low-income and some middle-income families, supports equality of opportunity, freedom of religion, and freedom of expression through choice.

"In theory, theory and practice are the same. In practice, they are not."

- Anonymous

#### IV. Setting the Stage for School Choice in Indiana

Milwaukee politician Polly Williams once remarked about her involvement with the nation's first voucher program "I came up with choice outside the public school system because I couldn't get choice inside it."<sup>75</sup> Since Williams' coalition began the private school choice movement, it has spread across the nation and taken various forms in different states. Indiana currently lays claim to the nation's largest state-wide voucher program, called the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program (ICSP). By allowing parents to direct the education of their children through the provision of a voucher, the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program better enables freedom and equality of opportunity than the traditional district public school system. Moreover, due to the high percentage of choice schools affiliated with a religious faith, the

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<sup>74</sup> Howard Fuller's work with the Black Alliance for Educational Opportunities (BAEO) is a notable example of involving stakeholders at the local level to drive reform.

<sup>75</sup> Viteritti, 100.

Indiana program enables the fulfillment of a particular constitutional promise: freedom of religion.

Established in 2011 under House Enrolled Act 1003-2011, the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program has grown steadily since its inception. During its first year, 3,911 students used a voucher to switch from a traditional district public school to one of 241 participating private choice schools. By 2015-2016, the program had grown to 32,686 participants choosing among 316 choice schools — a 736% enrollment increase from its first year. Though seemingly large, this figure only translates to 2.89% of students statewide.<sup>76</sup> Student eligibility for the voucher program is determined by a family's qualification for the free and reduced price lunch program under the federal poverty guidelines. Two types of awards, 50% and 90%, are calculated with reference to traditional public school per-pupil spending in Indiana. In 2012-2013, the average 90% award amount was \$5,550, which increased to \$5,800 in 2013-2014.<sup>77</sup> A family of four qualifying for the 90% award has an annual income of at or below \$44,123 before taxes.<sup>78</sup> A comparable family size with an annual income at or below \$66,184 qualifies for the 50% award. Yet, the overall average value of an Indiana voucher when the number of 90% and 50% awards are taken into consideration is \$4,024, only 42% of traditional public school per-pupil funding.<sup>79</sup> The total amount of state money allocated to families via school vouchers in 2015-2016 was \$132,744,300.<sup>80</sup>

The first great challenge to the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program was a legal one mounted by the Indiana State Teachers Association in 2013. In *Meredith v. Pence* the union challenged the legality of the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program on the grounds that nearly all of the voucher money had been directed to religious schools.<sup>81</sup> This fact was fairly inevitable, as 90% of participating choice schools in Indiana are religiously affiliated, with the largest percentage (55%) being Catholic. The plaintiffs first contended that the voucher program violated Article 8, Section 1 of the Indiana Constitution directing the General Assembly “to provide, by law, for a general and uniform system of Common Schools” as the law would divert up to 60% of the state's students from public schools. The court reasoned that, “even if we were to

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<sup>76</sup> Choice Scholarship Program Annual Report. Rep. Indianapolis: Indiana Department of Education, 2016. Print. 7.

<sup>77</sup> "Indiana - Choice Scholarship Program." EdChoice. N.p., n.d. Web. 30 Oct. 2016.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Choice Scholarship Program Annual Report, 7.

<sup>81</sup> Stephanie Simon. "Indiana Court Upholds Broadest School Voucher Program." Reuters. Thomson Reuters, 26 Mar. 2013. Web. 31 Oct. 2016.

apply the plaintiffs' 60% hypothesis...so long as a 'uniform' public school system, 'equally open to all' and 'without charge,' is maintained, the General Assembly has fulfilled the duty imposed by the Education Clause."<sup>82</sup> The plaintiffs also claimed that the program violated Article 1, Section 4 which reads that "no person shall be compelled to attend, erect, or support, any place of worship, or to maintain any ministry, against his consent" because general taxes flow to religious schools through the voucher program. The court disagreed, writing that, "An Indiana citizen does not 'support' a place of worship or ministry simply by paying general taxes which, through neutral legislation, may end up assisting a program organized by a church." Also responding to the plaintiff's allegation that the voucher program substantially benefits religious schools, the court reasoned that, "it is not whether a religious or theological institution *substantially* benefits from the expenditure, but whether the expenditure *directly* benefits such an institution...the principal actors and direct beneficiaries under the voucher program are neither the state nor program-eligible schools, but lower-income Indiana families with school-age children."<sup>83</sup> Thus, the Indiana State Supreme Court affirmed the constitutionality of the voucher program in a unanimous 5-0 ruling.

Shortly after the Indiana Supreme Court affirmed the constitutionality of the Choice Scholarship Program, the state legislature passed House Enrolled Act 1003-2013, introducing major policy changes. This new legislation expanded the avenues through which students are eligible for the program and removed the requirement that students had to have attended an Indiana public school for at least two semesters.<sup>84</sup> This new law created four new enrollment pathways for students to utilize the voucher program. First, via the special education pathway, students qualifying for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) due to a need for special education living in a household with an annual income equal or below 200% of the federal reduced price lunch guideline are now eligible. Second, via the failing public school pathway, students required to attend a public school that had received a grade of "F" from the Indiana Department of Education living in a household with income equal to or below 150% of the reduced price lunch guidelines may now receive a voucher. Third, via the sibling pathway, students whose siblings have received choice scholarships or tax-credit scholarships in the preceding school

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<sup>82</sup> *Meredith v. Pence*. Supreme Court of Indiana. 26 Mar. 2013. WestLaw. Web. 31 Oct. 2016.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> Katherine Cierniak, Rebecca Billick, and Anne-Maree Ruddy. *The Indiana Choice Scholarship Program: Legal Challenges, Program Expansion, and Participation*. Rep. Bloomington: Center for Evaluation & Education Policy, 2015. Print.

year are also eligible to receive a voucher. Fourth, via the continuing choice pathway, students who received a scholarship to attend a choice school in the preceding year qualify to receive the voucher again.<sup>85</sup>

The Indiana Choice Scholarship Program also includes accountability measures to ensure that participating choice schools meet certain standards. These provisions are important for two reasons. First, most obviously, is that all children deserve a quality education and equal opportunity to succeed. Secondly, because the enrollment of voucher students provides such a strong financial incentive, accountability measures ensure that participating private schools are helping children succeed rather than merely filling their empty seats. A nonpublic school must meet certain criteria to receive voucher students, including accreditation from the Indiana State Board of Education, administration of the Indiana state-wide test for educational progress (ISTEP) and compliance with the state requirement that they “provide civic and character education and display related historical documents.”<sup>86</sup> Data collected from their school’s test results must be reported to the state, which will assign the school an A-F rating that takes into account ISTEP scores and graduation rates. In order to continue to accept new voucher students, a school cannot be rated as a D or an F for two or more consecutive years. Additionally, schools must grant the state access to its classrooms and curriculum for purposes of oversight and review.

With the creation of the new pathways and the removal of the program’s cap on the number of participating students, it is likely that enrollment in the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program will continue to increase each year. The legal and political battles are past victories rather than future problems; the main issue on the horizon will be on the supply side. It remains to be seen whether or not new private school seats can, or will, be created if demand exists. After Ohio passed its voucher law in 1996, a similar issue arose. After all existing seats in private schools were filled, about three hundred students remained who wanted to switch schools. Businessman David Brennan enrolled them in two new secular schools, called Hope Academies, “that he promised to open virtually overnight.”<sup>87</sup> The idea of opening schools with the knowledge that seats will be filled by voucher students is a frontier that will likely present itself in the future. Nothing currently prevents a religious entity from doing the same other than the fact

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<sup>85</sup> Cierniak, Bullock & Ruddy.

<sup>86</sup> "Indiana - Choice Scholarship Program."

<sup>87</sup> Stern, Sol. *Breaking Free: Public School Lessons and the Imperative of School Choice*. San Francisco, CA: Encounter, 2003. Print. 212.



that it has never been done. Future speculation aside, the design of the Indiana law in its current form actively supports the human dignity of low income parents by allowing them to exercise freedom in choosing a school for their child to ensure their equality of opportunity.

It is important to note that before the Choice Scholarship Program was signed into law, some school choice did exist throughout the state. Yet, this choice was limited, as it depended on the location and availability of charter schools. The key supply side difference between charter schools and private schools accepting vouchers is that the charters need to be authorized and built from the ground up, while the eligible private schools existed prior to the enactment of the Choice Scholarship program, and there are empty seats in many such schools. In 2011, eleven charters were authorized to open their doors in Indiana, a number that has swelled to 88 for the 2015-2016 school year.<sup>88</sup> Yet, 79% of charters are located in the state's inner cities, whereas the state's suburbs and smaller towns are not privy to charter existence.<sup>89</sup> In fact, the vast majority of charters are concentrated in just three cities: Indianapolis, Gary and Fort Wayne.<sup>90</sup> A scholarship tax credit program<sup>91</sup> has also existed since 2010, but its average value is \$1,668, a mere 17% of public school per pupil funding, making it difficult for it to compete with other forms of choice. Thus, absent the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program, true three sector choice in a sector agnostic system — the condition allowing for the fullest guarantee of low income parents' human dignity — did not exist. A case study of two Catholic schools in Indiana, St. Adalbert in South Bend and St. Anthony in Indianapolis, illustrates the Choice Scholarship program's ability to enable parental freedom and equality of opportunity. Certain low-income parents sending their children to these schools on the Choice Scholarship were empowered to choose St. Adalbert or St. Anthony as the right place for their children, whether it be for religious reasons, safety concerns, or academic priorities. Affording these parents a choice in their child's education, a service that the state has committed itself to providing equitably, when their economic status pervasively denies them many other choices, supports their human dignity.

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<sup>88</sup> Scott Elliott. "Indiana Has Seen a Burst of New Charter Schools since 2011 Law." *Chalkbeat Comments*. N.p., 12 Apr. 2016. Web. 02 Nov. 2016.

<sup>89</sup> "Indiana." National Alliance for Public Charter Schools. N.p., 07 Mar. 2016. Web. 02 Nov. 2016.

<sup>90</sup> "Listing of Charter Schools in Indiana." Charter School Tools, n.d. Web. 02 Nov. 2016.

<sup>91</sup> Scholarship tax credits operate similarly to vouchers. Money is given to parents to be used toward tuition at a school of their choice but they differ in that the money in the scholarship fund stems entirely from private funding sources rather than from the public coffers.

## V. Case Studies: The Indiana Choice Scholarship Program in Practice

It is atypical to think of schools having stories. This paper has largely construed them as brick and mortar buildings to which children are consigned by various methods. Yet, schools themselves have histories, some of their leaders tell inspirational narratives, and their parents have voices to be heard. When legislators signed The Indiana Choice Scholarship into law, the futures of two schools, St. Adalbert in South Bend and St. Anthony in Indianapolis, changed for the better. I selected these two schools for the purposes of this paper because they are both outliers. St. Adalbert stands out as an exemplar of successfully educating a school population with the highest percentage of minority students and the highest familial poverty rate in South Bend. St. Anthony is the only school in the nation that converted to a secularized charter school when it feared losing the requisite funds to operate, but subsequently converted back to a Catholic school after the voucher program was passed.<sup>92</sup> Both schools have enjoyed rising enrollment and financial stability since the voucher program was passed. The testimonials of two parents from each of the schools, chosen for interviews in consultation with the school principals, also contribute to these snapshots. These parents previously enrolled their children in public school but were able to switch them to St. Adalbert or St. Anthony via the voucher program. These stories, if communicated, display the morality of the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program as it applies to real schools, their hardworking leaders, and their hopeful parents.

## VI. The St. Adalbert Story

Situated on the West Side of South Bend, St. Adalbert Catholic School has served an immigrant population for over one hundred years. The parish and school are a thriving cultural and community center for the now predominantly Hispanic neighborhood. Founded by Polish immigrants in 1910, St. Adalbert serves the highest minority population of any school in South Bend. Of the 211 students enrolled in this Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade school, the majority are Hispanic, only three out of 232 parents

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<sup>92</sup> Shaughnessy, John. "The Transformation of Souls: Principal, Pastor Say New St. Anthony Catholic School Eager to Share the Gift of Faith." *The Criterion Online Edition*. The Archdiocese of Indianapolis, 04 Sept. 2015. Web. 23 Nov. 2016.

attended college and 97% live in households qualifying for free or reduced price lunch under the federal poverty guidelines.<sup>93</sup> Andrew Currier, a graduate of Grand Valley State University (B.A.) and the University of Notre Dame (M.Ed), currently leads St. Adalbert as principal. Currier remarked that the Indiana school choice scholarship program, “has been an incredible benefit to the parish community as a whole. Our school is unique in that nearly all of our kids are all parish kids. They have been living in the neighborhood and going to church here, they just could not previously afford to go to school here.”<sup>94</sup> He estimates that the school has admitted over 50 new students as a result of the Choice Scholarship Program, and most of the previously existing school population has become enrolled in the program over time.

Currier described the difficulties of the first year of the choice scholarship program, which happened to coincide with his first year as principal. He noted that it was “a circus when it all started,” because everyone wanted to participate all at once. The parish priest took an active role in informing parishioners about the program, according to Currier, and organized an “Enrollment Fiesta” after mass during which parents could sign up for the program. Bilingual leaders from the community and surrounding universities also helped overcome language barriers to ensure that Hispanic parents could navigate the enrollment process. During the 2011-2012 school year, its first participating in the choice scholarship program, St. Adalbert received a D from the Indiana Department of Education and displayed negative GPA gains<sup>95</sup> in math based on student performance on the state exam.<sup>96</sup> Currier remarked that the new students enrolling via the voucher had both struggled academically in their old school and “had an overall low morale about school in general.” He mentioned that the students would sometimes boo each other at awards ceremonies and did not seem enthusiastic about learning. Currier said that above all, he needed to reorient school culture to “create a sense of urgency and pressure where there wasn’t any. I needed to combat the ambivalence coming from teachers and parents that accepted their child’s low performance

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<sup>93</sup> Andrew Currier. "Interview with Andrew Currier, Principal at St. Adalbert School." Personal interview. 11 Nov. 2016.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> A negative GPA gain occurs when a school receives a 0.0 (the lowest possible) GPA in a subject based on student test scores on the ISTEP and also loses a point in another category, such as reading. St. Adalbert received a 0.0 GPA in Math and then lost a GPA point in reading, thus their GPA gain was negative. The negative GPA gain is rare, thus it really emphasizes the school’s academic struggles during the 2011-2012 school year.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

as ‘this is how they do.’”<sup>97</sup> The ethos of acquiescence to low performance dissatisfied Currier, and he decided change was in order.

The extra tuition dollars from students using the choice scholarship program helped in part to fund new efforts such as recruitment of talented, hardworking, and mission driven staff, the implementation of a data tracking system to gauge student progress, and the purchase of a new accelerated math curricular tool. Following these changes to school climate, curriculum, and staff, St. Adalbert began to witness drastic improvements, even as more students enrolled through the voucher program. Currier remarked that in a few months, the school elevated itself to a C rating, with an average GPA of 3.0 in math after implementing wide-ranging school improvement shifts. Most recently, the Indiana Department of Education gave St. Adalbert consecutive “A” ratings for the 2013-2014 school year and 2014-2015 school year.<sup>98</sup> Currier believes the school is on pace to receive an A rating for the 2015-2016 school year as well. School climate has improved dramatically, according to Currier, and students are empowered to lead school conferences and actively participate in the parish’s faith life as lectors, gift bearers, and altar servers. Civic identity and religious education are also emphasized areas of study. Noting the importance of civic education — the dilution of which is a common concern voiced by critics of religious schools — Currier stated, “we recognize that many of our students do not have a background about what it means to be a citizen here, so we go out of our way to ensure this formation through social studies instruction.” Students begin each day by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, learn about the nation’s patriotic songs and the importance of voting, and participate in a community Memorial Day parade. Currier praised the choice scholarship program for many reasons, and stated that, “the beauty of school choice is that it allows us to get back to Catholic schools’ original mission of serving immigrants and the poor.”

Two parents<sup>99</sup> shared their views about St. Adalbert after having sent their children to public school. The first, a mother of a third, sixth and eighth grader at St. Adalbert, enrolled her children two years ago. Her eldest daughter is a freshman at Holy Cross College in South Bend. Though their family lived close to St. Adalbert when they first moved from the South Side of Chicago, they were not yet able take advantage of the Choice Scholarship Program. Before the law was changed in 2013, a provision existed that students must

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> "2014-2015 Report Card: St. Adalbert School." IDOE: Compass. Indiana Department of Education, n.d. Web. 14 Nov. 2016.

<sup>99</sup> The names of these families are omitted to ensure their privacy.

have been enrolled in an Indiana public school for at least one year before applying. In the interim, this mother relayed that her children attended Harrison Primary Center, a public PreK-4th grade school. Harrison serves 675 students and employs 35 teachers; the average class size is 20:1. It has been ranked in the bottom 10% of Indiana Elementary Schools for consecutive school years. 86.1% of students failed the Indiana State Test (ISTEP) during the 2014-2015 school year.<sup>100</sup> Like St. Adalbert, many students — over 87% — live in households qualifying for federal free or reduced price lunch and the school serves a predominantly minority population: 49.5% Hispanic and 35.9% African American.<sup>101</sup> After sending her children to school there for one year, she switched her children to St. Adalbert via the voucher. The mother stated that, “Harrison was not so familiar like here, here we are like family...I have always moved my children schools. This is the first school we stay.” She mentioned that St. Adalbert is safe, her children think everyone is kind, and they enjoy going to school each day. She described St. Adalbert as “a family school” and mentioned its connection with the parish, as her children have become lectors and altar servers in both the school mass and the parish services. She believes it is important that her children see the example of their parents volunteering at church and school, and she is a leader in the *Madrinas y Padrinos* (godmothers and godfathers) community outreach program to new parents or to those who are struggling. She said that she would not move her children back to Harrison, or any other public school, given the chance.

The second mother with whom I spoke has children in second, fifth, and sixth grades at St. Adalbert. Her children previously attended Kennedy Primary Academy, one of highest ranked schools in South Bend. A K-4th grade school serving 674 students, Kennedy received “A” ratings from the Indiana Department of Education over four consecutive years.<sup>102</sup> This second parent noted that the staff at Kennedy was wonderful and that she felt like her children “learned a lot” when they were there. Nevertheless, she decided to switch her children to St. Adalbert, after two of her children reported incidents of verbal bullying and pushing by other students on the bus. She noted that her children had also begun to exhibit more aggressive behavior and talked back to her more often. Her husband also noted the attitude shifts in their children, however he originally opposed her idea of changing schools, as he

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<sup>100</sup> "2014-2015 Report Card: Harrison Primary Center." IDOE: Compass. Indiana Department of Education, n.d. Web. 14 Nov. 2016.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> "Kennedy Primary Academy." IDOE: Compass. Indiana Department of Education, n.d. Web. 15 Nov. 2016.

did not think St. Adalbert would ameliorate what he believed to be normal teenager behavior.

The mother mentioned that her family had lived in the neighborhood and attended St. Adalbert parish for seven years. She had considered sending her children to school here year after year, however after analyzing her income in relation to school tuition and the other bills her family had to pay, she had always deemed it financially unreasonable. “I had heard about the school at mass, the priest always encourages us to come to school here,” she stated. After hearing about the choice scholarship program from a friend in the neighborhood, she investigated the option of moving her children and ultimately decided to move all three from Kennedy. She noted that the enrollment process was easy, because the school office helps parents with the paperwork if they struggle with English. She has been taking English classes at a local community center for seven years while working at a local taqueria and is working toward an ESL certification. Above all, she stated that she “feels blessed” that her children can attend St. Adalbert. “We are too busy working sometimes to teach them who God is in their lives,” she stated, “we know they get this in school now.” She also described noticeable behavioral changes in her children following the school change, and said that their academic achievement also improved from their test scores at Kennedy. “They have more feelings for others and they notice misbehavior in others and tell me that they don’t want to be like that person,” she reported. She also noted with a smile that her children have begun helping her out around the house more. St. Adalbert differs from Kennedy, according to her, due to its small size and the fact that every teacher and administrator knows every child by name, knows his or her family, and will do everything they can to help that child. At the end of our conversation, she teared up while stating that she is so thankful her children could go to school within their community in a place that feels like home.

Though both parents chose to switch schools for different reasons, the Choice Scholarship Program gave them the freedom to direct their children’s education. Religious education was clearly a concern for both parents, as they both described the benefits of a Catholic school that continues the moral formation taught in their church on Sunday. Without the opportunity provided by the voucher, the parents would not have been able to fully exercise their freedom of religion as it manifests itself in their children’s education. The public schools to which their children were zoned were simply not able to continue the religious education these parents conducted in their home and on Sundays at church. Additionally, both parents emphasized that they felt

welcomed and included as part of a family at St. Adalbert. For the first parent, use of the choice scholarship program enabled equality of opportunity for her children. If the voucher law had not existed, they would have had no choice but to remain at Harrison Primary Center, the persistently failing school to which they were zoned. Through the Choice Scholarship Program, her children were given equal opportunity in that they had a way out of the lower performing public school system. These parents are living proof that well-designed school choice policies in a sector agnostic system can support the human dignity of low income parents in guaranteeing equality of opportunity for their children and their own freedom.

## VII. The St. Anthony Story

St. Anthony school and parish are located in Haughville, a neighborhood west of downtown Indianapolis considered one of the most impoverished and crime-riddled in the city.<sup>103</sup> The parish served the neighborhood's immigrant Slovene and Irish population until 1902 when tensions between the two ethnic groups inspired the Slovenian population to break off and found their own church. Now, the parish and school serve predominantly Hispanic, low-income students. 90% of St. Anthony's 247 students are Hispanic, most identify as Catholic, and 98% belong to households that qualify for free or reduce priced lunch under the federal poverty guidelines. According to principal Cindy Greer, almost none of the students' parents attended college, and some have only an elementary school education from their native countries.<sup>104</sup>

St. Anthony differs from every other Catholic school in the nation in one respect: it is the only school which became a secular charter school and then converted back to a Catholic school. In 2010, before the existence of the voucher program, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis determined that the school was not enrolling enough students willing to pay private tuition to keep its lights on and doors open. If the school converted to a charter school — removing all religious symbols, halting theology classes and agreeing to comply with the management of an independent board — it could receive around \$7,000 of state money per pupil, a total cost benefit amounting to around \$1

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<sup>103</sup> "Indianapolis Neighborhoods Battle Blight." The John H Boner Community Center. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Jan. 2017.

<sup>104</sup> Cindy Greer. "Interview with Cindy Greer, Principal at St. Anthony School." Personal interview. 20 Jan. 2017.

million in the first year.<sup>105</sup> Indianapolis Mayor Gregory Ballard supported the conversion, and the school, renamed Padua Academy, continued to provide optional religious education before and after the school day, known as “wrap-around services.”<sup>106</sup> Though these courses were optional, the school reported participation rates in excess of 50%.<sup>107</sup> The Archdiocese of Indianapolis remained closely involved with the private, independent board managing the school, effectively retaining its oversight of the school. Vicar general of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis Joseph Schaedel said in a statement that, “many urban Catholic schools are closing across the nation and we did not want to leave the students or communities we currently serve. Through this transformation, an urgent and unmet need within Indianapolis will be filled.”<sup>108</sup> Principal Greer has worked at St. Anthony for eleven years, and therefore has experienced four years of Catholic management, five years of charter management, and the return to Archdiocese control. Her entire tenure has been characterized by periods of transition. She estimates that 85% of the school’s previously enrolled families remained when St. Anthony converted to Padua Academy, and overall enrollment increased as more families took advantage of the free tuition. The school received exemplary status<sup>109</sup> its first two years, but was placed on warning probation its third year. After adding seventh and eighth grade classrooms between its second and third year as a charter, the middle school as a whole plummeted from an “A” to an “F” rating. Greer stated that though St. Anthony “was not that much different when it was a charter school, it was not working as well during that time.” Greer mentioned that the school had difficulty with the influx of students and took in a lot of struggling students, which affected the school’s climate. Most came from George Washington, the notoriously poor performing and dangerous nearby district public school. The Indiana DOE rated the combined middle and high school as an “F” the past three years and 77% of its students failed the 2015-2016 state exam. It is also far larger than St. Anthony — the combined enrollment for seventh through twelfth grade exceeds 700

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<sup>105</sup> “Indianapolis City-County Council Votes to Transform Two Catholic Schools into Mayor-Sponsored Charters.” PR Newswire. N.p., 8 Apr. 2010. Web. 18 Jan. 2017.

<sup>106</sup> Brinig and Garnett, 48.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>109</sup> “Exemplary” was the old rating used by the Indiana Department of Education before it began assigning schools letter grades.



students.<sup>110</sup> After enrolling some of these students, St. Anthony is now struggling to climb its way back to better ratings, and received a “C” last year. Catholic to charter conversions are the subject of debate in educational policy and church circles. The dioceses of Indianapolis, Miami, Washington and Brooklyn have taken similar steps to convert their schools for financial reasons.<sup>111</sup> Typically, they maintain the features of the Catholic school formula, including mandating uniforms, holding high performance expectations, involving parents, and emphasizing character education. In states without voucher programs, school conversion grants struggling dioceses access to a plethora of state funds; when faced with closure or a dilution of Catholic identity, some make the pragmatic choice. To date, St. Anthony is the only school that has converted back. Interestingly, this change led to a net funding reduction of approximately \$2,200 per student — the difference between the voucher amount and charter per-pupil allocation. Yet, school leaders believe that the change was worth it. Though enrollment decreased slightly when the school returned to Archdiocese control, St. Anthony was able to reinstate the Pre-Kindergarten program it had eliminated when it was a charter school. Greer said that, “you need Pre-K at your school when you are serving high poverty families who may not be able to begin their children’s learning at home.” Since then, the school has added forty 3-4 year old students and has received help through a partnership with St. Mary’s Child Care. The school also partners with church affiliates and community organizations such as the local public library, food pantry, and homeless shelter. It also has its own police liaison who works to keep the school safe and to educate students about the justice system.

Two parents of seventh graders shared their views about St. Anthony in interviews. The first had originally been assigned to Bridgeport Elementary, a school that has received high ratings from the Indiana Department of Education and educates 700 children.<sup>112</sup> The mother noted that she liked the school and found it very organized and orderly. After moving, however, this family was no longer assigned to Bridgeport but rather to George Washington middle school. The mother noted that she did not know that the voucher program existed until she visited St. Anthony when exploring her school options. She stated her appreciation of the school’s Catholic character, noting

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<sup>110</sup> “George Washington Middle School.” IDOE: Compass. Indiana Department of Education, n.d. Web. 20 Jan. 2017.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>112</sup> “Bridgeport Elementary.” IDOE: Compass. Indiana Department of Education, n.d. Web. 20 Jan. 2017.

that, “I can teach them about my faith in the house and in church but it is better to have it in school.” She also believes that her daughter receives more attention now, because the teachers are more willing to do one-on-one instruction, and noted that the school strictly enforces its absenteeism policy. Overall, she believes that the school provides a safe environment and stated that her daughter expresses more interest in learning. “She come home from school and tell me things like ‘Mom did you know Joseph was the father of Jesus.’” The mother also noted that some of her daughter’s new friends at St. Anthony told her about making their first communion, which inspired her to begin preparatory classes this year. After her daughter graduates from St. Anthony, the mother hopes to keep her enrolled in private, religious school, ideally at the high-performing Catholic High School Cardinal Ritter.

The second mother enrolled her son at St. Anthony this year after becoming dissatisfied with George Washington middle school. Her son was bullied and beaten up at his previous school because he “is quiet and struggles with ADHD and anxiety.” The mixed middle and high school grade levels bothered the mother, as she said it was bad for her child that 12 year olds were in the same building as 18 year olds. She stated that the children in those schools “had a tough, inner-city attitude that my son just does not have.” Her family had just moved to Indianapolis from a rural area of Indiana. She first heard about the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program on the radio and from her friends. She believes that her son receives a “more well-rounded education” at St. Anthony, as his old school did not assign homework and disproportionately focused on math instruction. Also, though she is not religious, she appreciates that he is receiving some education about God. She expressed her gratitude for the ability to send her child to St. Anthony, as “he would not have survived at George Washington.” Like the first mother, she also hopes to eventually enroll her son in a small, private high school.

The anecdotes of the St. Anthony mothers resemble those of the St. Adalbert mothers in that all seem overwhelmingly grateful for their ability to choose where their child is educated. In the parental choice and education policy world, a common operating assumption is that parents primarily choose schools based on educational opportunity. These personal testimonials support that to an extent, but also display the myriad of considerations present in these pivotal decisions. For families with a strong faith, enrolling their child in a religious school may be their priority. Others may be motivated by safety, class size, or proximity to their workplace. Thus, the true equality of opportunity and freedom that parental choice enables may be measured less in the quantitative test score sense and more by the principle that low-income

parents can choose schools that reflect their priorities and values. The Indiana Choice Scholarship program enables such opportunity and choice, therefore supporting the individual human dignity of all, including low-income parents.

### VIII. Conclusion

When one considers how little the American education system changed between the late 1800's and the early 1980's, its evolution in the last thirty years appears more pronounced. At its inception, our education system split sharply into government funded public schools and religiously owned and operated private schools. Today's landscape now contains a myriad of options including district public schools, magnet schools, charter schools, secular private schools, sectarian private schools, home schooling options, and virtual schools. Choice, broadly speaking, exists among the different options. Why parents choose a school may be due to any number of concerns: safety, curriculum standards, college attainment, moral formation, or religious instruction. Yet, we as a nation need to take a better look at *who* is able to choose. Currently, in thirty-six states, only those with sufficient wealth are able to select with certainty what school their child attends. They may move neighborhoods, pay for private school, or purchase the materials and dedicate the time required for homeschooling. The poor do not have these same opportunities. They may have the *will* and the desire that their children be educated in a private school, a Catholic school, or perhaps just an institution that is safe and clean. Yet, they do not have a *way* to escape the fact that our nation assigns students to district public schools based on the zip code in which they reside.

Each state assumes the duty to provide a free, appropriate, public education in its constitution. What happens when they persistently fail to deliver on this promise? As this paper demonstrates, the sources of our current educational system's inequities are varied. A complex confluence of societal shifts, demographic displacement, dominance of a consumerist mentality, and other factors underly the stratification of our schools and our communities. Yet, in our great meritocratic nation, we believe that each individual human being should be granted an equal opportunity to develop his or her talents and abilities. This belief is the essence of the American Dream, and the public education system has traditionally been considered its genesis. As faith in public schools erodes and their inequities become more vast, the American Dream too is disappearing. As Howard Fuller once wrote, "getting an education in America guarantees you nothing, but I guarantee you, you will

have nothing without an education.”<sup>113</sup> Free market economics drove the initial conversation, while debates about equity now dominate in minority and disadvantaged communities. This movement recognized that if education is a service that the state has promised to provide equitably to all on a need-blind basis, it could not continue in its present form. The parental choice movement displays the practical application of a theory to the concrete problem of disparities in public education. It deserves serious consideration, decoupled from any political, economic, or other special interest judgements, to assess whether or not it helps or hurts the disadvantaged children of our nation.

The literature published on this topic catalogue a variety of goods produced by parental choice programs. These range from better educational outcomes, to college attainment, to a safer learning environment, to the inculcation of certain moral or religious values. The movement is gaining momentum and promises to reshape American education as we have known it. This may not always be the case, however, as courts are complex and teachers’ unions are powerful. As Coons writes,

School choice, in short, has been treated like the teenager with the keys to the convertible. His friends see that he is useful, and for the moment he is popular. One day, however, he may need to be admired for less ephemeral reasons. Choice, too, needs to be loved for its own sake, or at least for a reason more noble than its capacity to make life better for the producers. In fact, there are larger reasons for believing in choice, reasons equal in dignity to those that underlie our great constitutional freedoms. A humane democracy, however, should not leave its realization to the vagaries of constitutional litigation.<sup>114</sup>

This paper argues that choice is valuable for its own sake. Parental choice programs that enable and empower low income families to choose their child’s educational institution recognize the unalienable rights they possess as human beings living in our great nation. Freedom of choice, religious liberty, and equality of opportunity through education in America are not merely the property of the financially secure; rather, they are “endowed by a creator” to all, equally.

Thus, though parental choice is a moral good, its value extends beyond the sphere of ethics to that of natural rights. Ethics pertains to the things that individuals and society *should* do if they wish to live a good life. Yet, this

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<sup>113</sup> Fuller, 55.

<sup>114</sup> Coons, 8.

assumes that the choice to actualize one's potential to live a good life exists; it presupposes the agency of the actor. A natural rights analysis is different, and better describes the true value of parental choice programs. As Georgetown Law Professor Randy Barnett explains, "rather than asking 'How should one live one's life'" — a question which the poor often cannot due to their limited range of choices — "one can ask a different question, 'How should *society be structured* so that individuals can pursue happiness while living in proximity to others?'"<sup>115</sup> Barnett explains that at the time of the founding, the universally accepted answer to this question was that each individual needs the "space" over which he or she has sole jurisdiction or liberty to act. The right to actualize individual liberty stemmed not from the Constitution or from other founding documents, but from the idea of God-given, unalienable rights which are prior and superior to the documents written to ensure their protection. Parental choice programs establish a similar space in which parents, regardless of their income, may choose a school for their children. Well-designed policy ensures and bolsters individual human dignity by restoring the rights of freedom, religious liberty, and equality of opportunity that the current mode of delivering public education denies to the poor. This is not to say that parental choice is a panacea; even if the best programs were enacted in every state much work would remain. But, as journalist Yuval Levin elegantly writes, "We must seek solutions at the juncture of principle and practice — where ideals are turned into action in our everyday lives. The law can help us sustain the room we need to find those solutions, and our noble political tradition can reinforce the argument for freedom understood as chosen virtue...We would be wise to remember that we require more than the freedom to be virtuous. We require the will, and the spirit, and the faith, and the humility, and the wisdom to be virtuous, too. We require a culture of flourishing, which will only endure if we never stop building it."<sup>116</sup>

Public policy can only take us so far; ultimately, a well-functioning society depends on the virtue of its inhabitants. Parental choice programs help to ensure that individuals have full capacity to exercise the fullest extent of their virtue through the guarantee of their First Amendment freedoms.

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<sup>115</sup> Randy E. Barnett. *Our Republican Constitution: Securing the Liberty and Sovereignty of We the People*. New York, NY: Broadside, 2016. Print. 49.

<sup>116</sup> Yuval Levin. "The Perils of Religious Liberty." *First Things*. N.p., 01 Feb. 2016. Web. 08 Jan. 2017.

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# **How Formal and Informal Social Structures Facilitate Inclusion and Community Building: A Study of Refugee Resettlement**

**TERESA KENNEDY**

## **Abstract**

This paper comprises a synthesis of two separate investigations into refugee housing best practices. The first case study focuses on the entry and integration process for Burmese refugees in Fort Wayne, Indiana, while the second case details how flat sharing in Germany has been an effective means of resettling refugees in a more inclusive manner. Fort Wayne was chosen because of its status as a small city with one of the highest populations of Burmese refugees, and for the success with which these individuals have integrated into the community. I incorporate refugee flat sharing in Germany as a perspective on an alternative way to include refugees into a community. This new practice in Germany contrasts with what normally happens to newly arrived refugees, including the creation of secluded refugee-only communities and concentration of refugee populations in the margins of cities. These two frameworks show how inclusive practices can help to both stem xenophobia and aid in shortening the adjustment time for refugees. Taken in conjunction, these practices provide a set of flexible options to incorporate newly arrived refugees in a city of any size.

## Introduction

Over the past several years, many countries have been wrestling with the best ways to deal with the greatest inflow of immigrants and refugees since World War II. There has been a wide range of reactions to this population shift, from the rise of populist, anti-immigrant ideologies, to an increase of cross-cultural empathy and compassion. In this paper, I will examine the concept of refugee resettlement and the way in which formal and informal processes can influence how refugees integrate into and become comfortable in a new community. Formal social structures include ESL classes, job training, housing situations, employment, and school, while informal social structures include familial and friend relationships, maintenance of traditional practices, and positive interactions with natives of the resettlement site. In the past, the goal of resettlement programs was to “disperse refugee groups away from their points of arrival to facilitate their cultural assimilation and attenuate the economic burden they are supposed to represent for receiving areas” (Portes and Rumbaut 42). Over the long term, however, this strategy was neither economically effective nor beneficial for cultural assimilation. The goal of such programs therefore shifted to accommodation of refugees in local communities in the most mutually effective manner possible.

This paper will analyze successful refugee resettlement in Fort Wayne, Indiana, focusing on the perceived reasons for the success of this program and the local conditions that allow it to exist as it does. I will use two main case studies to make the argument for the success of Fort Wayne’s integration process. The first study is based on research regarding resettlement of the Burmese refugee population in Fort Wayne, Indiana. For this part of the study, I spoke with Karen Bender, the resettlement supervisor at Catholic Charities, the organization that is presently the most prominent actor in the Indiana resettlement process. The second study will examine the methodology and strategy of various German resettlement agencies. All information for this case study comes from an investigation that I carried out in Bremen and Berlin, Germany in March 2015, analyzing alternative strategies in refugee housing with the recent mass influx of refugees. While I was unable to speak with refugees themselves in either case due to privacy and Internal Review Board restrictions, the administrative perspectives I gathered provide valuable insight into how the systems in place aid refugees in the respective community integration processes.

## Why Fort Wayne? Success Indicators

The United States receives the largest number of refugees of any country in the world, with a total of 63,933 individuals resettled in 2015. The numbers over the previous two years are comparable, with 69,987 people resettled in 2014, and 69,926 in 2013 (Batalova and Zong, “Refugees and Asylees in the United States”). Within the overall refugee population, Burma (Myanmar) has been the top country of origin since 2006, sending 148,957 (24 percent) of the total 622,169 refugees that have entered the US (Batalova and Zong, “Refugees and Asylees in the United States”). While Indiana does not fall within the top 10 US states for refugee resettlement, it does have a large population of resettled Burmese refugees, particularly concentrated in Fort Wayne.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) republished an article originally from the Journal Gazette in June 2013 about a routine visit from State Department and UNHCR representatives, who reported that there is nothing unique or abnormal about resettlement in Fort Wayne (Francisco, “Refugee Program gets Official’s Praise”). According to these officials, the normalcy of the Fort Wayne program is the best possible review they could give, referencing the community’s support for the resettlement program and success in placing refugees in jobs as indicators of success (Francisco, “Refugee Program gets Official’s Praise”). These are each important factors in community integration, and it makes sense that if they function well the entire program is more likely to achieve its goals.

Another indicator of successful resettlement in Fort Wayne is that it has become a place that draws Burmese refugees from other US cities in a process called “second migration,” or the movement of refugees after they are initially settled in their new country. According to Larry Bartlett, the State Department official who visited the city, there is ideally no need for secondary migration once refugees are settled, as long as they are in the setting anticipated when they submitted the resettlement application (Francisco, “Refugee Program gets Official’s Praise”). However, if Fort Wayne is *drawing* refugees from other parts of the country, that is a sign that the programs in place there work effectively. Secondary migration is a large endeavor, as it must be carried out within the first 8 months after arrival at the first site. If refugees move after this time period, there is no guarantee that they will receive the same benefits in their new location (Merrill Weine et al. 28). That

refugees are willing to undertake this process to move to Fort Wayne shows the strong pull and positive reputation that the city holds.

The most prominent reason for secondary migration is to form communities of similar ethnic backgrounds that help to “shorten the adjustment period, provide protection against hostility and rejection [...] maintain cultural traditions,” and secure practical support with housing and transportation (Merrill Weine et al. 28-29). The issue of practical support used to be a much more prominent reason for secondary migration than it is now. After years of snowball effect, larger concentrations of certain ethnic groups have arisen in one area, thereby resolving the issue of obtaining practical support and decreasing the need to make a second migration for this reason. In turn, higher concentrations of ethnic groups in a given area have led to a greater number of family-sponsored resettlements, which makes the process easier from both a legal and refugee standpoint. For these reasons, secondary resettlement is now generally discouraged (Portes and Rumbaut 53). Additional causes for secondary resettlement that still exist include a lack of ties to the place of initial resettlement and dissatisfaction with new employment (Merrill Weine et al. 29). The attractive qualities of the Catholic Charities of Fort Wayne's resettlement process that draw Burmese refugees from other parts of the US, combined with the nonexistence of common detractors, label the program a success story.

*Yearning to be Free*, a documentary exhibition created by John Gevers, examines the Burmese refugee experience in the US at large, with a particular focus on Fort Wayne as the home to one of the largest Burmese refugee populations in the country. In a local news interview, Gevers describes why so many Burmese refugees sought this Midwestern city as their new home. He cites several reasons, starting with US government's resettlement of Vietnamese and Laotian refugees a number of years ago in Fort Wayne (“Documentary on Refugees in Fort Wayne, Part 1”). The community accommodated these new community members well, and a few years later, when the government was determining where Burmese refugees should be resettled, Fort Wayne consequently appeared as the best option. The influx of Burmese refugees snowballed from that point: the number of individuals increased, drawing other friends and family to join them. Infrastructure, such as cultural food stores and places of worship, were already in place when the newest wave of Burmese refugees arrived in 2007, making Fort Wayne an easy choice for a relatively comfortable new home in a different country (“Documentary on Burmese Refugees in Fort Wayne, Part 1”). Because their

culture was largely already in place, it was much easier for new Burmese refugees to adapt to this setting.

A final note on the success of Fort Wayne in resettling Burmese refugees is the ability of the Burmese population to maintain traditional cultural conditions while integrating into the local community. The original definition of “successful” refugee resettlement under the UN stipulated that refugees assimilate and completely “reroot” in the country of asylum (Voutira and Harrell-Bond 58-59). This definition has changed dramatically over time to encompass a dualistic story of success, in which refugees may adapt to their new country while maintaining traditional culture and practices (Voutira and Harrell-Bond 65-66). In this sense, resettled Burmese refugees in Fort Wayne are a model of success.

### **Catholic Charities: Initial Steps of Resettlement**

In order to learn more about the Fort Wayne refugee resettlement process, I spoke with Karen Bender, the Refugee Resettlement Supervisor at Catholic Charities of Fort Wayne, about their programs and the steps they take for resettlement. The first structural part of the process is that most refugees are resettled where they already have family or friends in the United States. As a result of the city’s pre-existing Burmese population, the majority of refugees arriving to the Fort Wayne community are Burmese. Additionally, though Catholic Charities works with individuals and couples, many of the individuals Catholic Charities resettles come in families, meaning they arrive with a built-in community. The first step of Catholic Charities’ involvement comes when it receives verification of the refugees from the US government, accompanied by an online bio of the arriving family. The “US tie,” or the person(s) the family knows, is also listed (“Personal interview with Karen Bender, 12/14/2015”). Catholic Charities next confirms the family, verifies their case, and then usually waits one to two months until it receives online confirmation that the family is approved. At that point, Karen begins to call apartment complexes and housing companies to set up accommodations for the arriving family. She also orders all of the furniture for the house using a relatively standardized list from the State Department of lamps, couches, beds, and other basic household accessories. Before the family arrives, she must ensure that their new home is stocked with culturally appropriate food and clothing to make sure that they arrive to a comfortable setting. Karen stated, “The goal is when the family arrives that the apartment is completely set to go” (“Personal interview, 12/14/2015”).

Finally, when the family arrives in the US, Karen and another staff member or translator who speaks the refugee family's native language go to the airport to welcome them and bring them to their new home. Refugees come from five main ethnic groups, meaning that this process is not uniform; rather it varies across groups ("Documentary on Burmese Refugees in Fort Wayne, Part 1"). Typically, the family also shares a meal with their US tie the day they arrive, before fully settling into their house or apartment. The first month or two after arrival, Karen said, is very busy. The day after arrival, Karen helps the clients apply for cash assistance, food stamps, and Medicaid. This step is another State Department requirement; clients are eligible for cash assistance just as any US citizen without an income, particularly families with two parents and children that would have no other means of subsisting. If clients do not qualify, as is sometimes the case when people come alone or as couples, they are still eligible for refugee assistance under the same qualification that they have no income. Additionally, Karen brings clients to the Social Security office and to the Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance (FSSA) interview that will move them to the next step in the process of obtaining Medicaid and food stamps. She brings them to the initial position exam, a rigorous hour and a half long medical examination mandatory for all recently arrived refugees. Finally, when applicable, she helps with the school enrolment process, and helps young men aged 18-26 to sign up for the selective service ("Personal interview with Karen Bender, 12/14/2015").

### **Community Integration**

Only when all of these basic survival steps are completed can Karen begin to help refugees to integrate into the community. Catholic Charities sponsors an English Second Language (ESL) class for all newly arrived refugees, as well as job development, through a six-week "Job Ready" class. She also helps families to set up any doctor appointments that they might need in the near future—for pregnant women or young children for example. The first week or two, Catholic Charities offers a cultural orientation that includes several three-hour block sessions. Karen says that this orientation is meant to reiterate the five-day orientation that refugees receive overseas before traveling to the US. They cover "all aspects of US culture," including hygiene, the school system, important laws, the benefit system, and employment, with a particular focus on local practices, such as how to access public transportation and medical care ("Personal interview with Karen Bender, 12/14/2015"). When Karen carries out activities with clients, such as going to the food stamp office, she reiterates these lessons. In this same period, one of the staff

members from Catholic Charities helps the newly arrived refugees to choose a doctor and to transition from Medicaid to insurance (many times this transition occurs after a few months once clients find employment) (“Personal interview with Karen Bender, 12/14/2015”).

Based solely on this initial process, it is apparent how the steps of acquiring basic necessities, such as food and health care, give way to activities that aid in making refugees comfortable, such as ESL classes and employment workshops. According to Karen, even these basic first steps immediately after arrival are important in the process of building community for newly arrived refugees. She said that although the initial process for resettlement is rather short, during this time Catholic Charities makes an effort to create starting points for new arrivals by connecting clients with the people that they will need to know in order to build community. However, because such a large and established Burmese refugee population exists in Fort Wayne, she also made it clear that the entry process could more accurately be described as newcomers entering a pre-existing community. In the beginning, the ESL and job preparation classes are very helpful for uniting people. In these settings, newly arrived refugees often become much more comfortable and begin to make friends locally, outside of their families and relatives. This trend continues in the long term, as refugees construct an existence for themselves in their new home through everyday practices, such as attending school, going to work, or shopping. Over time, these activities coupled with economic stability make people comfortable enough to move out of the apartments into houses scattered across the city and to become a part of the larger Fort Wayne community (“Personal interview with Karen Bender, 12/14/2015”).

According to Karen, newly arrived refugees are generally able to find employment relatively quickly—within the first three to four months in Fort Wayne—despite language barriers. Although most refugees do not pick up English within such a short timeframe, there are many employers that are willing to hire them based on strong relationships with Catholic Charities. This arrangement works well because many clients end up working with other refugees, aiding in the transition process. Most new arrivals do not have driver’s licenses or cars, which is another reason they are usually placed with a sibling or friend that can assist them (“Personal interview with Karen Bender, 12/14/2015”). While temporary income support is a necessary starting point for most refugees, “resettlement programs are, from the outset, designed to be ‘developmental’” (Voutira and Harrell-Bond 57). The restoration of a refugee’s livelihood is a key element in integrating into the community as a productive



individual rather than being forced to live off of cash assistance, food stamps, and Medicaid (Voutira and Harrell-Bond 58).

When I asked about challenges and backlash within the Fort Wayne community to refugees, Karen responded,

“There is *some* [backlash], of course, you see opinion pieces in the local paper from people who do not want refugees in their community. But I don’t see much of this myself—no one comes to me and tells me that they have issues with there being refugees here. There aren’t problems in the office, either. So, I would say in the community, there is probably some backlash, but I don’t see it” (“Personal interview, 12/14/2015”).

She said that generally, there are no problems with interpersonal relationships, simply because most Fort Wayne residents do not know who is a refugee and who is not. The face of the city looks much different now than it did 20 years ago, Karen says, with many new faces and many people who come from a wide array of diverse backgrounds. Karen told me that personally, she sees clients all over town and has never heard from anyone that they get dirty looks or that there are places they are afraid to go. The biggest challenge, she reported, is language. “Even if clients speak English,” she said, “that does not necessarily make everything smoother. To avoid any difficulties in the resettlement process, we just make sure that everything is done in the right timeframe, and that the ongoing process goes well. So really, there’s not *one* thing that is most challenging, but we need to make sure to stay on top of everything” (“Personal interview, 12/14/2015”).

Integration into the community, according to Karen, happens over time but is greatly aided by the ability to place newly arrived refugees with others from their same national, ethnic, and linguistic background. Specifically in Fort Wayne, there is not much of a debate around what kind of living community refugees should be placed into. Because Fort Wayne is a relatively small city with a population of around 260,000 (“Fort Wayne (City), Indiana”), the options of places that refugees can be accommodated as individuals without an income are limited. Even if refugees do come from different countries of origin, they will likely be resettled into the same apartment complexes as Burmese refugees (“Personal interview with Karen Bender, 12/14/2015”).

Catholic Charities’ practice is to negotiate six-month leases for newly arrived refugees. When their lease is up, they are free to live somewhere else,

perhaps closer to friends or other family members. In terms of integrating within the local community, Karen informed me that this part of the resettlement process takes time but does happen naturally to different degrees over several months or years. Those who have been in Fort Wayne for five years generally buy houses and move out into the larger community. At that point, they have the savings and skills to live unassisted in the city. Karen noted that refugee families move to many different areas in order to be closer to their church or their mosque for example, but not simply to remain with an exclusively Burmese neighborhood. In a working environment, Burmese refugees frequently end up together, based on the relationships that Catholic Charities has and the sheer volume of new refugees. More generally however, Karen says that refugee families construct their own communities naturally over time, as would happen in any population (“Personal interview with Karen Bender, 12/14/2015”).

There are many instances in which positive relationships do arise from resettlement. Karen says that it is common for Fort Wayne natives to make an effort to befriend newcomers, often in schools, but also in professional settings or in the local community more generally. In employment settings, positive relationships are fostered with refugees particularly in scenarios in which employers need to hire a large number of new employees, and end up trusting the larger refugee community from positive experiences with workers. In more formal settings, cultural events help to establish relationships with non-refugee members of the Fort Wayne community. In Fort Wayne, there are many Burmese cultural events and refugee events that many non-Burmese locals also attend. Many people, including resettled refugees and Fort Wayne natives, are invited to these events, creating an easy opportunity for people to come together (“Personal interview with Karen Bender, 12/14/2015”).

### **Why it Works**

In Fort Wayne, resettlement of Burmese refugees has been successful for several reasons. First, Fort Wayne is a small city, meaning that Catholic Charities is able to have localized, personal relationships with housing and employment partner organizations. In this way, the resettlement work is more integrated within the community itself, relatively speaking, compared to a large city. Second, the city’s small size works in favor of the Burmese refugee population; because Fort Wayne is a relatively small community, there is a greater need for refugees to integrate into the larger population for daily needs

such as schooling, employment, purchasing food, and entertainment (“Personal interview with Karen Bender, 12/14/2015”).

In this context, Asef Bayat’s concepts of “quiet encroachment,” “the art of presence,” and “nonmovements” can describe how Fort Wayne has gradually transformed from simply a small Midwestern city to the home of one of the largest Burmese refugee populations in the US. Bayat defines “quiet encroachment” as “noncollective but prolonged direct actions of dispersed individuals and families to acquire the basic necessities of their lives [...] in a quiet and unassuming fashion” (Bayat 35). “The art of presence” is what Bayat coins as “the courage and creativity to assert collective will [...] to circumvent restraints, utilizing what is available and discovering new spaces within which to make oneself heard, seen, felt, and realized” (Bayat 29). Finally, Bayat defines “nonmovements” as the joint action of widely spread out and non-organized individuals, who work towards a similar goal with no formally organized movement. In the context of Fort Wayne, Bayat’s concepts are exemplified in the fact that tens of thousands of Burmese refugees did not flood the small city at once; instead, each year people came to join friends and family that had already successfully settled in Indiana. The simple presence and the quiet encroachment of the Burmese refugees over a period of time, without seeming threatening or radical, have created the conditions for the current climate of peace and acceptance that Karen described. The well-established Catholic Charities resettlement process is the crucial step that allows refugees to quietly ease themselves into the community, avoiding many of the difficulties or faux pas that could be present if such a process were poorly managed or did not exist.

Finally, successful resettlement is due in part to the fact that Fort Wayne has a long legacy of taking in primarily Burmese refugees, meaning that it has a well-established program aware of the cultural and practical needs of its primary refugee population. In light of this point, former Indiana Governor Mike Pence’s 2016 suspension and then restriction of his state’s acceptance of Syrian refugees could still be considered inhumane, but the alleged reasoning behind the policy becomes clearer. Pence did not ban refugees from *other* countries from entering Indiana—for example, if refugees from Burma/Myanmar were due to arrive, it is likely that their case would not make the news. However, Pence’s rationale was rooted in his idea that, “The fact that Indiana, along with 30 other states, has expressed concerns about the security associated with the Syrian refugee program is a reflection of common sense,” or more accurately, supposed “security threats” and fear of the

unknown (Slodysko, “Pence’s Objection to Refugee Resettlement a Balancing Act”).

## **The \***

While Fort Wayne’s legacy of accepting Burmese refugees serves as a security blanket for accepting a “safe” population, one important additional consideration hinges on Suárez-Orozco’s idea that “globalization changes everything; inter alia, it makes the tenets of unilineal assimilation largely irrelevant” (Engaging Cultural Difference 37). While the people of Fort Wayne have grown comfortable with accepting refugees from Burma, there is no reason to believe that the refugees that have joined their community over the past 40 years are any “safer” than those coming today. Therefore, the success of the program in this regard is culturally constructed and should not be taken for granted, as we can see in the case of Syrians being constructed in the media as “dangerous,” and suddenly less worthy of acceptance. Suárez-Orozco writes that Americans must keep an open mind to immigrations and cannot make assumptions of what we expect immigrants to be because they will shape the future definition of this nation.

## **Shifting Refugee Housing Strategies at a Critical Point in German History**

While the immigration situation of Germany is dramatically different from that of the US, due to social, historical, and a number of other factors, reasonable comparisons can be drawn between the resettlement practices in the two nations. Over the past few years in Germany, public focus has shifted from immigration in general to focus on the arrival of thousands of refugees, most of whom currently come from Northern Iraq and Syria (“Personal Interview with Arian von Mach 3/11/2015”). When I visited Germany, I stayed in Bremen, a smaller city of around 550,000 in the western part of the country. To address my research question regarding alternative strategies in refugee housing, I met with representatives of Arbeiterwohlfahrt (AWO), one of the leading organizations in Bremen for organizing refugee housing, and Flüchtlinge Willkommen (“Refugees Welcome”), the original alternative refugee housing organization based in Berlin. In “Legislating Religious Freedom: Muslim Challenges to the Relationship Between Church and State in Germany and France,” Katherine Pratt Ewing describes Germany’s tumultuous history accepting Muslim Turks, who now constitute 2.4 percent of the total population (65). On page 66, Pratt Ewing describes how Berliners railed against the construction of prominent mosques, as “such a building

would disrupt the Berlin skyline, being a constant and permanent reminder of the presence of foreigners in the heart of Germany.” Now, Germany is at a turning point in a refugee crisis, where it has the opportunity—and moral obligation—to welcome foreigners (many of whom are Muslim) when they have nowhere else to turn. It is important to keep in mind that many, if not most, of the immigrants to Germany do not leave their homes voluntarily; they are generally fleeing conflict, immediate threats to their lives, and/or lack of opportunities. Because escaping to Germany is their only option, and because Germany has the economic means to support them, the nation has a duty to take in these individuals.

### **The Need for Shared Flats**

I first spoke with two staff members of AWO: Nele Lühmann, the social worker for one of AWO’s transitional housing facility in Bremen, and Arian von Mach, the coordinator of AWO’s “More Space for Refugees” program that works with living space mediators. Nele explained that the facility in which we met was one of many “Kamper-Häuser” that exist in four different locations in Bremen alone (see Figure 1) (“Personal interview with Nele Lühmann, 3/9/2015”).





**Figure 1:**

**Note:** AWO preferred that I not photograph the facility. These pictures of the home where I interviewed Nele were therefore taken from the Radio Bremen website.

These facilities are meant to serve as temporary housing for newly arrived refugees, but she informed me that in reality refugees remain in the homes, which are similar to storage containers, for anywhere between three months and 20 years. In fact, the Kamper-Häuser were designed to be temporary and to be taken down after a short period, but the space remains necessary, and in fact critical, if Germany is to provide housing for the large volume of refugees in the country. The goal is that each refugee family will have its own apartment after three months—but the search process is difficult, which usually results in longer stays in the Kamper-Häuser, particularly for larger families (“Personal interview with Nele Lühmann, 3/9/2015”). Arian added that there are now “emergency homes,” such as an old school and a fairground, that exist due to the increase in incoming refugees (“Personal interview with Arian von Mach, 3/11/2015”).

More practical constraints on helping refugees to move into permanent housing include finding and working with partners and the strain on the families of uprooting and relocating yet again. The first issue, securing permanent apartment housing for refugees, is of great concern. Although rent payment is secured through government funding and the process of enlisting in the program is easy, contracting apartment complexes remains difficult. Many people are still very skeptical of the idea of renting to refugees, and

working with partners frequently becomes difficult. Because of these factors, even during public inspections of the apartments, the probability that living space mediators (a supervisor/manager present in every refugee “home”) will successfully secure a site is low (“Personal interview with Nele Lühmann, 3/9/2015”).

Arian reported that an organization called Gemeinnützige Wohnungsbaugemeinschaft der Freien Gewerkschaften für Bremen und Umgegend (GEWOBA), or “Non-Profit Housing Association of the Free Trade Unions for Bremen and the Surrounding Area,” provides some apartments, and that other living space societies provide additional support. She added that depending on the neighborhood of the city the number of apartments available may vary. She also stated that there have been announcements from the city and the press to promote giving privately owned flats to refugees, but she echoed Nele’s claim that the size of the refugee group limits which apartments are available. She said that single refugees and families are difficult to relocate, since most apartments are intended for 3-4 person families (“Personal interview with Arian von Mach, 3/11/2015”).

After hearing these two AWO workers’ perspectives on the refugee housing situation in Bremen, I travelled to Berlin, Germany’s biggest city with a population of around 3.5 million. There, I met with Golde Ebding of Flüchtlinge Willkommen. The organization began when she supported the refugees in need of permanent housing herself, by helping them to search for apartments. Mareike and Jonas were two of the first to offer their apartments and eventually became part of the founding team of Refugees Welcome. Thanks to donations, they were able to cover rent, and the organization was off to a far smoother start than she had anticipated. The idea is that the formal preexisting structure of housing may be used as a means of social inclusion and to foster healthy informal social relationships, as well as to better include refugees in German society (“Personal interview with Golde Ebding, 3/13/2015”).

Since November 2014, when the team officially established Refugees Welcome through a Facebook page and website, the project has taken off. They had their first successful match for housing in early December 2014, which was interestingly right around the time that the anti-refugee protests arose. Initially, the organization received between 100 and 200 request messages per day. In March, they switched to a ticketing system in order to organize the large demand, and by mid-March, they had received around 580

full applications for housing. Jonas, one of the founders, plays a crucial role as the organization's web designer. The organization's website is meant to reach all residents of the temporary homes, as well as all refugees and people living illegally in Germany, because the possibility that they will encounter and sign for a living space on their own is small. Refugees Welcome has future plans to also work with information centers and help desks and to make greater use of fliers and posters, since not all potential clients have Internet access ("Personal interview with Golde Ebding, 3/13/2015").

### **Implementation on a Large Scale**

Organizations similar to Refugees Welcome have already sprung up in several other European countries, including the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, and Greece (where the government does not have a well-established asylum program and refugees face even greater challenges). The hope is that within Germany the idea will spread to other cities, although Golde predicts that it might be more difficult to implement in some parts of the country such as Hamburg or Bavaria, due to living restrictions and the fact that it is generally harder to find apartments for individuals there ("Personal interview with Golde Ebding, 3/13/2015").

Because of the massive inflow of refugees to Germany over the past two years, the flat-sharing idea is a creative solution to an otherwise seemingly insurmountable problem. The temporary housing for German refugees is already overcrowded and is creating "ghettoized" neighborhoods, in which large groups of refugees are forced to live illegally and/or separated from the rest of German society in many cases. Due to the great influx of refugees, a program like the one implemented in Fort Wayne, touted as exemplary, could not function. In the case of Germany, under present conditions and resettlement patterns, there is no room for the intimate small-city relationships that Catholic Charities enjoys with partners, nor is there the physical space to resettle refugees in the normal fashion. The flat-sharing program combines the best parts of the Fort Wayne program in a manner suited to the situation. On one hand, refugees are better able to integrate into the community and acquire language skills by living with Germans, while at the same time escaping the claustrophobic "temporary" housing. On the other hand, they are encouraged to teach their local hosts about where they come from, thereby strengthening the likelihood for German attitudes of acceptance and inclusion.



The example of flat sharing in Germany illustrates that while the structure of the refugee resettlement program carried out in Fort Wayne may not be flexible enough to be applied in much larger situations, the values that the program promotes are ideal. And while small-scale local engagement is what takes place in a best-case scenario, it seems as though there is hope in the German situation: formal social structures, such as housing, may be used to promote healthy informal social structures as well.

## **Conclusion**

As I have discussed, the refugee resettlement program in Fort Wayne, Indiana can be seen as one that does exemplary work to simultaneously ease Burmese refugees into American society while allowing them to maintain ties with one another and with traditional cultural values. The personal attention devoted to each client or family creates a healthy and supportive relationship for newly arrived refugees and serves as a springboard for the creation of other relationships within the community, through housing, employment, schooling, and day-to-day activities. While this structure seems to work very well, it appears that if its values of personal attention, fostering local relationships, and maintenance of traditional culture can be transferred into a different type of program, such as that of Refugees Welcome and flat sharing in Germany, there is still an opportunity for successful refugee resettlement.

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## Appendix

Karen Bender, Catholic Charities of Fort Wayne, 12/14/15

1) Q: What is the step-by-step process of how refugees arrive?

A: We get verification, online family bio, US tie listed, confirm, verify case, usually come 1-2 months after that, receive confirmation online.

-Then start to call apartment complexes and houses, order furniture

-Before they arrive, the apartment must be set—culturally appropriate food, clothes, and furniture (couch, lamps, beds, etc.)—purchase all this and put it in the apartment

-Goal is that fam arrives with apartment set to go

-Go to airport with someone who speaks client's language, bring them to their place, meet with US tie (friend/fam), meal maybe

2) Q: What's the first month like?

A: Home visit the next day; apply for cash assistance, food stamps, and Medicaid: the State Department requires it, cash assistance is for two parents plus kids, just like any other citizen with no income; if not qualified, single or couple, refugee assistance cash, because no income; also Social security office, FSSA interview, initial position refugee health screen exam, school enrollment, Boys 18-26 must help to sign up for selective service

-pretty busy; ESL, job development, refugee job-ready class (6 weeks)

-doc appointments (OBGYN, small kids, take to appointments)

-Cultural orientation: 1<sup>st</sup> week or two, ongoing, but three hour sessions, cover all aspects of US culture, 5 days overseas, go over that and local transport, medical, hygiene, schools, laws, basics of US cult, benefits system, employment, when they go to food stamp office for ex, go thru again

-One staff helps them choose doc and transition from Medicaid to insurance

-Get jobs generally pretty quickly, 3-4 months (even despite language barriers)—Many employers hire clients; relationship—many clients end up working together

-Most don't have license so they are usually placed with brother or friend that can help arrange transport (know someone in Ft. Wayne in the first place, how they get there)

3) Q: Are there any challenges? Pushback?

A: I don't think so...some, opinion things in the paper, not lots herself, ppl don't come to her and tell her, and no probs in the office either

-In the community, prob see some, but I don't see it (Karen)

-Language is always the biggest barrier; but even if speak English, not necessarily smoother

4) Q: What's most important in the process?

A: not one thing, making sure everything is done in right timeframe, ongoing process

- 5) Q: Do refugees remain with people from their own country/background?  
A: Ends up being together only b/c housing in Fort Wayne, only a few places that will take refugees (3-4 places), b/c no income, and even if dif pop, same apartments—6 mo leases, then can go wherever they want; as far as jobs, don't matter (Burmese maj.)  
-integrate with local community? Those here 5 years buy houses, all over town, sometimes close to church/mosque attend; save money to buy house, in general community at that point  
-communities: ppl definitely have their own; just happens naturally, as in any population  
-problems? Karen doesn't see many; the face of the town looks very different than it did 20 yrs ago—many faces, many colors, now native pop doesn't necessarily know who's refugee who's not; doesn't matter or make much of a difference, see clients all over town, no dirty looks or places they're afraid to go
- 6) Q: What positive relationships arise from resettlement?  
A: Yes! Befriend newcomers, many times in schools, in community, professionally, need to hire lots so they hire clients, good relationship
- 7) Q: How does this process relate to Mike Pence's recent claims?  
A: Oh, I don't know, can't comment politically as catholic ngo...email director (no comment)
- 8) Q: How does the process/housing facilitate inclusion? Build community?  
A: Process—initial is very short, introduce clients to those they will need to know to build community; already community, JOINING  
-ESL, job prep, ppl come together, lot more comfortable, make new friends outside relatives  
-Ft Wayne ppl: Burmese events, Americans, go, refugee events, many invited, can come together at that time (also informal)

## Interview 1

Nele Lühmann

Talk with the social worker and the living space mediator in the transitional housing Arbergen, Bremen

- Every home has a living space mediator
- How do you find the fitting living space?
- There are problems, working with partners concerning housing
- It is especially difficult to find flats for 5 or more persons and bigger families
- 9 and more persons (big families) live in “Kamper-Häuser” (ready built houses in 4 locations in Bremen)
- These were planned out to be temporary/to be taken down soon, but the space is necessary and heavily needed
- After the refugees build up a living at one place, it is difficult to change locations (school, social environment)
- During public inspections of flats, the living space mediators do not have good odds to get the flat, people are still very skeptical
- Especially private flats are difficult to get, although the payment is secured and the process is easy
- The duration of the stay in the temporary homes is very different (between 3 months and 20 years)
- Regularly, the refugees would have to move out to their own place after 3 months, but the search is difficult
- The people living in private flats still receive some minor supervision and the offer of advice if they need it
- Underage refugees live in special, supervised homes
- There are not only social educators working in the homes, but all kinds of people, since help and support is heavily needed
- There are three supporting institutions in Bremen: Innere Mission, AWO, ASB
- How is it working?
- There is a good network between the institutions and workers
- There are many volunteers working and supporting
- There are still not enough people to talk to concerning living space, there is not enough support from bigger societies
- It is important to have constant and static work in order to build up trust
- Translators are not contacted very much, many refugees learn German pretty fast and can help themselves
- There is great cooperation with churches/projects/supporting institutions
- For example Fluchtpunkt: they offer legal advice once a month

Interview 2

Arian von Mach (AWO Bremen „More Living-Space for Refugees“

- At first, people get to ZASt (central registration center)
- Every camp has 1-2 living space mediators
- People stay in temporary homes until a fitting living space is found (at the moment there are 12 temporary homes; but there are more to come)
- Tasks of the living space mediators (lsm)
  - o Inspection of flats
  - o Application (Job center, social services) >in order to cover costs (rent etc.)
  - o The fixed size and rent costs cannot be stretched (this is not always possible, due to the missing of suitable living space)
  - o These processes need time, that's why its sometimes difficult to place people into shared flats, because they mostly look for people immediately
- In addition to that, there are emergency homes now: because of the masses that are arriving in Germany these days, there needs to be space to live for them (school in Huchting and a hall of the fair)
- Concerning the mediation it has to be considered to not break the connection of families and people to school, social surrounding and work
- There are flats offered by GEWOBA (and other living space societies)
- Depending on the neighborhood, there are more or less flats offered
- There have been announcements from the city and press to promote giving privately owned flats to refugees
- The act of renting gets realized by the particular supporter of the camp or the city
- Special case of underage refugees: they do not live in temporary homes but in specially supervised houses
- Shared flats offers were already brought to AWO, but the mediation of these places is rather difficult, since many refugees (after living together with many people in the camps) urge for a flat for themselves without the need to share rooms
- Single persons are the biggest group of people looking for flats (+ big families)
  - o There just are not many flats to offer for this group of people (most flats are build for a "regular" 3-4 persons family)
  - o There are many people from Syria and Northern Iraq arriving now
- Some private landlords have special wishes when it comes to giving their flats to refugees: academic background, Syrian, English-speaking (so no Roma and Sinti for example)
  - o These concerns are communicated either openly or rather held back
- Nevertheless, there are also offers from landlords to support and help the refugees living in their flats with going to state offices or the connection to their neighborhood
- "More Living Space for Refugees" as a coordinating institution/group for the living space mediators and as a central contact person
  - o Since its start (beginning of 2014) with 4 mediators for all the camps, there are now 1-2 mediators in every camp

Interview 3

Golde (Flüchtlinge Willkommen – Website: refugees welcome)

- She herself supported the Oranienplatz-refugees before
  - o They started a search for living space for the people there, and Mareike and Jens offered their rooms (later became part of the founding group)
  - o Thanks to micro-donations the rent could be covered (it all worked out better than expected!)
- The website is meant to reach all residents of the temporary homes, all refugees and people living illegally in Germany (they all have a pretty small chance finding a place on their own, including signing the contract, etc.)
  - o Also: planned to be working together with information centers/helpdesks
- Access to internet? (Since the platform is only online) >most people in the appointed age to have some kind of access to internet
  - o Nevertheless they plan to use flyers and posters to also reach the ones without internet
- Start off: beginning of November in 2014 (with fb and the website)
- Very fast development of the people reached; already first successful match at the beginning of December
- Just when the anti-Pegida-protests arose, they too began (coincidence?)
- In the beginning: 100-200 messages per day (now they have a ticket-system, helping to organize the requests)
- There are already several similar projects in other European countries: Austria/Switzerland/Netherlands/Greece (also the government is not leading a very good asylum policy, and the country is going through rough times)
- There are up to 576 applications until now (3/13/15)
- Now the idea should be spread into other cities, through connecting people and flyers and posters
  - o In some parts of the country, rather difficult due to their living restrictions (Hamburg, Bavaria: cannot easily live in their own flat)



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## **Agency in Dominican Birth: Can Women in Region III Influence Exposure to Unnecessary Cesareans?**

**NICHOLAS NISSEN**

### **Abstract**

The Dominican Republic (DR) has the second highest rate of Cesareans in the world. In Region III of the DR, the Cesarean rate is 49%, while the suggested rate by the World Health Organization is 10-15%. Despite providing exceptional accessibility to specialized prenatal and intrapartum (during-labor) care, rates of maternal mortality and infant respiratory illnesses remain high. Causes of the maternal mortality are often due to sepsis. The invasive nature of Cesareans combined with the DR's poor sanitary conditions in medical centers can increase risk of sepsis, and subsequently, death. Additionally, Cesareans have been associated with higher prevalence of respiratory illnesses in infants along with other early childhood illnesses. This project is based on an ethnographic study of maternal birthing agency and unnecessary Cesarean use in the community of Region III. Interviews were done with 122 mothers, 12 physicians, and 9 nurses in waiting and/or administrative areas, and the 27 labor observations were done in the maternity ward of the same public hospital to investigate birthing methods. The research demonstrates Dominican women's minimal experience of agency during labor, reveals perceptions of natural and Cesarean birth, and aids in understanding how doctor-patient interactions can affect susceptibility to Cesareans for non-medical reasons. The findings from this study help to inform policy and hospital protocol for populations experiencing Cesarean overuse.

## Introduction:

Problem of Cesarean overuse: The Dominican Republic (DR) is the second highest nation for the overuse of Cesareans. In Region III of the DR, the Cesarean rate is around 490% of the suggested rate by the World Health Organization.<sup>1,2</sup> Despite providing exceptional accessibility to specialized prenatal and intrapartum (during-labor) care, maternal mortality remains high (see figure below). This “Dominican Paradox” is a growing area of research. Preliminary results indicate that mothers continue to die due to sepsis;<sup>3</sup> the invasive nature of Cesareans can increase risk of sepsis, and subsequently, death. Therefore, I researched Dominican women’s experience of agency during labor in order to understand how doctor-patient interactions can affect susceptibility to Cesareans for non-medical reasons.

Why is Cesarean overuse an issue? As medical accessibility has grown throughout the world, overuse of Cesareans has followed suit.<sup>4</sup> Compared to vaginal births, Cesareans can cause increased respiratory disease in infants, two to four times increased maternal mortality, and five to ten times increased morbidity. Cesareans can also cause psychological harm to a mother, due to a lack of proper release of oxytocin during and after labor that can hamper breastfeeding and bonding with newborns.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the estimated direct cost of unnecessary Cesareans to the Dominican public health system is \$16,125,808 USD annually.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Oficina Nacional De Estadística. "Samaná En Cifras." *Samaná En Cifras* (n.d.): n. pag. *ONE.gob.do*. Web. 13 Nov. 2014.

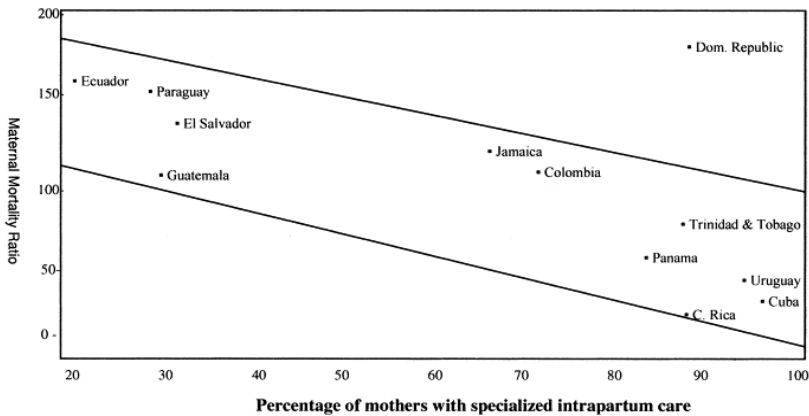
<[http://www.one.gob.do/themes/one/dmdocuments/perfiles/Perfil\\_Samana.pdf](http://www.one.gob.do/themes/one/dmdocuments/perfiles/Perfil_Samana.pdf)>.

<sup>2</sup> Gibbons, Luz, José M. Belizán, Jeremy A. Lauer, Ana P. Betrán, Mario Meriáldi, and Fernando Althabe. "The Global Numbers and Costs of Additionally Needed and Unnecessary Caesarean Sections Performed per Year: Overuse as a Barrier to Universal Coverage." *WHO.int*. World Health Organization, 2010. Web. 13 Nov. 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Miller, Suellen, et al. "Quality of care in institutionalized deliveries: the paradox of the Dominican Republic." *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics* 82.1 (2003): 89-103.

<sup>4</sup> Shearer, Elizabeth L. "Cesarean section: medical benefits and costs." *Social Science & Medicine* 37.10 (1993): 1223-1231.

<sup>5</sup> Fu, Jung-Chung, Cheng-Yu Long, and Huey-Shyan Lin. "Factors influencing breast symptoms in breastfeeding women after Cesarean section delivery." *Asian Nursing Research* 5.2 (2011): 88-98.



Source Cáceres 1996.

Previous findings: Research in North America and Europe reveals “Global North Cesarean predictors” such as higher maternal age at pregnancy, higher levels of diabetes, hypertension and smoking, female involvement in the workforce, perceived convenience of Cesareans, and a perceived undesirability of natural birth. Though some indicators are medical (e.g. hypertension), others are sociocultural, such as perceived convenience.<sup>6</sup>

The elevated use of Cesareans in the DR is largely due to nonmedical reasons; however, these nonmedical factors differ from those in American or European hospitals.<sup>6</sup> In the DR, researchers have documented the overcrowding of medical centers, a need for higher time-efficiency, and oppressive physician-patient interactions.<sup>7</sup> According to Jose Delancer from the Ministry of Health Department of Women and Children, “the Dominican health care system is designed to care for about 7 million people. There are nearly 10 million living in the Dominican Republic, and more than a million of them are Haitians – with more coming every day”.<sup>8</sup> Physicians may be tempted to use Cesareans to increase time-efficiency.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, it is critical to understand the nonmedical factors that influence which women have Cesareans (for example, efficiency,

<sup>6</sup> Leone, Tiziana, Sabu S. Padmadas, and Zoë Matthews. "Community factors affecting rising caesarean section rates in developing countries: an analysis of six countries." *Social science & medicine* 67.8 (2008): 1236-1246.

<sup>7</sup> Ortiz, Ana Teresa. "" Bare-Handed" Medicine and Its Elusive Patients: The Unstable Construction of Pregnant Women and Fetuses in Dominican Obstetrics Discourse." *Feminist Studies* (1997): 263-288.

<sup>8</sup> Gilger, Lauren. "Haitian Women Cross Border to Give Birth." *Haitian Women Cross Border to Give Birth*. N.p., n.d. Web. 13 Nov. 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Souza, Cecilia De Mello E. "Cesareans as ideal births: the cultural constructions of beneficence and patients' rights in Brazil." *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics* 3.03 (1994): 358-366.

financial incentives, or physician preferences). Before this project, research had yet to analyze whether women's actions can allow them to exercise more or less agency in this decision.

### Literature Review:

Many of the Cesarean sections (CS) that I noted in the Dominican Republic were due to emergency situations and/or a fetal distress diagnosis (which can be contained under the umbrella of emergency Cesareans). Wylie & Mirza (2008) demonstrate the rationality of the use of certain indications in necessitating an emergency Cesarean. According to their analysis of the obstetric electronic database, the most common indicators for emergency Cesareans were repeated Cesarean section(s) (30.2%), obstructed labor (14.4%), and fetal distress (13.6%). Most interestingly, an "audit of the 324 women's files showed that 30% of women had substandard decisions for CS mostly in the fetal distress group (59.1%) and least in the repeat CS group (9.1%)."<sup>10</sup> These findings are extremely applicable to my project outcomes. Specifically, Wylie and Mirza's findings point to a gross overuse of fetal distress as an indicator for emergency CS. Although this study is of a very different sample (tertiary hospital in Tanzania) than my project, it demonstrates that fetal distress' lack of clear guidelines allows for its overuse, resulting in exaggerated Cesarean levels.

In a similar manner, Aminu et al. (2014) focus on the most common indications for Cesarean sections (CS) in 5 public hospitals in Bangladesh. Although Bangladesh is distinct from Tanzania, the results are the same; the most common indications for CS are previous CS, fetal distress, and cephalo-pelvic disproportion. Out of 530 CS patients, these three indications for CS were found in the following percentages: 29.4%, 15.7%, and 10.2%, respectively. The majority (68%) of all CS were emergency Cesareans, "mainly during daytime working hours," according to the authors, suggesting physician convenience, disguised as "fetal distress" and "cephalo-pelvic disproportion," as a major driving force in the overuse of Cesareans. This work also points to some important social forces at play in the overuse of Cesareans, especially "pressure from patients and relatives to deliver by CS."<sup>11</sup>

Belizán et al. (1999) investigate the relationship between Cesarean rates and socioeconomic predictors, such as gross national product (GNP) and

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<sup>10</sup> Wylie, Blair J., and Fadi G. Mirza. "Cesarean delivery in the developing world." *Clinics in perinatology* 35.3 (2008): 571-582.

<sup>11</sup> Aminu, Mamuda, et al. "Reasons for performing a caesarean section in public hospitals in rural Bangladesh." *BMC pregnancy and childbirth* 14.1 (2014): 130.

public vs. private healthcare institutions in Latin America. The findings of this project demonstrate that a “positive and significant correlation was observed between the gross national product per capita and rate of Cesarean section.” Additionally, higher CS rates were found in private hospitals than public hospitals. Most importantly, this project demonstrates that there is an unnecessary increased risk for young women and their babies from the estimated 850,000 unnecessary Cesareans in Latin America. Nevertheless, despite the overuse of Cesareans in *private* hospitals and clinics, the *public* hospitals and clinics (and thus the vast majority of Dominican citizens) suffer from Cesarean overuse mostly due to false/misinformed indications of risk (such as fetal distress, cephalo-pelvic disproportion, and unnecessary VBAC intolerance).<sup>12</sup>

In order to supplement metadata-driven cesarean research, Bryant et al. (2007) provide important insight into the role of childbirth neo-liberalism in consumption, safety, order, and good mothering in relation to Cesarean use. This project derives data from 36 interviews with Australian women, and it reveals that women perceive themselves as “self-governing autonomous subjects in their birth experience.” Subsequently, they use their power of free choice to mold their identity as a good or bad mother by choosing between the following: safe/unsafe, order/disorder, and life/death. The neo-liberal need to manage risk and pursue a “successful birth” leads women to choose the “most obvious and sensible option: safe, ordered Cesareans.” This research informs our understanding of patients’ responses surrounding their preferences. This data helps researchers analyze whether patients’ preferences are based on safe, order, and/or ideas of “good mothering.”<sup>13</sup> By understanding these cultural scripts, researchers can better understand the basis behind patient preferences and more properly inform educational interventions.

Farland (2009) outlines several of the reasons for Mexico’s overuse of Cesareans. Although close to impossible to investigate completely, Farland mentions several important factors at play that help to give a background to the possible situation in the Dominican Republic. As developing Latin American countries with extreme socioeconomic inequality and equally disparate public and private health systems, Mexico and the Dominican

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<sup>12</sup> Belizán, José M., et al. "Rates and implications of caesarean sections in Latin America: ecological study" *Commentary: all women should have a choice* *Commentary: increase in caesarean sections may reflect medical control not women's choice* *Commentary: "health has become secondary to a sexually attractive body"*. *Bmj* 319.7222 (1999): 1397-1402.

<sup>13</sup> Bryant, Joanne, et al. "Caesarean birth: Consumption, safety, order, and good mothering." *Social science & medicine* 65.6 (2007): 1192-1201.

Republic are valuable points of comparison. In her “Clinical/ Medical” factors discourse, Farland mentions the use of Pitocin/Oxytocin, use of Electric Fetal Heart Monitors (EFM), and protocols surrounding Cesarean sections in previous births as major factors in the overuse of Cesareans. Financially, Farland points to reimbursement structures for private physicians. In “Psycho-social Factors,” she refers to the acceptance of Cesarean section as the standard of care, doctor convenience, machismo, race, and social power as important factors in the overuse of Cesareans.<sup>14</sup> All of these factors aid in the analysis of CS use in the DR because, as these results have revealed, the excessive use of Cesareans is due to a myriad of factors, not just biomedical predictors.

Gibbons et al. (2012) and Gibbons et al. (2010) provide important insight into the resources that unnecessary Cesareans needlessly consume. In the context of the Global South, these findings are important in demonstrating that Cesarean overuse can be incredibly harmful to developing public health initiatives, consuming important resources and even creating further illnesses/conditions requiring medical attention (subsequent Cesareans, infant respiratory illnesses, and infection, among others). According to Gibbons et al., 54 countries had a Cesarean rate <10%, while 69 countries had a Cesarean rate >15%, adding a cost of \$2.32 billion (US dollars), while it would only cost \$432 million to bring Cesarean underutilizing countries to the WHO’s recommended range of 10-15%. Although it may be problematic to think on such macroeconomic scales, the authors suggest that the supplementation of deficient Cesarean resources to 10% and the reduction of the excessive Cesarean resources to 15% would lead to a \$1.89 billion surplus toward other global healthcare initiatives. This study is important in framing Cesarean overuse as a hindrance to healthcare development. Gibbons et al. (2010) cites the Dominican Republic’s past Cesarean rate of 41.9% nationally—many findings suggest that it now lies closer to 50% nationally, placing the DR in the top 3 worst CS overuse offenders in the world (along with Brazil and Iran). For the year 2008, this project estimates 60,256 unnecessary Cesareans in the DR, producing a cost of \$16.1 million US dollars annually.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, this project only refers to the direct costs of the CS procedure as opposed to

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<sup>14</sup> Farland, Leslie. "The use and overuse of Cesarean sections in Mexico." *TyftScope* 9.1 (2009): 30-33.

<sup>15</sup> Gibbons, Luz, José M. Belizán, Jeremy A. Lauer, Ana P. Betrán, Mario Meriardi, and Fernando Althabe. "The Global Numbers and Costs of Additionally Needed and Unnecessary Caesarean Sections Performed per Year: Overuse as a Barrier to Universal Coverage." *WHO.int*. World Health Organization, 2010. Web. 13 Nov. 2014.

vaginal birth. It does not account for the resources wasted during recovery and in subsequent resulting illnesses as well (such as infant respiratory illnesses, sepsis, and uterine damage). These findings demonstrate the predicament of Cesarean overuse; aside from producing unneeded suffering, the overuse of Cesareans in the DR produce costly effects on the nation's healthcare development.

Kyu et al. (2013) look to understand the relationship between CS rates and the prevalence of neonatal mortality rates (NMR). In this study of 46 countries, Kyu et al. demonstrate that high NMR is positively correlated with low and medium CS rates. Interestingly, the results for countries with high CS rates (like the DR) are heterogenic. Therefore, Cesarean use only has positive value for the prevention of neonatal mortality (NM) until a certain point (which is around 10-15%, according to the WHO). Past this point, other factors are more important in NM prevention, and CS overuse can actually have adverse effects on NM prevention.<sup>16</sup> This project demonstrates why CS overuse is certainly an issue that requires intervention.

Leone et al. (2008) provide an important focus on social factors in Cesarean use. For example, the findings by Leone et al indicate that when women's decisions are important in their birthing methods (particularly in the private healthcare sector), interactions with "peers and significant others have an impact on her Cesarean section choices." This project, which analyzes over 20,000 births in Bangladesh, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Morocco, and Vietnam, demonstrates that women of higher socioeconomic status who had better access to antenatal services were "the most likely to undergo a Cesarean section." Most interestingly, this research demonstrates that women who communicate health information with friends and family were less likely to experience a CS than their peers.<sup>17</sup> This last point provides interesting implications for policy because it suggests that community-based prenatal educational initiatives could help in reducing Cesarean rates. My findings present similar information, and by combining my data with these findings, informed policy and/or intervention suggestions can be produced.

Lyerly et al. (2010) address the very important issue of vaginal birth after Cesarean (VBAC) and the need for a balance of proper medical

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<sup>16</sup> Kyu, Hmwe Hmwe, et al. "Caesarean delivery and neonatal mortality rates in 46 low-and middle-income countries: a propensity-score matching and meta-analysis of Demographic and Health Survey data." *International journal of epidemiology* (2013): dyt081.

<sup>17</sup> Leone, Tiziana, Sabu S. Padmadas, and Zoë Matthews. "Community factors affecting rising caesarean section rates in developing countries: an analysis of six countries." *Social science & medicine* 67.8 (2008): 1236-1246.



precaution and birthing agency. In the context of the Dominican Republic, there exists a protocol that does not permit the practice of VBAC in most health centers, regardless of the patient's conditions. This paper states that "in otherwise uncomplicated birth after a single previous Cesarean, both vaginal birth after Cesarean and repeat Cesarean should be regarded as reasonable options; women, rather than policymakers, providers, insurance carriers, or hospitals should determine delivery approach."<sup>18</sup> This statement is revolutionary in the history of obstetrics and gynecology because it is a major advancement in maternal agency that has not yet reached the Dominican Republic. Every year, thousands of mothers are forced to undergo Cesareans even though, according to Lyerly et al., it *can and should be* their choice. This paper provides an important criticism of the DR's outdated anti-VBAC protocol.

Roth & Henley (2012) provide important conclusions for understanding the racial and socioeconomic factors at play in the overuse of Cesareans. Although a study in the United States and not the Dominican Republic, their study demonstrates that disparities in Cesarean rates are largely tied to racial and socioeconomic identities after accounting for medical indications. According to Roth & Henley's findings, "non-Hispanic black, Hispanic/Latina, and Native American mothers are more likely to have Cesarean deliveries than non-Hispanic white or Asian mothers." In addition, they found that "increasing education is associated with a decline in odds of a Cesarean delivery, especially for non-Hispanic whites." The outcomes from this study are suggestive of CS overuse as an indicator "low-quality maternity care." Additionally, this paper demonstrates that women of higher social status are more likely to avoid CS services than to seek elective CS.<sup>19</sup> These findings support my hypothesis of racially and socioeconomically based inequalities underlying CS use in the DR. This paper helps to demonstrate that elective Cesarean use is not a major factor in the overuse of Cesareans; rather, excessive CS use tends to fall upon individuals with low social power.

In stark contrast to Roth & Henley (2012), Rebelo et al. (2010) demonstrate that CS rates "are significantly higher than the average among women attending private/insured antenatal care, among the highly educated,

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<sup>18</sup> Lyerly, Anne Drapkin, and Margaret Olivia Little. "Toward an ethically responsible approach to vaginal birth after Cesarean." *Seminars in perinatology*. Vol. 34. No. 5. WB Saunders, 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Roth, Louise Marie, and Megan M. Henley. "Unequal motherhood: Racial-ethnic and socioeconomic disparities in Cesarean sections in the united states." *Social Problems* 59.2 (2012): 207-227.

and in provinces with higher socioeconomic levels.” According to my physician interviews in the Dominican Republic, there are similar general trends: Cesareans are being practiced at an outrageously high rate in the private health centers. Therefore, patients with high socioeconomic status and (presumably) higher education levels are undergoing Cesareans at a higher rate. Nevertheless, private healthcare in the Dominican Republic does not represent a large proportion of childbirth care. Although users of the private system in Brazil are receiving more Cesareans, according to Rebelo et al., this is not necessarily because of patient preference.<sup>20</sup> It could very well be due to physician incentives. In the public system, my findings have indicated that very few women prefer Cesarean deliveries, and if money were no object, they would still prefer vaginal birth. So although these findings seem to suggest that elective Cesarean use are the reasons for higher Cesarean prevalence among private healthcare users, my findings suggest that high Cesarean prevalence in the private system is physician-incentive-driven and not patient-preference-driven.

The work of Ronsmans et al. (2006) is important for understanding the DR’s inequality in Cesarean section (CS) distribution among different socioeconomic groups. According to Ronsmans et al.’s data, in 2002, the Dominican Republic’s poorest, middle, and richest quintiles had Cesarean rates of 18.60%, 32.74%, and 54.38%, respectively. These findings echo Rebelo et al.’s statements about Brazil’s Cesarean frequency in relation to socioeconomic status: higher socioeconomic status patients (in the private healthcare system) are more likely to suffer unnecessary Cesareans, on average. These findings point to a difference in Cesarean delivery based on two main possible factors: incentives and preferences.<sup>21</sup> My findings from the Dominican Republic suggest that the overuse of Cesareans in the private sector (among Dominicans) is not due to patient preferences, but rather physician preferences and incentives. My findings emphasize that, despite CS overuse in the private system, the Dominican Republic’s public system still suffers from CS overuse not due to preferences and incentives, but rather, false/misinformed diagnoses (mainly fetal distress, cephalo-pelvic disproportion, and unnecessary VBAC intolerance).

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<sup>20</sup> Rebelo, Fernanda, et al. "High Cesarean prevalence in a national population- based study in Brazil: the role of private practice." *Acta obstetricia et gynecologica Scandinavica* 89.7 (2010): 903-908.

<sup>21</sup> Ronsmans, Carine, Sara Holtz, and Cynthia Stanton. "Socioeconomic differentials in caesarean rates in developing countries: a retrospective analysis." *The Lancet* 368.9546 (2006): 1516-1523.

Zeidenstein's research on informed choice in elective Cesarean use contributes an important piece to the body of knowledge surrounding the issue of childbirth agency. Although not a significant factor in my study of childbirth preferences in a Dominican public hospital, the question of elective Cesareans is formulated around an assumed "informed consent." However, Zeidenstein questions how informed this consent really is. Zeidenstein mentions that the risks of Cesarean birth are often understated and/or not fully understood by the patient. Many women (especially those of the DR) face unexpected outcomes, such as infant respiratory illnesses and sepsis, because of unnecessary Cesareans. According to Zeidenstein, it is important to analyze the context of women's actual health care experiences to know whether or not they give complete informed consent. Additionally, she notes, "the midwifery model of care should be utilized to foster health promotion and active family participation in prenatal care decision making."<sup>22</sup> Zeidenstein's research is critical because it demonstrates that ensuring that informed consent is *fully informed* must be a critical piece in the DR's mission of lowering its CS rate.

### **Materials and Methods:**

This study consists of two phases: Phase I and Phase II. Both phases were conducted in the OB/GYN and Pediatric areas of a Region III public hospital in the Dominican Republic. These interviews occurred between 06/02/15 and 07/30/15 and were accompanied by patient file reviews, physician/nurse shadowing, and a conference with hospital physicians.

Phase I: This phase consisted of 122 semi-structured interviews with pregnant women and/or mothers who have given birth within the past 10 years. These women were approached in the waiting areas for OB/GYN and Pediatrics, were asked to participate, and provided informed consent. Only women 18 years or older could participate. Questions were asked surrounding the patients' experiences with childbirth, whether their birth was natural or Cesarean and why, as well as their perceptions and preferences about different aspects of childbirth.

Phase II: this phase consisted of 75 hours of accompaniment and observation of 27 labors in the OB/GYN ward of the same hospital. Additionally, Phase II consisted of semi-structured interviews with 12 physicians, 9 nurses, and the hospital director, as well as an hour-long

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<sup>22</sup> Zeidenstein, Laura. "Elective Cesarean Section: How Informed is Informed?." *Online Journal of Health Ethics* 2.1 (2013): 4.

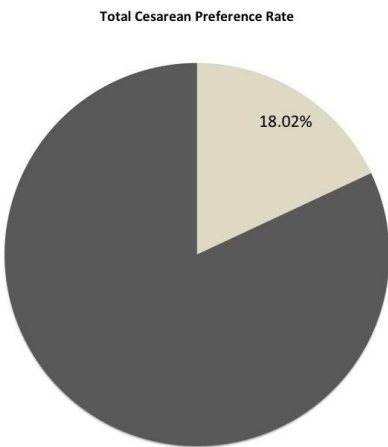
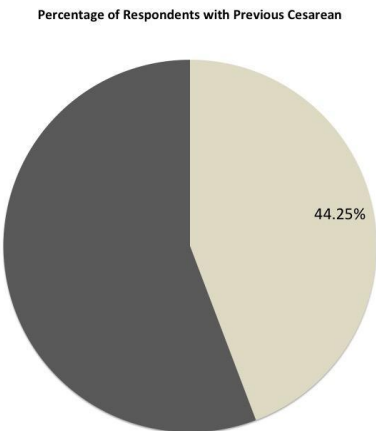
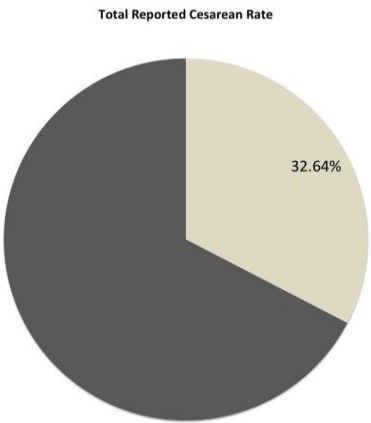
conference with the hospital’s medical team.

**Results:**

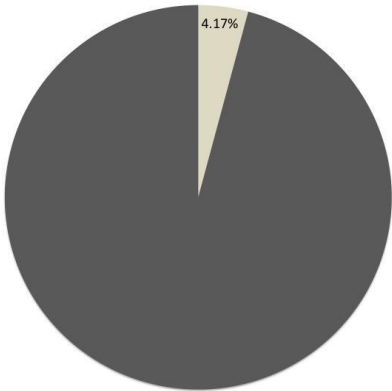
After completing interviews with 122 pregnant women and/or mothers who had given birth within the past 10 years, as well as ethnographic observations of 27 labors within the hospital, my research has produced several interesting results. According to my informants, 32.64% of their births were by Cesarean. This is somewhat consistent with the 36.7% Cesarean rate for the hospital during 2014. Interestingly, 62.96% of all births done during my ethnographic observation period (July 1<sup>st</sup>-July 30<sup>th</sup>) were Cesarean, perhaps suggesting an upward trend in the hospital’s recent Cesarean rate.

Among my informants, 44.25% of them had undergone a Cesarean at some point. Since this average is less than the Cesarean rate, we can conclude that women with Cesareans give birth less than those birthing naturally.

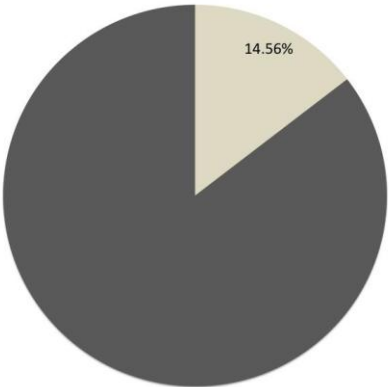
Among all informants, only 18.02% preferred Cesareans. More interestingly, among women who had never undergone a Cesarean, only 4.17% preferred Cesareans. This may suggest that the few women who prefer Cesareans only have this preference because they are accustomed to the procedure.



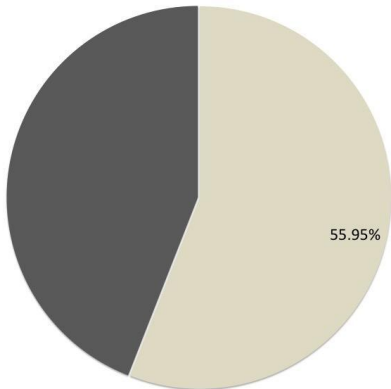
Total Cesarean Preference Rate Among Women with No Previous Cesarean



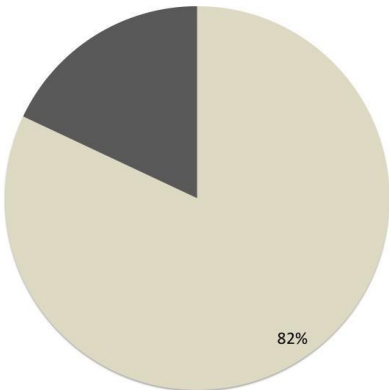
Percentage of Respondents Perceiving Cesarean as Safer



Percentage of Respondents Perceiving Cesarean as More Painful



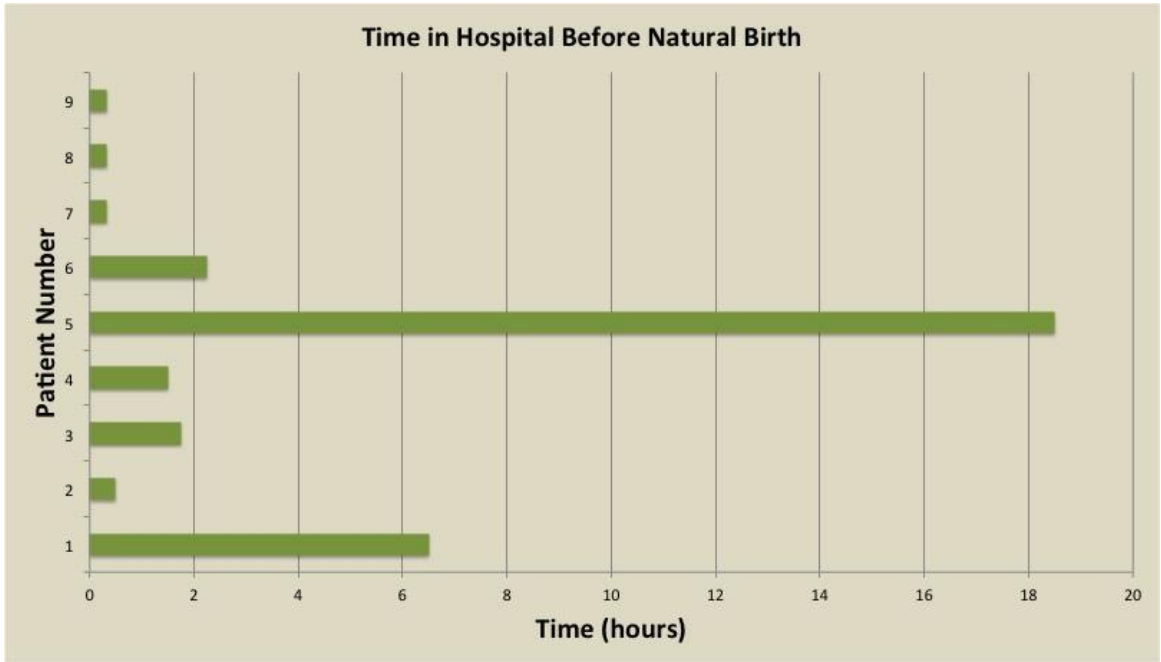
Percentage of Respondents Believing That at Least Half of Women That Attempt Home Birth Would Die in the Attempt



Only 14.56% of all informants perceive Cesareans as safer, signifying that the vast majority of women correctly identify Cesareans as generally more dangerous than natural birth. They often associated Cesarean birth with risk of infection, ugly scars, a poor “cleaning out” of the body, and the possibility of unintended items being left inside the body.

In addition, 55.95% of respondents perceive Cesarean as being more painful than natural birth. The pain of Cesareans is often associated with back pain (from the epidural analgesia used in the procedure), as well as abdominal discomfort and prolonged recovery.

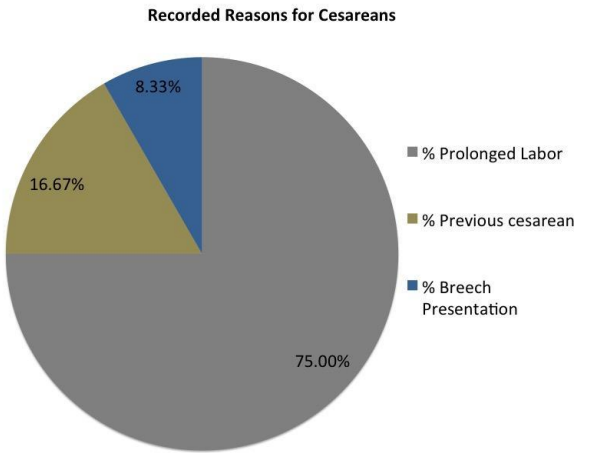
Finally, 82.00% of respondents believed that at least half of women that attempt home births would die in the attempt. The majority of respondents believed that 10% or less of home birthers would survive the attempt. These results indicate an exaggerated understanding of childbirth risks.



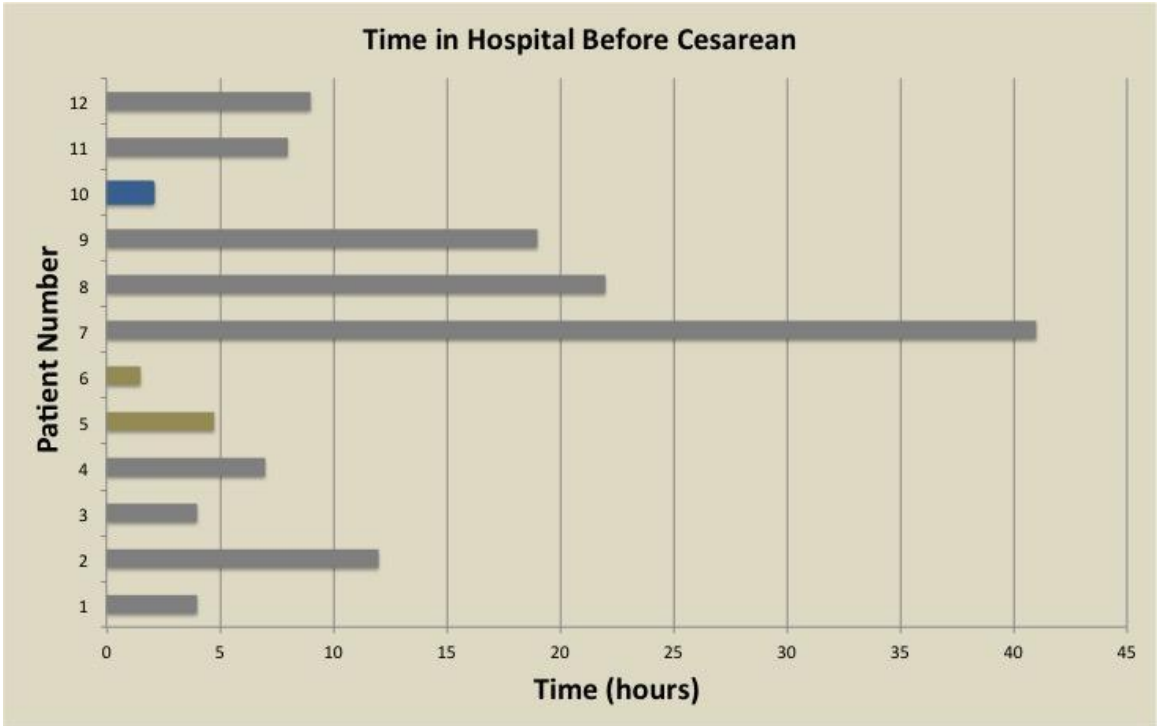
In phase II of my project, I recorded the amount of time spent in the hospital by patients as well as whether the birth outcome was natural or Cesarean.

For natural births, we see that 7/9 patients were in the hospital for less than 3 hours before giving birth naturally. This demonstrates that, in most instances, physicians are accustomed to natural birthing patients to do so extremely quickly.

For patients that gave birth by Cesarean, 75% were due to prolonged labor (often diagnosed as fetal distress). This “catch all” phrase was used to describe women whose labor had not progressed quickly enough. Although fetal distress is normally diagnosed by objective measures such as fetal heart rate, objective measures such as this were not being used in this Region III hospital. To a much lesser extent, Cesareans were being done for reasons like breech presentation and previous



Cesarean. Currently an anti-VBAC protocol exists in most Dominican health centers, meaning that many of those who could attempt VBAC are undergoing unnecessary Cesareans.



As can be seen in the figure above, 5/9 Cesareans due to prolonged labor were instances in which women were in the hospital for 9 hours or less. In 2 of these instances, women were assigned a Cesarean for prolonged labor after a mere 4 hours in the hospital. Comparing this data with the above natural birth data, it seems as though most physicians begin to feel nervous once a woman has not given birth within the first 3 hours at the hospital.

It is important to supplement this data with information from my interviews with physicians. The two following quotes are perhaps the most important:

- Female OB/GYN: *“Do you want the truth or the lie?” (with respect to the reason for Cesarean overuse in the DR), “Both,” I responded. “The truth is fear in the administration” (of maternal and infant mortality). “And the lie?” “The lie is fetal distress.”*
- Male General Surgeon: *“Is it logical for a patient to suffer ten hours of pain?” “Well, it depends,” I said. “What is the doctor’s job?” he asked. “To treat the person’s illness,” I responded. “No, no, no. The doctor’s job is to alleviate the patient’s suffering. It’s not logical for a patient to suffer ten hours*

*of pain,” he stated. I then explained to him that this logic only works if you consider vaginal and Cesarean outcomes to be the same. He said, “But the patient nowadays doesn’t suffer with a Cesarean. That’s why we have painkillers.”*

These two examples highlight a few important themes in the physicians’ philosophy of care. First, one of the main reasons for the elevated Cesarean rate is “fear in the administration.” As cited in Foster et al. (2006), the “Dominican Paradox”—its high maternal mortality rate relative to its impressive healthcare development has baffled healthcare development researchers for decades. Recent public health initiatives have been focused on preventing maternal death, perhaps producing the “fear in the administration” that is pushing for Cesareans after a mere 3 hours in the hospital.

“The lie” being used by physicians in order to legitimize Cesarean use is “*sufimiento fetal agudo*” (otherwise known as fetal distress). The lack of objective measures in this “catch-all” diagnosis means that it can be “the lie” that physicians use to get patient consent for an unnecessary Cesarean. This is perhaps the greatest threat to maternal agency noted during this study.

Additionally, many physicians perceive Cesareans as a way to relieve patients’ suffering. This belief can be seen in the second quote. According to this general surgeon, “It’s not logical for a patient to suffer ten hours of pain.” Physicians like this one fail to recognize the serious differences between Cesarean and natural delivery and underestimate the time necessary for normal deliveries.

During physician shadowing, I noted that the prenatal program is not educationally based. In these quick, 10-15 minute sessions, pregnant women are weighed measured, and questioned. Physicians note whether or not women have gained enough weight, have healthy blood pressure and heart rate, and possess any abnormalities. These prenatal check-ups include no education about pregnancy and childbirth: for example, labor duration, methods of pain management, warning signs, etc. It is expected that all of this information would be learned from peers and family members, which is not the case. Patients often spend multiple hours waiting for their prenatal check-ups, fanning themselves in the balmy 85-degree indoor temperatures of the hospital. This is perhaps a good opportunity for women to be educated about pregnancy and childbirth, especially considering the large population of pregnant adolescents with little birthing experience.

Despite these concerns, the examined hospital has excelled in patient satisfaction as well as in avoiding maternal mortality. The director of the hospital and I attribute these successes to the support structures for pregnant



women. During labor and postpartum stages, women are allowed up to 3 companions, which are often the mother, siblings, friends, aunts, or cousins. This support structure is critical in keeping mothers and newborns happy, well fed, and cared for. More importantly, this system has provided a structure for constant monitoring of the patients that has greatly reduced maternal mortality due to postpartum hemorrhaging. Interestingly, men do not play a significant role in supporting mothers while they are at the hospital.

Several legitimate reasons for Cesareans were observed and/or mentioned by hospital staff, including Cesareans due to breech presentation, reproductive illnesses (especially HIV), multiparous pregnancies, preeclampsia, and other reasons. However, as seen during Phase II, these are not nearly as prevalent as Cesareans due to prolonged labor, previous Cesareans, and other possibly unnecessary diagnoses.

### **Discussion:**

In general, women in the Dominican Republic's Region III experience poor birthing agency. My project demonstrates that Dominican women in Region III generally prefer natural birth, especially when they have never experienced a Cesarean before. Natural births are perceived as safer and less painful than Cesarean births and are preferred mostly because of their relatively quick recovery. Episiotomy overuse unnecessarily adds to the fear of natural birth, leading some women to seek Cesarean birth in order to avoid an episiotomy. Cesarean births are perceived as painful because they require long deliveries, leave ugly scars, and present the risk of back pain, infection, and unintended objects left inside the body. Due to this data, it is reasonable to conclude that most unnecessary Cesareans in the Region III public hospitals are not due to pressure from the mothers, but rather the medical team and/or administration.

Since this study took place in a public hospital, financial incentives to the physicians or administration were essentially nonexistent. Additionally, this hospital averaged around three births a day, so there were no significant pressures towards higher time efficiency.

Patients expressed an exaggerated understanding of the risks involved with both Cesarean and natural birth. Specifically, their responses surrounding home births reveal that they find childbirth to be a pseudo death-sentence if not managed by healthcare professionals.

Data from Phase II reveals that most natural births occur very quickly in the public hospital. "Prolonged labors" of a mere 4 hours or more in the hospital are reflective of the "fear in the administration" cited by the female OB/GYN. In order to protect themselves, physicians use "the lie" of fetal

distress to get patient consent for a Cesarean, lessening patient agency. These findings regarding agency and consent echo those outlined in Zeidenstein 2013. Fetal distress (or *sufrimiento fetal agudo*) is being diagnosed without objective measures, as was evidenced by Aminu et al. (2014), Ronsmans et al. (2006), and Wylie & Mirza (2008).

Natural birth is largely the preferred outcome, but many continue to undergo unnecessary Cesareans without providing much resistance. To most women, these birthing outcomes are understood as pure chance. As one mother told me, “I’d like natural, but we’ll see if I get lucky.” Women’s preferences regarding natural vs. Cesarean delivery are shaped almost exclusively by the perceived *amount* and *duration* of pain. Often natural birth was perceived as less painful and quicker than cesareans, and thus was the preferred birth outcome. Interestingly, preferences were not significantly shaped by differences in maternal or infant health outcomes in cesarean or natural delivery—amount and duration of pain were the only factors that women cited in nearly every instance. Risks to the infant and mother are of major importance when considering Cesarean vs. natural deliveries, but the infant risks were widely unknown to and/or not considered by the mothers of Region III.

Although elective Cesareans are not offered in the public hospital, a bargaining complex continues to exist, as was similarly noted by Aminu et al. (2014). Once a patient and/or her family want a Cesarean, a physician may capitulate, in order to “alleviate the patient’s suffering,” as the male general surgeon expressed to me.

Prenatal education relies almost entirely on patients’ social interactions—it is not provided by the hospital. Prenatal check-ups are not educational; physicians simply weigh, measure, and record pregnancy progress. Enacting a prenatal education program could aid in shaping women’s perceptions, expectations, and knowledge about healthy pregnancies and deliveries as well as correct the few that would request cesareans. The long waiting times for pregnant women in this program provide an opportunity for education on pregnancy and childbirth.

Friends and family members play a significant role in the monitoring of this hospital’s patients. Up to three close friends/family members are allowed to accompany the woman before and after labor (but not during delivery), allowing the hospital to greatly increase patient satisfaction and decrease maternal mortality due to postpartum hemorrhaging.

There is a need for the removal of the “anti-VBAC” (Vaginal Birth After Cesarean) protocol in most health centers of the Dominican Republic.

The existence of a protocol that inhibits VBAC leads to several women suffering unnecessary Cesareans despite likely having a well-healed uterus, as explained by Lyster et al. (2010).

Finally, the data seems to suggest that physician education has been far too focused on maternal mortality and the risks associated with natural deliveries. More focus needs to be placed on providing objective indicators of fetal distress as well as defining normal durations of natural birth.

**Recommendations:**

The aforementioned concerns can be addressed by public health policy that executes the following: (1) assigns a more modern VBAC protocol, allowing for VBACs to be practiced on healthy individuals, (2) educates women on pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum skills as well as the risks, time, and pain involved with Cesarean and vaginal deliveries, and (3) assesses the signals of fetal distress and its cause for Cesarean.

Specifically, I suggest that the hospital utilizes the patients' waiting time to facilitate prenatal education. By placing a professional that can speak about nutrition, warning signs, and expectations, the hospital could begin to address many of the issues outlined in this study.

Additionally, I suggest that physician education and administrative focuses are further assessed. Objective indicators for fetal distress must be more clearly defined, normal durations of childbirth must be taught to physicians, and administrations must focus on the Midwifery Model of Care and on holding natural birth as the ideal outcome. Using these suggestions from my research, the Dominican Republic's Region III should be able to more effectively confront Cesarean overuse and improve health outcomes for its patients.

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ALEXANDRA RICE, a native of Columbia, SC, graduated in 2016 and majored in Science Preprofessional Studies and Africana Studies. She completed her Africana Studies senior thesis under the direction of Dr. Stuart Greene and was awarded the Wright, Flint-Hamilton, & Mason Award. Alex is currently completing a year of service at a healthcare nonprofit in Bethesda, MD as a part of the Westmoreland Volunteer Corps. She will begin her first year of medical school at the Medical University of South Carolina in the fall and hopes to bring the audacious, inclusive, community-nurturing spirit of womanism to her practice of medicine.

# **'It Wouldn't Be the First Time': Womanism & African-American Women's Activism**

**ALEXANDRA RICE**

## **Abstract**

Despite popular, male-centered representations of African-Americans' movements for civil and human rights, black women have always been central to the cause. Since organizing and nurturing communities is often a draining, thankless endeavor, black women must be deeply internally motivated to participate in social justice work. I posit that by examining black women's activism through a lens influenced by Alice Walker's enunciation of womanism, students of history might better understand the motivations that drive black women's activism in ways that have heretofore been ignored or misunderstood. By examining the lived experiences and liberatory methods of Reconstruction-era clubwomen such as Ida B.Wells-Barnett, Civil Rights Movement leader Fannie Lou Hamer, and contemporary black women organizers, academics, and artists after the advent of #BlackLivesMatter, my thesis traces how womanist ideas and praxis have manifested themselves throughout the history of black American women's activism. Consequently, I seek to imagine how future black women activists might employ womanist ideas and techniques. This thesis adds to the growing body of womanist-influenced scholarship that seeks to reframe and celebrate the often-devalued, yet potent black women champions of civil and human rights in order to better comprehend black women's leadership in ongoing movements.



“I’ll tell you what I know to be true; it helps me in times when I’m feeling unsure. I know that we are descendants of a mighty people, who gave civilization to the world. People who survived the hulls of slave ships and crossed vast oceans. People who innovated, created, and who love, despite pressures and tortures unimaginable. They are in our bloodstream, pumping our hearts every second. They’ve prepared you. You are already prepared.”

— ‘Amelia Boynton,’ *Selma*<sup>1</sup>

“She has handed down respect for the possibilities—and the will to grasp them”

— Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens*<sup>2</sup>

The inspiration for my thesis originates in the relationships with my mother, grandmothers, and all the “othermothers” who raised me: my aunts, “Aunties,” and the family friends who played an essential role in my upbringing. The ways in which they move(d) through the world were vividly reflected in their choice of bodily adornments, the meticulous ways in which they “kept house,” their prayers, the ways, large and small, that they made their love—the *thick* love that Morrison champions in *Beloved*—known. From birth, I was swathed in the earthy color palettes and Afrocentric art pieces of their houses, the delectable scents of their cooking, the strength of their arms, the unshakeable nature of their faith, the tradition of motherwit, knowledge unrecorded in books, and their particular brands of Black Girl Magic®. I’m still cultivating my own. I also owe a great deal of thanks to my advisor, Dr. Stuart Greene, Dr. Richard Pierce, Dr. Dianne Pinderhughes, Drs. Jacquetta and Hugh Page, Dr. Maria McKenna, and the rest of the Africana Studies Department, for fostering my personal and academic growth during my time on Notre Dame’s campus. I look forward to the next leg of the journey.

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<sup>1</sup> DuVernay, Ava, Paul Webb, Christian Colson, Jeremy Kleiner, Dede Gardner, David Oyelowo, Tom Wilkinson, Tim Roth, Carmen Ejogo, André Holland, Giovanni Ribisi, Lorraine Toussaint, Stephan James, Wendell Pierce, Common, Alessandro Nivola, Cuba Gooding, Keith Stanfield, Dylan Baker, Oprah Winfrey, Jason Moran, Bradford Young, and Spencer Averick. *Selma*, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Walker, Alice. “In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens (1972).” *Within the Circle: An Anthology of African American Literary Criticism from the Harlem Renaissance to the Present*. Ed. Angelyn Mitchell. Durham: Duke University Press, 1994. Print. 401. Rpt. Of “Womanist.” *In Search of our Mothers’ Gardens: Womanist Prose*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984. N. pag.

## Prologue

“‘Here,’ she said, ‘in this here place, we flesh; flesh that weeps, laughs; flesh that dances on bare feet in grass. Love it. Love it hard. Yonder they do not love your flesh. They despise it.’”

— Baby Suggs in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*<sup>3</sup>

Trayvon Martin. Tamir Rice. Sandra Bland. Mike Brown. Freddie Gray. Walter Scott. Natasha McKenna. John Crawford. Tanisha Anderson. If one has the heart and stomach required to pay attention to the news, the list of unarmed black people killed by the police begins to seem endless, with names often being added just days apart. According to the website Mapping Police Violence, at least 102 unarmed black people were killed by police in 2015, at a rate five times that of unarmed whites (“Unarmed Victims”). Hauntingly, this multiple of five also appears in the criminal justice system: based on the 2010 census, despite representing 13% of the U.S. population, black people made up 40% of those incarcerated, five times the rate of incarceration for whites (Sakala). In some prisons, America’s inmates produce everything from gourmet cheeses and farmed tilapia to motorcycles, with starting pay rates below a dollar a day (Alsever). Consistent with violence perpetrated by police and the plight of mass incarceration, recent years have seen a rise in threats against the voting rights of people of color, often taking the form of voter ID laws (Berman). Under the banner of the #BlackLivesMatter movement, countless individuals have raised their voices and pens and attempted to raise others’ consciousness in protest of these symptoms of systemic racism and inequality in contemporary America.

Seasoned scholars of history will realize that these issues are recurring struggles in the history of African-Americans. In 1900, Ida B. Wells-Barnett wrote:

“If public sentiment were alive, as it should be upon the subject, it would refuse to be longer hoodwinked[....] If the laws of the country were obeyed and respected by the white men of the country who charge that the Negro has no respect for law, these things could not be, for every individual, no matter what the charge, would have a fair trial and an opportunity to prove his guilt or innocence before a tribunal of law” (“Mob Rule” 321).

During and before the *first* Jim Crow era—to reference Michelle Alexander’s

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<sup>3</sup> Morrison, Toni. *Beloved: A Novel*. New York: Knopf, 1987. 88. Print.

characterization of the mass incarceration of people of color as “the New Jim Crow”—the terror of lynching (murder as a public spectacle by self-deputized racist mobs), government-sanctioned, exploitative forms of incarceration such as convict leasing, and the fight for the franchise were all critical issues for African-Americans that strikingly mirror those faced today.

It is easy to infer from these examples that historically, African-Americans have been fighting very similar battles for justice and freedom, with each successive generation contributing new warriors to the cause of civil and human rights. However, it is important to remember that black women have always been at the forefront of these battles. I take my title from Alice Walker’s definition of womanism, which states that womanists are “Traditionally capable, as in: ‘Mama, I’m walking to Canada and I’m taking you and a bunch of other slaves with me.’ Reply: ‘It wouldn’t be the first time’” (Walker 19). By hearkening to the courageous acts of women like Harriet Tubman, who led thousands of enslaved black people to freedom in Canada by way of the Underground Railroad, and hinting at a “motherline” that extends even further into black women’s African ancestry, Walker makes black women’s longtime involvement in activism abundantly clear. To understand the nature of this activism, two questions drive my research: What ideologies empower black American women to fight for change in their communities? What strategies keep them sane and stable in a world that seems to ceaselessly threaten their lives, the lives of their loved ones, and their self esteem? By addressing these questions, I connect the past and present in order to foster greater understanding and a sense of continued purpose.

## **Organization of the Thesis**

For the purposes of clarity, I will dedicate the first section of my thesis to defining the particular enunciation of womanism in which I base my understanding, Alice Walker’s, and how it differs from other writers’ visions of womanism. Because the lives of black women and other women of color cannot be neatly divided into different scholarly disciplines, even those of more recent and radical origin—History, Theology, Africana Studies, African American Studies, Gender Studies, and the like—womanist viewpoints allow a space for discussing black women and women of color in their wholeness, the entirety of their personhood. They embrace each individual’s quirks and a broad range of influences and idiosyncrasies of thought, even those that may be considered problematic by contemporary audiences, with respect to historical figures, or that may contrast with the views championed by mainstream feminism or schools of academic inquiry. To address these

concerns, Africana women from throughout the diaspora have expressed differing ideologies including the word “womanism.” A person’s position on the spectrum of respectability, or as contemporary activists show, on the spectrums of gender and sexuality, does not preclude her from inclusion at the “kitchen table,” “an informal, woman-centered space where all are welcome and all can participate” (Phillips xxvii). In this way, womanism presents an unheralded way of troubling or problematizing contemporary academic discourse. At the kitchen table, all viewpoints are reflected upon and considered, as represented by Walker’s vision of womanists as “traditionally universalist” (19). As a framework for discussing black women’s activism, womanism leaps over the differences that a solely class-based analysis might center.

In the second portion of my thesis, I focus on the lived experiences and activist praxis of the women of the late 19th and early 20th century. These women used a combination of faith- and community-based activism through which to enact change in their communities. Womanism, as described by Walker and Maparyan, inherently acknowledges and honors a spiritual aspect in the lives of black women—a womanist “[l]oves the Spirit,” although, as I demonstrate, this can have many meanings (19). In the liberatory methods of black clubwomen such as Ida B. Wells-Barnett—including education, outreach, and literacy – we can see how womanist praxis manifested itself at the turn of the century.

Springing from Alice Walker’s seminal text *In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens*, rooted in the lived experiences of black women, and originating with black female theologians, womanist theology serves as a heuristic for understanding the world, the Christian faith, and black women’s place in both. In the third portion of my thesis, I posit that by examining Fannie Lou Hamer’s life and work through the lens of womanist theology, students of the Civil Rights Movement<sup>4</sup> might better understand the faith- and community-based motivations that drove her activism in ways that have heretofore been ignored. Using biographical details and Hamer’s own statements regarding her activism, I apply the term “womanist” to her conceptions of God and her self-

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<sup>4</sup> Throughout my paper, I will use the term “The Civil Rights Movement” to refer to a longer span of time than the typical “classical period” from 1954 to 1965; instead, I will employ the idea of a “long civil rights movement,” similar to that discussed by Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, so that I might avoid passing over important black women activists before this period. Likewise, since my thesis deals with the experiences of black American/African-American women specifically, readers should note that I will use the terms “black” and “African-American” interchangeably throughout. Where the word “Black” is capitalized in quotations, I have retained the author’s choice to capitalize the word.

expressed charge to lead a life of faith in action. I conceive of Fannie Lou Hamer as a foremother of womanist theological thought and action, someone from whom contemporary activists draw inspiration and guidance. This is particularly true given womanist theology's emphases on praxis, inclusive community-building, the inherent agency of black people and the innate value of black lives (especially those of black women), ethical approaches to social justice, and prodding the Black Church and Christianity as a whole to embrace activism as an integral dimension of faith.

In the final section, I seek to connect the ideology of womanism to contemporary black women's activism and imagine how future black women activists might employ womanist ideas and techniques for social justice work in the coming years. The influence of social media has changed the landscape of activism in unique ways, and I will discuss how womanism has the capacity to keep black women's movements inclusive and affirming of *all* black lives. With this concluding section of my thesis, I wish to add to the growing body of womanist-influenced scholarship that seeks to reframe, celebrate, and better understand the often-devalued, yet potent black female actors in ongoing anti-oppressionist movements.

## **Introduction: What is Womanism?**

"Womanism is a social change perspective rooted in Black women's and other women of color's everyday experiences and everyday methods of problem solving in everyday spaces, extended to the problem of ending all forms of oppression for all people, restoring the balance between people and the environment/nature, and reconciling human life with the spiritual dimension."  
— Layli Phillips, *The Womanist Reader*<sup>5</sup>

In *The Womanist Reader*, Layli Phillips mentions three different authors who have developed their own theories of womanism: Alice Walker, Clenora Hudson-Weems, and Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi. Although Phillips seems to consider each scholar's work to be of equal importance to the overarching theme of womanism, I have identified several points of contention in these authors' definitions that must be parsed apart before I can continue. These include: the way in which to respond to issues of sexuality and gender; the inclusion of spirituality and/or religion; womanism's place in relation to men, whiteness, and the larger hegemonic society; and, perhaps most

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<sup>5</sup> Phillips, Layli. "Introduction." *The Womanist Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2006. xx. Print.

controversially, the issue of naming.

Walker's womanism was first characterized as a "more common" version of a feminist in the 1979 short story "Coming Apart" ("Coming Apart" 7), which deals with the sexual politics of race and pornography in the context of a black married couple. As the woman in the relationship explores classic texts by black women writers like Ida B. Wells and Audre Lorde, her husband finally comes to understand the gendered tensions between them. She then expounded upon the definition in her 1981 review of Jean McMahon Humez' "Gifts of Power: The Writings of Rebecca Jackson." She refers to womanists as "'whole' women, from 'wholly' or 'holy.' Or as 'round' women—women who love other women, yes, but women who also have concern [...] for their fathers, brothers, and sons" ("Gifts of Power" 18). Although she includes room for some ambiguity, suggesting that what the term 'womanist' denotes is more important than the term itself, Walker states that it "would have to be organic, characteristic, not simply applied," "consistent with black cultural values," and "affirm[ing of] connectedness to the entire community and the world, rather than separation, *regardless* [a sly nod to her next, most formal definition of the term] of who worked and slept with whom" (18).

In her 1983 work *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens*, Alice Walker defines the term "womanist" in a variety of ways. Walker's four-part definition of the term provides a valuable metaphor for an ongoing, inclusive view of black women's areas of concern and approach to life within intersecting structures of oppression. The first part of the definition provides an etymology of the term "womanist" within the black folk tradition and alludes to the importance of staying curious about the world around one in a way that is both child-like and authoritative: "Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or *willful* behavior. Wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered 'good' for one. Interested in grown-up things. Acting grown-up. Being grown up" ("Womanist" 19). This innate curiosity and "*willful* behavior" leads black women in the pursuit of knowledge and corresponding action in order to better their situation.

The second portion of Walker's definition, including women from a vast array of experiences and embracing the input of men to further the "survival and wholeness of [the] entire people, male *and* female," (19) points to the ultimate goal of inclusivity. Everyone, regardless of race, class background, religious practice, sexual orientation, or gender identity, should be able to not only live, but to *thrive* in a just society. Womanists are black women, women of color, and, as some argue, even men of color (Lemons). Writers such as bell hooks and those in the anthology *Traps: African American Men on Gender and*

*Sexuality* have written eloquently on the disastrous effects of patriarchy on black men, as well as black women, so it follows that black men might also embrace womanism. Additionally, womanists can be heterosexual or same-gender-loving. This inclusive portion of Walker's definition speaks to the beauty and necessity of diversity as opposed to separatism, and its capacity for freeing the enslaved mind and body.

The third point enumerated in the definition is a mantra-like expression of *joie de vivre*, "[r]egardless" (19). In spite of intersectional forms of oppression, black women and women of color continue to view themselves, their lives, and the lives of others as precious. The natural world, "the Spirit," good food, other people, and, crucially, herself, are all worthy recipients of a womanist's love and concern, and her efforts toward social change reflect this. The inclusion of "the Spirit" alludes to womanism's cherishing of spirituality as a method of social change. As Layli Maparyan, née Phillips, reflects, "Spiritual activism is social or ecological *transformational activity* rooted in a spiritual belief system or set of spiritual practices" (Maparyan 119) and "putting spirituality to work for positive social and ecological change" (114). Womanists use techniques including "dialogue, arbitration and mediation, spiritual activities, hospitality, mutual aid and self-help, and 'mothering'" (Phillips xxvi). Though Walker herself does not identify as a Christian, some black Christian theologians have embraced her model of womanism as a new hermeneutic for understanding the world, the Christian faith, and black women's identities, creating the field of womanist theology.

Lastly, the oft-quoted, intentionally vague, and poetic enunciation of womanism, "Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender," points to the richness of knowledge that people of color, especially women of color, have to offer, both to mainstream movements such as the feminist movement, and to their own communities, by their singular merit ("Womanist" 19). In other words, though feminism can be considered just one shade of womanism, womanism represents a saturated, enduring ideological "hue" that has value on its own. When these elements – intellectual curiosity, a diversity of opinions and techniques for social change, love of life, oneself, and others, and a rich, wide-ranging knowledge base – come together, they imbue womanism as a "a social change perspective" (Phillips xx) with the potential to include many individuals from different backgrounds around an inviting "kitchen table," catalyzing the creation of new ideas and methods for change and encouraging continued efforts toward the greater good.

Ogunyemi's African Womanism originates in the author's lived experience as a Nigerian woman and attempts to deal with issues faced by

African women in a way for which she feels neither mainstream feminism nor Walker's womanism are equipped. African Womanism must be contextualized with other forms of African women's feminisms, including Ogundipe's *Stivanism*, Acholonu's *Motherism*, and Nnaemeka's *Negofeminism*. While they will not be discussed at length here, these theories of social change by and for African women resonate with the idea that Western perspectives on feminism or womanism, even those by black women, do not adequately address the needs of African women: "engaging with the context in which they are wrought, they resist elements of Western feminism which do not speak to the African experience. They are in constant negotiation with elements of custom and tradition and the goal of emancipating women" (Akin-Aina 69).

Like Walker, Ogunyemi's description of womanism grows out of an understanding of black women's literary traditions ("Womanism: The Dynamics..."). Her basic definition of womanism as "a philosophy that celebrates black roots, [...] while giving a balanced presentation of black womandom" that "concerns itself as much with the black sexual power tussle as with the world power structure that subjugates blacks" (28) very much mirrors the broad range of concerns held by a Walkerian womanist. However, unlike Walker's inclusive notion of womanism, African Womanism is for and by African women *alone* - only African women can be African Womanists (Arndt 711). Ogunyemi also refers to an "African obsession to have children" (711) and a supposed African "silence or intolerance of lesbianism" as the reasoning for the heteronormativity of her theory (*Africa Wo/man Palava* 133). A possible critique of this view can be found in the work of scholars who investigate same-gender practices in precolonial Africa; despite the protestations of some "Afrocentric" scholars, same-gender relations are not a Western invention (Morgan and Wierenga). Besides, as Walker notes in "Gifts of Power" in relation to Rebecca Walker's supposed same-gender-loving orientation, these practices would certainly not have been designated 'lesbian,' in the Western sense of the word.

In the scholarly attempt to gather varying womanisms and black and African feminisms around the "kitchen table", Ogunyemi and other African women scholars raise the poignant question of whether a truly inclusive, transnational womanism or feminism is even a possibility. However, Ogunyemi's claim that Walker's womanism, like mainstream "white" feminism, overlooks African women, seems like a stretch of logic. Although Walker begins with the experiences of black American women like herself, I would argue that her definition leaves room to incorporate *all* African-descended women. Because African women deal with different forms of



patriarchy (specific even to their region and nation of origin), class-based oppression, such as the aftermath of colonialism and Western structural readjustment, and gender-based oppressive practices such as polygyny and female genital mutilation, womanism seems to be broad enough to incorporate their experiences without negating difference or forcing diverse groups to fully assimilate to Western ideals. Ogunyemi herself writes: “Womanism, with its myriad manifestations, is therefore a renaissance that aims to establish healthy relationships among people, despite ethnic, geographical, educational, gender, ethical, class, religious, military, and political differences” (*Africa Wo/man Palava* 123). As Phillips writes, womanism “focuses on harmonizing and coordinating difference, ending all forms of oppression and dehumanization, and promoting well-being and commonweal for all people, regardless of identity, social address, or origins” (xxxv-xxxvi).

Hudson-Weems’s *Africana* womanism, growing out of an African-American context, imagines a diasporic ideology that unites women of African descent around the world. Coming from a “nationalist *Africana* studies context” (Maparyan 26), her use of “womanist” is meant to evoke Sojourner Truth’s rhetorical “Ain’t I a woman?” (“Cultural and Agenda Conflicts” 40). Central to the *Africana* womanist concept is a rejection of feminism. Hudson-Weems insists that feminism, in its white, Western, mainstream format, is inherently Eurocentric and necessitates the marginalization of Black women. She states that “[m]any white feminists deny traditional familyhood [presumably heteronormative, two-parent homes] as an integral part of their personal and professional lives” (38) and “include their interpretation of the *Africana* experience when it is convenient” (39). Therefore, she skewers white feminists’ attempts to appropriate black women activists such as Truth, Harriet Tubman, and Ida B. Wells as “feminist[s] or ‘pre-feminist[s]’” (39) as “an abomination and an outright insult to their level of struggle” (39). She considers black feminism a “misguided and simplistic” (39) collusion with the white feminist establishment, and therefore its history of inaction against or in fact complicity with white supremacy; black feminists are useful to white feminists only to “increase their power base by expanding their scope with the convenient consensus that sexism is their commonality and primary concern” (39). She also suggests based on Walker’s “purple” metaphor, that “[t]here is hardly any differentiation, only a slight shade of difference in color” between Walkerian womanists and white feminists (“*Africana* Womanism” 48). Lastly, she suggests that the *Africana* womanist “realizes the critical need to prioritize the antagonistic forces as racism, classism and sexism, respectively” (“Cultural and Agenda Conflicts” 41). While she understands that “[s]ociety needs to deal

with all aspects of the oppression of the Africana woman in order to better combat them,” she ranks gender last of all, stating “[r]ace and class biases are the key issues for non-Whites and must be resolved even before gender issues if there is any hope for human survival” (42). This notion goes beyond Walkerian womanism and even African womanism’s call for gender cooperation in asking black women to set aside their gendered, classed experience and deal presently with race.

Hudson-Weems’ suggestion that black feminists and Walkerian womanists blindly adopt white feminism or attempt to ingratiate themselves with white feminists is fallacious since African-Americans have never unquestioningly adhered to worldviews that have historically been used wrongly to oppress or harm. As evidenced by the liberatory work of the black church, and as will be discussed later, womanist theologians, black culture reinvents, repurposes, and reevaluates fraught ideologies as a method of survival. Contrary to her suggestion that black feminists have “adopted the agenda of the feminist movement to some degree in that [they], like the White feminist, perceiv[e] gender issues to be most critical” (“Africana Womanism” 50), black feminist theory insists that the intersectionality of race, class, and gender must be acknowledged at all times. Black people have always forged their own theories within a hegemonic structure that sought to stamp out their creativity and personhood. In contrast to her ranking model, black feminists and womanists *can* be concerned with all issues at once. As Maparyan states, Hudson Weems’ “posture of Black separatism [...] is highly consonant with traditional Black nationalist discourses, on the assumption that white racism is intractable and fundamentally threatening to Black cultural integrity” (Maparyan 28). While Hudson-Weems is right that mainstream feminism, particularly the suffragist movement, grew out of a white supremacist context, not all of its ideas should be completely discarded when they hold value in both black and white communities. Most importantly, Hudson-Weems’ emphasis on the “primacy of the group as the unit of analysis” (28) may be viewed as being to the detriment of the individual black woman, whom Africana womanism supposedly is meant to honor. Ogunyemi criticizes “Clenora Hudson-Weems’ utopian Africana womanism, which tends to romanticize black male-female relationships, ignoring its myriad dangers for women” (Ogunyemi 119). However, she praises its “insistence that the black woman has the right to and must name and define herself rather than fit into molds of feminism defined by others” (119). Hudson-Weems characterizes black feminists and womanists’ valid concerns about partner violence and physical, mental, and emotional abuse in the black community as being based

in “intellectual laziness, which requires effortless rationalization” and “personal negative experiences” (“Africana Womanism” 51). This negation of the very real experiences of victims violates the concepts of womanist self-care: “This womanist value relates to women’s, especially women of color’s history of overwork and exhaustion on the behalf of others[...] Womanists claim the right to self-care and extend it to others of any race, ethnicity, culture, class, or gender” (Maparyan 44).

As Walker defines womanism, womanists are not separatists, except for ensuring their “health,” or well-being (Walker 19). Walker does not mean that there should not be black-only spaces, woman-only spaces, spaces that happen to be both, and endogenous terminology to describe them, she simply acknowledges the interconnectedness of all forms of oppression and black women’s point of view as a valuable starting point from which to attack them. Meanwhile, Walkerian womanists and black feminists alike refuse to goad black women into setting themselves alight to keep others, specifically black men, warm.

So, what of the name, “womanism?” Why not “humanism,” “people-ism,” or another wider-arching title? Discounting the fact that the former belongs to a preexisting philosophy and the latter lacks a certain ring, “the womanist frame has been applied more frequently than it has been written about. That is, more people have employed womanism than have described it” (Phillips xxi). One gets the sense from Walker’s construction of womanism that the term is more important for its poetics of inclusion—this is its main point of departure from the separatist or nationalist undertones of Ogunyemi or Hudson-Weems’ forms of womanism. How, then, do contemporary black women position themselves between the concepts of womanism and black feminism? Black feminism is praised by adherents as an alternative to mainstream (white) feminism that addresses the concerns of black women. However, many womanists and others who do not identify as “black feminists” may hold the belief that black feminism considers black women’s issues as a mere addendum to white, mainstream feminism’s, rather than a crucial jumping-off point. Phillips notably considers the two ideologies to be sisters, much more alike than her proposed cousin relationship between womanism and (white) feminism (xxxiv). As seen above, naming is given primacy for Ogunyemi and Hudson-Weems, whereas Walker seems more concerned with praxis. Maparyan, who favors an “interpolated version of womanism” (Phillips xlvi) drawing from all three scholars, suggests that the term “womanist” itself is misleading since it represents a worldview concerned with more than just black women or women as a whole, but all of humankind

(Maparyan 15).

Patricia Hill Collins' cautionary article on this very issue, "What's in a name?" contains several points that I believe womanist and black feminist scholars should consider as poignant and necessary elements of the dichotomy. First, these debates are often academic discussions that do not reach the communities they purport to be about: "Black women academics explore intriguing issues of centers and margins and work to deconstruct black female identity while large numbers of black women remain trapped in neighborhoods organized around old centers of racial apartheid" (Collins 15). The average black person has neither the time nor the resources to participate in this argument. Second, the high-mindedness of womanism should not venture into the realm of "claiming that black women have already arrived at [the] ideal, 'womanist' endpoint of liberation for all people" (12). Instead, it is most useful as an ideology that "describ[es] black women's historical responses to racial and gender oppression" and recognizes the "liberatory potential within black women's communities" (12) in order to harness them for the greater good. Additionally, she picks up on the vehement, often religious objections to homo- and bisexuality that distance many black men and women from feminism and womanism—"The association of feminism with lesbianism remains a problematic one for black women. Reducing black lesbians to their sexuality, one that chooses women over men, reconfigures black lesbians as enemies of black men" (14). In turn, she asks the important question, "Who ultimately benefits when the presence of black lesbians in any black social movement leads to its rejection by African Americans?" (14). Notably, this question does not begin to address the violent opposition to transgender or nonbinary identities. Ultimately, as black women form and name their social movements, in order to maintain effectuality, due to the vast diversity amongst black people, it is important to keep in mind that naming should be of less importance than action.

Despite these differences, Collins advocates that moving forward, black activists sample the best of both womanist and black feminist theory in a methodology that "models sensitivity to the heterogeneity concerning not only gender, but class, nationality, sexuality, and age currently operating within the term 'black community'" (16). This model of mediating between and accommodating opposing viewpoints, similar to womanism's welcoming, hospitable "kitchen table," is much more useful than the Western-influenced, Linnean taxonomical approach that forbids black women from embracing intersectional identities and forces them to take just one title, black feminist *or* womanist (Phillips xxxii). Walker's definition of womanism is explicit: black

women can proudly be *both*. Perhaps womanism's most brilliant invention is its inclusivity and tolerance of varying womanisms, that is, individual expressions of womanism: "People need not be perfect to be good. There is no ideological 'party line.' To reiterate, '*womanist*' is a term of avowal: once you claim it, it's yours and you decide what it means and how to enact it" (xli). Therefore, womanist scholars can draw from black feminist theory as freely and unapologetically as they wish. By teasing out the differences of opinion (if any) between black feminists and womanists in this way, black people can begin the process of addressing broader issues around the kitchen table: "the womanism/black feminism debate [...] provides an excellent opportunity to model a process of building community via heterogeneity and not sameness" (Collins 16). Womanism works both outside of and within preexisting structures, as expressed in Maparyan's concept of "standing in," remaining in oppressive institutions or environments "despite the difficulty or risk to oneself, with the larger aim of change from within" (Maparyan 70). Lastly, womanism allows for, and in fact welcomes, ample points of disagreement while crucially calling into question the heteronormative and often separatist approaches of many black liberationists and insisting that black activists reject heterosexism, classism through the politics of respectability, and gender-based oppression. In short, womanism says that for black lives to truly matter, intra-community exclusion is not a viable option. Due to this thesis' centering of African-American women activists of varying backgrounds, especially in terms of time period, class, and sexual orientation, I will focus on Alice Walker's womanism as the best possible framework through which to tie together black women who, while separated by the boundaries of time and differing approaches to achieving social justice, are unified by their concern for the "wholeness" of their people (Walker 19).

### Early Shades of Purple: Black Women's Activism at the Turn of the Century

"Only the black woman can say 'when and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the whole Negro race enters with me.'"

— Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice from the South*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Cooper, Anna J., Charles C. Lemert, Esme Bhan, and Anna J. Cooper. *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper: Including a Voice from the South and Other Important Essays, Papers, and Letters*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998. Print. 63.

## Setting the Stage

Black women's activism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries corresponded with growing class differentiation within the black community, as well as Victorian concepts of womanhood that effectively excluded black women. In Chapter 3 of *Anake, Arise & Act*, Patricia Y. Riggs traces class stratification from the antebellum division of labor on plantations between marginalized field hands and relatively privileged house slaves and skilled artisans to the Reconstruction era, in which some black communities witnessed the rise of a black elite, typified by DuBois' "Talented Tenth," while lower-class blacks were relegated to menial jobs (in competition with poor whites) or remained virtually enslaved within the sharecropping system. Free and enslaved blacks all "seemed to recognize that they lived in a society that measured the worth of an individual by standards of [white] middle-class respectability" (27) and therefore developed "accommodationist/integrationist and protest/nationalist ideologies for racial advancement that utilized racial solidarity, self-help, and group economy as strategies for economic and moral development" (43). Theories of racial uplift, as these ideologies came to be known, often took the form of respectability politics: efforts to "convince white America of [the Black middle class] respectability" by "encourag[ing] Victorian morality and middle-class values among the Black masses through social and moral work to uplift themselves and the race" (Ross 3). At its best, however, uplift combined "activities by legions of parents, educators, businesspersons, ministers artists, and other professionals and nonprofessionals 'as community builders' seeking to realize a more inclusive vision of group advancement" (Ross 3).

Coincident with these class struggles was black women's fight to be considered *women*. Within the "cult of domesticity" or "cult of true womanhood," women were expected to be keepers of home and hearth, mothers and nurturers of children, especially sons, as the inheritors of fathers' wealth, and bastions of Christian purity and decency. Although black and white women alike valued the concepts of womanhood and motherhood, "[w]ith the shift toward industrialization and the increasingly narrow notion of women's proper arena as the home, leisure time became an indicator of one's social standing" (Townes 91). Within this social standing was a mixture of gendered racial and class expectations. Since their first arrival on American shores, black women were forced to supply their productive and reproductive

labor toward slavery, and subsequently, sharecropping; therefore, it was not a viable option for most black women to abstain from working outside the home. Black women were subjected to a “racialized configuration of gender under a system of class rule that compelled and expropriated women’s physical labor and denied them legal right to their own bodies and sexuality” and “[w]hile law and public opinion idealized motherhood and enforced the protection of white women’s bodies, the opposite held true for black women’s” (Higginbotham 257). Where well-to-do white women could afford to become homemakers, most black women needed to work to provide for their families, and during and following the Great Migration, they were “systematically denied easy access to jobs other than domestic work” (91). By the cult of domesticity’s definition, black women could never truly earn a spot on the pedestal of womanhood. Giddings notes the “tricky and sometimes contradictory path” black women took in navigating these social mores (Giddings 49). Although black women recognized the racial barriers to their achieving “true womanhood” in the ways that white women could, opposing the “racist and classist implications” (49) of Victorian ideals, due to their own valuing of family and the home and the influence of the “cult,” by and large, they still sought to achieve the trappings and cultivate the behaviors of respectable “ladyhood.” In opposition to the hypersexual, “unrapeable,” “Jezebel” stereotype of black women, Black women activists “defend[ed] their moral integrity as women,” “not by separating themselves along class lines from other women, but by defending the history of all Black women and redefining the criteria of true womanhood” (85).

### **Black Clubwomen and Social Change**

By the early 1900s, at the beginning of the Great Migration, many black women were involved in industry—where the labor movement excluded them—and domestic work (Townes 50, 52). As white women formed organizations to advocate for rights such as their suffrage in the face of sexism, black women founded uplift organizations to challenge the intersectional challenges of not only sexism, but racism and classism as well. These self-help clubs provided a space for black women to not only attempt to spread middle-class, respectable attitudes and behaviors, but also to enact real efforts toward change and support in their communities.

Under the name of “literary, intelligence, temperance, and moral improvement societies,” (Giddings 49) black women pursued both cultural reform and activist goals. The National Association of Colored Women (NACW), founded in the 1890s, served to unite the myriad clubs black women

founded throughout the nation and eventually, in other countries, and pursued “moral purity, temperance, self-improvement, and suffrage” while responding to the specific needs of the black community (Salem 845). The preamble to the NACW’s 1897 constitution states that its founders, “fe[lt] the need of united and systematic effort” and “hop[ed] to furnish evidence of the moral, mental, and material progress made by people of color through the efforts of [their] women” (Riggs 69). Emilie Townes makes the important point that despite membership in the NACW, “the various women’s clubs made no move to standardize their activities,” since they “evolved out of the needs of the immediate communities” in which they were formed (Townes 94).

In what follows, I will provide a few illustrative examples of the work done by local black women’s clubs and organizations. Elsa Barkley Brown reflects on the Independent Order of Saint Luke, a mutual benefit society in Richmond, VA, as a womanist enterprise that “had a non-exclusionary membership policy; any man, woman, or child could join” (Brown 196). The Order began with a “women’s sickness and death mutual benefit association” (176), had a Penny Savings Bank that “recognized the meager resources of the black community” (178), led a streetcar boycott in 1904 (177), and established “a juvenile department, an educational loan fund for young people, a department store, and a weekly newspaper” (176-177). Maggie Lena Walker, the leader of this organization, stated that her ““first work was to draw around me *women*,”” (176) since she recognized their strength in leadership and recognized that “women, while not abandoning their roles as wives and mothers, could also move into economic and political activities in ways that would support rather than conflict with family and community” (178); in other words, “[t]he Saint Luke women argued that it was [...] in the interest of black men and the community as a whole to support expanded opportunities for women” (184).

Overall, there were over 100 clubs founded by black women in Chicago between 1880 and 1920, the first of which bore the maiden name of Ida B. Wells-Barnett, who will be discussed later (Knapfer). Highly concerned with literacy in the black community, the women of these organizations “studied literature, art, drama, and municipal reform” and were responsible for the creation of “kindergartens[...], day nurseries, social settlements, reading rooms, youth clubs, and children’s camps, as well as homes for dependent and orphaned children, for the elderly and infirm, and for young working women” (Knapfer). Clubwomen were also very politically active, protesting segregation and fighting for suffrage and anti-lynching laws (Knapfer). They sponsored community service and social events, including “extravagant charity balls,



dances, and promenades [...] to assist the poor and disenfranchised and to demonstrate the clubwomen's own status and prestige" (Knupfer). These dual goals serve as a fitting illustration of the NACW's motto, "lifting as we climb": clubwomen were certainly social climbers, concerned with respectability, which often included attaining the appearance of white middle- and upper-class society, and the "finer things" in life. However, they were unwilling to ignore the plight of their fellow African-Americans as they attempted to ascend the social hierarchy within the segregated system. Similarly, the Women's Improvement Club of Indianapolis, although initially founded as a ladies' literary club, sought out resources for black tuberculosis patients in the early 1900s after the State Board of Health and white hospitals refused to help address the disease in black communities (Ferguson). At various times during the club's existence, the women ran an outdoor tuberculosis camp, perhaps the first in the nation, solicited supplies and financial donations from the black community, started home nursing and public health initiatives, began a 'fresh air' school, and finally purchased a house for the care of black patients with tuberculosis (Ferguson). As the NACW's constitution states, the most basic purpose of these clubs, like that of womanism, was universality, "to secure harmony of action and cooperation among all women in raising to the highest plane, home, moral and civic life" (Riggs 69).

Within these organizations, contemporary scholars can find strong resemblance to the womanist techniques of arbitration and mediation, hospitality, and, most clearly, mutual aid and self-help. Riggs describes the mediating done by nineteenth-century reformers in the black women's club movement as "the *process* of acknowledging seemingly diametrically opposing positions and *creating* a response that in effect interposes and communicates *between* the opposing sides" (77). In other words, womanist mediation requires "*living in tension with* rather than aiming at an end result of integration, compromise, or reconciliation as such. Integration, compromise, or reconciliation may be an outcome but *mediating as process* has occurred whether or not mediation as an end does" (77). Riggs characterizes the black women's club movement as "socioreligious" (78) due to the fact that its leaders were strongly associated with the church and Christianity and "it institutionalized an ethical perspective which emanated from the faith of black women (i.e., a belief in both the justice of God and justice for Blacks as a command of God)" (78). By acknowledging how class separated their communities, with the help of their Christian ethos, black women activists of this era sought to harmonize difference, (Phillips xxvii) exhibiting a realistic, faith-based sense of "responsibility to participate in community-building and community-sustaining

practices” (Ross 12).

Though they identified themselves as “race women,” black clubwomen’s concern for the survival and wholeness of the entire black community lends support to referring to their activities as womanist. Clubwomen demonstrated hospitality in forming “urban multi-service centers” that helped to ensure that migrant blacks during the Great Migration were successfully integrated into Northern society (Salem 848). Though their efforts were tinged with respectability, their motives were to assist the black community across class lines. As Ross states, “the norm of racial uplift attends to assuring life and human flourishing” and “the norm of social responsibility, always alongside and continuous with racial uplift, seeks to ensure that African-Americans, as full members of society, are able to realize God’s gift of life” (Ross 4). By focusing on “meet[ing] the practical needs of all classes of women [...], these programs also addressed the underlying racist-sexist-classist assumptions of gender oppression experienced by black women” (Riggs 79). In light of historical inequities in the black community in the realms of healthcare, finance, and education, the work of the clubwomen to address these very issues is especially important: these women were profoundly aware of the lack of support from the broader society, so self help was a must in bettering the quality of life for black people of all classes. This grounding of self-help liberatory activities in first addressing the trials within the lived experiences of black women strongly mirrors a womanist approach.

### **Witnessing and Testifying**

Since two of the most powerful tools for fighting for justice are the written and spoken word, women such as Ida B. Wells-Barnett put to use their intellect and eloquence in verbalizing the state of black life post-Reconstruction and the need for change. Wells-Barnett, born a slave in Holly Springs, Mississippi in 1862, was an educator, journalist, editor of the *Memphis Free Speech*, internationally-recognized public speaker, sociologist, mother, wife, and crusader for justice on behalf of African Americans in an era when lynching was an ever-present threat. Ross places this form of activism through literacy and eloquence within the religious tradition of “witnessing and testifying” in the black community, since “both anticipate a response from persons, frequently functioning to encourage others to act or to persevere” (15). As a witness to history, Wells-Barnett used her voice to point out injustice and define and defy the marginalized status of black women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Much of Ida B. Wells-Barnett’s writing was dedicated to publicizing

the shameful history of lynching, convict leasing, and other forms of violence and terrorism against black Americans. Wells-Barnett, an active member in several uplift organizations herself, was certainly an adherent to the politics of respectability and the cult of black womanhood espoused by clubwomen: "The masses of the women of our race [...] have not yet realized the necessity for erecting a standard of earnest, thoughtful, pure, noble womanhood, rather than one of fashion, idleness and uselessness" ("Woman's Mission" 181). However, writing as herself and under the pen name "Iola," she made the true goal of these efforts toward propriety evident, stating, "We [black women] only wish to be given the same credit for our virtues that others receive" ("Our Women" 186). One of Wells-Barnett's contemporaries, Anna Julia Cooper, also exhibited the same sentiments, characterizing young black women of the South, in the religious-tinged language of the cult of domesticity, as damsels in distress, a "large, bright, promising fatally beautiful class" in need of "a stronger brother to espouse their cause and defend their honor with his life's blood" (Cooper 60, 61). Cooper also championed "developing Negro womanhood as an essential fundamental for the development of the race" (66).

As Wells-Barnett led internationally by example, she served as a model for what an empowered "race woman" set on achieving greater social justice for her people could look like. Wells-Barnett was especially critical of the many claims of raping white women hurled against black men that led to lynchings, since most of these claims were either entirely fabricated or stemmed from consensual relationships that went awry. She did not mince words in these matters: "Nobody in this section believes the old thread-bare lie that Negro men assault white women. If Southern white men are not careful they will over-reach themselves and a conclusion will be reached which will be very damaging to the moral reputation of their women" (*Crusade for Justice* 65-66). She also attacked the hypocrisy of the cult of true womanhood's male adherents, who, in their defense of white womanhood as the untouchable ideal, ignored the institutionalized sexual violence against black women and girls:

"...what the white man of the South practiced as all right for himself, he assumed to be unthinkable in white women. They could and did fall in love with the pretty mulatto and quadroon girls as well as black ones, but they professed an inability to imagine white women doing the same thing with Negro and mulatto men. Whenever they did so and were found out, the cry of rape was raised..." (70).

In this impossible situation, black men, women, and the entire black

community could continue to be victimized on a whim. In this context, one can see how black women's desire to be considered whole, dignified human beings was directly linked to the "survival and wholeness of [the] entire people, male *and* female" (Walker 19).

Though Wells-Barnett's respectability was unquestionable, she was never afraid of confrontation. In 1884, she challenged the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad in court and won \$500 in damages after a conductor attempted to remove her from the white-only "ladies' car" and have her moved to a smoking car, an incident that demonstrated her fierceness of character: "He tried to drag me out of the seat, but the moment he caught hold of my arm I fastened my teeth in the back of his hand" (*Crusade for Justice* 18). Though her case was overturned by the Tennessee state court, Wells-Barnett understood its historic significance: "[t]he success of my case would have set a precedent which others would doubtless have followed" (20). After her friend Thomas Moss and two other black grocers were brutally lynched in the first such incident to happen in Memphis since the Civil War, Wells was inspired to investigate "what lynching really was. An excuse to get rid of Negroes who were acquiring wealth and property and thus keep the race terrorized and 'keep the nigger down'" (64). Wells performed extensive research, wrote articles decrying lynching, and armed herself with a pistol, "expect[ing] some cowardly retaliation from the lynchers" (62). A passionate woman who was ready to accept the consequences of her activism, Wells stated, "I felt that one had better die fighting against injustice than to die like a dog or a rat in a trap. I had already determined to sell my life as dearly as possible if attacked" (62). Similarly, when her sons and other black youths in the Chicago neighborhood Wells-Barnett and her family helped integrate were threatened with violence, "she kept a pistol available in the house and dared anyone to cross her threshold to harm her or any member of her family" (*Crusade for Justice* xxv). Wells-Barnett was a dedicated wife and mother who temporarily gave up her newspaper and the presidency of the Club that bore her name in order to care for her family; however, she continued her service to the community by establishing "an innovation in what was then the Negro district by opening a kindergarten" (249). Wells-Barnett exhibited exactly the kind of "outrageous, audacious, courageous [and] *willful* behavior" characteristic of womanists (Walker 19).

A strong advocate for women's suffrage, Wells-Barnett recounted an exchange with suffragist Susan B. Anthony, who asked Wells-Barnett whether she was wrong for asking Frederick Douglass, another supporter of women's suffrage, not to attend a meeting of the Equal Suffrage Association in Atlanta

and refusing to help a group of black women establish their own branch of the association since she “did not want anything to get in the way of bringing the southern white women into [the] suffrage association” (230): “I answered uncompromisingly yes, for I felt that although she may have made gains for suffrage, she had also confirmed white women in their attitude of segregation” (230). Though Wells-Barnett held Anthony in high esteem for her work, this acknowledgement of the lack of understanding and sisterhood between white feminists and black women foresaw the same tensions that led to the formalized theorizing of womanism and black feminism. Cooper’s *A Voice from the South* presents a similar early womanist perspective on white women’s efforts toward suffrage and equal rights that acknowledged intersectionality, long before the term was coined (Baker-Fletcher 118).

In a pamphlet she co-authored with Frederick Douglass and I. Garland Penn lamenting the fact that no African-Americans were included in the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 and revealing the injustices black people were experiencing in the United States, Wells stated, “There is no demand for reasons, or need of concealment for what no one is held responsible. The simple word of any white person against a Negro is sufficient to get a crowd of white men to lynch a Negro. Investigation as to the guilt or innocence of the accused is never made” (*The Reason Why*... 31). It is exactly the random cruelty of white supremacist violence, the true *Southern Horror*, that Wells tried so desperately to expose in her writing. In her 1894 “A Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynchings in the United States, 1892-1893-1894,” she painstakingly lists the names of those lynched and the supposed charges against them that lead to their murders, including arson, suspected robbery, assault, incendiarism, burglary, wife beating, murder, alleged well poisoning, (most famously) charges related to rape, and, most ironically, “race prejudice” espoused by the *victims* (“A Red Record” 150-153). Chapters IV-IX (Chapter V is fittingly titled “Lynched for Anything or Nothing”) detail the lynchings of numerous black men and women on the basis of often-trivial matters. The long lists of names and numbers of lynched individuals bear an eerie similarity to the ongoing tallies of black lives lost to acts of police brutality and shootings in modern times. Wells-Barnett’s deep concern for the welfare of her people lead her to compiling meticulous research and case studies of many scenarios that resulted in incidents of lynching. This drive connects her to the womanist mantra of “[w]anting to know more and in greater depth than is considered ‘good’ for one,” (Walker 19) as she fearlessly made strides toward societal equity by disseminating this important information in her work.

Baker-Fletcher draws attention to the fact that Anna Julia Cooper, like Ida B. Wells-Barnett, wrote from an “elitist” (111) point of view in that while speaking “on *behalf* of Black women, including the masses, she rarely appears to speak *with* or *to* them,” despite the fact that she undoubtedly “considered it an act of altruism and benevolence” (123). Learning from their example, Baker-Fletcher also suggests that contemporary womanists must learn to speak *with* and *to* one another in order to bring about social change (123). Higginbotham notes:

“[t]he politics of ‘respectability’ [a term she herself coined in *Righteous Discontent*] disavowed, in often repressive ways, much of the expressive culture of the ‘folk,’ for example, sexual behavior, dress style, leisure activity, music, speech patterns, and religious worship patterns” (Higginbotham 272).

Since a womanist “loves the Folk,” (Walker 19) Wells-Barnett’s and other black clubwomen’s adherence to the politics of respectability presents a complex challenge to the contemporary scholar hoping to apply a womanist lens to their work. However, as Ross reflects, “[s]ince this ideology originated to refute and oppose racism, the concept of racial uplift was not simple capitulation to judgments of white American racism” (3). Though clubwomen certainly borrowed from white ideals of success and respectability, they did not blindly swallow them, but attempted, however successfully, to show that black livelihood and womanhood were equal to white. Though contemporary scholars can critique the effectuality of their methods, their motives are clear; at least initially, it was precisely *because* black clubwomen loved their people that they attempted to assimilate to white standards. Though respectability politics continue to polarize the black community, it is important to remember that the nationalist self-help overtones of black women’s clubs were, in fact, transgressive—debutante balls and Christian moralizing notwithstanding.

Through powerful speeches, literacy, and the formation of uplift organizations, black women activists at the turn of the 20th century spoke truth to power and modeled womanist methods of social change for subsequent generations. Since “[l]ooking at others who embody qualities of strength, courage, creativity, dignity, beauty, and liberation is a way of reviewing or reimagining oneself,” their work is an important reference for contemporary black women who wish to combat the structures of oppression and harmful, enduring stereotypes that threaten their dignity (Baker-Fletcher 107). As contemporary womanists “build on a tradition of Black women freedom fighters” (109) like Wells-Barnett, it is important to recognize that their actions to defend black womanhood helped lay the ideological

foundation for future liberationist work by African-American women.

## Tracing Shades of Womanist Theology in the Life of Fannie Lou Hamer<sup>7</sup>

“Now, we’ve got to have some changes in this country. And not only changes for the black man, and not only changes for the black woman, but the changes we have to have in this country are going to be for liberation of all people—because nobody’s free until everybody’s free.”

— Fannie Lou Hamer<sup>8</sup>

### Introduction

For many years, the accomplishments of the Civil Rights Movement have primarily been credited to the work of male activists and leaders in the Black Church. During the era of Jim Crow, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other civil rights leaders within the Church used their visibility and respected positions in the pulpit to preach freedom, justice, and equality under God, a message of moral obligation that sought to spur the American psyche to fulfill the country’s loftiest ideals. However, scholars who only mention black ministers in discussions of the Church’s role in the Movement would be remiss in failing to acknowledge the long history of black Christian women who used their faith and its tenets as inspiration for anti-racist, community-building civil rights work.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> A version of this portion of my thesis was presented at *The Womanist Mystique: A Symposium on Scholarship and Activism*, a conference at sponsored by Princeton University Women’s Center and Princeton University Department of African American Studies, Princeton, New Jersey, February 6, 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Brooks, Maegan Parker, and Houck, Davis W., eds. *Speeches of Fannie Lou Hamer : To Tell It Like It Is*. Jackson, MS, USA: University Press of Mississippi, 2010. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 25 March 2016.

<sup>9</sup> In *Debating the Civil Rights Movement: 1945-1968*, both Lawson and Payne only identify a few black female activists in passing. Payne questions the dominant narrative’s emphasis on Dr. King’s contributions over those of other participants in the Movement while Lawson reinforces the popular notion of King as the Movement’s representative, but both Payne and Lawson dedicate the final sections of their arguments to revisiting Dr. King’s legacy (124). Fairclough in “Historians and the Civil Rights Movement” criticizes the “top-down” narrative of King’s legacy, but fails to discuss the exclusion of women from overarching narratives of the Movement. Contrastingly, Belinda Robnett is just one of several scholars attempting to more fully describe the contributions of black women in the Movement. In her book *How Long? How Long?: African-American Women in the Struggle for Civil Rights*, she coined the term “bridge leaders” to describe women during the Movement who, due to the confines of racism

In addition to having a strong faith, another way black women have responded to the intersectional challenges of discrimination based on race, gender, class and sexuality is through the ideology of womanism. In this third part of my thesis, I argue that since the underrepresentation of black women or diminution of their efforts in historical discussions of the Civil Rights Movement represents an unfortunate oversight that researchers have only begun to address, womanist theology presents a new way of conceptualizing their contributions. Patricia Hill Collins discusses the ways in which these forms of oppression work together in distinctive ways to produce a distinctive “matrix of oppression” that relegates black women in America “to the bottom of the social hierarchy from one generation to the next” (Collins 292). Springing from Alice Walker’s seminal *In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens* and emerging out of liberation theology around the late 1980s and early 1990s by “black women theologians, historians, writers, and philosophers” of varying religious backgrounds, womanist theology presents a way for Christian black women to apply biblical teachings to their lives and see themselves reflected in Scripture as children of God (Collier-Thomas 474). Mitchem traces several defining characteristics of womanist theology: 1) it exposes and begins with the everyday theologies of black women; 2) it is built upon a communal aspect, incorporating social justice and carrying over into the methodology of activism; 3) it takes an interdisciplinary approach to faith, grounded in ethics, and in dialogue with other theological ideas and real-world occurrences, as connoted by Walker’s definition; and 4) it issues a challenge to the Black Church and Christianity as a whole to get involved in social justice issues and remain so (Mitchem 63-64). In addition, due to its centering of black women and their experiences, womanist theology may contrast with mainstream feminism in a variety of ways. I argue that such a lens helps shed light on aspects of black women’s activism in ways that many historians have ignored.

One of the most visible and outspoken black female leaders in the Civil Rights Movement, Fannie Lou Hamer, a sharecropper from rural Mississippi, was involved with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and served as the voice of the Mississippi Freedom

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and sexism, were denied positions in formal leadership, despite playing roles integral to the success of the movement. (cont.)

Higginbotham’s *Righteous Discontent* focuses on the ways that black Christian women created a context for activism inside and outside the Black Church through the establishment of women’s clubs and mutual aid societies and empowering their communities through education. Additionally, writers including Jo Ann Robinson, an activist in her own right, in *The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It* have taken on the work of highlighting the stories of black female activists.



Democratic Party (MFDP), which challenged the composition of the all-white delegation at the Democratic National Convention of 1964 and demanded a proportionate number of seats for black delegates.

Hamer, born October 6, 1917, the twentieth child of two Mississippi sharecroppers, was a woman whose boldness flew in the face of traditional feminine roles expected of women during the Civil Rights Movement. Hamer became a leader in her native Sunflower County and nationwide, urging others in the fight for the franchise. Hamer was a lifelong Christian who attended Williams Chapel Church, the location where she first attended a SNCC mass meeting in 1962. In a statement connecting her faith to social activism, Hamer affirmed:

“Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.’ We Negroes had hoped and we had faith to hope, though we didn’t know what we had hoped for. [...] In 1964 the faith that we had hoped for started to be translated into action. Now we have action, and we’re doing something that will not only free the Black man in Mississippi but hopefully will free the white one as well” (Ross 112).

Because she saw her faith as directly linked to the struggle for civil rights, throughout her life, Hamer boldly challenged the oppressive structures of white supremacy, racism, poverty, and voting suppression that she recognized in her community and throughout the nation. Despite the fact that Fannie Lou Hamer would not have personally described herself as a womanist, or even a feminist, at the time, one can keenly observe each of the aspects of womanist theology in the context of Fannie Lou Hamer’s life. I focus on her life as a case study in womanist theological thought and praxis that helps explain the nature of her activism in addition to clarifying and informing the tenets of modern womanist theology. As I add to a growing body of womanist-influenced work on African-Americans’ struggle for equality, including Rosetta E. Ross’ *Witnessing and Testifying*, I demonstrate how this academic framework can contribute to further understanding of the work of other black women activists, particularly Hamer’s contemporaries in the Civil Rights Movement.

### **Conceptual Framework: Womanist Theology and Hamer’s Life**

First and foremost, womanist theology starts with the lived experiences of black women, the very facts of existence with which Hamer grappled as a black woman during the Civil Rights Era. It asks important questions of Christianity: “Where is God in the experiences of black women? By what name should this God be called? What does it mean to live a life of faith? How

should black women respond to God's call?" (Mitchem 23). Since black women have faced unique challenges at the intersection of race, class, and gender from their first arrival on the North American continent, black women who identify as Christians must wrestle with the applicability of a faith with a fraught history – one that has been used, in many cases, to oppress them. And yet, from slavery to Reconstruction to the Jim Crow era and beyond, black women's religious thought has served as a source of strength, enabling many efforts:

“to hold in check the nightmare figures of terror, to fight for basic freedoms against the sadistic law enforcement agencies in their communities, to resist the temptation to capitulate to the demands of the status quo, to find meaning in the most despotic circumstances, and to create something where nothing existed before” (Cannon 56).

Although many have told her story, dominant narratives about Hamer's leadership in the MFDP often neglect to mention her early confrontation with the realities of racism. When she was six years old, Hamer began picking cotton to help her sharecropping family and first encountered the exploitative cycle of debt involved in this system of labor. While she was playing beside the road, a local landowner got her to pick 30 pounds of cotton on his land in exchange for treats at his commissary store:

“...what he was really doing was trapping me into work. So, the next week I had to pick 60 pounds. [...]. By the time I was 13 years old, I was picking three and four hundred. And I just wondered what in the world was wrong that all the people that didn't work [the white landowners], they was the people that had something, but people that worked, they didn't have anything...” (Wright).

Adding to her family's struggles, out of sheer jealousy and spite, a white man poisoned the animals her father toiled and saved to acquire; this setback prevented the already overburdened family from ever getting out of debt (Marsh 12). Another painful experience in 1961 further demonstrates the effect of racism on Hamer's life. Hamer was subjected to an involuntary hysterectomy after going to the hospital to have a small cyst removed from her stomach (Lee 21). This involuntary sterilization, linked to racist eugenics laws throughout the South, was common practice for many white doctors at the time, and, as a poor black woman, Hamer had no route for reprisal: “I went to the doctor who did that to me and I asked him, Why? Why had he done that to me? He didn't have to say nothing—and he didn't” (Mills 22). These injustices, which left her primed for change in her community, were only

compounded when she was encouraged to register to vote in 1962 following the start of SNCC's registration drive in Sunflower County. After her first attempt to vote, Hamer was evicted from the land where she worked as a sharecropper, forcing her to leave her husband and adopted daughters as she fled persecution. In 1963, Bob Moses asked her to work full-time for SNCC's voter registration campaign in Sunflower. Later that year, on her way back from a voter registration workshop with activist Septima Clark in Charleston, SC, she was arrested in Winona, Mississippi, taken to jail, and beaten severely by the local white policemen and black inmates under their orders. This "Golgotha experience," as Charles Marsh terms it, left Hamer with permanent kidney damage, a blood clot over her left eye that could have caused blindness, and an irrepressible sense of her purpose in the Movement (Marsh 20). Lastly, in her most public battle with patriarchy and racism, during her 1964 speech to the Credentials Committee of the Democratic National Convention as vice-chairperson of the MFDP, President Lyndon Johnson attempted to silence Hamer by holding a press conference about an altogether unrelated issue. While she spoke to the nation unflinchingly and bravely about her "Golgotha experience" and the state of racism and oppression in her native Mississippi, national leaders such as Johnson, Walter Reuther, Walter Mondale, J. Edgar Hoover, and Vice-Presidential hopeful Hubert Humphrey, sympathetic whites, such as the MFDP's lawyer Joseph Rauh, and even prominent black leaders such as Bayard Rustin and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., participated in the effort, whether directly or indirectly, to stifle Hamer's and the MFDP's influence (Marsh 38, Lee 96-97, Wright).

In a 1971 interview, Hamer paid homage to the Black Church for giving black people the fortitude to survive the kinds of lifelong affronts she endured: "I really think that people should return to some of the things that have made us strong for these many years. [...] If we hadn't been a strong people, we would have crumbled long ago" (Ross 111). The Black Church's overarching communal aspects served to unite African-Americans throughout their experiences. Though her trials were great, Hamer found ample encouragement in her Christian faith and her tacit espousal of a womanist theological perspective.

Mitchem describes how womanist theological perspectives preserve the agency of black women such as Fannie Lou Hamer, in spite of the intersectional challenges facing them. Agency "refer[s] to the ability of a person or community to work on their own behalf, within or in spite of existing social institutions"; in other words, agency is "the visioning gift that sees beyond simple tasks of survival" (Mitchem 20) and seeks to enable one to

truly live and thrive, “stand[ing] against the internalized self-hatred found among some African Americans” (21). While they are abused and taken for granted, it befits black women to espouse a conception of God and Christianity that affirms their value and humanity and preserves their sense of agency, a view consistent with womanist theology.

Hamer’s predecessors in the 19th and early 20th centuries also linked their faith to their agency and a sense of empowerment and/or obligation as black women to uplift and empower the race. Maria W. Stewart, a free black abolitionist in the first half of the 19th century, was the American first woman, black or otherwise, to speak in front of a mixed audience of men and women. Her Christian faith inspired her, in a speech given in 1833, to connect her drive toward leadership through activism to the calling of biblical women: “What if I am a woman; is not the God of ancient times the God of these modern days? Did he not raise up Deborah, to be a mother, and a judge in Israel [Judges 4:4]? Did not queen Esther save the lives of the Jews?” (Stewart 68). A contemporary of Stewart’s, Sojourner Truth, born enslaved as Isabella Baumfree, also traced her activism to her strong Christian faith and gave abolitionist and pro-women’s rights lectures throughout the North (Ross 15-21). Far from depicting black women and black people as being helpless to shirk off “two centuries and more of compression and degradation,” Anna Julia Cooper wrote in 1886 that “the fundamental agency under God in the regeneration, the retraining of the race, [albeit a notion steeped in the politics of respectability] as well as the ground work and starting point of its progress upwards must be the *black woman*. [...] No other hand can move the lever” (Cooper 62). As discussed previously, those who participated in black clubwomen’s efforts to uplift the race, like Cooper, helped bring the legacy of black Christian women into the 20th century so that women like Hamer could also be rooted in a faith-based sense of agency.

Because Hamer was raised not to pathologize her own blackness, she knew that the injustices against blacks were wrong, and therefore, should be fought. Hamer recalled asking her mother as a young child why she wasn’t born white—why she and their family worked so hard for little gain. Her mother was quick to admonish her about her sense of identity as a black woman:

“Be grateful that you’re black because if God had wanted you to be white, you would’ve been white. So you accept yourself for what you are. [...] You respect yourself as a black child, and when you get grown, [...] you respect yourself as a black woman, and otherpeople will respect you” (Wright).

The fact that Hamer's mother worked so hard to instill these values of self-respect in her daughter is a striking example of how African-Americans used specific notions of Christianity to uphold their dignity and pride in being black. However, Hamer fully rejected racial separatism while standing up for the rights of black people:

"I think that every person regardless of their color should have a chance to participate in their own destiny. Because politics deals with everything. And I can understand why we have militants, I can understand why we have nationalists, or Muslims [members of the Nation of Islam] – they don't say that it's the black man's problem, it's America's. [...] The white people can't destroy me to save their lives without destroying themselves." (Wright).

This strong sense of linked fate, not only with other black people, but with whites and the entire nation, evidences Hamer's own perceptive "visioning gift," which allowed her to look past socially-constructed differences toward the betterment of the entire nation. In 1971, Hamer said, "My whole fight is for the liberation of all people because no man is an island to himself," and that whether white or black children were being killed, "there's a little bit of America being destroyed" (Ross 117). Despite the prevailing ideology of white supremacy during her youth, Hamer exhibited a strong sense of agency, influenced by her faith, and was henceforth enabled to engage in later civil rights work.

In a 1968 interview, Hamer recalled a song her mother would sing, a testament to this belief reflected in the 'everyday theologies' of black women: "I would not be a white man, I'll tell you the reason why: I'm afraid my Lord would call me, and I wouldn't be ready to die. ... She would say in songs what was really happening to us" (Wright). Implicit in Hamer's words is a notion consistent with Mitchem's explanation of womanist theology as "an understanding of personal evil" as well as one of "[s]ocial sin, which is committed through structures such as slavery, [...] and damnation is the expected punishment from God" (110). This big-picture view of structural violence contrasts with common Western notions of sin, which focus more heavily on individual perpetrators. Womanist theologian Katie G. Cannon suggests in *Katie's Canon* that "[i]t was biblical faith grounded in the prophetic tradition that helped Black women devise strategies and tactics [including this alternate view of sin] to make Black people less susceptible to the indignities and proscriptions of an oppressive White social order" (52). In fact, womanist theologians considering the legacy of violence against black bodies, particularly

those of black women, have posited that because all mankind is created in the image of God, “any abuse or defilement of the body is sin” (Mitchem 110). Because white oppressors have long defiled black people’s bodies through rape, enslavement, and the commodification of their productive and reproductive power – womanist theology fully denounces this injustice. In the same interview cited above, Hamer contends,

“I don’t hate whites, because I’m yet trying to give them a chance, because I know – and they will know one day ... in a sense, they are not as much as [that is to say, superior to] some of us [blacks]. ... I couldn’t tell nobody with my head up I’m fighting for equal rights with a white man, cause I don’t want it. Cause if what I get got to come through lynching, mobbing, raping, stealing, and killing, I don’t want it” (Wright).

Hamer draws on history, as well as her observed experience of racism, to condemn the historical abuses against black people, as well as reject equally violent means of social reform. Alice Walker has observed that since womanism is concerned with the “wholeness” of the entire person, black women should never serve exclusively at the expense of their own well-being: “Salvation, then, in a womanist construction, is not found in formulaic answers but in the search for wholeness” (Mitchem 111). Similarly, “[r]edemption is a journey that begins by daring to care for self in the face of repeated assaults on identity and value” (111). A womanist concept of sin thus prompts those studying social movements to rethink the idea of servanthood, the idea that black women should always act in service to black men or the church; because this conception devalues black women’s hard work, a womanist theologian might state that “sin is too much service, for it has invited them [black women] to self-destructive behaviors” (111). Since one of the ways womanists care for self is through expressing solidarity with fellow black women, a statement Hamer made in a 1973 interview stands out as a special gesture of sisterhood. When asked who she thought was the most important black leader at the time, Hamer replied, “A woman that I really respect more than I do any other living woman at this time for her role in civil rights and activity is a woman in New York City named Miss Ella Baker. [...] She’s a beautiful human being that I respect for the role she has played. If it’s men, I wouldn’t be able to name them” (Hamer). These words suggest that Hamer recognized her unique status as a powerful woman in the Movement, and her decision to name another woman activist and acknowledge her contributions, rather than one of the many men in the Movement, is notable.

Despite womanist theological scholars' conflicts regarding the proper interpretation of Jesus' suffering,<sup>10</sup> the fact remains that womanist views of Jesus challenge the majority view by fully acknowledging black women's need to see themselves reflected in and affirmed by their faith. For Hamer and others, "Jesus is liberated from his historical imprisonment by controlling patriarchy, white supremacist ideology, and the privileged class" and He is "seen by black women as equalizer since he is for all people regardless of class, race, caste, or gender" (114). For Hamer and others, Jesus was not an impersonal Savior. As Jacquelyn Grant puts it, "When Black women say that God is on the side of the oppressed, we mean that God is in solidarity with the struggles of those on the under side of humanity," a position with which black women are all too familiar (*White Women's Christ* 209). Hamer explained that, "Christianity is being concerned about [others....] Christ was a revolutionary person, out there where it was happening. That's what God is all about, and that's where I get my strength" (Marsh 33). By focusing on Jesus' personal relationship with humankind, especially the downtrodden of the world, Hamer and other Christian figures in the Movement were greatly empowered.

### **Fannie Lou Hamer's Civil Rights Work as Ethical Action**

Womanist theology, like the activist Christian attitudes Hamer projected, requires praxis. Since womanist Christians would believe that they are called to ethical action as followers of Christ, involvement in social justice causes that impact the black community would be a logical extension of their beliefs. Hamer knew, even from a young age, that the system of inequality in her native Mississippi was unjust, wrong, and needed to be corrected: "the

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<sup>10</sup> In *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus*, Jacquelyn Grant delves directly into the importance of Christology to black women: "...[T]here is a direct relationship between our perception of Jesus Christ and our perception of ourselves" (63). Grant shows how throughout history, the concept of Christ as a male figure has been used to uphold patriarchy and oppress women – The concept of the superordination of males and the subordination of females has resulted in men being [viewed as] God's inner circle and women being God's outer circle" (Grant 95). Jesus' life and ministry, in addition to salvation, when colored by patriarchal ideals, have little to do with women. Grant demonstrates how "[i]f women are indeed to be saved they must begin to re-articulate Christology starting from the questions which arise out of their experiences" (Grant 83). Feminist biblical scholars show how within Scripture, Jesus is depicted with both traditionally male and traditionally female traits – since Jesus took on flesh and became human, he could identify with the experiences of both men and women (105). Some womanist theologians, such as Dolores Williams, take the view that "Jesus' resurrection was triumphal not because of the brutality of crucifixion, but because that ministerial vision was incapable of being destroyed by human evil" (Mitchem 115-116). Others reject this decentering of the cross for the idea that "Jesus suffering invites those who live in oppression to identify with God's love" (117).

same land that's in cultivation now, that they got closed to us, that we can't own, my parents helped to make that ground what it is" (Wright). As timekeeper on the plantation where she worked, she actively resisted the corruption inherent in the sharecropping system by using her own counterweight to prevent the plantation owner from deliberately underweighing how much cotton each worker picked: "I would take my pea [counterweight] to the field and use mine until I would see him coming, because his was loaded and I know it was beating people like that" (Ross 98). She also struck out to make a difference through political participation, despite the fact that before undergoing voter education classes herself, she "knowed as much about a facto law as a horse knows about Christmas Day" (Wright). Though the MFDP's gains were not as decisive as its members would have hoped, Hamer was proud of her involvement – "...it's something I'll always be a part of, you know, because that means that you can kill a man but you can't kill an idea" – and the fact that the group maintained its integrity by refusing to accept the 'two-seat compromise' the Democratic establishment offered them at the 1964 DNC: "If we had accepted that then, we wouldn't be nothing today" (Wicker, Wright).

The impulse to affect those around her for the better greatly influenced Hamer's civil rights activism. Hamer challenged the leadership of local black churches to accept the risks associated with becoming solidly activist, stating, "I'm not anti-church and I'm not anti-religious, but if you go down Highway 49 all the way into Jackson, [...] you'll see just how many churches are selling out to the white power structure" (Marsh 25). She lamented the fact that so many pastors were willing to betray the Movement and their people: "Sometimes I get so disgusted I feel like getting my gun after some of these chicken eatin' [self-satisfied, complacent] preachers" (Ross 111). She similarly implicated her fellow believers and Mississippians in the success or failure of the movement toward voting rights at a 1963 SNCC rally: "...we can come out here and live a lie and like the lie and we going just as straight to hell, if we don't do something. Because we got a charge to keep too" (Brooks & Houk 39). Her statements confirm the notion that the Church "must be more than an institution and it certainly cannot be contained within the confines of a building" ("Civil Rights Women" 47). In her own words, "If something is wrong with the Church, stand up and change it and make it be relevant to the community" (Ross 112). In a powerful anecdote, while visiting a church and organizing for voter registration, she gave a speech which read poor blacks' experience through that of the Israelites' and implicated the pastor himself in the fight for voting rights: "[...Y]ou, Reverend Tyler, must be



Moses! Leadin' your flock out of the chains and fetters of Egypt – takin' them yourself to register –*tomorra*—in Indianola!” (Ross 113).

Despite her criticisms, Hamer recognized the spiritual and social value of the Church in her own life and in the progression of the Movement. At the first mass meeting held by SNCC in 1962 in Sunflower County, Hamer heard SCLC preacher James Bevel preach from Luke 12:54, on “discerning the signs of time” (Wright); it was here, at this meeting attended by SNCC leaders Bob Moses, Amzie Moore, and Jim Forman, that Hamer first learned of her rights as a citizen, as well as how instrumental the church could be in mobilizing prospective voters. These mass meetings testified to the fact that “[t]he fellowship dimension of the Church/Christian experience *must* be more than a mere social event. Indeed, it must direct the struggle towards liberation and freedom” (“Civil Rights Women” 48). Fannie Lou Hamer believed that “singing brings out the soul,” and her powerful singing voice was a constant throughout her involvement in the Movement (Marsh 22). On the bus home after her first failed attempt to register to vote, she sang the hymn “Have a Little Talk With Jesus” with others from Sunflower (15); after being beaten in jail in Winona, Hamer sang to encourage herself and the other prisoners: “Paul and Silas was bound in jail, let my people go. / Had no money for to go their bail, let my people go” (22); she also served as an active songleader in SNCC, leading the congregation in freedom songs at mass meetings and teaching them to volunteers from around the nation at the June 1964 training session for the effort that would become known as Freedom Summer (30). As one of her colleagues, John Lewis, stated, “These meetings were *church*, and for some who had grown disillusioned with Christian otherworldliness, they were better than church” (27). Hamer affirmed her faith in terms of its action, and hoped others would do the same:

“People need to be serious about their faith in the Lord; it’s all too easy to say, ‘Sure, I’m a Christian,’ and talk a big game. But if you are not putting that claim to the test, where the rubber meets the road, then it’s high time to stop talking about being a Christian. You can pray until you faint, but if you’re not gonna get up and do something, God is not gonna put it in your lap” (25).

Hamer’s life attests to the belief that without praxis, one’s statement of faith is meaningless – as James 2:17 makes clear, “...faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” (*Zondervan KJV Study Bible*).

### **Hamer: Womanist in Retrospect?**

Some of Hamer’s values and attitudes may seem to diverge from those

held by modern feminists, at least at surface value. It is important to note, however, that the concept of womanism often differs from mainstream feminism because it takes into consideration a broader spectrum of issues than feminism, including classism and racism, in addition to the particular issues facing black women, which are often ignored by the mainstream feminist movement due to black women's marginalized status. Walker's "purple" analogy not only cleverly alludes to skin color differences between blacks and whites, but also implies that the womanist perspective is richer in nuance, springing from a specific racial understanding of the world and necessitating praxis in order to improve black women's lives.

The definition of womanism has become a contentious site of debate as new scholars engage with Walker's text. However, I argue that from Walker's definitions, one can glean a sense of the nature of womanism as an ideology with an inspirational, activist bent that seeks the betterment of all society. This is primarily done through centering and addressing the issues facing black women, and by extension, black people. From their recollections of Fannie Lou Hamer training the young people from SNCC during Freedom Summer, volunteers noted her "traditional sexual ethics," "her motherly fussiness toward social etiquette and sartorial propriety," and her disapproval toward interracial dating amongst volunteers; however, one might argue that the violent reactions to interracial relationships in the South were cause for caution (Marsh 31).

Hamer's work after 1964, despite the crushing defeat at the DNC, showed that she was willing to continue to attack the intersectional challenges facing black people in the South, especially her work to mitigate the effects of poverty. This was a pressing concern she shared with other civil rights workers, including Martin Luther King, Jr., who planned the People's March before his assassination in 1968. Hamer lived out her goals through her efforts to provide food, clothing, and other necessities for the poor and those who had lost their livelihoods, as she had, for registering to vote (Ross 104). She also contributed to the Mississippi Freedom Labor Union, which mostly benefited day laborers on plantations (Lee 124). In 1968, she founded a "pig bank" to continue to provide for the people of Sunflower County<sup>11</sup> – this

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<sup>11</sup> This work in particular was influenced greatly by the work of another black woman activist in Mississippi, Dorothy Height. In Height's memoir, she recalls having been inspired by the work of Heifer International and sharing the idea of a "pig bank" with Hamer after a conversation with her: "You see, Miss Height, down where we are, food is used as a political weapon. But if you have a pig in your backyard, if you have some vegetables in your garden, you can feed yourself and your family, and nobody can push you around. If we have

ingenious system allowed families to care for a pregnant pig and keep its offspring if they agreed to return the original pig and provide a pregnant pig for two other families; by 1970, more than 300 families were helped (Ross 110). Recognizing the value of land ownership and subsistence farming in lifting families out of poverty, Hamer followed the “pig bank” with the “Freedom Farms Cooperative” in 1969. The Freedom Farms helped to provide meat and fresh vegetables for thousands of poor blacks and whites and provided low-interest financing to build homes for sixty-eight families by 1971 (Ross 110). Despite never truly escaping poverty herself, she continued to work to aid the poor. Noting class differences in the black community, Hamer stated,

“A few years ago throughout this country the middle-class Black woman didn’t even respect the kind of work that I was doing. But you see now, baby, whether you have a Ph.D., D.D., or no D., we’re in this bag together. [...] Not to fight to try to liberate ourselves from the men—this is another trick to get us fighting among ourselves—but to work together with the Black man, then we will have a better chance to just act as human beings, and to be treated as human beings in our sick society” (116).

This statement of the need for cooperation between black men and women across class barriers echoes Walker’s definition of womanism.

Additionally, in displaying her wariness of the white-dominated Women’s Liberation Movement, Hamer reiterated her desire for the “wholeness” of all black people: “[s]he approached the emerging women’s movement not as someone critical of men [...] but as one who wanted to be sure that this new movement did not forget black people” (Mills 273). This mirrors Walker’s conception of womanists as “‘round’ women—women who love other women, yes, but women who also have concern, in a culture that oppresses all black people (and this would go back very far), for their fathers, brothers, and sons, no matter how they feel about them as males” (“Gifts of Power” 18). At the National Women’s Political Caucus’ first meeting in 1971, while some young black women felt her image was being used solely to

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something like some pigs and some gardens and a few things like that, even if we have no jobs, we can eat and we can look after our families” (Height 188). With an assist from programs like the “pig bank” and Head Start, which benefited youth in poverty through early childhood education, black Mississippians could hope for advancement despite being denied the franchise (186).

legitimize white liberal feminism, Hamer and Shirley Chisholm challenged white feminists to take up anti-racist causes: “there was no ‘sisterhood’ without an expressed commitment to end all forms of discrimination and suffering for all women” (Lee 170). Though the conference was targeted at increasing female representation in government, Hamer would not allow her fellow attendees to forget the intersectional position of black women in the era of women’s lib:

“[...T]he white women in this country have known for years that they aren’t free. But for so many of them it was a rude awakening, a few years ago when they woke up, and found out that not only were they not free, but that they had a whole lot of problems. Not like mine, but similar to mine. But somehow we’re going to have to bridge the gap” (Brooks & Houk 169-170).

Hamer also highlighted a difference in opinion on the issue of sexism: “I got a black husband, six feet three, 240 pounds, with a 14 shoe, that I don’t want to be liberated from. But we are here to work side by side with this black man in trying to bring liberation to all people” (Lee 171). Hamer refers to something similar to the gender cooperation model of womanism as an alternative to what she saw as the divisive nature of “women’s lib.” In her view, black men could not be perceived as arch-enemies when they were also victims of white patriarchy: “I’m not fighting to liberate myself from the black man in the South because, so help me, God, he’s had as many and more severer [sic] problems than I’ve had” (Brooks & Houk 169). She also held certain beliefs about traditional gender roles that diverged from the majority feminist view: “Women can be strength for men, women can help with the decision-making, but men will ultimately take the action” (Mills 274). Later in her life, when she began speaking out against involuntary sterilizations like the one she was subjected to, Hamer “argued that contraceptives and abortion equaled genocide and sin” (Lee 172). When one considers the history of limitations on black women’s reproductive autonomy, this belief shows how “[t]he meaning of choice or reproductive freedom was relative and subjective for Hamer, but in different ways” than for white women” (Lee 172). Hamer’s Christian morals, historical precedent as a black woman, and personal experiences undoubtedly colored her response to certain social issues and set her apart from the mainstream feminist cause.

## Conclusion

By examining Hamer's life and work through the lens of womanist theology, one might better understand the faith- and community-based motivations that drove her activism. Uncovering the interplay between Hamer's faith and her activism contributes to the work of reframing and celebrating the female actors of the Civil Rights Movement and honoring those who came before. While the work of women like Hamer was actually essential to the Movement, Civil rights activists in the Movement are often viewed in terms of high-profile male spokespeople and figureheads, with the work of black women relegated to a peripheral, or even inconsequential status. We can also begin to see the many ways in which the goals and ideals of today's womanist theologians and activists are inherited from a long "motherline" of black Christian women leaders in the Movement, such as Hamer, Sojourner Truth, Anna Julia Cooper, and Maria W. Stewart. Hamer's life of faith and bravery in the face of oppression stands as a testament to how womanist theological ideas, despite their relatively recent naming, have allowed black women to persevere in challenging times.

## Back to Our Future: Imagining Womanist Implications for Contemporary & Prospective Black Women's Activism

*Are we really living or just walking dead now?  
Or dreaming of a hope riding the wings of angels  
The way we live  
The way we die  
What a tragedy, I'm so terrified  
Daydreamers, please wake up, we can't sleep no more...*

— Janelle Monae, “Sincerely Jane”<sup>12</sup>

### Black Lives Matter—All Black Lives

Among the points listed as the Black Lives Matter organization's guiding principles are some that one would expect from a social justice-oriented group: black families, diversity, empathy, and loving engagement (“Guiding Principles”). Others seem to drastically differ from the issues championed by previous organizations attempting to bring forth justice for black Americans: creating intergenerational connections, advocating for restorative justice, and affirming unapologetically what it means to be black, female, queer, and transgender. Alicia Garza and Patrisse Cullors, the activists and co-creators of #BlackLivesMatter with Opal Tometi, both identify as queer (“Alicia Garza...”). While their Twitter hashtag has been widely disseminated, taking on a life, and a “leader-ful” (rather than *leaderless*) movement, of its own, their names and identities often go unacknowledged, as Garza notes:

“When you design an event / campaign / et cetera based on the work of queer Black women, don't invite them to participate in shaping it, but ask them to provide materials and ideas for next steps for said event, that is racism in practice. It's also hetero-patriarchal. [...] Perhaps if we were the charismatic Black men many are rallying around these days, it would have been a different story, but being Black queer women in this society (and apparently within these movements) tends to equal invisibility and non-relevancy” (“Herstory...”).

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<sup>12</sup> Monae, Janelle. “Sincerely Jane.” *Metropolis: Suite 1 (The Chase)*. Bad Boy, 2007. CD.

What does increasing the visibility of queer women of color and others whose identities have traditionally been marginalized at the forefront of the movement mean for Black Lives Matter? For the future of black activism? A 2012 Gallup poll found that 4.6% of African-Americans identified as LGBT, the highest out of the other (non-Hispanic whites, Asians, and Hispanic) groups polled (Gates and Newport). Additionally, despite growing media attention toward transgender activists and entertainers, by February 10, 2015, the date on which transwoman Penny Proud was murdered in New Orleans, six transwomen of color had been murdered in the US in the year 2015, “an average of one per week” (Hammond 8). While mainstream LGBT organizations like the Human Rights Campaign focus their energies on marriage equality, transgender women of color face violence, discrimination, and rampant homelessness (8). The Black Lives Matter movement seeks to address the particular manifestations of white supremacy that lead to these hardships. Additionally, the visibility of “nontraditional” leaders in the Black Lives Matter movement points to the observation that today’s black activists, unlike those of previous generations, seem much less concerned with charismatic leaders and the politics of respectability, especially as more young black people move away from the black church, often viewed as a bastion of respectability and/or the status quo (Green). Although many black young people remain in the church, the murder of nine members of Emmanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC was a visceral reminder that “...respectability politics [and, heartbreakingly, even the walls of the church] cannot save us” from white supremacist violence (Houston). Since the community as a whole suffers at the hands of racism and police brutality, not just heterosexual black males, Black Lives Matter is attempting to “complicat[e] the narrative about who’s black and what it means to be black. The larger public narrative and discourse, particularly in this moment, is still so focused on black male bodies, cisgender male” (Tometi). As opposed to previous generations’ “appeal[s] to [white] humanity” through respectability politics in an attempt to gain civil and human rights, like womanism, the Black Lives Matter Movement espouses an inherent “recognition that all black lives deserve humanity, regardless of their gender, class, or sexual orientation” and “articulat[es] the national struggle for racial justice as a broader one for human rights” (Harris).

Black feminist and womanist theologians and thinkers provide fertile ground on which to help the black church address the issues facing the community in an unprecedented, inclusive way. Katie G. Cannon states the value of womanist theology in addressing these issues: “[a] womanist liberation theological ethic rejects heuristic concepts such as ‘heteropatriarchial

familialist ideology’ and ‘compulsory heterosexism’ but seeks instead heuristic models that explore sacred power and benevolent cohumanity” (Sanders 93). In other words, this ethic “is a critique of all human domination in light of Black women’s experience, a faith praxis that unmask[s] whatever threatens the well-being of the poorest woman of color” (94). This recentering, which takes as its chief consideration “the least of them” as defined by society, helps in imagining the liberation of all people, regardless of race, gender, class, or other facets of identity. In fact, it is exactly this imagining that is crucial; upon her visit to the University of Notre Dame, Patrisse Cullors reminded those who attended the talk she gave with Opal Tometi that the first thing that systems of oppression tend to steal is marginalized people’s ability to imagine something better. She also spoke of the Black Lives Matter Movement’s championing of “residual care,” a concept strikingly similar to womanism’s view of self-care as communal accountability for one another, in order to avoid the burnout so many activists experience (Cullors). Alicia Garza’s “Herstory of the Black Lives Matter Movement” centers women in its very title, speaking out against the plagiarism of her ideas and resisting those who might attempt to counter the phrase “Black Lives Matter” with the pejorative “All Lives Matter”:

“When we are able to end hyper-criminalization and sexualization of Black people and end the poverty, control, and surveillance of Black people, every single person in this world has a better shot at getting and staying free. When Black people get free, everybody gets free” (“Herstory...”).

In addition to sounding like a purposeful application of Fannie Lou Hamer’s “nobody’s free until everybody’s free,” Garza echoes the womanist concept of beginning with the experiences of black people, particularly black women, in the effort to oppose all oppression. In interview with *The Advocate*, she “recounts hearing people within the Black Lives Matter movement tell her that the trans or so-called gay agenda ‘is not part of this movement’” (“Alicia Garza...”). By challenging transphobia, homophobia, and similar prejudices within the movement, Garza resists the “partitioning impulse” and welcomes people of all backgrounds into the movement (Maparyan 21).

In response to the current generation of activists moving away from the black church or religion in general, I would like to posit that womanism’s expansive view of spirituality has room enough to accommodate those who propose addenda to existing religious structures as well as those who reject them outright. In *The Womanist Idea*, Maparyan discusses the spiritualism and



metaphysical thinking that exploded in the 1980s, and how “it led to the conclusion that ‘*being spiritual*’ is also a legitimate way to participate in social struggle” (103). In other words, “Womanism [...] is unafraid of [...] audacious spiritual forays. Indeed, it welcomes them and is enriched by them” (107). As prominent black feminist bell hooks states, “Any black person concerned with the survival of black families and black people must encourage respect for varied religious experience” (Sanders 104). In *Embodiment and the New Shape of Black Theological Thought*, Anthony Pinn, himself an atheist, utilizes womanist theological concepts in an attempt to create a theology that deals with the physicality and sensuality of the black body and adequately accounts for the fullness of black lives and experiences, including the tenuous issues of sexuality and gender.<sup>13</sup> Sikivu Hutchinson, a prominent black atheist scholar notes that “state violence is still not viewed as a critical issue when it comes to mainstream feminist or humanist organizing” (Hutchinson 23); therefore, black atheists passionate about social justice may feel marginalized in the humanist community. Trudy of the blog *Gradient Lair* identifies as both a womanist and an agnostic atheist and writes of the tenuous issues black atheists face, including alienation and condescension from the black community and white atheists: “Black atheists aren’t going to divorce knowledge of our history and blindly follow behind White male atheists adopting this history of bigotry, bigotry which impacts research today, as sound, ‘neutral’ science” (“Thoughts About Atheism...”). The work of these writers suggests that womanist thought can even include those who reject spirituality and theism, based in the poetic nature of Walker’s definition; the “Spirit” the womanist “loves” may simply be a humanistic sense of obligation to the commonweal discussed in *The Womanist Idea* (Walker 19, Maparyan).

Womanist theology provides many black women a way to feel affirmed in their faith lives. Despite unjust social circumstances, black women of faith can find peace in the belief that they are the beloved children of a just God. Though she does worry that a feeling of obligation to service may add more stress to black women’s lives, Melissa Harris-Perry’s research demonstrates that “as black women embrace more womanist faith tenets, they become more likely to embrace the role of agent for moral change” (Harris-Perry 250). By examining womanist ideas regarding theology and social justice and how they might have allowed the black women activists throughout history to persevere

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<sup>13</sup> This is reminiscent of Riggs’ call for a renunciation of the “privilege of difference,” which states that “[t]he morally relevant in our relationships does not derive from *some disembodied human essence* we share” but from “our *concrete embodiedness*—that is, the assumption that we must recognize and respect the particularities of one another” (Riggs 94).

in trying times, contemporary black women can feel strengthened and empowered to tackle the racial and societal issues facing them, as well as those of the greater community. A thorough reevaluation of the black church's strengths and weaknesses, especially in regards to gender, race, and community involvement, can aid in exploring options for the future of black people and their social movements.

### **Black Girls at the End of the World: A Pop Culture Post-lude**

I would like to conclude by suggesting that black women's art, specifically their musical innovations, presents a broad, nuanced canvas upon which womanist ideals and hopes for the community can be read. I will focus on the work of Janelle Monáe as a rich text of womanist praxis.

Janelle Monáe (her stage name drops her given last name, Robinson), born in Kansas City in 1985, rivets audiences not only with her strong voice, clever lyrics, and eccentric presentation—her black-and-white ensembles, most notably her perfectly-tailored tuxedos, and signature pompadour afro have earned her style icon status—but also with Afrofuturist imagery. Monáe's current discography contains her 2007 debut EP, *Metropolis: Suite I (The Chase)*, as well as two studio concept albums, 2010's *The ArchAndroid* and 2013's *The Electric Lady*, which tell the story of her android alter-ego, Cindi Mayweather, who exists in a science-fiction future where the mistreatment of artificially intelligent androids by humans strikingly mirrors the oppression experienced by people of color in contemporary society. In *The ArchAndroid*, Mayweather arises as the messianic figure of the album's title—a high-tech Harriet Tubman of sorts—in order to lead the androids to freedom. Through Mayweather and her story, Monáe discusses contemporary issues facing black women through an Afrofuturistic lens, including stereotyping, intrusive forms of policing, and the denial of sexual agency.

From her earliest work, Monáe has been outspoken about social justice issues in interviews and within her work. "Violet Stars Happy Hunting" is an exciting ride through Mayweather's flight from the "droid patrol," who criminalize android-human relationships - a thinly veiled reference to the policing of women's sexuality, particularly black women's ("Violet Stars..."). "Sincerely Jane" reflects upon the intersectional issues affecting black women in contemporary America within the conceit of Cindi Mayweather's *Metropolis* ("Sincerely Jane"). Monáe has been intentionally cryptic about her own sexual identity, stating, "The lesbian community has tried to claim me [...b]ut I only date androids. Nothing like an android — they don't cheat on you" (Hoard). However, she remains an outspoken advocate for LGBT rights and justice for

people of color, performing recently at a concert to benefit and encourage the residents of Flint, Michigan suffering from the effects of lead-tainted water (Ketchum).

In her track “Q.U.E.E.N.” with artist Erykah Badu, Monaé fires back at critics attempting to define her blackness and sexuality for her and celebrates her embodied self. Self-definition is an important factor in her work: “We have so many different ways to live marketed to us in the media [...] it’s so important to embrace the things that make you unique, even if it makes other people uncomfortable. You’ll never know whom you’ll free by just being yourself - flaws and all” (Azzopardi). She makes braggadocious references to touchstones of her distinctly black identity such as twerking and eating wings and “throw[ing] them bones on the ground” with mentions of “throwing shade” and “serving face” originating in black gay drag culture (“Q.U.E.E.N.”). By celebrating these somewhat controversial or marginalized aspects of black culture, Monaé flaunts the community’s diversity in the face of the politics of respectability - *Am I a freak for getting down?* [...] ‘Well, then,’ she seems to say,] *Yeah I wanna be, wanna be* (“Q.U.E.E.N.”). Lines like “[h]ey sister, am I good enough for your heaven?/ Say will your God accept me in my black and white?/Will he approve the way I’m made?” playfully suggest fluid sexuality and subvert religiously-influenced sexual and gender norms. The universality of the message is compounded with the knowledge that the song’s title is an acronym for “those who are marginalized”: “the ‘Q’ represents the queer community, the ‘U’ for the untouchables, the ‘E’ for emigrants, the second ‘E’ for the excommunicated and the ‘N’ for those labeled as negroid” (Benjamin). This bold statement of solidarity exemplifies the inclusive nature of womanist ideology.

In her rap at the end of the song, Monaé calls upon the “motherline” of powerful black women who came before, stating “My crown too heavy like the Queen Nefertiti/Gimme back my pyramid, I’m trying to free Kansas City” and “...I’m gonna keep leading like a young Harriet Tubman” (“Q.U.E.E.N.”). Monaé is an artist who has certainly mined her “mother’s gardens” for inspiration and sustenance. The song ends with a call to women to engage in womanist praxis: “Will you be electric sheep?/Electric ladies, will you sleep?/Or will you preach?” (“Q.U.E.E.N.”). Monaé’s own definition of an “electric lady” says a great deal about her tacit espousal of womanist concepts:

“They’re walking all around every day. You can find a lot of them in the community, nurturing the community. Electric ladies don’t have the same shape or hair color or background, but our number one

commonality is the ability to want to be the change that we want to see. We want to see positivity. We want to see the community cleaned up. We know that we have to go out and be leaders and take action and make it happen” (Azzopardi).

From the references to mothering/nurturance and hospitality, to diversity of appearance, to the concern with the commonweal of the entire community, to the necessity for praxis, Janelle Monáe’s “electric ladies” could very well be the newest generation of Walkerian womanists.

Another track from *The Electric Lady*, “Ghetto Woman” is a beautiful, funky ode to the working-class black women like her mother who inspired Monáe’s tuxedo “uniform.” Monáe stated:

“When I started my musical career I was a maid, I used to clean houses. My parents—my mother was a proud janitor, my step-father who raised me like his very own worked at the post office and my father was a trash man. They all wore uniforms. And that’s why I stand here today in my black and white and I wear my uniform to honor them” (Rivas).

Despite her success, Monáe’s concern for women across class boundaries is reflective of a decidedly womanist outlook. Within the bridge of the song, listeners find a refutation of stereotypes, a celebration of black women’s perseverance, and a tone of pride and self-love. First, Monáe states that “Some say this ghetto land will take you down and poison you,” referencing the often oppressive nature of urban life; however, her “some say” hints at a more positive interpretation of the normally negative term “ghetto” (“Ghetto Woman”). In this song, Monáe seems to view the ghetto as both a challenging environment and one that breeds creativity, self-definition, and fortitude. The next line, “Some say she can do all the things a man can do,” can either be read as a refutation of the “strong black woman” stereotype or an affirmation that yes, at times, black women have been expected and able to perform the labor expected of men (“Ghetto Woman”). Next, she sings, “Who said the ghetto’s just a place where queens dance naked on the moon?” (“Ghetto Woman”). This rhetorical question not only challenges imagery of the supposed hypersexuality of black women, but characterizes the working-class women inhabitants of the ghetto as queens (a self-referential nod to “Q.U.E.E.N”) and the ghetto as the moon, an otherworldly, dreamlike place; while acknowledging that this naked dancing does occur —after all, a womanist “Loves music. Loves dance” (Walker 19)—this line shields the “queens” from the voyeuristic

gaze and instead celebrates their joviality in the face of adversity. Lastly, in the line, “We say a woman came to change the face of each and every room,” listeners can hear a call to community - *we say* - and a celebration of the powerful transformational abilities of women (“Ghetto Woman”). Trudy of *Gradient Lair* reflects on this song in particular as a wonderful example of “everyday womanism” while remarking that this phrase is redundant in itself - womanism is *already* “common,” for the everyday:

“This song is a tale of intersectionality and one about freedom, love, admiration, respect. She reclaims the word “ghetto” and rejects its use as a misogynoiristic (and classist) slur against poor Black women but instead as a recognition of both Black women’s strength (and not as the societally abusive Strong Black Woman stereotype) and vulnerability” (“‘Ghetto Woman’...”).

This recognition of the multifaceted nature of black women’s lives and identities allows “Ghetto Woman” to stand out as an illustrative artistic example of womanist praxis and Monaé to serve as a poignant example of a womanist attempting to define herself in the public eye while continuing in her commitment to attaining wholeness for herself and others.

By using her platform as an internationally-known, six-time Grammy-nominated recording artist and entertainer to advocate for marginalized groups, Janelle Monaé has crafted an anti-oppressionist stance all her own. By examining the womanist undertones in her work, those unfamiliar with womanism, but perhaps familiar with some of her songs, can gain a better understanding of the “‘non-pin-down-ability’ of womanism” (Maparyan 15). As contemporary women of color seek new solutions to face the continuing issues of racism, classism, gender-based oppression, heterosexism, and other manifestations of the “partitioning impulse” (Maparyan 21), Monaé’s work serves as a source of creative social critique and an inspiring soundtrack for the womanist learning to love “herself. Regardless” (Walker 19).

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# Intellectual Property Law & Traditional Craft Technology: A Case Study

**VICTORIA SLUKA**

## **Abstract**

This case study uses historic looms and weaving techniques from around the world to explore the complexities of protecting traditional craft technologies used by modern groups. Descendant and indigenous communities worldwide, especially in developing nations, use sale of their traditional crafts as a way to benefit from the increasingly popular cultural tourism industry. Cultural heritage management initiatives and the ethical sourcing of cultural materials call for more relevant and focused intellectual property laws around the world. By legally protecting the processes of production and the traditional colors, motifs, and forms associated with traditional crafts, indigenous groups can gain legal control of their heritage, and in turn control any economic benefit that may come from it. As this study illustrates, existing intellectual property laws cannot be effectively applied to very old and complex traditional skills. A primary difficulty comes in the form of defining ownership of cultural heritage. However, even when an object or technique can be clearly attributed to a particular group, differences in moral systems and ideas of ownership can create new and ethically ambiguous differences between etic and emic parties. With a focused analysis of this and related problems, solutions can begin to be explored which could aid in the economic growth of indigenous communities, and therefore encourage the retention of innovative traditional knowledge.

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**See part II of the online edition for the text of this paper.**