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From the Editors

Welcome!

All articles in this volume were part of an external peer-review process, with each submission reviewed by two anonymous reviewers. We thank those reviewers for their contribution.

We hope you enjoy contributions in this volume.

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Vol. IV, 2020 Editors

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For review, please submit to dmckinnon@uca.edu

- a PDF file of the complete submission
- OR a Word file containing the complete paper (i.e., including abstract, tables and figures)
- OR a Word file containing the text, references, table and figure captions, plus an individual file of each figure (600 dpi) and/or table.
- Excel file of tables is preferred.

In Search of Embodiment: Yoga Instructors and Their Students

Addison Mary, *American University*

Introduction

My research addresses the ways in which yoga allows individuals to experience embodiment; an elusive quality to describe, yet it is at the center of the yoga practice. Nearly a decade of my own practice and subsequent role as an instructor have led me to ask why and how we reach this state. In “The Body as Representation and Being-in-the-World,” Thomas Csordas explains one notion of body-culture interaction, which grew out of Foucault’s post-sexual social theory; “the body should be understood not as a constant amidst flux but as an epitome of that flux” (Csordas 1994). Further research indicated that embodiment has actually been a topic of research since the 1930s when Mauss first discussed the concepts of habitus in “Techniques of the Body” wherein individuals move from “the concrete to the abstract” and is useful in terms of understanding how people use their bodies and might achieve embodiment (Mauss 1973). Herein, “the body is at once tool, agent, and object” (Csordas 1994). The classic markings of Mauss’ techniques, all involving movement, situates embodiment as the vehicle for cultural existence to be grounded in the human body. In more recent years, scholars like Di Placido (2018) and Persson (2007) have explored embodiment through spiritual capital and the phenomenology of place and space by way of the yoga practice. All of this to say, while there are few conclusive definitions of embodiment, the existential experience can impact the beliefs and perspectives we hold of the world.

For the purposes of this research, it is important to understand yoga as a physical practice by which individual embodiment leads to the production of culture (Mauss 1973). Herein, the methods I use largely rely on instructors to address when and if they experience a sense of awareness being in the body, or a higher level of connectedness between body and mind (Table 1).

Then, using the instructors’ interpretations of embodiment, I explore the idea of the impact of yoga on self-perception and cultural development (Franco and Eigner 2009). Furthermore, I have rooted this discussion in the historical groundings and socio-economic implications of yoga that were explored during the archival analysis component of this project. Specifically, the aphorisms written in *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, along with the commercialization of yoga and wave of commodification of knowledge that have been situated in a modern context where the yoga practice

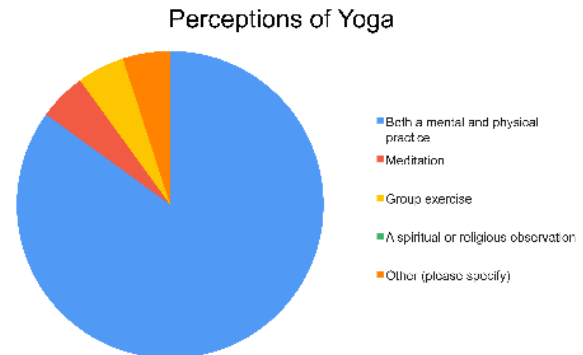


Table 1. Perceptions of yoga from practitioners.

enables sensory experience to function as a window into the phenomenology of perception (Fish 2006; Merleau-Ponty 2002). While this research is largely limited to the experience of embodiment as articulated by teachers and students, Buddhism and Hinduism, along with the seven Chakra Energy Centers, have been considered in addressing the spiritual and historical roots of ancient yoga.

When studying something that is philosophically, culturally, and spiritually interpretative, both the historical implications and positionality are paramount in fully understanding the topic’s relevance today. While there are many different perspectives of yoga across cultures and geographical areas, I aim to illustrate how the practice is inherently a product of embodiment. I use Persson’s ethnographic findings around the paradigm of embodiment as it is interwoven in body-world relations, to create my working definition of embodiment. Despite working with informants who are largely tied to the “Westernized” asana, or physical practice, the paradoxicality of embodiment is still prevalent. I have a level of entree into the community at large, because of my positionality as a yoga instructor, which is useful when addressing the historical and religious themes and the cross-examination of my research. Furthermore, I use the operationalized concepts from Di Pacido (2018) to situate my question between physiological phenomenology and cultural anthropology in terms of empiricism and observation.

Although the physiological benefits of yoga have been addressed by the neuro-psychology community, very little has been synthesized about the impact of yoga on self-perception and cultural development. I am



Figure 1. Wanderlust Festival, Washington, D.C.

interested in the ways Westernization has influenced practitioners' views of yoga, and how this is reconciled with mainstream narratives surrounding religiosity and self-awareness (Buckingham 2012; Grosz 1995). Recent research explores intersections between the eight limbs of yoga and social justice issues. In *Skill In Action*, Johnson (2017) centers the discussion on the changing embodiment of yoga and how these changes enhance society's ability to exist within structures of power. In other physiological fields, like dance and boxing, embodiment has been discussed. For example, in Aimee Cox (2015) uses the concept of "shapeshifters"--applying a movement-based theory of choreography--to illustrate how the construction of race and socioeconomic status affects the social mobility of women in Detroit. In anthropology, early works by Marcel Mauss and later by Pierre Bourdieu laid the foundation, for me, to understand yoga as a physical practice, by which individuals can reach an embodied state and produce culture (Mauss 1973). This led me to the questions of why and how we embody, and the impact these have on our experience(s) in the world. Thus, my research question developed to explain: In the context of contemporary U.S., yoga is often seen through the Westernized misconception as merely an exercise. *How do yoga instructors understand and grapple with this major shift in perception--that is the removal of embodiment--while sharing it as a key, underlying component of the Eastern practice with their students?*

After completing my 200 Registered Yoga Teacher Training (RYT) in 2016, I have studied under

instructors in Pittsburgh, PA, Sydney, Australia, and Washington, D.C. at Wanderlust (Figure 1).

Wanderlust is a touring yoga and wellness festival, founded in 2009. Today, they operate internationally with four-day retreats or two-day "urban escapes." The events include yoga practices, wellness events and sponsors, health food vendors, shops, music, and often other fitness classes. While the festivals use social media marketing and often charge high prices to attend, they operate under a mission statement that states, "Wanderlust's mission is to help you *find your true north*--to cultivate your best self." They claim to foster community, commit to sustainability, "do good" with partnerships, and raise awareness. Additionally, Wanderlust is a certified B Corp to "meet the highest standards of overall social and environmental performance, transparency and accountability and aspire to use the power of business to solve social and environmental problems" (Wanderlust 2019). Wanderlust also operates with an online presence through streamed classes and a journal for articles falling under the categories: *Reach, Ground, and Stretch*.

During my training program, I studied yoga styles including: Iyengar, Bikram, Ashtanga, and Vinyasa, along with the Yoga Sutras and the Chakra Concept of embodied energy centers. My education on these subjects increased my preparedness for this research, and gave me the ability to employ an auto-ethnographical approach.

I gathered information through interview, survey, and archival research and these informed my definitions

and perceptions of embodiment. Furthermore, I considered ethical issues with my involvement in the yogic practice at large, and I use the American Anthropological Association's ethics guide in creating representations of my informants' identities.

Methods

Data collection included both fieldwork and archival research. I found that an array of background information and a current analysis of yoga's role in society was the best way to substantiate my ethnographic findings. Through semi-structured interviews, primary research, and folklore analysis, I am able to set the scene for readers. This array of methods can be useful in cultivating a framework for comprehensive and nuanced understanding. I collected empirical data through surveys and noted characteristics of yoga studios where my interlocutors are associated. In conducting this research, I learned that the experience of embodiment has much less to do with the physical space, but is highly influenced by perception of self and the world (Table 2).

To further situate this research, I focused on aspects of the yoga practice; such as how we define embodiment, what this means in terms of being in the world, and how people can experience yoga as a ritual or religious experience. Twenty anonymous respondents completed the seven question survey, which was mostly multiple choice combined with the option for individual response. I chose not to employ surveys in or after classes, as I did not feel that they would help to illuminate such a personal experience, nor did I want to engage in stigmatizing forms of modern yoga. The surveys helped gauge a general understanding of both the concept of embodiment and the goals of yoga in communicating these in classes. The results illustrate the modern context of the practice and highlight widely held public misconceptions (Marry 2019).

I also concentrated on incorporating literature focused on a modern interpretation of the Bhagavad Gita, as social justice geared philosophy and practice (Johnson 2017). Primary research helped to situate the practice within structures of power; such as capitalism, spirituality, decolonization, and cultural preservation, or psychic unity--a Structuralist approach (Strauss 2004). I interpreted my ethnographic findings and synthesized these with classic and modern yogic texts through the framework of embodiment. Much of the archival research included folklore analysis and the development of a historical timeline to address the transformation of the practice and socio-economic implications in the context of modern understandings and assumptions of yoga (Koch 2015; Nakamura 2013).

My semi-structured interviews hovered around thirty minutes each and were made possible

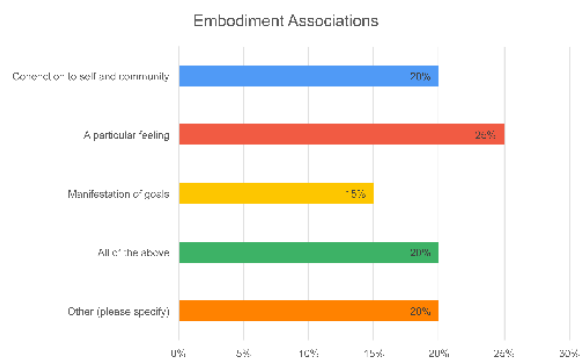


Table 2. Embodiment associations of students and instructors.

by my entrée as an instructor in the community. These personal relationships allowed me to connect informally to my interlocutors. Thus, trust and an overall ease of conversations was possible. I acknowledge the potential bias in my interpretation of data due to my unique relationship with each instructor. In total, I conducted four individual interviews--two of which were voice recorded, all with female instructors who are currently teaching regular classes in a studio setting. Questions focused on their interpretation(s) of the concept of embodiment and how it plays a role in their awareness of spirituality and/or teaching. While these interviews were largely freeform, I addressed the following questions:

- How do you define embodiment?
- When, if ever, do you feel you experience this [their definition of embodiment]?
- Do you see any limitations on how yoga is perceived in Western cultures today?
- Are you religious and/or spiritual?
- How does yoga impact your awareness of spirituality? Do you reconcile this with a framework by which you exist?
- How do you teach embodiment or not? Does it impact your experience teaching?

The concept of Western religion (Christianity) came through thematically in my interlocutors' description of their personal journeys with spirituality, or their lack thereof (Di Placido 2018). Whereby, nearly all of the instructors commented on their connections to the institution of religion and perspectives on how this influences their ability to connect with traditional yogic philosophy. While a definition of experienced embodiment is still difficult to achieve, I am working to operationalize the concept through the described methods. Specifically, this includes the commodification verses the philosophical experience of yoga itself (Fish 2006).

Results

Patanjali was an Indian sage who compiled the Yoga Sutras around 200 BCE, according to most academic historians (Bryant 2018). Known as one of the most prominent scholars of this time, it is thought that he both created and organized the 196 aphorisms that are the basis of ancient yoga and Auryvedic medicine. Translated from their original Hindi over time, to encourage the study of the asana practice, has implications for both classical and modern yoga (Bryant 2018). Sri Swami Satchidanada published his translation and commentary, one of the most popular copies, in 1978. Satchidanada is a prominent figure and well-respected practitioner of yoga. His text is most popular among those who study some form of classical yoga, as well as practicing Hindus and Buddhists. Other related texts include the Bhagavad Gita, which was originally written in Sanskrit as a popular Hindu epic; commonly, these texts are synthesized in Hindu philosophy (Bryant 2018). I was introduced to the Satchidanada text as a result of my study of yoga and both the philosophical and historical groundings of the asana practice.

The main consideration of *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* will be in relation to Samadhi, which is defined as the eighth limb of yoga, and the way I will begin to define embodiment in my research. The first book in the Sutras, *Samadhi Pada*, is written in a list form where each tenant builds upon the next. This Sanskrit word is translated to encompass the control over and practice of the entire mind to achieve supernatural manifestation and individual liberation whereby one is freed from worldliness (Satchidananda 2009). Recurring motifs and themes include selflessness, hierarchy, pure intention, practice, disciplined consciousness and transcending freedom (Satchidananda 2009). These themes are reinforced in Hindu religion, philosophy, and culture wherein the target audience may be referring to the text as an educational tool or manual (Bryant 2018). I think the meditative practice is intended for all practitioners and for the community at large.

It is interesting to consider how translation may alter original meaning(s), especially in this version, as there is also anecdotal commentary. It seems likely that those who choose to partake in and study it would have affected the ancient text's meanings. While it is hard to say how or why Patanjali compiled the aphorisms, I do think the intent remains in the principles. Despite any external factors, the book has been hugely influential, even in modern yoga where studios and/or teachers may only possess a limited understanding. In many ways, the Sutras could be understood through the struggle for societal freedom and equity, which has been studied and discussed across generations. I think a comparative analysis of this document, along with other folklore,



Figure 2. Wat Lokayasutharam, Ayutthaya, Thailand.

or analysis of space and place, can help to define what embodiment looks like in the asana practice and how it might be interpreted today--both through similar and different desires.

Some of the values of yoga may have shifted historically and cross-culturally. The reclining Buddha at Wat Lokayasutharam is forty-two meters long and eight meters high, and its positioning depicts the Buddha's head laying on a lotus to symbolize his journey into Nirvana (Figure 2). This statue is used for alter offerings and many believe the construction dates back to the fourteenth century. The historic city of Ayutthaya, where the Buddha rests, is a UNESCO World Heritage site because of its archaeological richness and past global importance. Buddhist monasteries and other architectural features are still respected and visited by many local people and tourists abroad (Historic City of Ayutthaya 2019).

Yoga holds space for religious or spiritual beliefs--far enough away from original religion to hold space for all beliefs. The basis for my definition of embodiment has been synthesized with the help of my interlocutors. The following condensed interview notes highlight real word experiences in practicing and teaching yoga that led to the definition of embodiment. While not all questions or responses are included here, for those that are there has been no alteration to meaning. All interlocutors have been assigned pseudonyms.

Key Interview Notes Defining Embodiment:

Leigh Jones:

How do you define embodiment?

- Being in the body.
- Consciousness and the body are separated as we move through the world.
- Forming connection of body and mind.
- In Buddhism there is no separation.
- Body and soul are seen as intertwined.

When, if ever, do you feel you experience this?

- In yoga, meditation, etc.
- Most consistently in asana practice.
- Meditation in physical practice.
- Cultivate in yoga consciously.
- Serendipitously happens sometimes out in nature, mountains, profound being.

How does yoga impact your awareness of spirituality, do you reconcile this with a philosophical framework by which you exist?

- She only had formal training in Hinduism, Buddhism, and yoga led to her reconciliation with an atheistic perspective.
- Symone Bile is an inspiration to her.
- She was raised Jewish but converted to Catholicism.
- Talks about skeptical conversation with God and her own faith.

Veronica Simpson:

How do you define embodiment?

- Fully filled by the thing.

When, if ever, do you feel you experience this?

- Usually in some creativity--on my mat--writing, performing, cooking, always when laughing tends to be action driven, but also true in stillness.
- Common thread--flow, brought into the present moment.

How does yoga impact your awareness of spirituality, do you reconcile this with a philosophical framework by which you exist?

- Yes. Sought out teachers from Hindu or Buddhist lineages or tried veganism or vegetarianism.
- All of the things we do can practice cause ripple effect.

Mixed culmination:

- Expressed or touched by yoga, walking, sitting by water.
- Embodied spirituality.
- Yoga practices as a tool to touch the divine
- Yes. They help to embody but not the only access point

Table 3 summarizes the key ideas related to the achievement of an embodied state.

The responses from students; 85 percent of which concluded that yoga is both a mental and physical practice, and 70 percent of whom identified insecurities as something that impacts their ability to feel embodiment, was a surprising finding. As I compare these specific responses, I think the answer to "What is embodiment?" becomes even more clear. If insecurities are one of the most common barriers for people to

Which of the follow impacts your ability to achieve an embodied state?

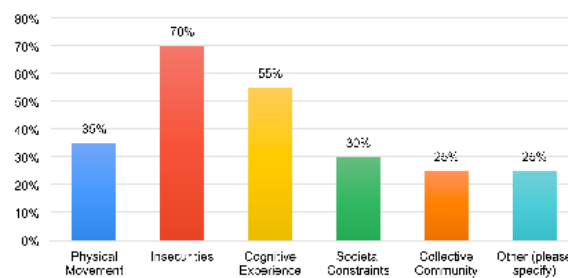


Table 3. Compilation of data from student survey respondents about their ability to achieve an embodied state.

"reach an embodied state," then no matter what their definition may be, it has to be a mind-body experience. Grosz (1995:68) explains the corporeal experience: "Bodies speak, without necessarily talking, because they become coded with and as signs. They speak social codes. They become intextuated, narrativized; simultaneously, social codes, laws, norms, and ideals become incarnated." The definition of embodiment remains in conversation; with ourselves, our experiences, and the ecosophy through which we exist. There is no hard line or uniform way about teaching it. To some, this includes self-study, to others it is freedom from judgment. In tangible expression, it is laughing, being, moving, creating. What we do know, is that it is something yoga instructors, their students, and probably millions of conscious people grapple with on a daily basis. The history of yoga was never lost, it is reshaped, renamed, and evolving to something more and more people can connect in with.

Discussion

As I wove together the definition of embodiment, I found these words from my interlocutors to be most salient:

I do believe that, like, to embody something or anything, the concept of whatever you believe in, like, lives in your bones, lives in your blood and it's how you act in interacting with the world. And the more that you can tap into it, the way that you interact with your own sankalpa, is like your, it's like your core values, about, your core values, how you interact with the world. My sankalpa is I exist to ignite warm connection and grounded strength. So in anything that I do, like those are my governing words for how I choose to act. Olivia Chuck

Not care whatsoever about what anybody else in the room thinks of you, to not judge yourself to be very light and very carefree because it truly is a practice to, like, not give a shit. So it's really important to have that. Anna Blake

Being in the body. Forming connection of body and mind. Leigh Jones

Fully filled by the "thing." Usually in some creativity--on my mat--writing, performing, cooking, always when laughing. It tends to be action driven, but also true in stillness. Brought into the present moment. Veronica Simpson

As I compiled the links between interviews, surveys, theory, and my own experience, it became increasingly apparent that all people grapple with Western structures in one way or another. The Western version(s) of yoga are neither good nor bad--they just exist. The ancient practice had eight limbs, and only one included the physical exertion that we practice under thermostats cranked up to 105 degrees. I, like many of my informants, came to yoga in some kind of desperation, for exercise, but not religion; yet, it was for completely different reasons than we would say, jog. Despite the transient nature of embodiment and social barriers to access, the practice of yoga contributes to what early anthropologists called our "psychic unity." Through the physical postures, practitioners' ability to embody leads to the production of culture, wherein the equanimity of all people becomes more salient. Michelle Cassandra Johnson (2017) discusses how these concepts directly relate to social justice topics today. Repetitive movements lead to opening of energetic expression according to yogic principles, wherein embodiment influences cultural development.

Asha Persson's case study of an Australian yoga community illustrates how embodied "being-in-the-world" is not necessarily dependent on "place," which challenges the philosophy by Edward Casey. Hereby, Casey's claims revolve around the human fear of "placeless space," and the function of the body to configure scenarios of place and spatial orientation (Persson 2007:72-98). Persson's ethnographic findings illustrate how the paradigm of embodiment is interwoven in body-world relations, and how this has been influential in anthropological field and sub-disciplines (Persson 2007:45). I find this to be one of the most relevant points as I weave together a working definition of embodiment, which can be so paradoxical to even conceptualize. In the same vein, key findings in opposition with Casey's argument were the seemingly paradoxical themes of grounding and expansion, which understood being as a movement between "senses of place and spaces," where communal vastness transcends physical limitations of "place" (Persson 2007). Self awareness and physical boundaries are foundational to employing physical movement for expansion and to establish a perceived connectedness (Persson 2007:51- 53). In such case, she finds that "ritual practices aim to restore balance in people's lives, and

bodies become the field where this work is carried out, where pathways are cleared, disturbances, healed, and losses retrieved" (Persson 2007:45). In her research, the definition of Satyananda yoga is also complex in that she emphasized both the meditative and active components to unpack her ethnographic interpretations. Similarly important in my research are questions of scholarship and ethical boundaries by acting as both a participant and scientist in this work.

Other scholars, like Matteo Di Placido, have researched the formation of a *yogic habitus*, through a framework of Shilling's theory of the body as a *multi-dimensional medium for the constitution of society*. Di Placido situated his ethnographic findings in an "ex-post multi-sensory autoethnography" in an ashram which is defined as "an example of modern denominational yoga" (Di Placido 2018:13). The analysis concludes: "the seekers' body, whether in the case of karma, jnana or bhakti yoga(s), functions simultaneously as the source of, the location for and the means to, the individuals' relationship with the ashram, its social, cultural and spiritual life" (Di Placido 2018:15). Herein, the motivation of self-discovery and a commitment to the ashram brings practitioners to "embody a *yogic habitus*;" defined by the balance of serving, contemplative, and devotional dispositions, which allow "seekers" to relate to the life around them. More broadly, this *spiritual habitus* has been developed and taught through "Asian practices" in relation to the Western social forces of *reflexive modernization and commodification*. Di Placido's work also draws on Bourdieu's "traditions of phenomenology" and "centrality of the body and embodiment in understanding core social processes and phenomena" (Di Placido 2018:6). Herein, the study of yoga(s)' negotiation into the "Western landscape" can lead to the risk of promoting implicit *Orientalism* (Di Placido 2018:15).

The "privileged focus on self-realization" is also grounded in the "broader focus on the individual and his or her self-responsibility that identifies late-modern, consumer societies, and neo-liberal forms of governmentality" (Di Placido 2018:17). Di Placido's research plays an important role in the grounding of my ethnographic findings, as I have drawn from his methodological techniques and historical textual analysis to compare the ways in which the yoga I studied does or does not follow the same patterns. Additionally, this could be one of the most recent engagements which addresses both a philosophical framework and the experience of embodiment in "modern denominational" of yoga. Using some of the operationalized concepts in "Serving, Contemplating, and Praying: Non-Postural Yoga(s), Embodiment, and Spiritual Capital," allows me to situate my question between physiological phenomenology

and cultural anthropology in terms of empiricism and observation.

Similarly, Anne Koch (2015) addresses the socio-economic implications of global yoga where she operates under a religious framework of giving whereby behavioral economics combined with new institutional economics are considered to situate charity in contemporary yoga. Citing the Yoga Aid Organization and economic figures of funds raised, she explains how “the gift and gift return occur in this narrative on an intercultural scale” through engaged spiritually as “giving back” (Koch 2015:88). The findings from this research conclude;

In the cases considered here, yoga at the interface of spirituality, secularist belief system, and non-religion proves creative in motivating other-regarding behaviour. This is an important finding regarding research on the differences in religious and non-religious giving (Brooks, Eckel and Grossman) and questions the essential link between religiosity and generosity (Koch 2015:86).

While more economically rigorous than the connection I aim to address, this research combined with the principles of the Bhagavad Gita illustrate how, or potentially why, this transition from ancient to modern yoga has occurred. The Bhagavad Gita is a conversation between Arjuna and Krishna, which is believed to have taken place around 3000 B.C. The premise rests on Krishna as the supreme being and Arjuna as “an ordinary living being” who asks questions to elicit Krishna’s explanation of the complete science of Yoga (Paul 2004). While yoga, as it is practiced today is only one chapter (six) in the Bhagavad Gita and one limb in the Yoga Sutras, the larger “purpose is to connect ones consciousness to the Supreme consciousness,” wherein good health becomes a byproduct (Paul 2004). The importance lies in the Bhagavad Vita’s description of the highest form of yoga--Bhakti, or love. Also seen as the perfection of Karma Yoga, the notion of “loving service” to the Supreme is quite literally the goal. This is crucial in understanding how the development of yoga has been swept through a neoliberalist framework.

It seems that society is becoming increasingly disconnected. The goals of yoga, albeit functioning within capitalist structures, maintains the goal of reunification. Sarah Strauss illustrates the functioning of embodiment through her ethnographic study in Bombay, India wherein the history, commodification, and nuances of modern yoga are articulated. “Although yoga has been studied extensively as a philosophical and religious system, it has less often been researched ethnographically, as a system of bodily practices within a sociocultural context. Yoga offers an excellent example of the inseparability of mind

and body” (Strauss 2004). Delineating the timeline of classic yogic texts and their exportation, she continues to explain how Vivekanda, “child of a judge and trained in European-style philosophy and law,” was educated by Sri Ramakrishna, “one of the most revered spiritual [Hindu] teachers in all of India” (Strauss 2004). Years later, his lectures and pamphlets became one of the West’s first exposures to yoga and Eastern spirituality.

Because the West was rich in material resources, but devoid of spirituality, “a fair trade could be made”--monetary compensation for spiritual wellbeing (Strauss 2004). Viewing yoga through a more comprehensive analysis allows one to understand what and why people choose to engage with the topic today. Strauss offers what it means to Re-Orient yoga:

To Indians, re oriented yoga suggests empowerment, using an imagined shared history to create a progressive, self-possessed, and unifying identity. In this light, yoga can be understood as part of a methodology for living a good life. It offers a critical practice which encompasses both ends of modernity’s personal/global spectrum, the current preoccupation of the middle-class world with personal health and fitness as well as with the ecological health of the planet (Strauss 2004).

Strauss’ interpretation, along with the works of previous scholars; Koch, Di Placido, Persson, etc. helps to ground the concept of embodiment. With this constant push and pull toward the existential experience, such as in the definition of habitus, by Mauss, or the notion of the body as the epitome of flux, by Csordas, I find Strauss’ work useful in creating meaningful attachments between the ancient practice of yoga and the ways in which it functions today.

Conclusion

While yoga has recently been viewed as a fad or trend exercise, the practice is much more deeply rooted in spirituality, and mental-emotional connection. Scholarship illustrates that while yoga has been commoditized within the capitalist structure, the Eastern principles of spirituality are still at the forefront, and are potentially a global motivation for continuing the practice. As some instructors operate and experience embodiment within the realm of Western practice, their connection to yoga’s ancient principles comes from a shared desire for connection and fullness of life. Despite the modern emphasis on fitness, the sense of embodiment is still articulated by both instructors and scholars alike. The long-standing philosophy of yoga holds that every belief adapts to cultural changes over time. Furthermore, the sense of connections could be seen as stress relief or belonging to a group in the modern context of class

structures today. Not only is yoga important in the production of culture, but the cultural preservation has impacted our collective narrative.

Whether it be a conscious activity or an unconscious connection, each instructor described parts of the *Yoga Sutras* or the *Bhagavad Gita* in our interviews when I asked how they would define embodiment. Furthermore, my interview with Anna Blake was a really interesting contrast to the way I conceptualize embodiment and spirituality sort of working in tandem, and the way much of the past scholarship has described the connection. Considering the aspect of religious awareness and family values, I wonder if the thought of spirituality is influenced by external acceptance/rejection. However, other informants take on a more skeptical approach to rationalize the folklore within their secularist or atheist belief system. I found Simpson's approach to the topic: *Yoga holds space for religious or spiritual beliefs-it's [modern yoga] far enough away from original religion*, to be one of the most relevant in the context of yoga's positionality (Simpson 2019). In future research, a closer evaluation of world religious beliefs and practices may provide more context into the cultural interactions between the East and West, and therefore a deeper understanding of the exportation of yoga in its diverse forms might be achieved.

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The Effects of Essentialized Gender Roles in Advertisements on Gender Performance

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Abstract

Advertisements often use idealized images inspired by the essentialized gender binary to sell their products. This can cause severe dysphoria to consumers. Idealized images often depict men and women as unattainably attractive--protruding muscles, ultra-thinness, flawless features, sexual poses and attributes, etc. Images are often technologically altered to achieve these unattainable appearances. Marketers use the gender binary to construct their advertisements, leaving out a vast number of individuals who identify beyond the two categories of male or female (cisgender, transgender, etc.). Additionally, advertisements neglect to represent sexual orientations and relationships beyond those that are heterosexual. Negative effects involved with these images include those on mental and physical health as well as body image, self-esteem, and identity issues. Several theories can be applied to this issue, such as Social Comparison Theory, Butler's theories on gender, the theory of cognitive dissonance, and Du Bois' theory of double consciousness. Negative effects have the potential to be mitigated through teaching positive body image, media literacy, and critical thinking, as well as through the inclusion of more representations of the gender continuum in advertisements.

Introduction

Advertisements that portray the essentialized gender binary have a negative effect on gender performance and societal expectations of gender. These negative effects are closely related to body dissatisfaction, negative mood, and weight anxiety (Tiggemann and McGill 2004). In advertisements containing idealized images, women are shown to be submissive, dress provocatively, and appear ultra-thin. Men are shown to have protruding muscles, masculine qualities, and prominent sexual features. Beyond appearance, naturalized gender binaries perpetuated by advertisements can also affect gender performance due to underrepresenting women. This can cause them to seem unimportant or invisible, and portraying both men and women in stereotypical ways that sustain socially constructed views of gender, and normalizing violence against women (Wood 1994).

Advertisements often encourage viewers to act and appear in ways that are appealing to society rather than in ways that align with their own identity, potentially causing cognitive dissonance. Additionally, Du Bois' (1903) theory of double consciousness applies to those who must act differently in certain groups than they identify, such as members of LGBTQ+ who may not reside on the gender binary but feel they must act as if they do to avoid mistreatment and societal neglect. Other negative effects include those that impact health, as advertisements encourage viewers to seek unhealthy practices in order to meet a societal norm of beauty, such as engaging in anorexia, bulimia, steroid usage, over-exertion at the gym, and having cosmetic surgeries performed on their bodies. Advertisements also leave out a key component

of life in the current society--gender is no longer defined as those who identify simply as males or females. Those who view advertisements may identify as transsexual or transgender, agender, bigender, gender fluid, genderqueer, intersex, or could even be actively questioning the ways in which they wish to present themselves. Many people have androgynous characteristics that marketers rarely attempt to represent. Advertisements simply are not representative of society and are therefore dysphoric to those that do not fall into the essentialized gender binary.

Increasing Availability of Technology Leads to More Advertisements

The omnipresence of technology in society has led to the integration of advertising into most areas of everyday life, whether it be on the radio, in television commercials, in movie trailers, on social media, or even covertly slipped into the media consumed. In 2020, individuals are estimated to see between 6,000 to 10,000 advertisements per day, depending on their lifestyle (career, time spent on devices, etc.) (Carr 2020). Though individuals are not always aware of the advertisements being presented to them, messages of binary gender roles unconsciously processed can be problematic.

The film *The Ad and the Id: Sex, Death, and Subliminal Advertising* delves into the subliminal messages within advertisements. It focuses on the psychoanalytic aspects of the subliminal ad which is the "ad addressed to the id" that is "hidden beneath the ad addressed to the ego" (Parallax Pictures 1992). In the film it is highlighted that people are not consumers who seek out ads but are instead being manipulated and conditioned into becoming consumers. In using applied psychoanalysis,

advertisers target the repressed wants and needs, such as those of sex, to sell products. These messages are often nearly impossible to notice but are the most important component in understanding advertisements. Suppressed material is often embedded in the presentation of normal things on which human qualities are projected making the “primitive dimension of [the human mind] be tapped into to anthropomorphize those things” (Parallax Pictures 1992). Examples used in the film were generally of a sexual nature, exemplifying the focus on the psychoanalytic lens, especially in the use of everyday objects to represent phallic symbols. Most, if not all, of the advertisements featured in this film used women and men, the ideal gender binary feminine and masculine body types, or the sexualizing of women to sell products.

Cross-Cultural Expectations of Feminine Beauty

The ability of advertisements to alter self-concepts of individuals begins in the common societal conceptions of the importance of beauty, as attractiveness is often linked with higher popularity, better relationships, and better career prospects (Gurari et al. 2006). The extent of gender binary distinction has shifted throughout history, dating from modern times back to pre-historic civilizations, of which examples can be seen in art through the different eras.

In pre-historic art, pieces such as *Venus of Willendorf* and *Venus of Dolni Vestonice* depict women as being large and holding the ability to survive in harsh conditions of which they were often faced. In ancient Egyptian art, artifacts show women as being delicate, slim, and entirely shaven with fine features, expressive and large eyes, and black hair. Ancient Greek art portrayed the zeitgeist of the time by creating works that showed women as having perfect symmetry, physical and mental harmony, and balanced proportions. The feminine beauty ideals of the ancient Greeks have been replicated multiple times throughout history, such as in the Renaissance art period and the Empire art period. This ideal of symmetry over slimness disappeared in the Romanticism period and has remained uncovered since that time. The obsession with fragile and slim body types in women have continued into the modern era with the introduction of other media outlets besides artwork, and the ideal weight for women has become increasingly smaller with each decade since Expressionism in the 1920s (Visage MedArt 2017).

The Essentialized Gender Binary in Advertisements

According to Richards et al. (2017) those who identify either all or part of the time as a gender other than male or female are considered genderqueer or non-binary. Though the binary has previously been used in a practical setting to define sex, it has many limitations in society

because individuals that are biologically male or female exhibit traits (height, strength, hormone levels, femininity, masculinity, etc.) on a large spectrum rather than in two simple and concise categories (Oldehinkel 2017).

In recent years, many members of society have become advocates for moving away from the gender binary as it only represents what society views as the correct portrayal of males and females. The academic community has even begun to address the need for demographic categorical options that stray from the binary (Frohard-Dourlent et al. 2016). However, most popular advertisements continue to base their scripts, characterization, and imagery on the binary. Further, marketers confine the binary even more to women and men who fit a certain beauty and lifestyle standard.

Marketers target viewers by deploying essentialized notions of a gender binary in which gender is described as one of two things--male or female. Further, these males and females are not only socially forced to identify with the gender most closely related to their biological sex but are also required to assume the roles acceptable of the two genders. Males should be masculine and strong while females should be feminine and petite, with both genders having all their features displayed attractively. This creates a disconnect when presented to those who were not born with a specific biological sex as well as those who do not identify within the binary.

Advertisements geared toward women often attempt to objectify the female body and place stress solely on appearance which in turn devalues their innate worth (Rajagopal and Gales 2002). Men are often expected to have square jaws, chiseled features, full heads of hair, and physical strength to be featured in popular advertisements (Sheehan 2004). Oftentimes, these perfected features are not attainable in the natural human body. Rajagopal and Gales explain that these requirements are met with the use of images that are technologically modified to represent the individual that the advertiser believes their audience will see as perfect, images that are therefore unrepresentative of the majority of society and, further, atypical of even a small percentage of how humans actually look.

The shame and dissatisfaction that occurs due to the failure of achieving unattainable appearances is much like that described by Miner (1956:506) in that it is “symbolized in the fact that the ideal form is virtually outside the range of human variation.” In order for companies to profit from selling products that aim to heighten beauty or lifestyle, marketers must first force their customers to feel as though they are themselves not good enough by convincing them that they must fit into the gender binary to be beautiful.

Negative Effects of Idealized Imagery and the Gender Binary on Consumers

A frequent way in which advertisements negatively affect viewers' health is through their indirect encouragement to seek cosmetic surgery for appearance reconstruction. Cosmetic surgeries are those that are focused on enhancing appearance such as breast enhancements (breast augmentation, breast lift, breast reduction), facial contouring (rhinoplasty, chin enhancement, cheek enhancement), facial rejuvenation (facelift, eyelid lift, neck lift, brow lift), body contouring (tummy tuck, liposuction, gynecomastia treatment), and skin rejuvenation (laser resurfacing, Botox, and filler treatments) (American Board of Cosmetic Surgery 2019).

As noted by Lirola and Chovanec (2012:490), cosmetic surgery should be regarded as an important social practice as it "merges the attention given to the body by an individual person with the values and priorities of the consumer society." This allows those who feel as if they do not fit into society unless they obey certain "aesthetic canons" to potentially risk their lives in plastic surgery in order to adapt their bodies to such "socially pre-established patterns" (2012:490). Lirola and Chovanec cite the main drives of having cosmetic surgery as coming from social, physical, and psychological components, including the want to heighten self-perception of body image, to unlock greater opportunities for advancement in the job market, to please a partner, to follow the ideal image set forth by the media, to affirm one's femininity or masculinity, and to overcome the anxiety of aging. Therefore, these risky surgeries are often not arranged for personal benefits, but rather to satisfy the social expectations that are often perpetuated by representations of ideal images in advertisements. Individuals do not inherently believe that their bodies are not good enough, they have simply lived in a society that has repeatedly told them it is not.

Advertisements popularizing the essentialized gender binary have also led to the negative health effects of having lowered self-concepts, participating in or being ridiculed by body shaming, and developing disordered eating (Gallagher 2015). Findings from Agliata and Tantleff-Dunn (2004) suggest that viewing idealized images of males in advertisements can have negative effects on mood and body satisfaction in men, can significantly increase dissatisfaction with muscles, and can cause increases in depressive symptoms. According to a report released by the American Psychological Association Task Force on the sexualization of girls, research shows that the sexualization of females negatively affects girls and young women across a variety of health domains including cognitively, emotionally, mentally, physically, and sexually (especially during their adolescent developmental stages of each of these domains) (Zurbriggen et al. 2007).

Cognitive and emotional consequences include undermining a woman's confidence in and comfort with her own body which can lead to problems both emotionally and with self-image, such as shame and anxiety. Research by Zurbriggen et al. (2017) performed on negative mental and physical health effects link the sexualization of females with eating disorders, low self-esteem, and depression or depressed mood, which are the three most common mental health problems diagnosed in girls and women. Negative effects on sexual development involve the consequence evoked on a girl or woman's ability to develop a healthy sexual self-image after seeing sexualized females in advertisements.

Advertisements instruct users on who they should be and how they should look, which is often encouraged to be achieved through much time, energy, and money spent on improving appearance to reach an anatomically impossible goal (ChallengingMedia 2012). When this unattainable goal is not met, the individual often suffers from feelings of shame and guilt as they compare themselves to the image they strive but fail to mirror.

Social Comparison Theory and Butler's Theory on Sexual Multiplicity

Aside from advertisements specifically geared toward selling products by cultivating shame in viewers, negative effects can also be derived from the use of models, as in Social Comparison Theory. Dittmar and Howard (2004) apply this theory to advertisements by suggesting that discontent is derived in viewers when they are exposed to and compare themselves with idealized images of models in the media. Dittmar and Howard continue by explaining that images such as physically attractive men and women, women in loving and nurturing relationships, and men posed with several women partners at one time are used to sell items that will remedy the discontent they create. Consumers associate the purchase of the advertised good with believing that the product will improve their appearance, relationships, sexual lives, etc. These scripts and images used in advertisements are directly derived from the constructs of the essentialized gender binary.

For example, many makeup companies present their target audiences with images of women who have been photo-shopped to an extent to which the face shown is hardly comparable to the face of the actual model to show how a beautiful woman on the binary should look. Following this, these companies attempt to sell their beauty product to consumers by establishing a connection between the product and this unattainable face, promising them that the product will secure their place on the societally accepted binary.

Butler's writing on sexual multiplicity and the binary continue to stand as relevant theories. Prášil (2018) explains that Butler regarded the gender binary as fiction that functions to confirm the coherency of heterosexuality. Further, Prášil claims that this thinking allows biological sex to be put aside in order to think of the socially determined gender which "sex takes over in the framework of a specific culture" and "realizes itself through performance" (2018:33). Additionally, Prášil explains that Butler viewed gender as performative, an act that individuals must repeat and conform to in order to please the desires of the "monster" that is social structure (2018:33).

Effects of the Advertised Gender Binary on LGBTQ+ Individuals

Sexual orientation is another way in which advertisements neglect to include those who stray from the essentialized gender binary. Most advertisements involve the representation of an attractive heteronormative partnership when dealing with romance. Underrepresented are the nearly nine million Americans who identify as being LGBTQ+, as well as those who similarly identify worldwide (not including the unknown number of individuals who have not identified themselves as such) (Gates 2011).

In the rare occasion that orientations other than heterosexual are represented, advertisements continue to use tactics to keep the presentation vague. One of these tactics is "gay window advertising" which is "carefully designed to avoid explicit gay references as well as gay stereotypes" (Tsai 2004:7). In doing this, models and actors in advertisements are often presented as appearing heterosexual and average to achieve the objective of having the audience view them as they wish--in other words, those who wish to see a straight person or an LGBTQ+ person are equally able to notice the representations in the advertisement. Marketers take part in this tactic to appeal to lesbian and gay consumers without "offending, or even alerting, homophobic audiences" (Tsai 2004:7). This could teach viewers that in order to be accepted or even safe in society, they must only present the parts of themselves that match societal standards and hide the rest.

Festinger (1957) developed the theory of cognitive dissonance to represent the psychological distress that occurs when the actions or identity one wishes to fulfill is inconsistent with their reality. If this occurs in an individual, Festinger explains that they will be motivated to "reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance" (Festinger 1957:3). Additionally, an individual will actively avoid situations that will increase their dissonance. This theory can easily be applied to sexuality, especially in an individual that strays from

the socially constructed limits of heterosexuality. For example, if a member of the LGBTQ+ community is continually flooded with representations of only heterosexual relationships on advertisements and other media, they will feel dissonance in their own compelling to seek sexual or romantic pleasure with a partner of their own biological sex. In order to avoid the dissonance associated with their own feelings of discomfort and their potential fear of how they will be perceived by both society and their circle of relationships, they may avoid situations and actions that allow them to perform their homosexuality. This can further their discomfort and unhappiness, leading to mental health and identity problems.

Du Bois (1903) described his theory of double consciousness as

...A peculiar sensation...this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness...two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings... (Du Bois 1903:3).

Though Du Bois wrote on his social discomfort of being an African American man, the concept also applies to those who do not identify on the gender binary or as heterosexual. A woman may privately identify as a lesbian but acts as though she is straight around her friends, family, and coworkers. In this scenario, the woman portrays herself in one respect in society and therefore must hide who she truly is until she is in her own privacy or away from those who may know her. This could potentially create a disconnect between her identity and the performance she must act out in public, causing psychological distress.

Implications of the exclusion can occur as early as childhood. Losty and O'Connor (2018) suggest that the limited knowledge and acceptance of non-binary genders held by those in the Western world could lead to non-binary children developing through their adolescent lives with no role models or mirrors to assist them in shaping their identity. Losty and O'Connor also explain that this lack of awareness may lead to an absence of available language that can be used to describe the personal experiences of members of LGBTQ+ which can cause struggles to adjust and trouble finding a place in society. Individuals, through reiteration from various authorities throughout the developmental lifespan, are continuously reinforced to perform the gender (and sexual behaviors of that gender) that society expects of their biological sex (Miron and Inda 2000).

Butler (1993) explained this performativity as a

...matter of reiterating or repeating the norms by which one is constituted: it is not the radical

fabrication of a gendered self. It is a compulsory repetition of prior and subjectivating norms, ones which cannot be thrown off at will, but which work, animate, and constrain the gendered subject (Butler 1993:22).

Therefore, due to the heteronormative privilege that flows throughout the current society, those who identify outside of this narrow category on either gender or sexual orientation are automatically viewed as delinquent. Those who identify off the gender binary and who are not heterosexual may receive less societal support as well as have higher risk levels for discrimination.

Conclusion

Advertisements can affect the mindset of entire populations due to their massive reach. The emphasis placed on the essentialized gender binary in advertisements reflects the socially constructed views of gender in that they represent only ideal male and female scripts and images. This can clearly be seen in the current enforcement of gender roles and sexual orientation norms. Gender stereotyping in advertisements further perpetuates the societal conceptions that males and females have their own specific place in society and that they should not stray from it.

In a meta-analysis, Eisend (2010:431) found that in advertisements women are four times less likely to have a speaking role than men, three times more likely to be presented as a product user rather than as an authority, four times less likely to be in an autonomous or independent role, three-and-a-half times more likely to be presented in a domestic environment such as at home while men are more likely to appear in a work-setting, and two times more likely to be associated with products like body care and home goods. These findings further add to the evidence that marketers attempt to confine their consumers into two strict categories in order to achieve success in selling their products.

The negative effects of the emphasis on the gender binary in advertisements include physical actions such as the regular reconstruction of appearances using filters, Photoshop, applying makeup, and getting cosmetic surgery to achieve the ideal concept of beauty. Mobile phone applications used by individuals of all genders and ages allow for the handheld creation of false personal narratives. Beyond the negative effects of greatly changing one's own appearance, posting photos that are carefully perfected and sculpted into an ideal image can cause others to experience shame about their appearance. This creates a ripple effect that leads to a society full of individuals who believe their actual selves are not adequate.

Society has pressed unrealistic ideals of beauty, attractiveness, and behavior onto women, men, and those who identify outside of the essentialized gender binary. These representations create stress, tension, and compression on the gender continuum, leaving individuals to practice unhealthy habits and contorted social actions in order to obtain images of perfection to be accepted within their own surroundings. In this age of increased technology usage, it is incredibly important for viewers to be aware of the advertisements being presented--both those factors that are obvious, and those that are hidden--in order to effectively manage the effects on their health and social well-being. Educating individuals on having their own positive body image view of themselves from a young age can protect them from feeling pressured on their appearances from outside sources (Halliwell 2013). Additionally, Mclean et al. (2016:1690) found that media literacy and the tendency to engage in critical thinking, both skills that can be taught, can deter the negative effects of body dissatisfaction due to social comparison. Embedded in our culture should be teachings of the skills and coping mechanisms needed to better react to the idealized images that the media portrays so that until the images change, individuals do not suffer chronic negative consequences.

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The Wilson Collection: Lithic Analysis of Chipped Stone Artifacts Recovered from Northern Faulkner County, Arkansas

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Introduction

This research focuses on the analysis of lithic material from the Fred Wilson Collection. As a mailman for the U.S Postal Service, Mr. Fred Wilson (Figure 1) spent approximately twenty years surface collecting in northern Faulkner County and developed numerous relationships with the people along his route. These longstanding relationships allowed him access to private property throughout the northern Faulkner County area. Therefore, the collection is extensive and represents a wide variety of lithic material from that area. While the collection is made up of a variety of stone tool production forms, the emphasis herein is on the chipped stone tools. The collection was donated to the Museum upon his death and is currently housed at the Faulkner County Museum in Conway, Arkansas.

Very little information or research exists pertaining to stone tool technology in Faulkner County (Figure 2). Thus, the analysis of the lithic technology represented within the Wilson Collection provides valuable insights regarding the prehistory of Faulkner County and surrounding region. Additionally, analysis of the collection establishes a comparative dataset to be used for future research of lithic collections in northern Faulkner County.

Three themes guide this research:

1. Raw Material: What types of raw materials are in the collection? What are the geographic sources (quarries)? What might this suggest about exchange of raw material throughout the region? What might this suggest about the preference for certain types of raw materials?
2. Chronology: What is the chronology of the collection? What date range is represented and how does it compare to existing archaeological chronologies of the region?
3. Style and Typology: What styles (or possible archaeological types) are present in the collection? For example, what is the ratio of contracting stem versus expanding stem or straight stem? What is the ratio of notching preferences: basal, side, corner, etc. What is the ratio of form: lanceolate, triangular, etc.?



Figure 1. Fred Wilson at his museum in Greenbrier, Arkansas.



Figure 2. Arkansas counties with Faulkner County marked with red dot.

Background

Stone tools and their analysis figured prominently in critical early stages of archaeology's own intellectual development in Europe, from John Frere and Boucher de Perthes's establishment of human antiquity and association of stone tools with Pleistocene fauna to Christian Jurgensen Thomsen's three-age system (Frere 1800; de Perthes 1860; Thompson 1836, 1969). Later, stone tools were equally critical in establishing the depth of New World prehistory (Lubbock and Avebury 1913; Mckern 1939; Shott 2015; Wissler 1914).

William Andrefsky (2005) posits that chipped stone tools and debitage represent the most abundant form of artifacts found on prehistoric sites. In many cases, due to environmental and anthropogenic factors such as erosion, decay, and landscape development, they are the only form of prehistoric cultural material. Because of this, lithic artifacts represent one of the most important clues to understanding prehistoric lifeways (Andrefsky 2005). However, the importance of lithic artifacts is not limited to their ability to withstand the tests of time. In other words, an analysis of stone tool artifacts can offer qualitative insights beyond manufacturing processes or subsistence adaptations to provide anthropological considerations related to past "behaviour, lifestyle, social and economic structures, and organizational principles" (Odell 2004:9). To get at these anthropological questions, however, stone tools must first be organized according to a series of physical attributes and quantified using standard comparable weights and measurements. This process, at its most basic level, is called lithic analysis.

The systematic analysis of lithic artifacts began with the work of William Henry Holmes, which resulted in research guidelines by which lithic analysis was to be conducted and a set of goals to be met. These include using stone tools as chronological markers, understanding the evolution in form and function of stone tools, and comprehension of the processes of stone tool production and use (Andrefsky 2005; Holmes 1919).

Guided by the instruction of their predecessors, lithic analysts of the 1950s and 1960s were concerned with creating clearly defined types of stone artifacts (Brew 1946; Taylor 1946; Willey and Phillips 1958). This was accomplished by taking precise measurements of the morphological characteristics of stone tools such as length, width, thickness, platform length, and edge angles (Binford 1965; Yerkes and Kardulias 1993). From these data, distinctions were made, and lithic technologies were given specific cultural affiliations. In doing so, the analysts presumed that the behavior of ancient people could be revealed from the comparative study of quantitative data associated with stone tools (Yerkes and Kardulias 1993). Shortcomings of a strict focus on quantitative analyses have been characterized as, "producing numbers rather than understanding" (Yerkes and Kardulias 1993:90). Likewise, in describing lithic analysis in the southeastern United States, previous approaches have emphasized "overly simplistic methods that lead to gross descriptions of assemblages by way of artifact counts and types from which few behavioral inferences can be made" (Bradbury et al. 2012:2).

Despite these concerns, quantitative methods largely define lithic analysis today. However, since the 1960s, there has been a growing emphasis on the contextual aspects of lithic artifacts and the mechanics

of stone tool production and use (Binford 1962; Yerkes and Kardulias 1993). This is applied using experimental archaeology, which was born from an archaeological paradigm shift known as processual archaeology (O'Brien et al. 2007).

Theoretical Grounding and Rationale

Processual Archaeology

The development of processual archaeology was in response to the culture history approach (Driver and Massey 1957; Gladwin and Gladwin 1934; O'Brien et al. 2007; Wissler 1914). The culture history approach involved the analysis and cataloging of artifacts and situating them within an assumed chronology of the archaeological record. In contrast, processual archaeology involves the scientific method in order to test the feasibility of chronology rather than accept as established. While all data are still important when employing the processual approach, quantitative data alone are insufficient (see Yerkes and Kardulias 1993:90). In addition to the data, interpretation is required. Thus, cultural remains are used to determine how past peoples, who manufactured and utilized such artifacts, lived and thought (Johnson 2005).

Experimental Archaeology

One challenge in the study of prehistory is trying to interpret material remains. In short, there are inherent restrictions when trying to interpret stone tool manufacture. Most notably, the researcher was not there when the stone tools were made and used, and thus should not pretend to understand unambiguously how or why they were produced (Odell 2004). However, one method that informs the analyses of the manufacturing processes is experimental archaeology. Experimental archaeology is a process whereby controlled and systematic experimentation is used to answer specific questions. This can take two forms: 1) experiments to test hypotheses made about a site or type of artifact, and 2) experimentation to test methods which are used to gather data about the past to ensure the data collected is a true representation of prehistory (Millson 2011).

One form of experimental archaeology utilized in lithic analysis is the process of replication or flintknapping. The terms flintknapping and replication are used interchangeably in the literature, with the term "flintknapping" used primarily when describing the experimentation process as a crucial part of contemporary lithic analysis (Ferguson 2010). However, Whittaker argues that the use of the term flintknapping implies that there is no clear purpose in the production of the stone tools, which are made using any type of equipment and methods that may or may not have been employed by prehistoric stone tool makers (Whittaker 1994).

Replication, on the other hand, is the process of producing a copy of a prehistoric stone tool using the same process, equipment, and methods that were utilized in the past. Replication also produces the same kinds of waste flakes or debitage identified in the archaeological record (Whittaker 1994). The purpose of replicating lithic material is to better understand possible techniques given differing variables and the limitations that certain materials place on the reduction process, stone tool production, and the final form (Odell 2004). Experimentation and subsequent analysis not only provide insights into defining techniques and methods used but also the ability to evaluate the many stages necessary to finish the product, and to consider the significance of broken, malformed, and reworked tools found in the archaeological record (Swanson 1975).

The Archaeological Site and Question of Provenience

The idea of a site is the cornerstone of archaeological methodologies. This concept is utilized in the designation of artifact provenience and serves as the primary means of associating artifact assemblages (Dunnell and Dancey 1983). Traditionally, sites represent spatially bound areas with high artifact densities. In a site-based model, high-density artifact clusters are demarcated such that artifact concentrations of lesser densities are distributed between named sites and defined as extemporaneous inter-site or background artifact scatters. Thus, this conceptualized circumscribed site area is segregated as a finite cluster of cultural distributions independent of any functional or ideological relationships to other such defined sites or inter-site artifact scatters.

With this site-based perspective in mind, the validity of the Wilson Collection as a reliable source of data, given its lack of specific site provenience and procurement methods, could be argued as questionable and limiting with respect to understanding use of northern Faulkner County landscape (Bruck and Goodman 1999; Roberts 1996). In this perspective, a definitive categorization of what is considered archaeologically significant ignores a major source of potential data.

One theory proposed to facilitate a comprehensive analysis of cluster and inter-site scatter relational comparisons is through the design of a "siteless" survey. In a siteless survey design, dense artifact clusters are not identifiers of specific bounded sites but are considered to be a part of an artifact distribution that is continuous over the land surface (Dunnell and Dancey 1983). Surface collections can produce primary archaeological data of a scope and character entirely consistent with and necessary to a regional or landscape frame of reference (Banning 2002; Dunnell and Dancey 1983; Kvamme 1998). Thus, while the Wilson Collection

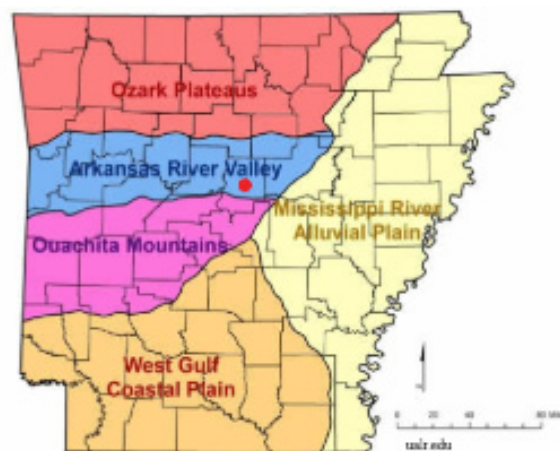


Figure 2. Environmental regions within Arkansas. Northern Faulkner County is marked with red dot.

may not have a site-specific provenience it does have regional provenience where all artifacts were collected from landscapes situated along a 60-mile mail route in northern Faulkner County.

Environment

Divided by two physiographic regions, Faulkner County is located within the Arkansas River Valley and the Ouachita Mountains. Given the location of northern Faulkner County, the focus of this section is on the environmental characteristics of the Arkansas River Valley (Figure 3). The Arkansas River Valley is situated between the Ozark uplands to the north and the Ouachita Mountains to the south (Sabo et al. 1990). The region is approximately 40 miles (65 kilometers) wide and characterized by rolling bottomland. However, geologic features of both the Ozarks and Ouachitas are present and include plateaus and folded ridges, respectively (Steward 2015). Fertile soils are found on flood plains along Cadron Creek and the Arkansas River, which forms the southwest boundary of the county. Likewise, the Arkansas River and its tributaries, Cadron and Palarm Creeks, are major water sources (Townsend and Wilson 1975). These waterways would have been a valuable resource to prehistoric peoples, providing fish, a means of transportation, drinking water, and even raw materials for stone tool manufacture, such as river cobbles. The eastern end of the valley, nearest the origins of the Wilson Collection, averages about fifty inches of rain per year. It is an environment that would have been readily exploitable by prehistoric peoples.

Raw Materials

The procurement of raw materials is often determined by the desired function of the tool. Not just any accessible rock will suffice. For instance, percussive implements such as axes, adzes, hammers, and mauls need to be

durable, capable of holding up to heavy use wear. These qualities are found in coarse, dense stone such as granite, gabbro, and diorite (Odell 2004). Alternatively, chipped stone tools such as arrow points, darts, spear points, and knives were created to cut and penetrate skin and flesh (Whittaker 1994). Because of this, prehistoric stone toolmakers needed to select a material that could be easily shaped and hold a sharp edge, such as flint and chert.

A key characteristic of lithic material when used to make chipped stone tools is its ability to produce a conchoidal fracture when worked. A conchoidal fracture is a cone-shaped fracture, exhibiting a smooth wave-like surface (Ray 2007). Chipped stone resources like these share several attributes. First, they are homogenous. This means that the internal structure is similar throughout. There are no or very little differences in texture, cracks, planes, flaws, or irregularities (Whittaker 1994). Second, the resource material is brittle. This means that the stone can be worked quite easily, although, applying too much force can cause it to shatter. Lastly, the material is elastic, a term that initially seems to contradict the material's brittleness. However, according to Whittaker (1994:14), "elasticity means only that if not deformed too much (to the breaking point) a material will return to its original shape."

The most regularly used materials throughout prehistory for making chipped-stone tools are microcrystalline silicates such as flint and chert (Odell 2004). As anticipated, these materials comprise most of the chipped-stone resources utilized prehistorically in the Ozarks (Ray 2007; Sabo et al. 1990). While chert and flint are essentially synonymous terms, some have differentiated the two by color, calling the dark-colored material flint and the light-colored variety chert (Ray 2007). Others have attributed differentiating grain characteristics to each. However, chemically and structurally there is very little difference between flint and chert and the varying use of terms is largely a matter of regional vernacular. In this analysis, I use the term chert.

Regional Variations of Chert

The following chert types represent local lithic resources that originate and were utilized in Arkansas and surrounding regions. Of course, there are many other types, including nonlocal and exotic materials that occur in the region, though less frequently (Ray 2007).

Novaculite

Novaculite can be found within the Ouachita Mountains of Arkansas, and while usually white in color, can be light to dark gray, pink, red, tan, or black (Trubitt 2015). Translucency is a distinguishing characteristic of

novaculite, which means light can be seen through the thinner edges of the stone. Fossils are rare in novaculite, and the lithic material is variable in texture, density, and luster. Texturally, novaculite ranges from fine-grained to coarse-grained and more porous. Likewise, novaculite varies in hardness and density of the stone. Luster varies from waxy to dull, however, stone that has been heat-treated will have a glossier appearance (Trubitt 2015).

Pitkin Chert

Pitkin Chert is generally found in northwest Arkansas (Ray 2007). The material is distinguished by a thin grey or brown, smooth cortex with an inner matrix of black, very dark grey, shades of bluish grey, bluish black, and greyish brown. Typically, the chert is homogenous in color with occasional banding or microscopic mottling. There is a medium-to-high luster with a medium-to-fine grain producing a very high knapping quality. Generally, Pitkin is non-fossiliferous, that is, without fossil inclusions (Ray 2007).

Penters Chert

The Penters formation is a small but prolific outcropping in the central Arkansas Ozark region (Ray 2007). The chert is composed of a very thin cortex with a colorful interior matrix. Common colors include variations of grey, from dark to light, with bluish and brownish greys; deep brown greyish and yellowish browns; yellow; white; and occasionally weak red. Typically, there is a mottling of light and dark colors, though homogenous coloration is not uncommon (Ray 2007). Penters can be differentiated by the presence of distinct brown-to-yellow blotches and streaks. As with Pitkin, it is excellent knapping material with a fine grain and medium-to-high luster (Ray 2007).

Reeds Spring Chert

Reeds Spring chert is part of the Osagean system and is located in northern Arkansas and southern Missouri within the Ozark region (Ray 2007). The chert can be variable in structure, but in general it has a low fossil load compared to other Osagean cherts and there are few inclusions. Having a low fossil load or minimal fossils within the matrix of the raw material is an important characteristic for lithic materials when producing chipped stone tools. Fossils and other inclusions weaken the structural integrity of stone, which is especially detrimental when working or knapping them because they cause the lithic material to fracture inconsistently. This makes the trajectory of the manufacturing process unpredictable and tool use unreliable. Reed Spring chert is medium-to-high luster with a medium-to-fine texture. Colors include various shades of grey from light to very dark, shades of bluish grey, shades of brownish grey, pinkish grey, olive grey, shades of greenish grey, shades

of brown, shades of yellowish brown, shades of greyish brown, and weak and dusky red and white.

Burlington Chert

The Burlington Formation is sometimes referred to as the Burlington-Keokuk formation, since the two formations are indistinguishable in some places because of their lithological similarities--their visible characteristics--as limestone formations (Ray 2007). As a result, there are several different classifications of Burlington chert. Generic Burlington occurs as a white to light grey with occasional grey, light brownish grey, or brown streaks or mottles. There is low-to-medium luster and fossils are common. Another variety of Burlington is High Ridge Burlington with red, brown, and grey of various shades from pale white to deep hues with dull-to-medium luster. These colors are typically mottled--almost speckled through the material. Bands, blotches, and streaks are also possible. Mozarkite Burlington occurs as various shades of red, grey, and brown mottling or banding with a low luster. Finally, Graydon Burlington generally exhibits reds, browns, and greys in irregular mottled patterns with low-to-medium luster. All varieties are highly fossiliferous (Ray 2007).

Undifferentiated Osagean Chert

This term is used as a catchall for indistinguishable fossiliferous Reeds Spring, Burlington, Keokuk, and Elsey chert types (Ray 2007). The chert can be white, light grey, grey, light brownish grey, light bluish grey, or pale red with occasional mottling of grey or dark grey. It can be homogenous in color and strongly or weakly mottled. It is generally low or dull in luster with fossil inclusions (Ray 2007).

Research Design: The Approach

Macroscopic Analysis: Identification and Classification

Chipped-stone tool analysis begins with the identification and classification of materials before further analysis can be conducted (Andrefsky 2005). In some instances, this task may be simple. Material characteristics such as color or pattern may be so distinguishable that they are readily identified (Whittaker 1994). However, this is rarely the case. Given the variation of lithic materials, classification of chipped-stone resources can be quite complex. It depends on the purpose of the research and its context. Artifacts can be classified into types based upon morphological similarity, lithic raw-material characteristics, function, or the size of the artifact (Andrefsky 2005). Alternatively, the artifacts may be classified based on a combination of these characteristics.

Typology: Monothetic and Polythetic Approaches

The purpose of a typology is to condense extensive amounts of data so that the information may be discussed and disseminated efficiently and effectively, utilizing a common and comparative vocabulary (Whittaker 1994). The attributes selected to characterize types will determine the typology employed. The two methods used to create typologies are referred to as the monothetic and polythetic approaches. The monothetic approach to classification is based upon the identification of a single attribute (Andrefsky 2005). For example, when classifying arrow points into different types, a monothetic approach considers one characteristic, such as stems, and sorts each by shape straight stems, expanding stems, and contracting stems. Subsequent sub-classification of those groups follows, by adding additional characteristic variables.

Contrastingly, in the polythetic approach no single attribute is considered the most important at any one time (Andrefsky 2005). A polythetic approach with the same arrow point assemblage classifies the artifacts into groups based on overall commonalities between points. For example, arrow points with expanding stems and concave bases can be grouped together, while arrow points with contracting stems and straight bases can form another sorting group.

Methods

Analysis of the collection took place at the Faulkner County Museum under the supervision of Dr. Duncan P. McKinnon, assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Central Arkansas, and Mrs. Lynita Langley-Ware, director of the Faulkner County Museum. I was granted full and unrestricted access to the facility, with space made available in the basement to conduct this research. I worked eight to ten hours a week on the organization and collection of data, focusing efforts on a representative sample of the collection's chipped-stone tools. The representative sample is composed of 800 chipped-stone tool artifacts.

In this study, a morphologically descriptive typology was used to sort the material into groups. The sorting process began with a monothetic approach, during which the focus was to create broad classifications based on singular characteristics. The key attributes used to distinguish one point type from another included the hafting element and stem. The hafting element was the primary attribute used to sort points and point fragments. When possible, point or point fragments were first separated into groups of basal-notched, corner-notched, side-notched, stemmed, or unnotched categories.

Following the initial sorting by haft type, a polythetic approach was applied, where two characteristics were evaluated simultaneously--the stem

and base morphology. Points were first sorted into contracting, expanding, and straight stem groupings. Then basal attributes were documented as concave, straight, or convex.

Finally, morphometric measurements were taken, including length, width, and thickness of the available elements of points and point fragments. Given the size of the representative sample and time constraints, minimum and maximum length, width, and thickness measurements were collected from the smallest and largest tool within each group, rather than measuring each artifact individually. The maximum length measurement of complete points was measured when possible. However, point fragments were used in place of complete points if a specific type was absent from the collection or if the length measurement of the fragment was greater than that of the complete point.

Once the morphological classification of chipped stone tools within the collection was determined, the focus of the research shifted temporarily to experimental archaeology. Dr. McKinnon and I met with Mr. Ben Swadley, Superintendent of Parkin Archeological State Park. Mr Swadley is a very knowledgeable and talented stone tool replicator. While at Parkin, we observed the processes of lithic manufacture. Pictures were taken to document the experience. Mr. Swadley made two chipped-stone tools, while going through the reduction phases.

Quantitative Results

Of the 800 chipped-stone tools analyzed, they were organized into 23 groups based on their morphological characteristics (Table 1). Group 1 consists of 64 corner notched tools with expanding stems and straight bases. This group constitutes eight percent of the sample. Group 2 consists of twelve corner notched tools with contracting stems and convex bases and makes up two percent of the sample. Group 3 contains ten corner notched tools with straight stems and convex bases, constituting one percent of the sample. Group 4 is made up of a single basal notched tool, statistically representing zero percent of the sample. Group 5 contains seven tools with concave bases, making up one percent of the sample. Group 6 is comprised of three corner notched tools with bifurcated bases, representing one percent of the collection. Group 7 is composed of six tools with contracting stems and concave bases. This group represents one percent of the sample. Group 8 contains two corner notched stone tools with contracting stems and straight bases, statistically comprising zero percent of the sample. Group 9 contains a single side notched tool with an expanding stem and convex base, representing zero percent of the collection. Group 10 consists of seventeen side notched tools with expanded stems and

| Group | Morphological Classification | Total Weight (G) | Minimum Length (mm) | Maximum Length (mm) | Minimum Width (mm) | Maximum Width (mm) | Minimum Thickness (mm) | Maximum Thickness (mm) |
|-------|---|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Corner Notched Expanding Stem Straight Base | 635.029 | 30.55** | 62.08** | 23.96 | 46.41 | 6.47 | 14.00 |
| 2 | Corner Notched Contracting Stem Convex Base | 219.709 | 31.52* | 66.78** | 32.21 | 58.10 | 10.02 | 14.30 |
| 3 | Corner Notched Straight Stem Convex Base | 134.660 | 43.47** | 60.87* | 25.75 | 52.13 | 5.40 | 11.86 |
| 4 | Basal Notched | 5.0 | N/A | 36.90** | N/A | 19.08 | N/A | 8.76 |
| 5 | Concave Base | 35.437 | 22.49* | 38.33* | 21.98 | 26.76 | 4.69 | 8.58 |
| 6 | Corner Notched Bifurcated Base | 35.437 | 46.31* | 51.72** | 30.82 | 40.05 | 7.09 | 9.96 |
| 7 | Contracting Stem Concave Base | 42.524 | 36.05* | 47.97** | 22.29 | 31.13 | 6.67 | 8.26 |
| 8 | Corner Notched Contracting Stem Straight Base | 42.524 | 54.28** | 61.82* | 33.40 | 40.09 | 9.84 | 13.26 |
| 9 | Side Notched Expanding Stem Convex Base | 14.175 | N/A | 57.01* | N/A | 29.34 | N/A | 7.86 |
| 10 | Side Notched Expanded Stem Straight Base | 134.660 | 18.87* | 45.04* | 20.44 | 38.42 | 5.02 | 9.32 |
| 11 | Side Notched Expanded Stem Concave Base | 240.971 | 37.35** | 61.50** | 19.49 | 34.46 | 6.14 | 11.61 |
| 12 | Corner Notched Expanding Stem Convex Base | 1112.719 | 28.83** | 63.98* | 23.17 | 46.84 | 4.95 | 12.89 |
| 13 | Straight Stem Concave Base | 262.233 | 35.89** | 91.60** | 21.32 | 38.32 | 6.35 | 15.07 |
| 14 | Corner Notched Straight Stem Concave Base | 14.180 | 27.00* | 30.11* | 41.74 | 44.05 | 6.13 | 7.41 |
| 15 | Expanding Stem Convex Base | 304.757 | 26.07** | 54.36* | 18.79 | 39.02 | 5.07 | 11.95 |
| 16 | Contracting Stem Convex Base | 1270.060 | 33.34** | 66.25** | 18.51 | 37.76 | 6.60 | 14.13 |

Table 1. Morphometric measurements of chipped stone tools.

straight bases, making up two percent of the sample. Group 11 contains 26 side notched tools with expanded stems and concave bases. This group represents three percent of the sample. Group 12 contains 110 corner notched tools with expanding stems and convex bases, constituting 14 percent of the sample. Group 13 consists of 27 straight stemmed tools with concave bases, making up three percent of the sample. Group 14 contains two corner notched tools with straight stems and concave bases, representing zero percent of the sample. Group

| Group | Morphological Classification | Total Weight (G) | Minimum Length (mm) | Maximum Length (mm) | Minimum Width (mm) | Maximum Width (mm) | Minimum Thickness (mm) | Maximum Thickness (mm) |
|-------|--|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 17 | Straight Stem Straight Base | 609.514 | 30.29** | 62.64** | 20.14 | 43.84 | 5.57 | 11.94 |
| 18 | Corner Notched Straight Stem Straight Base | 361.456 | 34.45** | 76.70* | 25.72 | 49.59 | 7.06 | 13.92 |
| 19 | Corner Notched Expanding Stem Concave Base | 326.020 | 31.85** | 54.46** | 22.22 | 41.07 | 5.41 | 9.84 |
| 20 | Straight Stem Convex Base | 425.243 | 30.57** | 62.40* | 19.71 | 40.42 | 5.60 | 14.57 |
| 21 | Contracting Stem Straight Base | 616.602 | 32.49** | 79.35** | 19.72 | 45.79 | 5.94 | 12.62 |
| 22 | Expanding Stem Straight Base | 389.806 | 23.14** | 72.84** | 20.29 | 32.93 | 4.32 | 16.33 |
| 23 | Expanding Stem Concave Base | 297.670 | 27.73** | 51.57** | 20.45 | 35.21 | 6.10 | 10.69 |

Table 1 (cont.). Morphometric measurements of chipped stone tools.

15 consists of 37 tools with expanding stems and convex bases, making up five percent of the sample. Group 16 contains 128 stone tools with contracting stems and convex bases, comprising 16 percent of the sample. Group 17 contains 67 straight stemmed tools with straight bases, representing eight percent of the sample. Group 18 is comprised of 33 corner notched tools with straight stems and straight bases, making up four percent of the sample. Group 19 has 44 corner notched tools with expanding stems and concave bases, constituting six percent of the sample. Group 20 contains forty-three straight stemmed tools with convex bases, which makes up five percent of the sample. Group 21 is comprised of 68 tools with contracting stems and straight bases, representing nine percent of the sample. Group 22 contains 50 tools with expanding stems and straight bases, accounting for six percent of the collection. Finally, group 23 contains 42 stone tools with expanding stems and concave bases, representing five percent of the Wilson Collection's representative sample.

Qualitative Discussion

What types of raw materials are in the collection? What are the geographic sources (quarries)? What might this suggest about exchange of raw material throughout the region? What might this suggest about the preference for certain types of raw materials?

The following interpretations are based exclusively upon observational analyses, comparing photographs taken of the sample and photographs presented in a single comprehensive publication of lithic types in the Ozark region (Ray 2007). The representative

sample contains all the regionally available raw materials already discussed. In addition, there also seem to be two other regionally available lithic resources represented within the sample. For example, many of the tools are visually similar to materials from the Atoka and Lafayette chert formations located north and east of Faulkner County, respectively. In fact, the Atoka Formation runs through the northernmost edge of the county. The presence of each of these lithic materials has yet to be quantified, however, the most prominent raw materials utilized within the sample appear to be novaculite, Pitkin chert, and Penters chert.

Furthermore, there are several raw materials that are not visually comparable to any of the reference material (Ray 2007). For instance, a large number of the stone tools appear to be made from Dover chert, which originates from Tennessee (Ray 2007). Dover chert is reported to have been widely distributed throughout the Mississippian sphere. Interestingly, "Dover chert bifaces have been recovered at the Spiro site located near the southwest corner of the Ozarks" (Ray 2007:325). As such, it is likely that the material passed through the Faulkner county region on its way to major mound sites. The possible presence of Dover chert suggests interconnectedness, through trade or exchange of lithic material, of groups living in northern Faulkner County with those to the east and west. However, without further microscopic analysis these initial findings cannot be presented as definitive.

What is the chronology of the collection? What date range is represented and how does it compare to existing archaeological chronologies of the region?

The chronology of the representative sample follows that of the chronology presented at the Faulkner County Museum, which spans from the Early Archaic (8000 B.C. - 6000 B.C.) to the Mississippian period (A.D. 800 - A.D. 1600). The chronology was established by Dr. Leslie Stewart-Abernathy, a retired Station Archaeologist with the Arkansas Archaeological Survey. Given the wide variety of chipped-stone tool forms within the representative sample and their associated archaeological periods, it is likely that northern Faulkner County was inhabited, and its resources utilized throughout much of prehistory. The lithic chronology further highlights that the ecology of northern Faulkner County was highly exploitable by prehistoric peoples who visited the region regularly and over an extended period of time.

What types of styles (or archaeological types) are present in the collection? For example, what is the ratio of contracting stem verses expanding stem or straight stem? What is the ratio of notching preferences: basal, side, corner, etc. What is the ratio of form: lanceolate, triangular, etc.?

Of the 800 chipped-stone tools contained within the 23 different morphological groups, Groups 12 and 16 are the largest groups within the sample, both by the quantity and weight. Group 12 consists of 110 corner notched tools with expanding stems and convex bases. Group 16 contains 128 stone tools with contracting stems and convex bases. Given their prevalence, it may be assumed that these groups represent the most popular stone tool forms within Mr. Wilson's 60-mile mail route through northern Faulkner County. My initial interpretation of these data is that these tool types are more common (i.e. preferred technology for production and use) in the northern Faulkner County region than the other chipped stone tools. Thus, there might be a preferred style of lithic tool form, or forms, that differentiate northern Faulkner County from neighboring groups. These forms might serve as cultural or identity markers tied to the region.

Future Directions

In pursuit of a master's thesis, the research going forward will include the analysis of flaking patterns, cross-sections, blade shape, and the prevalence of heat treatment within the representative sample of chipped stone tools. Likewise, the data will be more fully compared to diagnostic point types established in pre-existing sources. These resources will be utilized to consider archaeological type assignments. Finally, walkthrough surveys of the proposed area will be conducted, and surface materials documented, giving the regional provenience of the Wilson Collection further credibility and context.

Conclusion

Ultimately, while lithic analysis of the Wilson Collection remains within its initial stages, this research has served as a familiarization process and the establishment of a set of data. Having had no prior experience with lithic analysis, this research has led to a deeper understanding about regionally available raw materials, the temporal distribution of chipped stone tools within northern Faulkner County, and the associated lithic forms within those archaeological periods. Furthermore, initial stages of this research have identified the presence of regionally available raw materials within the collection and the possibility of extra-regional materials, suggesting broad trade and exchange. Likewise, analysis of the representative sample has identified two of the most common lithic forms in northern Faulkner County, at least within the Wilson Collection. Finally, although not essential to the primary focus of contextualizing the sample, the exposure to experimental archaeology will facilitate more accurate interpretations of the chipped stone tools from the Wilson Collection in the future. For instance, understanding reduction processes will allow for the identification of lithic bioproduct and debitage that results from its various phases of construction.

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Attitudes Toward Work in Blue Zones: A Step in the Direction of Successful Aging

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Abstract

Blue Zones are regions known for healthy aging. This research investigates attitudes toward work, friendship, and sleep in three Blue Zones: Loma Linda, Costa Rica, and Sardinia. I examine cultural conceptions of aging, differences in attitudes toward work between the Blue Zones and control groups, and how work may play a part in a sense of purpose in life. This article focuses on interview data in Loma Linda, California and a control group in Arkansas, with reference to research in Costa Rica. This research considers whether modifying attitudes about work can be applied outside of a Blue Zone to promote “successful aging.”

Introduction

What makes aging successful? Rowe and Kahn's (1997) model of successful aging shows a combination of three elements: (1) avoiding disease and disability; (2) high physical and cognitive function; and (3) active engagement with life. Successful aging has become a contemporary obsession in everyday society around the globe (Lamb 2019). People want to be healthier later in life in order to reduce the prevalence of ailments and health risks. There is a common perception that if they practice health-oriented behaviors, engage in successful aging interventions, and implement wellness routines throughout their lifespan, they are more likely to have greater longevity and fewer years of disability. There are a wide variety of factors involved in leading healthy lives that will benefit individuals as they age.

Over the past two years, Dr. Anne Goldberg, an associate professor of Anthropology, and Dr. Jennifer Peszka, an associate professor of Psychology, from Hendrix College have worked with a rotating team of psychology, anthropology, and biology students to investigate sleep, work, and friendship as facets of healthy aging in the Blue Zones across the world. I have been fortunate enough to work with this team collecting data in two of the Blue Zone regions -- Loma Linda, California and the Nicoya Peninsula of Costa Rica. Specifically, I aim to look at how a positive attitude towards work can contribute to a successful and healthy life. I also will focus on the values of productivity in later life and the differences in the perspectives of older men and women.

Context

Blue Zones are areas of the world that have high rates of longevity. Coined by Dan Buettner in 2005, he expanded his research from the demographic work of Poulain et al. (2004) who drew blue circles on a map highlighting areas of extreme longevity. According to Poulain et al. (2013:89), “a blue zone is defined as a rather limited and

homogenous geographical area where the population shared the same lifestyle and environment and its longevity has been proved to be exceptionally high.” Using this definition as a guide, Buettner labeled five regions where exceptional longevity has been identified and validated: Loma Linda, California; the peninsula of Nicoya in Costa Rica; the island of Sardinia in Italy, Okinawa in Japan, and Ikaria in Greece.

Much of the existing research has been dedicated to looking at the lifestyles of individuals in these places as well as into their environments. Specifically, research has focused primarily on diet, exercise, religion, and age-related diseases and other genetic factors that contribute to longevity. This research formed as an interdisciplinary approach that wanted to see how sleep, socialization, and work -- areas that are lacking in research on healthy aging -- factored into a long and healthy life in three of the Blue Zones.

Loma Linda, California is described as an “island in the big city” even though it is not geographically isolated like the other Blue Zones (Buettner 2012b:125). Rather, there is a dense population of Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) in Loma Linda. The Adventists' social groups are composed of other Adventists, so the social structure embedded within Loma Linda contributes to the “island” metaphor -- an island that is due to the social isolation of the group. The community in Loma Linda is built around the church and the values of the religion. Healthy aging is commonly attributed to characteristics found within the SDA religion; their faith instructs them to observe the Sabbath, to eat little to no meat, to not smoke or drink alcohol, and to exercise daily while also giving their lives a greater sense of purpose, meaning, and direction.

Central America is not thought of as a particularly healthy region. In fact, it is widely known for political instability and infectious diseases such as malaria and dengue fever that are known to shorten people's lives (Buettner 2012b). In developing countries such

as Costa Rica, the main issue in “investigating claims of longevity” surrounds record-keeping that makes it near impossible to verify ages (Buettner 2012b:174). Rosero-Bixby (2008), a demographer who noticed men in Costa Rica living longer than in other more developed places in the world, was able to answer questions about longevity because Costa Rica is one of 11 developing countries where its population registry is characterized as “complete” and “accurate” (Rosero-Bixby 2008:674).

What allowed the Nicoya region to stand out was not only the population of nonagenarians, but also the difference in cancer mortality rates from other parts of Costa Rica and the lowest middle-age mortality in the world (Mishra 2009). Overall, the Nicoya region in Costa Rica offers health achievements that can be attributed to the absence of military expenditures, allowing for investments in education, the high coverage of health insurance, the provision of health care, and the relative isolation of the central peninsula from Western influences leading to a lower degree of industrialization and income per capita (Rosero-Bixby 2008; Poulain et al. 2013). This isolation was even more pronounced before the construction of a bridge that connected the peninsula to the mainland. The increased connection has changed the lifestyle of the younger generation with the introduction of fast food and other Western practices, ultimately impacting the life expectancy of the region (Buettner 2012b).

The research team has already gathered qualitative and quantitative data in both Loma Linda and Costa Rica, and the next leg of the research will extend into Sardinia, Italy -- the first named Blue Zone. Sardinia is a remote and isolated mountainous environment, but the community’s overwhelming hospitality helps establish close, meaningful, personal relationships. Hospitality to the Sardinians is a sacred duty to those within the community and outside of it. There is a common proverb in the community: “Dove c’è l’ospite, c’è Dio, ‘Where there is a guest, there is God.’” (Sorge 2009:4). This saying makes an important connection between hospitality and their faith. Longevity in this area has been attributed to hard work, living off the land, and red wine. Researchers have also shown that there is a prominent genetic factor in the region as well (Poulain et al. 2004).

Even though the region has a fairly low socioeconomic status, “older adults from the Sardinian Blue Zone display an unusual combination of low mental ill-health and high perceived well-being which is indicative of robust psychological adjustment and suggestive of high resilience/successful aging” (Fastame et al. 2018:2). This result is unexpected because low socioeconomic status is typically associated with poor mental health and well-being; therefore, it suggests that there are other, perhaps individual or interpersonal, factors that

lead to enrichment in this population, yet research on this subject is limited. In all, the community’s attitude celebrates the elderly and keeps them engaged in the community through leisure activities and through the establishment of close personal relationships.

Even though the team is not exploring the Blue Zones of Okinawa and Ikaria, it is still important to understand why they have been labeled as such. Data show that people on Ikaria were reaching the age of 90 at two and a half times the rate of Americans (Buettner 2012a). Not only that, but they live 8 to 10 years longer before contracting cardiovascular diseases, cancers, or dementia (Buettner 2012a:3). People in Ikaria have a Mediterranean plant-based diet, including a moderate consumption of wine. They also stay up late, sleep in, and nap regularly. While they do not go out of their way to exercise, the physical environment of Ikaria aids in keeping them active. Interestingly, their unemployment rate is high -- around 40 percent -- which has also been seen in other Blue Zones (e.g. Sardinia and Nicoya), but it does not affect their life expectancy as one would think. Ikarians describe themselves as “self-sufficient” and are content in their lives as long as they have food on the table and are surrounded by family and friends (Buettner 2012a).

The island of Okinawa has historically been known for longevity. According to Suzuki et al. (2016:1), “despite being the poorest prefecture in Japan, Okinawa has long been among the healthiest and longest lived.” Women, specifically, tend to live longer than any women in the world, and there is also a very high prevalence of centenarians. Their dietary pattern is very similar to the other Blue Zones including the hearty consumption of vegetables and legumes. Surrounding meals, there are two traditional beliefs in Okinawa called *nuchi gusui* which translates into “food is medicine” and *hara hachi bu* which is a dietary rule that says you should eat until you are 80 percent full (Suzuki et al. 2016). Older Okinawans also possess a strong sense of purpose or *ikigai* -- “the reason for which you wake up in the morning” (Buettner 2012b:253). *Ikigai* offers a new perspective to view life through as you age, and it provides older adults with defined roles of responsibilities and feelings of being needed (Buettner 2012b). Another important tradition among the elderly is *moai* which are social support groups that start in childhood and last a lifetime. These groups are formed of around five people who make a commitment to each other for life, meet for a common purpose, and act as each other’s social support network (Buettner 2012b:89-90). Buettner (2012b) described how the term has expanded from being used to describe a village’s financial support system hundreds of years ago to become a cultural tradition for built in companionship.

In all five of the Blue Zones, there are similar patterns. Diets are relatively plant-based or grain-based in conjunction with the intake of less meat. They drink in moderation, and in the case of SDAs, not at all. People in these areas are rarely hurried and are able to relax during meals and in conversations. They find ways to reduce stress. Faith is an integral and highly-valued part of life. People have a sense of purpose in life well into older adulthood. They have a healthy and well-established social network and support system through family and friends. Together, Buettner (2012b) argues, these factors allow for longer, healthier lives.

Literature Review

Successful Aging in Western Culture

Successful aging first appeared in the literature in 1961 and has continued to be the dominant paradigm in gerontological research (Lamb 2017:1). Aging has a popular connotation of a natural process of decline, in which a person's bones get weaker, they are more susceptible to disease, and they are more dependent on the people around them. In Western culture, there has been a shift to a new vision of aging -- people are wanting to live longer, healthier lives and the perception they want to give off is one of being "welllderly" rather than "illlderly." (Sokolovsky 2009:8).

In North America and Western Europe, there is an increasing emphasis on personal responsibility for one's own health. There are growing numbers of healthy aging centers, self-help books, wellness programs, public health campaigns, and discourses on dieting, exercise, and overall health promotion. This widespread attention and attraction to "successful aging" is indicative of the "institutionalized nature of ageism" (Calasanti and King 2017:29). People in the U.S. feel the need to institutionally promote positivity and wellness to combat the negativity that surrounds old age. Ideals of healthy aging revolve around independence, productivity, and individual control (Lamb 2017). In our contemporary society, there is a constructed reality of late life. This social construction of aging creates social norms, symbols, and meanings in the aging process. They are emphasized through language, popular culture, and various forms of media (Sokolovsky 2009:8).

In most Western societies, the beginning of old age occurs when people reach the age of 65. This "old age" is arbitrary. It is commonly associated with retirement and its benefits as well as physical decline. There is no general agreement to when a person becomes old. People who are above the age of 65 do not necessarily consider themselves old. Lamb (2019:263) interviewed a 69 year-old man who "doesn't categorize [himself] as old." He is unhappy about getting older, and is absolutely dreading it. Lamb (2019) describes a widespread perception that we,

as people, have a moral obligation to make our own aging "as healthy, active, and successful as possible, by staving off through techniques of self-care the disabilities, declines, and vulnerabilities of old age" (Lamb 2019:264-265). This pattern of "staving off oldness" was a major theme in her ethnographic research of the elderly in America which occurs through individual agency and effort, because as mentioned earlier, successful aging is viewed as dependent on individual choices and behavior. There is a common desire "to not become old" (Lamb 2019:265). Many fear the aging process and the characteristics of old age that are attributed to this process. This desire is propelled by the cultural values of personhood in the United States.

The need for successful aging creates a dilemma of class and body. Individual control and responsibility of behaviors are especially pronounced among the socioeconomic elite and able-bodied (Lamb 2019). There is a key ideology:

[We] each have a personal responsibility to stay fit, healthy, active, and independent as we age, and that healthy, successful aging is good for the self, family, and society -- to prevent one becoming a burden and to fend off the embarrassment and sense of moral failure associated with old age, dependence, incapacity, and loss of control in the U.S. society (Lamb 2019:266).

This personal responsibility, along with medical interventions, social hierarchies, and individual experiences, creates a stigma that is associated with old age. People with wealth have more control over their health and are better able to avoid aging. They are able to afford healthcare, organic foods, gym memberships, cosmetic surgeries that allow them to present younger, and other health interventions. Because of this control, people of a higher socioeconomic class can also avoid even more pressures associated with the decline of aging. People of a lower class, on the other hand, unfortunately become doubly stigmatized - not only because of old age, but because they will be looked down on due to the lack of resources available for them to practice healthy behaviors. Their primary responsibility in life is to make ends meet and live day to day rather than focus on the expensive nature of youthful aging. There is a motivation to control aging that is more pronounced among the elite in society because they have the agency to stay as healthy as they can versus those who face the structural inequalities of society that prevent that same agency (Lamb 2019).

Aging Cross-Culturally

Aging is culturally constructed, as the above discussion shows. Even more so, important cultural ideals aid in the understanding of healthy or successful aging. Worldwide,

discussions of “successful aging” often equates success with maintaining youthful behaviors and bodies as long as possible across the lifespan. In Mexico, this is present in advertisements for Viagra (a common medicine used to treat erectile dysfunction) -- sex is a youthful behavior, and if men use Viagra, they will be able to enjoy sex in old age (Wentzell 2017). This problematic feature associates with the stereotype of ‘machismo,’ a form of hegemonic masculinity (a practice that legitimizes a man’s dominant position in society [Connell 2016]). But in reality, Mexican people see having less sex in older age as successful aging culturally, and ultimately believe that men’s sexual ideals shift as they age. When men marry, their wives play an important role in the emergence of their “desires to mature and cease youthful sexuality” (Wentzell 2017:77). Decreased erectile function, as a result of aging, is seen as a way to become better and more faithful husbands later in life -- with a focus on being a loving and emotionally present member of their family.

In most parts of Europe, there is increasing support of active aging as an important cultural norm. Older adults in Poland, for example, can take part in a University of the Third Age (UTA) program which is “a type of educational and social institution for older people” (Robbins-Ruszkowski 2017:112). Having a commitment to education in old age is a way to encourage positivity during the latter part of the life course. These educational programs “transform old age from a time in the life course characterized by social stigma [associated with political views of state socialism], isolation, and withdrawal from the broader social world to a time characterized by personal growth, new social roles, and education” (Robbins-Ruszkowski 2017:116). It is important to note that the UTAs reinforce social inequalities in Polish society affecting and excluding the older populations within a lower socioeconomic class. It highlights that even cross-culturally there is a difference in the resources available for those who have more means than those who cannot afford them, and that difference leads to an unequal ability to be perceived as aging well. With the lack of financial stability, there is less control over the aging process, and as Lamb (2017) discussed, contributes to the dilemma of class and body.

Cross-culturally, many perspectives regard aging as “normal, inevitable, and even in some ways valued parts of personhood and key aspects of the human condition,” but due to processes of globalization, North American and European models of “successful, healthy, and active aging” are spreading around the world (Lamb 2017:5-6). According to Sokolovsky (2009:2):

cultural perceptions of older adulthood, or old age, link changes in the person’s physical being (reduction

in work capacity, beginning of menopause) with social changes (such as the birth of grand-children) to create a culturally defined sense of oldness.

Cultures treat their elderly differently and place different values on old age. There is a stark distinction between independent and interdependent cultures. In independent cultures, such as people from European-American cultures, there is a strong belief in the independence and autonomy of the self, whereas other cultures, such as East-Asian cultures, are more interdependent where there is a tendency to think of themselves as a part of a greater social unit (Uchida et al. 2004). Many East-Asian societies treat their elderly with high levels of respect, understanding that with age comes wisdom, and they would not be where they are without them.

In Japan, the interdependent cultural-context is evident through the care of older adults. Adult children are expected to care for their aging parents in different ways than in the United States. Japanese cultural norms are built around caring for one’s parents -- neglect of these responsibilities would bring shame on the family (Raymo et al. 2008). For example, when parents are no longer able to take care of themselves, they move in with their children instead of being placed in an assisted living home. Children and spouses are the most important sources of physical care and emotional support for the Japanese elderly. Japanese people do not demand that the elderly remain independent because no one is ever seen as truly independent in their culture. Nor do they blame them when they are no longer healthy because everyone is in need of help with their health. The value placed on the elderly in these societies dramatically differs from the value placed on the elderly in Western societies -- where higher value is placed on youth even in aging contexts.

Elderly Perspectives of Work

Retirement has a romanticized impression among individuals in the United States of a life filled with travel, leisure, and happiness. While quite a few people believe this idealization of retirement is the ultimate end goal, many older adults want to be engaged in work as long as they can be. Lynch describes “retirement” as a “complicated ideal for people across social classes, both because of cultural connotations and experiences that accompany it, and also because of the vulnerable economic positions in which retirees often find themselves” (Lynch 2009:23). Retirement is highly valued among the middle-class population and is usually unattainable for those below the middle-class. It is also unattainable for those in countries that do not offer provisions for the old except through familial support. And while it may be “financially feasible” for some, it no longer appears desirable to many

adults who would rather do something that is “perceived as work” (Lynch 2009:23).

Once people hit retirement age, they may have new freedom and autonomy to do things that they want to do. But this way of life is boring to many individuals: “In U.S. society, paid work is integral to one’s sense of self-worth, and non-working adults struggle to develop a sense of value that counters the cultural and economic norm” (Lynch 2009:22). There is a workaholic attitude enveloped in mainstream U.S. culture, so when there is a sense of unproductivity in life, people find ways and activities to counteract that feeling. Caitrin Lynch has spent years researching the work lives of older adults at Vita Needle Company, a needle production factory in Boston that is known for its policy of employing senior citizens. The majority of Vita Needle’s workers are over the age of 75, and this employment opportunity gives them something to do and look forward to while providing them economic benefits (Lynch 2009:23). Lynch gives a few of the complex reasons for the motivation to work into retirement: “from the desire for meaningful peer interactions, to the affirmation of identity, to the need for a paycheck in tough economic times” (Lynch 2009:23).

Cross-culturally, people have a strong desire to work fairly late in life until they are not physically able to work anymore. Many Japanese companies have gained experience in employing older workers and policies have been developed to help older workers remain in the labor market (Martine and Jaussaud 2018). Though, the dilemma of class and body also reaches across waters:

Although Japan’s pension system provides decent benefits to those who have worked all their lives in large, stable companies, employees working part-time or with temporary, frequently renewed contracts often do not fully benefit from this system, because employers are not always obliged to pay pension contributions for these workers (Martine and Jaussaud 2018:3).

There are a few motivations why older adults in Japan want to stay working, and it principally revolves around economic necessity followed by social interaction and a way to give meaning to their lives.

Gender and Work

A socially constructed gendered division of labor is a near human universal. Women remain in “globally concentrated” social and personal services, while men predominate industrial work and better-paid financial services (Goodman 2010). Cross-culturally, men and women generally work within the roles that are defined and prescribed by their cultures: “gender roles are complex packages of personal preferences

and inclinations combined with culturally defined expectations” (Weil 2001:28). Further, gender is a social institution that is used to organize social life because “human society [is dependent] on a predictable division of labor” (Lorber 1994:16). Lorber defined the gendered division of labor as a component of the social institution of gender:

[the gendered division of labor is] the assignment of productive and domestic work to members of different gender statuses. The work assigned to those of different gender statuses strengthens the society’s evaluation of those statuses – the higher the status, the more prestigious and valued the work and the greater its rewards (Lorber 1994:26).

Everyday gender interactions help build gender into work practices, which in turn reinforces gender expectations for individuals. Gender also contributes to the stratification system that ranks men above women of the same race and class and the structured system of inequality that devalues differences in gender (Lorber 1994). In the United States, the division of labor is evident in the context of work and family. Montez and her fellow researchers (2015) investigated why female life expectancy in the United States is currently lower than in most high-income countries and they believe it is a result of the changes in work-family contexts post-World War II. They write:

While work-family context changed similarly across other high-income countries during this time frame, many of those countries implemented institutional supports, such as universally available childcare and family leave, to help working parents contend with these changes (Montez et al. 2015:1568).

They compared and contrasted how women in the United States combine employment and childrearing with the practices of Finnish women. Multiple roles are usually associated with better health because they provide sources of social support a sense of purpose and accomplishment, and financial well-being (Montez et al. 2015). But these roles in the U.S. are challenging to juggle and often conflict with one another.

Education is a strong predictor of U.S. women’s work and family roles -- the longevity disadvantage is even more pronounced among low-educated women in the U.S. (Montez et al. 2015). Although there has been a prominence of discourse surrounding women’s education as an increasing priority, the literacy level of women still lags well behind men in many countries of the world, especially countries of “low human development” or countries where literacy rates extend below 50 percent (Nussbaum 2004:510). Illiteracy is often a barrier to employment -- and women are condemned to work

low-skilled jobs. The limited employment opportunities also lessen the possibility to leave a bad marriage. In all, women with less education do not have the resources available to them to maintain their lives financially and overcome the conflicting demands of work and family. In Finland, there was a quicker transition to full-time employment for women post-WWII, but policies were enacted that guaranteed paid and extended support for parental-leave and offered universal childcare benefits (Montez et al. 2015). Policies in the U.S. do not require paid parental leave or any other benefits – and it causes strain among family members, specifically women who are tasked with childcare. The worldwide crisis of female education is, in part, “a problem of poverty and cannot be stably solved without raising the living standard of the poor in each nation” (Nussbaum 2004, 514).

People who do not have the resources, such as education and money, struggle to gain employment and therefore struggle to survive. In Costa Rica, community survival is dependent on subsistence agriculture, domestic activities, agrarian wage labor, and other forms of employment work in conjunction with artisan work (Weil 2001). Artisan work has been a way to provide income for a household, and has been predominately gendered in form -- conditions in the artisan world have been worse for women than they have been for men. It was harder for women to gain economic emancipation with the demands of the household constraining their production of artisan craft and limiting their craft's appearance in public spheres. Though, through this struggle, women developed a strong sense of gender identity and often formed networks of solidarity with one another (Weil 2001). In the past, ceramic production was carried out primarily by women but with the rise of tourism, men have begun to take up artisan roles contributing to the diminished gendered division within the ceramics industry (Weil 2001:30). Foreign markets are making their way into Costa Rica's domain, replacing national entrepreneurs and bringing employment opportunities to Costa Rica's population. This rise in modernization has its advantages, but it also has its disadvantages. The process is bringing in machinery to do the agricultural work that men and women do to earn their livelihood. Also, factories and much of the industrial workplace does not have the services to absorb the growing workforce. Globalization does not draw Costa Ricans from their attitudes towards work and life: “as residents of a nation of relative peace and prosperity... many Costa Ricans may be seen as cultural conservatives in the sense of cherishing customary beliefs and practices that define their way of life” (Weil 2007:5).

Methods

In this Blue Zone project, the objective was to interview 20 participants within a 20 mile radius of the epicenter of a Blue Zone as well as 20 participants outside of the zone to act as a control group. Participants ranged from age 55 to 75, with a few exceptions. The reason for this age range allowed us to have participants who were still in the workforce and others who might be retired or no longer working. Recruits were compensated \$25 for their participation in Costa Rica and \$50 in the United States. This compensation turned out to be more of a motivating factor for those in Costa Rica and less of one in Loma Linda, California. The research team tried contacting senior centers in both Loma Linda and Costa Rica, but many places did not want research being conducted on their premises. For Loma Linda, the main point of contact was achieved through the senior group at the largest Seventh Day Adventist church. An informational flyer was sent to the church group looking for participants, and they posted it on their bulletin. From there, six interviews were scheduled before landing in Loma Linda. After breaking through to the community, many of the remaining participants were recruited through snowballing -- one person led to another. In Arkansas (the control group in the United States), there was a more established base and participants were recruited through convenience.

In Costa Rica, recruiting was more difficult. Unlike Loma Linda, no contact had been made with potential participants prior to arriving in Costa Rica. So, there posed a new challenge of starting with no participants, and the language barrier did not help. In the first few days, there was no luck -- our field team of two professors and three students went to senior centers and parks, got recommendations from locals, and even tried recruiting older relatives of the younger people who we came in contact with. Early in the trip and after a morning of dead ends, we decided to go to a park where we were told that older people tended to congregate to no avail. But before we left, we decided to explore a church that was across the street. We went up to the door, but it was locked and it seemed to be deserted. That did not deter us from exploring further. As we walked around the side of the building, a man who had been working on his car approached us, curious about the strangers who were lurking around. We asked if there was anyone around from the church that we could speak to -- and he led us to our key informant, a woman with well-established connections within the church. Without meeting her, we would not have had a majority of our participants.

Combining anthropological and psychological methods, our approach consisted of four components.

The first part was a face-to-face interview with each participant. These interviews were recorded with consent of the participant, and questions were asked pertaining to their life particularly about work, friends, and sleep. These interviews lasted, on average, an hour. Interviews that took place in Costa Rica were conducted in Spanish, and my fellow student researchers acted as Spanish translators. Many of the participants were surprised at how emotional they became during the interviews. While no questions raised any controversial topics, some questions might have led participants to think about emotional times in their lives (i.e. a death in the family, struggles that they faced when they were younger, remembering close relationships). They were told that they did not have to answer any questions that made them uncomfortable.

The participants were then given a booklet of surveys and questionnaires outlining questions about sleep, work, and socialization. With these questions, there was minimal risk involved -- they were just asked to think about concepts of their lives in a more quantitative measure. For Costa Rica, the booklets were translated into Spanish. However, a few problems did arise. In Costa Rica, literacy is usually determined by whether a person can write or sign their name, and this commonly stems from the amount of education one receives. Many of the participants in Costa Rica had difficulties writing and reading, therefore they had trouble reading and filling out the questionnaires. A few participants did need aid in completing the questionnaires. Those who were more literate still had trouble understanding what was being asked by some of the questions. Many of the participants in Costa Rica had never had to complete a questionnaire of this magnitude. They often were impatient and probed as to why questions were being asked multiple times -- they did not understand certain nuances raised by specific questions. For example, questions such as "during the past month, when have you usually gone to bed at night?" and "approximately what time would you go to bed if you were entirely free to plan your evening?" made participants question whether they had already answered what time they would go to sleep at night. In a similar vein, on several of the Likert scale questions, many Costa Rican participants either selected "1" or "7" and rarely a number in between. The reliability of this information and the cross-cultural value is questionable. Attitudes expressed in questionnaires of the Costa Rican participants cannot be compared effectively with the attitudes of the Loma Linda participants.

The participants were also given a Z-machine, which is a sleep device that records measures of sleep including light sleep, deep sleep, REM sleep, and wakefulness. Participants were given oral and written instructions for how to use the machine; they were

asked to place wired electrodes in specific places on their head and connect it to a small machine that could be placed under their pillow at night. They were asked to sleep with the machine for two nights. Because this was a new apparatus to the participants, a second night was included to counter what is known as the first-night effect in sleep research. This effect describes how data that is recorded during the first night might show unreliable information because the participant could have had discomfort with a foreign machine attached to their person and due to this, has the potential to cause much more tossing, turning, and wakeful periods during its use. Many participants, especially those with no prior medical background, questioned the machine, and some thought it would record their dreams. Others did not trust it. In Costa Rica, the high humidity and warmer weather led to more perspiration and caused the electrodes of the machine to slip off of participants during the night, and because of this problem, some data were not recorded. Participants were told that if they felt uncomfortable during any part of the procedure, they could withdraw their participation.

In the fourth and final component, participants were asked for a microbiome sample. Many participants were glad to be interviewed and even tolerated sleeping with a machine attached to them, but when asked for a small sample of their fecal matter, many politely declined. All of the previously mentioned methods were approved by the Human Subjects Review Board, and for the sake of anonymity and confidentiality, I have used pseudonyms in place of participants' names throughout the rest of this article. I do want to mention that because research is still being conducted throughout the next year, the team is currently in process of analyzing the data. The only interviews that have been completed and transcribed are the Loma Linda interviews. We are currently halfway through the transcription process of the Arkansas interviews. While we have conducted all of the interviews in Costa Rica, the transcription process is still underway, so I will primarily be referring to observations and notes that were taken in the field.

Aging in a Blue Zone

Cultural Definitions of Old

As I have mentioned, cultural definitions of "old" vary throughout the world. Similar to Lamb's findings of the embodied cultural perception of aging, older adults in America do not necessarily define themselves as old. One of the first participants in Loma Linda, Beth, a 75 year-old woman, talked about volunteering with the senior center in her community -- playing bingo with the "old people" and driving "old people around." Tina, another participant, mentioned that there are "so many silver-haired people around." The way they describe the

older population in the community is very indicative of how they view others rather than how they view themselves within their own community.

They also expressed the idea that with age comes wisdom. Mary advises to “listen to the older folk, they’ve gone there.” Along with Mary, Tina recognizes the wisdom that older people possess and understands that “older people have a lot to offer.” But even though most of these women see themselves apart from the aged population, men tended to explicitly view themselves as old. During the interview with the married couple of Sam and Jackie, Sam had to apologize for how many stories he was telling: “When you’re old, you have lots of stories, I apologize.” He sees himself as an old man and is content with his perception of himself. Roger describes aging through time commenting on his own age:

You know, as you get older it’s-. Time is a relative thing. You see when you, when you’re one years old and you go to two years old, you’ve doubled your life span. When you go from 75 to 76, you’ve only increased it by this much, you see. So, relatively speaking, [laughs] time gets shorter and shorter.

While age was more of a central concept in Loma Linda, Arkansans did not explicitly talk about aging except in a few instances. A few people used the common saying “in the old days,” and one commented on their old age as the reason for forgetting a detail of a story, but aside from those examples, there was no other mention of being old in society unless it was specifying ailments due to health concerns.

Inside the Costa Rican Blue Zone, there was not much talk about the limits of aging. But in a few of the interviews from participants outside of the region, they commented on how there were not many employment opportunities for older adults, rather they were always looking for younger people so it discouraged them for looking for work. But in both of the samples a definite generational divide was highlighted, as many participants commented on the destructive nature of the youth in their fight with drugs and alcohol. Many of the elderly commented on the “evil” nature of such influences and believed that this could be a destructive force in the area if they continue to be absorbed into society -- over half of the participants in the Nicoya region advised to stay away from such vices or mentioned drugs as the reason for such difference in the youth of today. Maricela described that the youth do not take care of themselves like they used to, and Roberta does not believe that the younger generation will live as long because of the “chemicals” they put into their bodies.

The influence of drugs and alcohol seemed to be more pertinent to participants outside of the Blue Zone where there was a larger impact of tourism and

industrialization. One participant even commented on the difference between the area on the coast, and the inland Nicoya region: “Here people live off tourism. In Nicoya, they live off the land.” Teresa also spoke to this difference: “In Nicoya, they live very old-style. If people here live to 110, people there live to 120.” Selena, a woman who lived in the neighborhood of Sardinal near the coast outside of the Blue Zone, talked about the migration of drugs from the busy city of San José making Sardinal “not even the shadow” of what it used to be. But even with this growing influence, participants could not discount the amount of opportunities that the youth have -- job opportunities through tourism, technological advances, and the availability of education, specifically studying and learning English.

Attitudes toward Work

Work plays a very important role in the lives of the participants. Work life occupies an honest majority of a person’s lifetime because to survive in a functioning society, one needs the experience and financial support that they gain from working. On average, people begin working for money in their early teens often as a means to support their family or a means to be more independent and responsible. When asked about a typical day in the life of our Loma Linda participants, it often revolved around work in some form or fashion whether it was the paid work of a job or the unpaid work of leading productive lives. Tina, a full-time independent nurse contractor spends a majority of her days travelling between her patients’ homes. And, while it is busy and challenging for her physical health, she enjoys it: “I have to work, but I’m so glad that I like my job because I need to work.” There is emphatic positivity even through the more challenging obstacles that her work posed.

Jackie knew from the beginning that she was going to be a nurse -- she had family members who were nurses, and always found herself going and training at the hospital. Her husband, Sam, on the other hand, did not have as direct of a route. In fact, it was just a matter of chance:

And one day I was in a restaurant in the morning, reading the newspaper and it said: “today is the last day to apply for nursing.” And I thought: “I could do that.” [laughter] I went in, I applied. Had they not accepted me, I would have never thought about it one more day in my life.... and, it was a wonderful career for me. [pause] I loved every day of it.

Many people in the Loma Linda area occupy positions within the medical field due to the prominence and centrality of the Loma Linda University Medical Center in the city. As in any medical career, there is often a potential for stress and burnout -- a full life in a medical

field has its stressful tendencies. But the outlook that both Jackie and Sam had to their careers allowed them to see past the onslaught of stressful times and view the experience holistically and positively which would ultimately build to their desired goal. Once people hit the retirement age, people like Sam and Jackie often find retirement jobs in order to stay busy and still enjoy the life of work. Others do not retire until they physically have to -- Beth mentioned her 92 year-old boss is still working in the hospital, "I mean, if she didn't have that she would die," she explained.

The Arkansas participants also commented on the necessity of work in the United States. One of the participants who moved to Arkansas for education and work from France commented on the Americans' busy nature: "In France, we do take vacation. It's okay to take vacation -- this country, it's like 'we don't live to work; we work to live,' Big difference." It emphasizes the need for work in American society. It is also evident that there is a certain amount of control that work has over the lives of people in the United States. Many people, who have the means to, move their entire lives for a job across the country. People of a lower class or who live in a less industrialized country do not often have those luxuries in regards to work. Similarly, life revolved around work. Peggy grew up believing that work was the entirety of a person's identity. She believes she was fortunate to find a community within her occupation at a small liberal arts college that makes it "more than just a work thing," and a larger part of who she identifies as. In America, it is easy to forget your own identity when work is so deeply embedded in your life that it essentially takes over your identity. However, this is not the case in Costa Rica -- work is seen as a way to provide economic and financial support as a means to survive. Work is a part of their lives, but it does not define who they are.

In Costa Rica, there was a stark difference in the education level of the participants. The lack of transportation offered difficulties in going to school, and many participants had to leave school in order to find some sort of financial support to help support their family. Héctor -- a 66 year-old man who was paralyzed from the waist down from a diving accident he had when he was 27 years-old -- advised that the most important thing you can do for yourself is study and learn English because that will lead to a job. Not getting an education is one thing he regrets about his life -- he believed that if he studied, he would not be in the situation that he is in. For women, it was common that their studies were disrupted because they had children and were not able to juggle studying and taking care of their family. It also limited their opportunity to find a steady income.

Many participants described living off the land, and living off the land requires a good amount of

hard work. In fact, a number of the participants met their significant others through work when they were younger -- whether working in coffee fields or on banana plantations. There is an observable division of labor when participants marry. The men tend to keep working on the land -- farming, tending to crops and animals, etc. -- or working in construction. The women take over the role of housewife -- taking care of the children or grandchildren and doing household tasks such as cooking and cleaning. Alejandro, who has been doing farm work his entire life, did not think his work was very difficult -- he was not forced to do this kind of work; he enjoyed it and kept working because of this attitude.

Costa Ricans would not be able to survive without the work that they do. Of course, this was a big stressor on their lives, and a different kind of stressor than what participants in Loma Linda faced in regards to their jobs. They also do not have the same resources available to them as the United States participants. Many participants are content with their lives because it is what is available for them -- the way their society and culture runs does not grant them many choices. This limitation factors into living simply. There were not many opportunities for them growing up -- but they seem optimistic about the opportunities for their children and grandchildren because of the growing influence of tourism in the area.

Outside of the Costa Rican Blue Zone, there seemed to be more variety in the occupations of the participants: Selena was a retired nurse; Silvia was an educator who was surrounded by books and papers; Teresa took over her husband's upholstery business and worked for different furniture companies; Fabián was an artisan and bike mechanic who started out as a teacher in primary school -- he found teaching stressful, but with art, it involved having a clear mind resulting in less stress; and Jorge worked on a sport fishing boat where he had to interact with tourists daily. He focused on how rough and unstable his work can be, but he described how much he enjoyed working on the water and sharing experiences with the tourists. Participants outside of the Blue Zone did not live as similar lives as those in the Blue Zone because there was a difference in their work lives. There was less of an emphasis of living and working off the land as there was in Nicoya.

The Value of Productivity

One question that was asked in every interview was about the kinds of activities that make them feel productive. Many people were taken aback by this question -- not quite sure how to answer or what we might be looking for from it. Productivity is described as "all activities, paid or unpaid, that create goods or services of value," but it can also be referred to as a personal measure -- activities

that individuals find inherently meaningful, valuable, or satisfying relative to their own personal goals (Rowe and Kahn 1997:438). Productivity is subjective -- one person can feel a sense of productivity in walking their dog or exercising, while another person could feel productive knitting or working in the garden, and another could feel productive when paycheck is in their hands after working for a set period of time. The participants differed on their answers to this question, but they highlighted the cultural attitudes and values associated with productivity.

Health was a contributing factor in feelings of productivity in both Loma Linda and Costa Rica. There were quite a few participants who opened up about their health specifically in relation to work during their interviews. A majority of the time, women were more open about discussing their health, or they would speak about their husband's health -- in the case of Mary and John, Mary brought up the limitations John faces due to Parkinson's disease. Sam has also had some health concerns and is currently using a LVAD -- a left ventricular assist device that assists cardiac circulation. This is an option for those who are in need of a heart transplant or are in need of extra assistance after open-heart surgery. Sam was not able to do many physical activities anymore because of his condition. He said, "I am not productive. [laughter] I think, will my health keep me from being productive? [pause] I've done nothing to be productive... I just can't do anything productive, really..." While Sam was open to talking about his health, his wife Jackie dictated most of the conversation. She was the one who mentioned his battles with seizures -- but Sam did not necessarily want to be seen as weak or as incapable. His views on productivity stemmed from before his LVAD surgery when his work was the main focus of his life. Clara, one of the participants in the Nicoya region, also did not feel productive because of her health. She has trouble getting around and standing and she was constantly in pain, so she did not feel like she can be productive because of her lack of mobility.

In Loma Linda, there was a theme of being very involved in the community that tied into feelings of productivity. In fact, Tina, whose work takes up a vast majority of her day still wished she was more involved in the community although she does not have the time for it between work and family activities. Being busy has become a status symbol of United States society today -- if you are not busy, there is a sense that you are not contributing in the way that you should be. David and Charlotte have their roots in the church; David worked as a minister over multiple congregations and Charlotte worked as a teacher, and the flexibility with this occupation allowed her to move during David's transfers to different congregations. And although they do not work full-time anymore, Charlotte categorized their

lives as "workaholics" -- a practice that is predominantly evident in Western societies. They stay busy through event-planning for the Church, socializing with different community groups over a meal, reading the Bible and attending Bible classes, but they manage to keep a flexible schedule for when unscheduled activities arise. Jackie keeps busy volunteering in different capacities within the community and participating in Bible studies and other church-related activities. Beth juggles tai chi, helping friends with their work, volunteering at the senior center, tutoring kids in the community, but she did not necessarily describe these activities as productive. Rather, she mentioned cleaning. Women in the area specifically mentioned domestic tasks such as cleaning as a method of being productive. It made them feel as if they had accomplished something in the day. Beth believed that doing things you enjoy and keep you productive are very important because she believed "when you quit, you die."

There were definite gender differences in how people approached productivity. Among the women, cleaning the house was a common task that made them feel productive -- they did not necessarily mention their volunteering efforts, their work through their church, or going out with friends as activities that they would consider productive. For men, specifically retired men, work was the driving force of productivity. So, if they were not working anymore, there was a feeling of being unproductive. Work keeps you busy and there is often a financial reward associated with it -- so when you strip the work away, you also strip away that feeling of productivity. Sam had this feeling in regards to productivity, but after having a few days to think about it, he wanted to change his answer. He periodically visited people in the hospital who were debating the decision to get a heart transplant or a LVAD wire implanted, and talked to them about his own experiences living with an LVAD. He went so often that nurses knew exactly what he was there for and who he was visiting. This comradery that he builds with the patients is something he considers especially productive, yet this feeling did not manifest during the first interview with him.

The participants in Arkansas felt similarly to the participants in Loma Linda. Often taking a moment to think of activities that make them feel productive, they landed on work. In fact, many thought of productivity in a more positive light -- the feeling of satisfaction or accomplishment that often was associated with the enjoyment of work. One participant said crossing tasks off of a list was productive "as long as I've accomplished something." The setting of the interview also played a factor in the answers of some of our participants. Jim's interview, for example, took place on a college campus where he worked, and his answer about his feelings of productivity reflected it, whereas if he had been

interviewed in the comfort of his home, his feelings of productivity might have reflected his life in the home. When describing a typical day, those who were still working commented on work, and those who were not working described a wide array of activities that often take up their day. It was interesting to see how even though they engaged in these activities, they did not come to mind when asked about productivity.

In Costa Rica, the concept of productivity was not quite as clear or prominent. They most likely had never had to think about such levels of productivity because their culture is surrounded by ideals of hard work. If you do not work, you are not productive, and you will not survive. There is a common theme of simplicity within their culture in Nicoya. Alejandro believes people live longer in this region because they live a simple life. Maricela talks about sewing as being productive because it is the only thing she “produces.” Estefanía talks about how going to church makes her feel productive -- also the spontaneity of getting out of her routine. In a similar vein, many people advised young people to stay preoccupied with and pursue good activities in order to stay away from the influence of drugs -- in other words, if you are busy and productive with other things, you will be less likely to succumb to the pressures of bad influences. Another participant, Gloria, talks about how work and other activities such as crocheting helps her with feelings of depression and loneliness -- but she also believes that if you keep busy, you worry more. So, she also sees that it is important to have a calm life.

Outside of the Blue Zone, productivity was seen as making the most of what you can do with what you have. Sofia described this feeling of being “between a sword and a wall” where “you have to push through.” She had to find ways to be resourceful when she did not have the necessary resources to survive. Fabián described productivity in regards to his art -- he was able to do whatever he wanted because art had no restrictions or limits. Though he was very active, he did not describe all of the physical activities that he does as being productive. To him, exercising, such as riding his bike and running, was something he enjoyed doing. There seemed to be a difference in what people considered productive -- most thought of it in terms of accomplishment, but rarely in terms of enjoyment.

Finding a Sense of Purpose

Work often aided people in finding their sense of purpose. A sense of purpose is the motivation that drives you toward a satisfying future. This was highlighted extremely in Loma Linda. Many of the Blue Zone participants believed that their religion was a driving force in finding their sense of purpose and ultimately leading to their careers in life. In Loma Linda, religion and work were

inextricably linked when it came to finding a sense of purpose. In Beth's case, she felt her career was just meant to be:

Interviewer: So, what was it that made you decide nursing as the path?

Beth: Well, I have a theory on that, I have a, I have a picture, I don't know if I can find it and show it to you, but anyway, my mother gave my sister and I each a picture to us ... But, I had a picture of a nurse that hung in my room and my sister had a picture of a nurse that was by her bed. Yes, and her nurse was holding a baby, my nurse in the background was a picture of an operating room. I became an operating room nurse my sister was an OB nurse. And then she asked us why we didn't become a teacher like she [laughs] I don't know I think she, I have no idea, that's just a theory.

To her, it seemed like the picture of the Operating Room nurse was placed in her room knowingly and with faith that she would pursue nursing as a career -- a kind of divine intervention.

Tina often calls on religion to keep herself motivated:

I'm full of prayer ideas and sometimes that's how I get through the day is praying. I get such neat responses to my prayers. It's just amazing. I just feel like I know because of what I've seen and experienced over my life, I know He's there. I know that He's never not had my back for everything, even though at times I've, I felt so overwhelmed I didn't know if I could make it. Um-- He was [slight pause] there the whole time and He allowed me to take the time off from thinking about how wonderful He was because I was having trouble and I came back to the same conclusion, He's-- He's my best friend.

Without religion, Tina felt like her life would have no purpose. It provided answers for the biggest questions in life -- it was the reason she chose nursing as her career path. Her religion allows her to get through the hardships of the day, the pain she feels, and the workload she faces: “the Lord blesses me every day.” Sam worked as an Intensive Care Unit nurse when he was working, and as a post-operation recovery room nurse once he retired due to his health. He always called on his faith to help him through his day:

I had about a thirty-mile drive from here to where I worked my last 28 years, and every day virtually, I got in the car to drive and I prayed: “Lord, let me bless someone today. Some patient, some family...” And every day, as I walked down the stairs out of the hospital--virtually every time I'd say: “Lord, you got it

wrong. I was the one that was blessed." I loved every day at work. I fell in love with the patient, every day. Um, [pause] I think nursing's a wonderful career.

There is a quite obvious distinction between Loma Linda and Arkansas in regards to the amount of religious dialogue. Participants in Loma Linda, specifically those of the Seventh Day Adventist faith, incorporated their views of religion into the interview frequently whereas participants in Arkansas were not as motivated to talk about religion unless they were prompted. Even more so when talking about work, there was never an explicit connection to religion. There was also more of a variety of beliefs within the Arkansas participants. The faith-based Seventh Day Adventist community of Loma Linda most likely is a reason why religion is such an important value ingrained in almost all aspects of their lives.

Religion was very prominent among the participants in Costa Rica. There was a common belief that God was the reason for their long lives. Luisa, for one, did not understand why people live longer in the Nicoya region because they have more hardships and less commodities than other countries: "It's the mystery of God, God knows -- he deals the hand, only God knows." People believed that God had a plan, and whatever they faced was just a part of His plan. Outside of Nicoya, participants shared similar beliefs. Selena spoke highly of her religious beliefs. She believed that God was the thing that made a difference in the world, and that "when people don't believe in hell or purgatory, they are lost like paper in the wind." Fabián put all of his worries toward his faith, in order to live without troubles. There was a shared understanding that satisfaction with life comes from the belief that God is there and has a purpose for them. It was not as intertwined within their work lives as it was for participants in Loma Linda.

There was also an importance of volunteer work within the Loma Linda community. Often, those who did not work anymore found a sense of purpose within their community through acts of volunteering. It was a way to work for a greater purpose than just to earn a steady income. They often volunteered for things that they enjoyed or believed would serve the most people -- volunteering through the church and hospital, sharing meals with others, and taking part in activities with the senior center. There were many ways to provide service to the community. There was also an ample amount of volunteering within the Arkansas residents, but there was not a sense of meaning that was associated with their efforts. They would mention volunteering very casually as if it were not as important as other aspects of their lives whereas in Loma Linda, participants would convey that volunteering added to their sense of meaning in life. In Costa Rica, there were

not many voluntary efforts, but this could be understood because of the isolation of the community, the lack of volunteer opportunities nearby, and the troubles of transportation. Most of the elderly in the community were focused on helping their extended family members who often lived close by. They still expressed a very hospitable nature to those in the community and to the occasional new faces (i.e. our team). They offered coffee, a variety of treats, homemade items and foods, among other forms of generosity.

Also in Loma Linda, work provided meaningful interactions and connections to others. Many participants in Loma Linda described the rewarding nature of their work. Because quite a few participants were nurses, with the job came the responsibility of caring. Beth spent quite a lot of time caring for children, and through that she made meaningful connections with their parents. Jackie who spent her last 24 years of working as a pediatric heart transplant nurse described this feeling: "You're going through the worst time in a person's -- with them, with people. And, um, you know, it's very rewarding." She would be the nurse for children during the heart transplant process, see them grow up, know them for all of their lives, and establish very close relationship with their parents through the process. Roger, a biostatistician professor-turned-mayor, established personal relationships easily within the community. His wife, Pam, had friends that she could confide in during stressful periods of work. The connections they built within the community through the Church and through their careers helped shape their outlook on life.

Meaningful interactions in Costa Rica primarily stemmed through the family. In regards to work, family members are often sources of support and help during hard times. They worked to support their families and found a sense of purpose through caring for them. It was more difficult to understand the participants' reasons for waking up in the morning (plan de vida) because their purposes in life did not come across as clearly as those in Loma Linda. They woke up every morning in preparation to take on the day ahead of them whether it was spent working or with family, knowing that God was looking out for them.

Discussion

Work often defines a person's role in society. It becomes a large part of our identity and our way of life. A day in the life of any individual can usually be described in relation to work or activities associated with work. Work acts as a means to provide financial income to those in order to make it day to day in a capitalist world. It provides a method of socially stratifying individuals based on wealth and access to resources based on that wealth, where those who cannot afford resources struggle to

make ends meet. Globalization efforts have increased the stratification in even the most isolated communities making it more difficult for the lowest strata to survive in society. This not only effects economic value, but values and ideas of personhood.

Old age is inevitable. It is a natural process that cannot be stopped, although Western societies do as best as they can to exemplify youthfulness. There is a reluctance in talking about the aging process -- people stray away from asking a person's age or they use polite age-defying discourse when the subject arises. The aging process should not be taboo topic of conversation because it is a natural phenomenon that every living organism goes through. In a majority of our Loma Linda interviews, aging was welcomed into the conversation and that less-so occurred in Arkansas. This is relevant because Loma Linda is publicly known as a Blue Zone, so there is a sense of validation when talking about old age whereas in other parts of America one is socialized to not talk about someone's age. As Beth sarcastically mentioned "yeah, you have to be at least 90 to die here. If you die before 90 it's like 'this is the blue zone.' [laughter]" Aging connects every society and culture in a way and it should be celebrated. This process is limited by cultural and societal structures surrounding old age.

In America, there is an obvious stigma surrounding aging. People want to live younger, healthier lives, and if they do not have the resources to do so, they suffer from mistreatment and the prejudices of an ageist society. To understand the American aging experience, we have to understand the cultural values surrounding individualist ideals about productivity, independence, self-reliance, and control over one's bodies and futures (Lamb 2019). These values are tied to cultural norms that "denigrate old age in our society and come together to motivate aspirations for an ageless self" (Lamb 2019:269). But it also poses limitations for those who do not have the means to control one's body and future.

There is a perception in U.S. society "where being busy is a badge of honor at any age" (Lamb 2017:4). This societal perception is absolutely evident in the United States communities in this study. Almost every participant had non-stop lives whether that included a nine-to-five job or not. Feelings of productivity were ultimately understood in terms of satisfaction and fulfillment. Accomplishing simple tasks such as grocery shopping and cleaning made participants feel productive. There were gender differences as well: men valued more effortful activities whether it was working within their job, building new things for the home, or sparking meaningful interactions. Women, on the other hand, valued humble tasks and volunteer efforts placing a high value on helping others. Though days were filled with a plethora of activities, these day-to-day activities were less likely

to be mentioned as productive even though they were, in fact, according to societal standards of productivity. Health also played an important role in dictating values of productivity. Many people felt limited in their productive tendencies because of their health. Because work is extremely ingrained in values of productivity, if one is unable to work because of their health, it made them feel as if they were not contributing meaningfully and productively to society. Some participants worked through the pain, especially when they could draw on other sources of support whether friends, family, or religion. Others who were physically restricted let their inability to work overshadow other activities in their lives that were just as satisfying and rewarding.

Differences between the Loma Linda community and Arkansas community ultimately lie within religious beliefs. Because of the openness of the Seventh Day Adventist religion, there was quite a bit of evidence that pointed to the importance of religion and through religion finding a sense of purpose in everyday life. Seventh Day Adventists not only stay healthy because of their dietary and exercise habits, but they have faith that the path they are on is for a reason that is greater than them. Religion offers a source of support during stressful times especially when work became burdensome; it also fosters a sense of belongingness that is important to have as an older adult.

In other countries, this is not practiced. In Costa Rica, the older population spans the lives of many generations -- lessons are learned, stories are told, and lives are long-lived. The bond of family is a very important part of life. Older adults are able to provide support for their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren until it comes time for the younger generations to become the caregivers and the foundational support system. Within the Blue Zone, there seemed to be more multigenerational households than there were outside of the Blue Zone. Older adults lived with or near family members, so there was always a source of support around. The influence of older adults in a household creates this aura of respecting elders, and it encapsulates Costa Rican ideals of aging. Often, children follow in the footsteps of their parents, though as globalization increases in the Nicoya area, it produces more work opportunities through industrialization and tourism, but it also increases and exaggerates generational differences. The older generation recognizes the growing number of opportunities and want their children and grandchildren to live more successful lives. They want them to get an education that will lead to a job that will provide financial stability for them and their family.

When they were younger, there were all sorts of hindrances that prevented them from continuing their studies and getting a formal education -- many had to

drop out of school in search of work to help financially support their families and some never completed school because they had to care for children. Many of the jobs that participants had were trades that did not require an education to perform. Men worked long days on the land doing physical labor and women worked in the home or outside of the home doing similar domestic tasks. Some women also made and sold craft goods in order to receive another source of financial income. Before marriage and children, women had more autonomy in their decision to work -- many worked in fields when they were younger aiding their father and siblings' work as a means to provide for their family. After having children, the role of women shifted to housewives. These usual defined work roles in Costa Rica highlighted the difference in gender norms that are culturally embedded within many societies.

Though with the benefits of Westernization, negative influences are also brought in. The influence of foreign processed food markets is changing the eating habits in the region. People used to eat mainly off of the land -- meals of rice and beans and other home-grown and harvested crops. This influence will likely change health outcomes of the population in the years to come. Processed foods are not the only cause for worry of the healthy area, but the youth are getting more involved with drugs and alcohol. It has become a primary concern for older adults. The nature of drugs in the area is very recent compared to other areas of Costa Rica, but older adults fear for the future of their youth because of these unhealthy behaviors.

In Costa Rica, there was less of a pervasiveness of old age. People did not go out of their way to do things to contribute to successful aging. They were just living their lives day to day. Their worries were not focused on aging because they were surrounded by family and they had faith in a higher power. They live simply, and their relative isolation of the community in Costa Rica can be shown to be a factor in the aging process. Growing up, the participants did not have to worry about the vices that plague the youth of today which are increasing mortality. As outside influences increase in the area, this calls into question whether the younger generations will live as long as the older population today. A belief that work equals long life is not only echoed by Costa Ricans, but by Sardinians as well. It can be assumed that Sardinia will show similar attitudes toward work seeing as they also embody their simplistic lifestyle along with the natural value on living off the land.

As our society continues to grow in the twenty-first century, there is less and less of a distinction between men and women's occupations -- they are more commonly sharing roles. The gendered role division tended to be more pronounced in the older population

because it was embedded in society when they were younger, and their views have not changed with the times. It will most likely take longer for more equality to spread in less industrial parts of the world because of the slow materialization of Western ideals. Every culture has different conceptions of gender roles and what is considered right and wrong for men and women to do. Now as the youth of today grow older and are becoming more aware of the need for equality in society -- this just begs the question whether similar attitudes will develop when they reach similar ages as the participants in our study.

Significance

In sum, the concept of "successful aging" cannot be acquired in just one way. There are multiple components that need to be addressed in order to live a healthy life. The research gained through this study has allowed us to look at a few of the facets that contribute to a healthy life. Particularly, the focus on work as an important part of an individual's life was commonly highlighted. It allowed us to see attitudes toward work in a cultural context to see how life might revolve around conceptions of work. A majority of the participants were overall content with their lives in regards to work. If you are working a job that you enjoy, it will lessen the feelings of stress and overall lead to healthier and happier lives. Cross-culturally there was quite a focus on the importance of education as not only a means to acquire work, but as a means to acquire work that one enjoys doing. It is harder for people in developing countries to gain an education while still supporting themselves and their families financially. Policies should be put into place to allow for greater education practices, especially in more rural areas so that the people do not have to face the burden of survival through physically-demanding labor.

Dan Buettner started an initiative in 2009 -- the "Blue Zones Project" -- to incorporate the findings from his research in hopes to benefit local communities in the United States (with hopes to extend across the world). These initiatives are led primarily with the focus of "healthy aging" in mind, as the description states: "we help people live longer, better® through community transformation programs that lower healthcare costs, improve productivity, and boost national recognition as great places to live, work, and play" (Blue Zones Project®). Most of his research concentrates on diet and exercise, so looking more intensely at work could be beneficial when going into these communities -- specifically focusing on whether people find their work enjoyable and satisfying and whether work is a major cause of stress -- because work is an important part of any individual's life who is trying to survive in the world today. Understanding attitudes toward work and implementing changes to

produce greater levels of happiness accordingly can have a great impact of a person's life. As the study extends into Sardinia, there will be a similar lifestyle of simplicity as in Costa Rica so it will be interesting to draw comparisons in relation to work. But the question still remains: should we strive for successful aging or is it as simple as simple living?

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Dr. Not Mrs.: Gender Relations at University of Pennsylvania

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Introduction

Women have gained increasing representation in higher education through the decades, as both students and faculty. Shifting dynamics in the workplace reflect reforms in American legal, social, and cultural realms. In this research endeavor, I explore the opportunities available to female professors at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn), focusing on each informant's route to achieving her current role. My research aims to augment understanding of transitioning gender dynamics in light of social power at various stages on the paths to obtain doctoral positions. Ethnographic methods uncover the personal experiences of gender relations within the institution of higher education at Penn.

Policy influences the formal mechanisms for change in workplace environments, though legal rulings do not always filter down to individual experiences and interpersonal relationships. The ethnographic interviews explore the informal mechanisms that create differential access in academia, emphasizing the sociality of power. This project contributes to the broader conversation about gender relations and how those dynamics manifest in an academic employment setting, specifically looking at the impacts of interpersonal connections on opportunity and access.

Theoretical Background

This research project lies at the nexus of gender, education, and evolution of norms. As I investigate women's opportunities in higher education, the theory of gender performance proves an essential framework to understand relationships in academia (Morris 1995). The theory of performativity defines gender as the effect of discourse, focusing primarily on productivity instead of the meaning of discourse. Gender performativity asserts that gendered tendencies stem from cyclical reifications of subjective abstractions (Jagger 2008). In the academic sphere, gender performativity informs the hierarchies of rank, tenureship, and behavior in faculty meetings. Ambiguity and indeterminacy pervade this school of thought, which yields practice theory. The latter conceptual framework focuses on habits of social beings, attempting to ease tensions between the individual and collective intentions within a space. I apply practice theory to further understand how women in academic careers juggle their priorities. The approach examines the lifestyle and actions of individuals in relation to the

broader structures governing collective social existence. This study will apply the theory to academic careership, which calls for professors to always be "on." Careers in academia thus exemplify how the university system causes individual goals to blend with other communal aspects of their career, such as colleague collaboration, as well as the balance of home life.

Focusing on the individual aspect of sociality, Catharine Macaulay promoted epistemological views about pedagogy (Titone 2004). The goal of formal education according to this philosophy is to create a person with character, morals, and knowledge, which both genders have the capacity to accomplish. Education is the remedial solution to rectify misperceptions about limited capacities from different natures of individuals' (genders'). Thus, women's entrance into higher education proved integral to see progress in intergender relations. Simultaneously, women's writings are historically excluded from studies of educational philosophy, keeping women's ideas far from the power to shape educational policies. Male-centric approaches pervade educational philosophy; educational institutions themselves are set up to cater to men. My research investigates this institutional bias, looking at how existing practices in salary, norms of child-rearing, and socialized expectations of women set up an economic and cultural system that presents women with unique challenges.

As legal policies progressed to favor women's access to education and academic careers, the manifestations of these formal mechanisms sometimes failed to have the intended effect. Change over time reflects a constant exchange between cultural shifts and policy output. "Gender mainstreaming" and family-friendly policies altered the economy to gain greater representation of women in the workforce. Title IX, for example, emphasized equal access to educational opportunities (Rose 2015). However, inequality between women widens as a minority of women become more equal to men (Perrons 2005). Within the present market economy, the workplace trends towards larger gender and class divisions, and gender mainstreaming proves questionable as a solution. Rather, reconceptualization of the existing economic structure may better serve these disparities. Alexandra Kollontai (1909) called for a revolution in labor relations in order to achieve gender equality. Taking a Marxist approach to women's rights would radically overthrow the labor relations

and reframe the superstructure to liberate women from the oppression imposed by both capitalist value extraction and unpaid labor in the domestic sphere. The policy transitions in the U.S. have been less radical than Kollontai's proposals. My research shows that labor relations represent an integral component of women's capacity for opportunism in higher education.

Methodological Design

Utilizing ethnographic methods, I investigated various factors affecting women's access to academia: norms of the generation, culture, sociality, and institution. In order to explore the relevance of these factors, I conducted personal interviews with established female professors among Penn's faculty. The face-to-face interview allows the interviewer to accommodate the immediate needs of the informant and glean further insight from gesticulation, facial expressions, and body language (Bernard 2011). For example, if a question was unclear or uncomfortable for the interview subject, I read their physical expression to rephrase accordingly. Intonation, silence, and pace of speech also broadened my understanding of the participants' messages.

Taking a realistic approach, I investigated opportunities for participant-observation (Bernard 2011). My email interactions successfully procured interviews with female professors at Penn. However, my contact with multiple department chairs, the Penn Forum for Women Faculty, major advisors, and individual professors did not bring about opportunities for observation of collaborative spaces. I readjusted my research methods accordingly, focusing instead on the individual experiences of informants in one-on-one settings.

Research hurdles aside, my project focuses primarily on ethnographic interviews with female professors. I utilized various networks, asking peers and advisors for recommendations of female faculty members to interview, spanning various departments in social and physical sciences. The professors I contacted also included a range of ages, presenting a mix of perspectives of women in higher academic positions. Reaching out via email, I informed each potential interviewee about my project and asked for their participation. This informative exchange provided the potential interviewee with a basis of my research, allowing them to ponder consent. The process of informed consent is ongoing, so each participant may email me at any time regarding concerns or withdrawing from the research endeavor. Prior to each interview, the interviewee signed my consent form.

I began each ethnographic interview by surveying the meeting space. Scheduling the interview involved selecting a space, which I left up to the subject in order to maximize comfort levels and accommodate convenience. If the meeting took place in the professor's

office, preliminary observations included the location on a campus map, whether the space is shared, which direction the desk faces, and how the office seems to play a part in the informant's work life. Whether in her office space or a public place, I note the seating arrangement, and how our physical dynamic might affect comfort, power dynamics, and mutual trust.

In order to control the research inquiry, I asked a similar set of questions to each of my key informants, formulating a semi-structured interview. Adjustments were made to prioritize the interviewee's comfort level or to allow flexibility for a flowing, productive dialogue. My questions delved into personal topics; I aimed to ensure the safety and confidentiality if any concerns arose amidst the interview.

The interview typically followed this structure:

1. What is your occupation?
2. What prompted you to pursue this career?
3. I am really interested in looking at gender dynamics over time through your career. Could you speak to a few different times in your career when your gender influenced your opportunities, access, or professional relationships?
 - a. As an undergrad?
 - b. As a graduate student?
 - c. Did you have a post doc? Can you speak of any experiences in which gender influenced your opportunities at this point?
 - d. What were your experiences as an assistant professor?
 - e. Associate professor? (if applicable, depending on rank)
4. Did you teach at a different university? Can you speak of any experiences in which gender influenced your opportunities at this other institution?
5. What changes in gender norms and dynamics within the academic professional work have you seen through time?
6. I would like to ask about mentorship, since there are many efforts to support women's career via mentorship. Were there key figures throughout your life who inspired you to pursue this position? Do you feel as though gender influenced mentorship relationships you've had throughout your career?
7. Beyond mentorship relationships, have you ever been treated differently by a colleague based on gender? I'm interested in this both professionally and socially, including informal relations with colleagues.

8. Have you ever been treated differently by an institution based on gender?
9. How does your work life interact with or influence your social life? This may include family dynamics, work-life balance, or differential treatment from male colleagues based on parental/marital status.
10. How do you define occupational success?
11. How (if at all) has society organized the work world in order to allow for access to this type of success?
12. Do you believe gender equality is attainable in this field? What needs to change?
13. What might you recommend to women pursuing careers in academia?

Upon recording each interviewee's responses on my smartphone, I reminded the informant of anonymity. When I transcribed the interviews to splice out quotations and conduct subsequent analysis, I used pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. My notes described the environment, body language, and intonation behind the words in each ethnographic interview. Placing each interview within the setting's context, the relational dynamic between interlocutor and interviewer, and the participant's positional background provided insight into the informant's perspective. Noting the tone, emotionality, pauses, and question evasions will bring a more rounded analysis of the data.

Data Samples

The collection of interviews provides insight into experiences of female professors. Each professor contributes a unique element to the overarching discussion of institutional opportunity for women. The interviews share a common theme of interpersonal connection, though the means and emphases vary. I have organized the discussion of the interviews into subheadings that label notable points of comparison, though the similarities and differences between the professors' responses are more nuanced than these groupings. In establishing these associations between interviews, I aim to emphasize some of the many valuable links between narratives.

Nationality and Race

Interviews with Professor Shana and Professor Dennon (pseudonyms) discussed national and racial identities as primary considerations in their experiences within American educational institutions. Tying together these elements of individual identity revealed the intersectionality of the various aspects of the self, and the sense of place within a university.

At the initiation of our appointment, Professor Shana called out my name in the waiting room, jolting me out of my headphone haze. I followed her into her private office and sat in a chair set out for students. She made herself comfortable in the large desk chair, swivelling around to face me at an angle. I motioned to close the door, which she had left ajar. With the space secured, the consent form signed, and my recording device on, we delved into the interview. Dr. Shana procured her Ph.D. at Harvard in the 1960s, where she "was one of two women in the Economics Department, and at Columbia I was one of three." The academic path strayed from the expectations of the 1960s American woman, as exhibited in the department's gender ratio. Her employer in 1972 "told [her] that [her] husband had a very well-paid job, and so [she] could leave. [She] did not have to work for money." This norm regarding education and employment of women "was the reality" of this time period.

However, the American "reality" did not pervade universally. Professor Shana said that the women's movement was irrelevant to her work life because of her community background. "I told you that I come from an academic family. So women whom I knew growing up were already equal to their brothers or husbands or fathers or whatever." The informant clarified that her experience reflected "the community... my father had both women colleagues and male colleagues, my mother the same. My grandfather, both my grandfathers were professors, so were my grandmothers... so I have grown up with that, so the idea that women couldn't do math was a very novel idea to me, I had never come across that." Dr. Shana conveyed how community of origin played a significant role in her access to upper-level academic roles, even during the 1960s.

Whereas Dr. Shana's entrance into academia followed a familial routine, Dr. Dennon represented as a trailblazer from her community background. Rather than representing the product of generations of academic careers, Dr. Dennon reported that she "sort of fell into it." With her elbows propping her upper torso onto the bright circular desk and her left hand gesticulating enthusiastically, Dr. Dennon explained her initial interests in "nationalism and Afro-Diaspora contexts and the ways that artists have been involved in social change movements." She said, "My dad was like, 'You know, maybe if you went to a university, someone would pay you to do this.'" This professor's pursuit of academia stemmed from alternative motives of learning and the desire to make a difference: "I wanted to open a community arts center in my neighborhood in Brooklyn." Like Dr. Shana, though, parental encouragement played an important role in motivating and informing Dr. Dennon about the path to the academy.

To consider nationality further, Dr. Shana came from a community that upheld gender equality in higher education, while Dr. Dennon repeatedly emphasized the need to seek out a subgroup of like-minded individuals. In her academic career, "Women's Studies has always been a community for me. Um, you know, in the midst of all the nonsense that one experiences as a woman, or as a woman of color, too, differently." Dr. Shana's characterization of the egalitarian aspects of India's higher education showed that Professor Dennon's experience as a woman in academia does not translate universally. One consideration in analyzing these different levels of optimism about global gender equality is their areas of study. As a professor of Gender Studies and Women's Studies, Dr. Dennon spends a significant portion of her academic career "in spaces where... these kinds of dynamics are acknowledged as foundational and pervasive, you know, to a liberal order of things." Her social circle within the intellectual community remains keenly aware of gendered notions of opportunity, so her experience in the academy continuously points out "the normal kind of sexism and, sometimes, misogyny... within the academy."

Dr. Shana and Dr. Dennon exhibited distinct narratives with overlapping considerations of nationality, race, and modeled behavior, in this case by parents. These two interviews demonstrated differing experiences in the academy. I do not intend to imply that Dr. Shana glided through her various academic positions without an array of gender-based impediments. Her characterization of access and opportunity stemmed from a relatively egalitarian perspective on education from India, normalizing female professorship. In contrast, Dr. Dennon's experience with the academy interacted with her intellectual outlook of race and gender, impacting her professional social life.

Family and Generations

Professor Marks and Professor Jethry provided divergent generational perspectives, though their experiences with marital obligations revealed the persistence of female professors' concerns about work-family balance.

Professor Marks highlighted the generational differences in her retrospective understanding of women's access to higher education over the decades. Sitting at the table set out for students, faced diagonally toward the door with her legs crossed, she delved immediately into her past. Throughout her experiences in higher education, spanning forty-five years, "there's been a lot of social change around people's expectations and even the language that they use about this kind of thing." Her career path depended on the social conventions of the time period, so her trajectory directly reflected the changing expectations and norms of women's roles in

academia. When she began her academic career, "it was still a time period when kind of dismissive, misogynistic language was common in the college classroom. And there was no social ability to, um, object," shifting her intonation higher to express the personal impact of these social norms. The inequalities in the higher educational environment also showed in Dr. Marks' concrete access to opportunities, such as "what research money went to what person, what difference it made that someone might be about to marry or have children or follow a spouse... the impossibility of a man wanting paternity leave." The social conventions bled into financial and opportunistic policies.

Because of the severe barriers a woman encountered while pursuing research opportunities, Dr. Marks gained monumentally from her mentors. Marks reflected that she "received a lot of encouragement... very early on... And of course that kind of encouragement and engagement is very compelling. And it was a [*with emphasis*] woman professor." Marks' professional experience demonstrated the dependence on community to propel her career forward. A major opportunity came up when "another anthropologist had that job before, and she kind of passed on to me, we did a lot of that work. And the women in that program passed on women's jobs, one to the other." Upholding a community of females in the professional sphere echoed the necessity of connectivity and unitedness expressed by Professor Dennon. This phenomenon showed in another example of a job opportunity, when "a [*slowly, loudly, with emphasis*] WOMAN friend of mine from Michigan hired me as a research manager in her lab.... Again, you know, women hiring women, it doesn't get any more obvious than that."

Whereas Professor Marks' perspective incorporated generations of sexism in higher education, Dr. Jethry's more recent experience in the field involved higher levels of gender equality. Marks looked back on forty-five years of experience in higher education, while Professor Jethry reflected back to the nineties. The different experiences between the generations are apparent. Dr. Jethry leaned over deliberately to speak into the recording device on her desk, saying, "Back in the nineties, I didn't have any sort of hallmark experience where gender was called out as an operator for me." In contrast, Marks pointed out key examples of overt sexism in her past, such as "comments about people's clothes, comments about people's marital/reproductive status, just [*with emphasis*] embedded comments about, um, women's versus men's roles in academia." Unlike Marks' experience in the job market, Dr. Jethry "came into this job at the same time as my colleague who is a man... And I don't feel like he was ever taken more seriously, or given more access than I was to opportunity." Dr. Jethry's experience in the past two decades thus reflected

more consistency in equal access for women in higher education. One anecdote to consider, though, is although Dr. Jethry claimed “I haven’t seen a big difference in the way gender operates,” she promptly noted, “I definitely see more people of color now in higher education than I did in the nineties.”

Because of their differing generational perspectives, Professor Jethry emphasized the need for mentorship and interpersonal support far less than Professor Marks did. When I asked Marks peripherally related questions in the interview, mentorship was a major component in her answers, even though the subject was not directly implied in the questions (see methodology questions 2 and 3). In contrast, Professor Jethry did not raise the topic of mentorship relationships. When I asked a specific question about it, referring to the prominent role mentors can serve in secondary education, she replied “I don’t think that’s the case for graduate students.” She did provide an anecdote about a mentor teaching her “to own your ideas and not apologize” by telling Dr. Jethry, “Don’t deliver your talk by ending the end of your sentences an octave higher than where you begin.” Professor Jethry expressed that this mentorship relationship “actually had a big effect on me,” even though it did not steer her professional career in a starkly new direction as some mentors did for other interlocutors.

The varying emphases on mentorship potentially reflected the generational differences between these two professors. Professor Marks began her career in a noticeably sexist climate, and sought guidance to succeed within this unwelcoming environment. In contrast, Professor Jethry’s observation that “sexism in higher ed... is more muted in many ways” perhaps led to these mentorship relationships that provide advice, but not necessarily career-changing guidance.

The personal accounts from Professor Marks and Professor Jethry reflected changing attitudes about gendered experiences in the academic world. However, the two interviews presented commonalities in work-family balance. When I asked Professor Marks what her occupation is, she raised the notion that she is “a college professor and... an archaeologist. But, I have other roles in life.” She therefore included her non-academic endeavors as prominent contributors to how she occupies her time. Dr. Marks originally came to Penn “as a trailing spouse, which was a [*with emphasis*] monumental decision on my part.” Because her husband had an opportunity in Philadelphia, Dr. Marks confronted a dilemma in her career trajectory: “I had given up a really good job in Boston and come to nothing here. It took me a long time to get back from that.” This prioritization of spousal support over her career reflected both in this decision to give up her position in Boston, and in her financial

dependence. Because of the demands of childrearing and caring for her parents, Dr. Marks taught part-time for fifteen years, and “was living off my husband.”

Dr. Marks situated her personal family experiences in societal norms and formal rules that influenced her decisions. She asserted that “it’s reality... our social service sector is set up around the nuclear family, and there’s no way to make that fair.” Decades-old legal principles leave legacies that extend long after their eradication. “Family wage is a 1950s philosophy of wage equity that revolved around... very low employment of women because they were part of a family. That explicit practice was made illegal in the late 1960s, but the traditions are still there.” Changing the laws did not necessarily implement informal mechanisms to relieve the woman’s family burden: “They’re legal, that doesn’t mean they’re representative of practice.” She explained the current legal framework: “maternity and paternity leave are both protected by law on one level, you know the Family and Medical Leave Act, and in the Penn Handbook it talks about how much time you’re allowed to take off for the birth of a child or the adoption of a child, which is fair enough.” The legal mechanisms aimed to equalize distribution of domestic labor, but this structure does not always manifest, because “they’re used very differently by men and women.”

Despite the generational difference, Professor Jethry expressed similar burdens in the domestic sphere as a woman in a household. As a Ph.D. of Art History working as an academic advisor, she encountered an academic-marital complex often in her field. As “art historians, you’re either a serious scholar art historian... or you’re what’s called an M.R.S., which means you’re getting your degree in art history just to have something to do while your husband goes off and makes money.” She noticed how power dynamics in the home are influenced by prestige, as well as financial distinctions. Because her partner receives a higher pay grade, “I’ll pick up more of the domestic labor than he will.” Dr. Jethry’s habit to take on household needs is not an individual choice, but rather a generalized trend, coined, “as women do.” Their relationship perpetuates this dynamic when “I’ll take on more of the burden at home and he’ll allow that [*with her intonation going up*] because, I think, sort of the spoken and unspoken understanding is that his job is more important because he is up here,” indicating a superior level.

The generational gap between Professor Marks and Professor Jethry reflected different experiences with restraints on their gender in the workplace, as shown by perceptions of sexism and reliance on mentorship. However, the family burdens of these women persisted past legal efforts to equalize household labor between men and women. These personal accounts reflected

the spatial organization of these two interviews. There was no desk barrier dividing the interviewer from the interlocutor in either setting. I recognized my positionality as an undergraduate student speaking with these two professors who focus on advising students. The familiar dynamic exhibited an energy of openness and comfort, because this dialogue aligned closely with the established relationship between student and advisor.

Family Models

Professor Bach and Professor Marson each spoke to the prominent influence of the structures of their respective families of origin. Considering the modeling of household organization, financial burden, and career expectations, these informants expressed and exemplified the powerful impact of familial background.

Professor Bach, sitting next to me at a small, round table in a public cafe, spoke over the noisy surroundings about her experiences in academia, especially with regards to acquiring tenure. Seeing as Bach retired and was among one of the first women in her department at Penn, her experience through higher education aligned more temporally with Dr. Marks' and Dr. Shana's careers. Dr. Bach did not always notice the sexism that Dr. Marks pointed to so emphatically. She reflected: "In my undergraduate experience I noticed nothing about being... a woman. There were enough women that it just didn't occur to me that I was a woman." Gender remained a nonissue. "In my graduate career, actually there weren't that many women, but there were enough so that I didn't feel that anything was open or closed because I was a woman." The hiring process presented Dr. Bach with her first noticeable limitations based on gender.

Despite the gender-based constraints of her generation, Dr. Bach experienced far fewer pushbacks due to the mentality she was raised with. Most of her female peers faced gendered expectations of career trajectories, as there were "a lot of women in my generation who sort of had mothers who stayed home." Bach "grew up differently than other women. I was an only child with a single mother. And so I grew up only with a woman, and she had to work, so I thought that's what women did." Bach's mother modeled behavior of a financially independent, working woman whose gender played no inhibiting role in her access to successful careers. Bach learned that professional impediments did not necessarily reflect gendered hindrances, as Bach's mother "wasn't held back by virtue of her gender; if she was held back, it was by virtue of her business." After a childhood that depended on her mother's self-sufficiency, Bach said, "I wasn't raised to think that there were gonna be [gender] differences, nobody ever talked about it." Her preconceived notions of gender equality

in the workforce thus played to her advantage, as Bach saw no reason not to "widen" her "horizons" with new opportunities and pursuits.

Dr. Bach's perspectives on work reflected her mother's mentality while raising her, similar to how Professor Marson's concerns about security stemmed from the instability of her family of origin. Whereas Dr. Bach's mother modeled the norm of a self-reliant career woman, Dr. Marson's mother experienced insecurity and familial dependence. Professor Marson, with her legs stretched out and crossed, faced the door as she spoke to me over the corner of her desk. She reflected on her parents' marriage, saying "My mother... really probably should have left my father." Even as a child, Marson held onto this critical perspective, because "growing up I'd say, 'You know, you aren't being treated very well, you really should leave.' And she would say, 'Well, I couldn't possibly take care of you girls, [Dr. Marson and her sister] if I don't stay' [in this relationship]." Dr. Marson grew up in a family structure in which the woman remained dependent on the male, to the detriment of her emotional health. As a result, Marson "internalized that, and never wanted to be without a job for myself." Her mother modeled behavior that equated inability to financially provide, paired with family burdens of childrearing, to unhappiness in her relationship.

Professor Marson actively fostered a career path to steer away from the example her mother set for her. In her professional trajectory, she said, "I really wanted security," "was way more cautious, and made sure that I had positions." To ensure her capacity to provide, Marson avoided the possibility of ever being reliant upon a spouse: "I work in this job and my husband stays home with the kids... I don't want to be in a position where I feel like I have to stay for anything." After a childhood of observing her mother in an unhappy, but financially necessary marriage, Marson actively determined to take on the financial responsibility to ensure her marriage rests on something more substantial than money. The dynamics within her household also gained influence from her upbringing, enacting "an orientation and a response to my family situation that had to do gender; I think in the sense that my mother really didn't feel like she was as valuable as my dad." The notion of "value" may manifest financially, intellectually, or even relatively with regards for power dynamics within the marriage.

Because of Dr. Marson's utmost prioritization of security, her career took on a very different direction than many of her colleagues. Put simply, "I took less risk." For example, "in graduate school, there were other people going more out on a limb than I was, like taking a language fellowship and going to Russia." Along with these opportunities came uncertainty, and she noted, "I just didn't feel like I could do that. I was afraid that I

wouldn't be able to come back and find a job, you know, or that I wouldn't have anyone to rely on." Marson's concerns with financial independence and job security persisted throughout her academic career path. She eliminated the option of "the roving postdoc" because "I wanted the stability of the honors program." Even today, "family is constantly being a part of my decision making," such as moving to Philadelphia to be near her husband's family. She also added, "my mother, by the way, now lives with us, so another part of the dynamic." These familial forces, from modeled behaviors to present-day caretaking, played prominent roles in Professor Marson's career choices.

Both Dr. Bach and Dr. Marson gained influences from their respective families of origin. While Bach's background pushed her to seek new horizons, Marson learned to take the cautious route in her career pursuits. Despite these divergent mentalities, these two professors both exhibit(ed) prominent careers, fostering significant academic growth, social justice, and scholarly productivity at Penn.

Outlier and Generalizability

The vast majority of my interlocutors presented the perspectives of women entering the male-centered academy. In the main data set, participants spoke about patriarchal forces controlling the hiring process, determining wage, perpetuating entrenched norms of domestic burdens, and lowering expectations for women's intellectual contributions. The aforementioned professors are all scholars in departments in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania. The data so far reflects the experiences of women pursuing academic positions in the social sciences, especially in feminizing areas of study in recent years.

One interview conveyed an outlying perspective from this trend among the participants. Professor Quadron, who teaches at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing, provided a unique perspective in this data set. The gender ratio plays a significant role in her access and opportunities, as "nursing is a little different just because we're female-populated." Rather than highlighting the gender-based inequalities among colleagues, Professor Quadron pointed out that she experienced "more of a dynamic of physician-nurses." Inferior treatment thus reflected more of an imbalance of career respectability, instead of incapacities or domestic expectations of women. She said, "I think sometimes nursing is definitely looked at as kind of a secondary; had not had as high of a ranking as some other professions." While nursing as a broader field faces this mistreatment, the prestige of Penn Nursing represents an exception to this norm. Professor Quadron clarified that "at Penn it's not, you know what I mean? We're kind of, it's an equal

playing field so we are respected, but I don't think that's the norm across the country."

Despite the institutional and ingrained differences between Nursing and the College, Professor Quadron's career trajectory gained similar influences from professional support networks. The previously analyzed interviews have emphasized the influence of mentors, role models, and supportive communities in enhancing career opportunities. Professor Quadron similarly spoke about her mentor. "She was my initial, kind of, gave me that jump to...believe and...set my path." This mentor provided integral professional guidance, as she "helped me come up with...this new idea of meshing the school of nursing and the hospital."

Similar to many of the interlocutors with advising roles, Professor Quadron focused on the role of the students in her current position. Professor Marson, speaking to her frustrations in faculty meetings, raised the notion that mentorship lacks hierarchical structure. Marson explained, "My mentors are the allies: the few faculty and staff who really understand this idea of privilege and difference. And, frankly, the students... who have really taught me so much." Reciprocal learning thus plays a prominent role in Professor Marson's advising methods. Professor Quadron reflected a similar sentiment that dismissed differential treatment based on rankings. She claimed, "I always have my students call my by my first name, because in my philosophy, you respect me, I respect you, and we'll be colleagues in four years."

Although Professor Quadron represented an exception to the traditional trajectory of many of the professors in the College, her sentiments and sources of inspiration showed great similarity. This finding suggests that professional support and interpersonal connection transcend the differences between fields of scholarly work. These tools for success pervade as sources to learn, grow, and foster networks that present opportunity. This interview with Professor Quadron provided important insight: even when the power dynamics present come from physician-nurse relations rather than gendered interactions (though these relationships sometimes run parallel), mentorship and supportive learning environments still play important roles in occupational success.

My research design delved into the experiences of women in Penn's faculty, aiming to gain a well-rounded understanding of the female experience in the academy. Almost all of the interviewees were female professors within the College of Arts and Sciences, so I do not have sufficient data to apply my findings across schools. Additionally, I excluded male and nonbinary participants to focus on the common experience of women, so I cannot compare behaviors with male or gender-nonconforming professors.

Conclusion

In addressing work-personal life balance and the domestic burden of cisgender women, my ethnographic interviews question the effectiveness of legal attempts at equality in the workplace, recalling Kollontai and the notion of relational feminism. The hierarchical and exclusive nature of the academy poses power dynamics inextricably tied to social factors that incorporate gender, nationality, prestige, and race. With high standards at the zenith of the intellectual hierarchy, competition spurs, and political dynamics take personal as well as professional tolls. Women have generally been integrated into male-centric education and economic systems, forced to follow the established rules of the game. My research aims to conceptualize how individual and collaborative academic pursuits reify hierarchies based on codified norms at the intersection of gender, age, race, and family structure.

The interviews portrayed in this paper provide an excerpted view into these hierarchies when considering the subjects' upbringing and background. My findings about these women entering a male-dominant realm reveal the importance of a supportive community in doing so. Professor Shana received encouragement from a culture that normalized female professors, indicating how the routinized path of her surrounding community steered her own career path. The collective normalization of female academics in her background paved the way for her entrance into the male-dominated Economics Departments at Harvard and Columbia. Professor Dennon sought a community of like-minded feminists within the institution that contains hierarchies along gendered and racial lines. Gender and Women's Studies reflected the nexus of structural academia, interpersonal relatability, and individual curiosity.

Professor Jethry and Professor Marks gained self-presentational input and professional advice from mentorship relationships. As they contributed to the relatively feminized fields of Art History and Anthropology, respectively, these two professors gleaned wisdom and guidance from female mentors in the professorial community. At the same time, their household habits fall along gender lines, reifying women's traditional roles in the domestic sphere with undervalued careers. Professor Bach and Professor Marson revealed the influence of their family models on their subsequent career trajectories and lifestyles as professional women, with little emphasis on the impact of their selected disciplines. The patterns exhibited by their mothers inspired their prominent careers in academia, rejecting societal expectations of domesticity.

Professor Quadron highlighted the guidance received from her advisor and imparted to her students as she took on new roles. Although her experiences at Penn Nursing circumvent typical gender power relations

in the female-dominated field, Professor Quadron, like the other informants, sought collective support as an individual rising through the academic ranks. Across disciplines, these professors' entrances into a male-dominated institution (in the U.S.) often come at the costs of isolation and dismissal, prodding women to seek strong forms of social and professional support.

The interviewees' common thread of seeking support networks reflects the core tenants of practice theory. This framework considers the habits of social beings, such as the interpersonal tendencies of female professors trying to navigate patriarchal family norms and academic structures. The informants voiced their intentions to persevere in individual, intellectual, and professional endeavors, and acknowledged the tensions of doing so in a system built primarily by and for men. Considering the male-oriented intentions of the institution, the women constructed and sought out spaces for community connections that counteract the hegemonic powers in place at Penn. Whether in professional mentorship, family support, or like-minded peer groups, the female informants expressed the necessity of establishing routines of collective support.

The series of interviews presents women in a range of fields and positions interacting with this stratified system at the University of Pennsylvania. Personal anecdotes about rank, upbringing, spousal conflicts, sexual dynamics, and authority figures provide insight regarding the integration of women into professorship in the past sixty years. Legal reforms aim to rectify schisms in opportunity and treatment. Culture progresses as each generation gains a new set of perspectives and expectations of women, building on their predecessors. Along with legal and cultural change, social constructions of gender continue to blur. However, beyond interpersonal discrimination, the biological difference of ciswomen remains a prominent challenge faced by professors. Childrearing reflects a colossal undertaking that often poses a threat to career progression, and U.S. policy lacks the infrastructure to address this burden. Legally, culturally, and systematically, the male-oriented academy fails to take these largely female needs into account.

This ethnographic research project shows how female professors tend to seek a community to navigate the academy in solidarity. The incorporation of practice theory further informs the scholarly support for the use of sociality to navigate hardship. I conclude that social connection unites like-minded individuals with this common experience, exhibited in the roles of mentorship, friendship, and professional encouragement. My finding of pervasive community-seeking measures among female professors calls into question whether this evidence implicates a generalizable social practice. The interpersonal tendencies may perhaps reflect a

performative notion of feminized work ethics. Whether habitual or performative, familial or advisory, my research reveals the significant impact social support has on the career trajectories of women in higher education.

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A Comprehensive Unveiling of Detention Center Conditions at the U.S.-Mexico Border

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Thermal blankets, cages, fences, tents, and overcrowded bodies appear in the few and far between images the public has of current detention center conditions. Most Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention centers do not allow public visitation of these spaces. In a letter to the Department of Homeland Security, the acting Inspector General records:

We observed dangerous overcrowding at the facility with single adults held in cells designed for one-fifth as many detainees. Specifically, we observed: 1) a cell with a maximum capacity of 12 held 76 detainees; 2) a cell with a maximum capacity of 8 held 41 detainees; and 3) a cell with a maximum capacity of 35 held 155 detainees (U.S. Department of Homeland Security [USDHS] 2019).

In May 2019, facility inspectors called for immediate action to be taken against certain detention processing centers at the border (USDHS 2019). Although access to information on conditions and behaviors within these spaces is limited, it can still be concluded from what information is available that these spaces are serving the same purpose and conditions as internment camps.

The current conditions, structures, and policies of immigrant detention in the United States parallel many other global examples of inhumane internment. "To intern" can be defined archaeologically as "the practice of organizing material culture and space to control and restrict the movement of a person or a group of people" (Myers and Moshenska 2011:2). The organization of material culture and space can mean the intentional architectural manipulation of distance between buildings to have better sight of those interned, the construction of chain-link fences to create physical boundaries between outside the fence and inside, and the location design between sleeping quarters, eating quarters, and work quarters to ensure faster movement of detainees between spaces. Another definition offered defines internment as "all forms of unjust imprisonment: those that are not the result of a fair and equitable legal process" (Myers and Moshenska 2011:3). I argue that internment is precisely what is happening at the U.S.- Mexico border today.

There are 135 detention centers in the United States (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement [USICE] 2019a). This number does not include processing

centers. This number does not include the private affiliates of ICE adult detention centers. This number does not include the numerous centers holding migrant children and toddlers. Within the known 135 detention centers accounted for by the U.S. government, approximately 50 immigrant detention centers are taking place in correctional facilities or prisons (USICE 2019a). The most recent facility inspection guides were established in 2000, 2008, and 2011 by ICE (USICE 2019b). In the course of the last couple months of my research, September through November 2019, detention facilities listed on the ICE website have updated from 129 to 131 to 135 (USICE 2019a).

This study provides a comprehensive description of the current policies and conditions of detention centers at the U.S.-Mexico border and emphasizes the physical and emotional effects on people detained in these spaces. Torres's (2014) theory of the 'militarization of consciousness' and Agamben's (2005) theories of sovereignty and 'states of exception' are foundational in this research for understanding how detention centers, prisons, and other forms of internment are exercises by governments to promote fear and 'otherness'. Constant 'othering' by the state allows for the criminalization and abuse of migrants who have engaged in entirely natural human behavior, that of mobility. A lack of transparency and complete public coverage of the abuses allow for further mistreatment of migrants and their families.

This thesis is written for anthropologists and other social scientists, other undergraduate students, the general public, and policy makers. I aim to provide clear information to any individual who is a migrant, works with migrants, or interacts with migrant populations. Ultimately, my goal is to disperse this information out to everyone and anyone who has power in changing the current immigration system in the United States and beyond. This change can be created through the advocacy of migrant communities, implementation of new, sensitive, migration policies, and working internationally to redefine perspectives on migration and detention of migrants.

My motivation for this research is to provide greater insight into the obscured environment, spaces, and terminology used when referring to the United States' current immigration system. Education on these topics allows for critical thinking about the policies in place as well as the shaping of more humane interactions

with those outside one's community. In numerous historical accounts, basic human rights violations were seen as dismissible by local and global communities. However, in some instances, those violations became the stepping stones that transitioned into mass violence against certain communities and even genocide. The 'camp' specifically has acted as a vessel by the state to induce such violence and rightlessness (Fassin 2005; Myers and Moshenska 2011:11).

A Contextual History

Since the attacks on September 11, 2001 in the United States, state policies have shifted dramatically towards promoting security out of fear. The fear of outsiders within our nation created aggressive policies on immigration and in international affairs (Callan 2018:3398-4007). United States border enforcement started becoming "far more rigorous and oppressive" in its ground tactics and granting of visas (Torres 2014:xiv). For the past three presidential administrations, the targets of deportation have been inconsistent. For example, the Obama administration primarily focused on the deportation of migrants with criminal charges. Today, the Trump administration is calling for deportation of all 'illegal' immigrants despite some just having a civil immigration violation, such as a speeding ticket (Shapiro 2019).

In October 2018, more than 1,200 migrants originating in Central America started traveling north through Mexico with the hope of entering the United States with claims of asylum (Pindado and Ortiz 2018). This event and other journeys by migrant caravans to the United States were met with:

Mass illegal pushbacks of asylum-seekers at the U.S.-Mexico border; illegally breaking up thousands of families by separating children from their parents; limiting where and when individuals can apply for asylum and by increasingly relying on the use of arbitrary and indefinite detention of people seeking protection (Pindad and Ortiz 2018).

Almost a year later, "more than 50,000 people are currently being held in ICE facilities... approximately 20,000 are being held in CBP centers... [and] more than 11,000 children are now in the custody of HHS" (Joung 2019). As of October 2019, close to 4,000 African migrants are in the southern region of Mexico hoping to trek upward to the U.S.-Mexico border (Kahn 2019). Immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers from many continents around the world have the potential to travel through (or already have traveled through) detention centers at the U.S.-Mexico border. Because of these large numbers, it is crucial to examine how the states and conditions of these spaces have changed due to higher processing periods and political climate, what conditions

are currently like, and how to make these spaces more humane for the individuals.

In order to have the most productive discussion, it is also important to define the differences between migrant, refugee, and asylum seekers. Each of these words are coded with concepts of race, politics, and an outsider status. Despite having similar connotations, these words can potentially play a big role in legislation and how the public views issues of migration (Fassin 2005:223-226). Amnesty International, an independent organization seeking to protect human rights worldwide, defines a refugee as someone whose 'home' government cannot or will not protect their lives and rights and has fled due to such fear. An asylum seeker is a refugee who has not yet been "legally recognized" (Amnesty International 2019). A migrant and the reasons for migrating can be defined as:

People staying outside their country of origin, who are not asylum-seekers or refugees. Some migrants leave their country because they want to work, study or join family, for example. Others feel they must leave because of poverty, political unrest, gang violence, natural disasters or other serious circumstances that exist there (Amnesty International 2019).

Migrating is a completely natural and human endeavor that has existed for many reasons for millions of years. For the sake of this paper, I will primarily use the term of migrant instead of refugee or asylum seeker to center my argument around the natural migrating process that has been present throughout all of history. The migrants to which I refer to may also be refugees or asylum seekers. Individuals currently migrating to the United States are primarily from Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Ecuador, and Brazil (Burke and Mendoza 2018; Bogado 2019).

Theoretical Considerations and Literature Review

In order to best understand the current physical conditions and power structures currently within detention centers at the U.S.-Mexico border, I look to the work of three main social theorists: Nicole Torres, Didier Fassin, and Giorgio Agamben. Nicole Torres presents a theory of 'militarization of consciousness' that is present at the U.S.-Mexico border. As discussed, one's own abstract ideas of differences and borders can lead to a physical creation of borders for those not within that idea of community (Anderson 2016). Torres expands upon this idea by saying, "inner space can be militarized... in this day and age, the militarization of internal space includes an ever-expanding list of concerns and grievances that include racism, war, downward mobility, crime, drugs, illegality, citizenship and belonging" and countless others

(Torres and Gurevich 2018). Inner space is the space of contemplation within our thoughts and feelings that drive our responses to things in the physical world. Having our thoughts constantly heightened by militarized issues like racism or illegality causes panic within ourselves. Constantly fearful and panic-filled thoughts lead to aggressive actions to ensure security or internal serenity again.

The state constantly creates and feeds into these fears by engaging in war-focused and security-related rhetoric. These everyday concerns can be transformed into issues of mass security like when the phrases 'war on drugs,' 'trade war,' and now the 'war on immigration' are used. These choices in rhetoric are meant to polarize the issues and deem extreme external action necessary to find safety again internally (Torres 2014). When the Trump administration declared a 'National Emergency' in order to find funding for a wall at the border, despite most of the border already having a wall, they militarized the issue (Baker 2019). Declaring a 'National Emergency' automatically can generate internal comments like, 'Is this an emergency? Apparently so, because it is being declared as one by a very important individual,' or 'Oh, this is serious. I must take more caution in order to protect myself and my loved ones.'

As these emergencies are announced, one can see how one can become controlled by war-like narratives where "war-making and state-making become internalized" (Enloe 2000:49; Torres and Gurevich 2018). Ultimately, war can be understood as a demonstration to secure one's power. Power can simply be defined as having control over one's self and/or others. Control is something we all strive for in life whether that be through the clothes we put on each day or the food we put in our bodies to nourish and protect us.

In war, whether consciously or unconsciously, there is the creation of a strong marker between us and them. The making of a protected, secure, and powerful 'us' is the state-making that Enloe (2000) refers. By "war-making and state-making... an individual either consciously or unconsciously becomes disciplined into performing as an agent of violence" (Torres and Gurevich 2018). An agent of violence is a creator of further systemic harm to the 'other'. The public as state-makers begin to enact the very aggressive notions of security imposed on them by the state previously. They are now enlisted by the state to act out its ambitions. Torres describes further that not only do people become perpetrators and victims of violence, but also "accustomed to, or actively participate in, the social and physical distress of others" (Torres 2014: xxii). Torres's work helps shine a light on how decisions can be made by ICE officials, case workers, and the public on matters of immigration. The militarization of consciousness can and

will define immigration policies as well as how individuals approach conditions within detention centers.

In Peter Hayes' *Why? Explaining the Holocaust* (2017), he explains there was "no shortage of Germans ready to participate in the torture and killing of Jews" because "the Nazi regime succeeded in creating a closed mental world, an ideological echo chamber in which leaders constantly harped on the threat that Jews supposedly constituted the need for Germans to defend themselves against it" (Hayes 2017:144). He emphasizes the importance of the "group solidarity" created by Nazis (Hayes 2017:138). Young men, eager to claim a proud German identity and the belief systems associated with that identity, became "'political soldiers' in service to Nazi racial ideology" (Hayes 2017:140, 142). These men were not placed in "extreme circumstances... but rather military creations of the Nazi regime, schooled in the need for racial purification (Hayes 2017:140).

The "ideological echo chamber" that Hayes discusses can directly be related to Torres's ideas about the militarization of consciousness through social media, language used by political figures, and elsewhere. As indicated previously, people are not actually being placed in war or 'extreme circumstances', but in war-inspired scenarios. Internal states are constantly being re-educated in ideas of difference and danger. Eventually, the German people's "beliefs conform[ed] to behavior" (Hayes 2017:139). People changed their beliefs as they saw what was being done to cope with the extermination of the Jewish population. "They did not kill because they hated their victims, but they decided to hate them because they thought they had to kill them" (Hayes 2017:139). As can be seen, it is increasingly important to examine the language associated with identity and power. Through Hayes and Torres, one can understand how these notions can drastically affect one's behaviors and perceptions of others and questions of morale. Otherwise, the victims of a militarized consciousness quickly become perpetrators who are 'just following orders'.

Related, Agamben and Fassin define "the camp" and explore many variations of spaces operating under "state[s] of exception". 'The camp' is one space where normal procedures and rights are not respected because governments are operating under conditions that would 'allow' exception (Agamben 2005:40). Fassin (2005:222-229) notes nine types of spaces with similar objectives -- to exclude and hold -- with different meanings depending on public and political views on humanitarianism and the political state. These nine spaces include: the center; the detention center; the waiting zones; the camp; the transit camp; the internment camp; the refugee camp; the jail; and the prison. How these terms are used are very much tied in with how terminology of mobile persons (migrant, refugee, asylum seeker) are used.

Discussions of a nation's sovereignty and the power it holds to make decisions about who is afforded rights is integral to understanding spaces of exception. Agamben notes the "state of exception marks a threshold at which logic and praxis blur with each other and a pure violence without logos claims to realize an enunciation without any real reference" (2005:40). More simply put, after a crisis is claimed by the state, a state can respond to said crisis with as much power and force deemed necessary to address the problem. Basic human rights can be taken away if deemed necessary by the government to fix the problem. When there is no rights or humanity attached to people, they are stripped down to 'bare life'. 'Bare life' does not qualify one to make decisions about one's own life. People do not have the right to make decisions and people do not have the right to their own body. They lose all power and control in how their bodies, voices, and stories will be used. They are just a moving, breathing thing. States of exception allow for the denial of the full humanity of others and thereby allowing for their mistreatment (Agamben 2005). This theory is foundational in identifying the United States as a state of exception and excusing the rights and resources of thousands of migrants entering and living in the U.S.

Methodological Considerations

The aim of this paper is to provide the most up-to-date picture of detention centers at the U.S.-Mexico Border as of November 2019. Of course, that does create some limitations on the number of peer-reviewed works that relate directly to the situation at this time. Most academic publications take place one to two years after certain events have occurred, as there is a need to be aware of such events, analyze such events, peer review ones work, and publish. Unfortunately, immigrant detention has existed in the United States (and elsewhere) for many years, but that does mean I have access to some academic work done on immigrant detention. It may not reflect the same policies and ultimately conditions of the current high-processing period of migrants in the United States. Pictures, testimonies, and other accounts of the current state of the detention centers are sometimes covered by news outlets, but with varying amounts of information. The pictures and accounts of media outlets analyzed in this paper have been cross-referenced with government and academic documents whenever possible and have been automatically dismissed from my literature review if possessing obvious biased or polarizing language. This exercise of caution has allowed for the most up-to-date, accurate, and helpful depiction of the current conditions at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Most of the literature I am considering in this analysis addresses previous contexts of the U.S.-Mexico Border, cross-cultural detention center contexts, and

a study of similar spaces of detainment like prisons and internment camps, as well as the access to this information. The vast majority of theory and sources used are peer-reviewed and are from the social sciences. I am also using government websites to better understand the goals and rhetoric used by government agencies to address the questions in this thesis.

I have explored many of these ideas through interviews I have conducted with two legal assistants, Danny and Sam (aliases), of migrants who have been detained. Danny has been involved with an organization providing legal assistance to migrants in detention for approximately a year and a half. He works primarily with minors. Sam has been involved with organizations for approximately three years that have provided legal assistance and information on both sides of the border to migrants. Danny and Sam are both fluent in Spanish and English. I interviewed Danny through recorded telephone calls twice with field notes. I interviewed Sam once through telephone with field notes.

Although, I considered interviewing those being detained in these spaces (or previously detained in these spaces) in order to retrieve the most honest and revealing insight into one's experiences, I ultimately reasoned it would be too risky for the interviewee and I to conduct interviews due to the intense measures taken by the current administration to locate undocumented migrants. Additionally, interviews will not be conducted because it may be difficult for individuals to discuss and relive a potentially traumatic experience while in detention. This high-risk assessment should signify just how crucial honest discussion about the immigration system are needed at this moment.

I am a white undergraduate student from the southern United States. I have never been in a detention center nor am I aware of anyone close to me who has been detained in a detention center. I do not have any experience working for the government or in security. I do live in a state with large populations of immigrants. I am hoping to expand on the current conditions of the detention centers and other spaces migrants journey through at the U.S.-Mexico border because of its increasing relevance every day in the United States. I found it also necessary to do such work because of a lack of academic information circulating about the most current detention process and conditions.

I am a Peregrin Scholar under Dr. Dorian Stuber, professor of Holocaust education and literature at Hendrix College. As a Peregrin Scholar, I engage with Holocaust-focused literature and educate the public about various aspects of the Holocaust and the Jewish community. In this research, I have cross-referenced immigrant detention with Holocaust internment in multiple sections of my analysis. Many historians believe

comparisons to the Holocaust are irresponsible and potentially a minimization of the events. I have strived to be sensitive to these matters. However, I believe as an anthropologist, it is incredibly important to discuss where there are similar patterns of human behavior such as through group identity and spaces of exclusion. How people interact with ideas of race, class, and power are comparable across different cultures and time.

Finally, I have tried to make this work more accessible to readers everywhere by explaining abstract anthropological concepts in plain language instead of academic jargon. I am also working currently to have in translated into Spanish so that it is more accessible to a wider linguistic audience.

Data and Analysis

Processing Centers

The images seen through news sources of migrant families and often children being held in the widely discussed 'cages' are known as ICE short term detention centers or processing centers. These centers are often the first stop in a migrant's journey through detention in the United States.

These processing centers can also be termed as transit camps. A transit camp is a space or center that is a temporary holding spot for internees before being transferred to a more long-term destination. Often these transitional spaces serve as convenient holding stations before further movement or decisions are made about what to do with the individuals in holding. Other examples of transit camps throughout history include "immigrants from Kosovo, Kurdistan, and Afghanistan... housed in a warehouse... on their way to seeking asylum in Britain" (Fassin 2005:363) and "tens of thousands of Jews, mostly from Hungary and Poland... held as a labor reserve to be 'distributed'" by SS men to work or to gas chambers (Auschwitz.org 2019). Even though many believe issues of detention and ICE agents are only truly relevant in border states such as Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, or California, these states host only 34.8 percent of the adult detention centers in the United States (USICE 2019a). These transit spaces in border states are utilized when sorting through future transportation to many more facilities across the United States.

Finding the legal limits of adult stays in processing centers is not clearly or accessibly noted in media or public government documents, to my knowledge. However, children are required to be transported to longer term detention within 72 hours of being in processing centers (Gruwell 2018). Over the last three years, these times have been exceeded by border authorities repeatedly (Hauslohner and Sacchetti 2019). In August 2019, the current presidential administration announced the end of the Flores Settlement, which sets the condition

standards and legal time limits of each minor's stay (Gruwell 2018; Naylor 2019). The new policy replacing the Flores Settlement means that "migrant families who are detained after crossing the border can be kept indefinitely, until their cases are decided" by immigration courts, in all detention facilities including processing centers (Naylor 2019). This is a perfect example of how the state creates more aggressive, or uncaring, policies in order to fix the state-proposed problem of immigration into the United States. We are currently waiting on the Supreme Court to discuss this policy revision.

In a podcast report done by Reveal News, a multi-award winning non-profit investigative journalism organization, many conditions within processing centers are unveiled. Their podcast transcription reads:

The doctors and attorneys say hundreds of young people are living under inhumane conditions at a Texas border control station... Federal inspectors observe serious overcrowding and prolonged detention at five locations just three weeks ago... Outbreaks of scabies, shingles, and chickenpox spreading among the hundreds of children being held in cramped cells... Advocates who visited children at border facilities last month spoke publicly about flu quarantines, lice infestations, and babies drinking milk out of dirty bottles. Many of the children had not had access to a single shower or bath. They were wearing the same dirty clothing that they crossed the border with... Customs and border protections own policies say migrant youth cannot be held at border patrol facilities for more than 72 hours. But advocates say they've spoken to kids who've been held for weeks at a time (Bogado 2019).

Outside of the few images taken and the reports by doctors and legal officials taken of these spaces, it is very difficult to have a perspective inside these spaces. Legal assistants to migrants are not allowed in these spaces, although they are allowed in longer-term detention (Danny personal communication 2019). Border Patrol agents, government officials such as the director of Homeland Security, and sometimes asylum officers are the only persons allowed in these spaces. As I discuss below, I believe spaces of internment should be constantly and rigorously assessed. Clear and accessible information about the rights of detainees, conditions and goings-on within detention centers, and the ability to visit detainees is vastly important and ethical if immigrant detention is expected to continue.

Adult Migrant Detention

Fortunately, there is much more information available on the next parts of the detention process, though still not enough. The next step of the journey for migrants

after transit detention centers is differentiated based on one's age as well as family relationship status. I have encountered three main spaces in my research process. Unfortunately, there are private organizations funded by the government or outside donors that are not required to release information about their detention practices and numbers on government documents or websites. Hopefully, through further research, anthropologists and the public alike can find useful answers despite the lack of transparency. The three primary spaces that kept showing up in my research are ICE adult detention centers, Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Shelters, and 'tender age shelters' also run by ORR.

ICE adult detention centers are spaces for detaining individuals over the age of 18 as they wait for their asylum claims and possible visa violations to go to trial. After interviewing Danny, I was able to find out that three out of four detention centers in Arizona hold only males, leaving one of these centers holding both male and female detainees. These detention centers are "essentially prisons" as described by one of my interviewees to which they later corrected to mean functioning like prisons. Approximately fifty of the one-hundred-and-thirty publicly known adult detention centers in the US are actually being housed in correctional facilities, prisons, or jails (USICE 2019a). Other locations include specifically made detention centers for migrants, temporary tent cities, and camps on military bases (Brasuell 2018; CityLab 2018; USICE 2019a). Danny notes migrants are "forced to wear jumpsuits" and reside in barred cells with one other roommate. If a detainee "leaves detention, [they] will be shackled, handcuffed." Those being detained do have access to meals three times a day, although they are "not culturally appropriate" and have been described by migrants as "not good." There is a designated outdoors time. And migrants can work towards earning one dollar a day. Migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are being held in prisons and treated like the prisoners of the United States criminal justice system despite sometimes not committing any crimes, including illegal entry. This includes asylum seekers who must enter through a border patrol port of entry in order to even be potentially recognized as an asylum seeker versus a migrant. On April 30, 2019, 64 percent of the approximately fifty-thousand detained had no criminal conviction on record (TRAC Reports 2019). Those that were identified as "criminal" include those with non-violent offenses, traffic violations, immigrant violations, and others who have already served time for their offenses years, if not, decades ago (TRAC Reports 2019).

Allowing migrant detention to occur specifically within prisons or prison-like settings further establishes ideas of 'illegality' and the 'criminals' Donald Trump

has alluded to in his speeches (Ye Hee Lee 2015). This feeds into our militarized consciousness of continual ideas of the need for protection from outsiders. This is also highly problematic because it criminalizes the very act of mobilization. Humans have invariably been mobile creatures hoping to find better resources and opportunities elsewhere throughout all of their existence.

The privatization of the prison system not only affects inmates in the criminal justice system, but also migrants who are treated like criminals. Goals to make profit out of punishment creates a system that minimizes the care of those being imprisoned. The quality of food, clothing, extra materials those imprisoned can buy with their earned cash, the beds, sheets, and other necessities for everyday life are profited on by saving as much money as possible (Brave New Films 2015; Perera 2018). Additionally, the privatization of the prison system and immigrant detention means increasing profits every extra night someone stays in their facility (Perera 2018). This body count and low-quality materials and food lead the state (and the private company) to profit instead of losing money through interning individuals (Perera 2018). Dr. Leah Sarat, an associate professor at Arizona State University, summarizes many of these points by concluding with the statement, "what we are deciding is that some human lives are worth the care, worth our concern, and some are expendable" (Perera 2018). The ones worth caring for? United States 'citizens'. The people who are expendable? Anyone else.

As I have shared above, the privatization of prison creates profits for the state and prison companies by allowing the state to save money through private companies looking to lower the expenses of each inmate through food and bedding. Although the Trump administration would like a mass decline in immigration to occur, it may also be considered an additional monetary benefit to detain anyone who is undocumented or crosses the border. This is certainly something to consider as the state pushes further aggressive policies towards detention and deportation.

I could apply many more concepts regarding the current criminal prison system in the United States to immigrant detention, but that is not the focus of this research. Although, it helps to highlight the patterns of legislation and treatment of the 'outsiders' of our society. Additional information regarding the patterns of people of color being enslaved in different aspects throughout history (including the prison system), exclusion from full citizenship while in the prison system, as well as the conditions in the criminal prison system are discussed elsewhere (TheSentencingProject.org 2019; PenalReform.org 2019).

Adult Migrant Detention & Gender

Safety, a human right, is not always a given to migrants in detention spaces, but especially so for transfolks. According to Sam, transwomen are forced to reside in all male detention centers. These women have expressed numerous concerns about a lack of recognition by guards of their gender identity. Violent attacks by fellow inmates to these individuals have been laughed-off by guards even sometimes blaming the victim themselves for creating the problem -- the problem being gender non-conforming. When “protective” actions do take place for these transwomen, they are often ‘segregated’ from the group and left in solitary confinement (Sam personal communication 2019). Their abusers are often released before the transperson. Although isolation on the surface could reduce physical violence, it does not reduce the psychological harm for the victim in isolation. This kind of setting leaves individuals alone with their anxious and depressive thoughts with no one to confide in. Transwomen have declared that they “fear for their life”. Being raped or even being killed are of constant horrific concern by these victims, according to Sam. These very concerns of safety are often the concerns of asylum seekers from their country of origin, yet the country they seek to reside in is exhibiting these same behaviors. This is additional trauma they may experience.

Between 2012 and early 2017, there have been over 8,400 reports of solitary confinement for migrants who are simply LGBTQ+, individuals with disabilities, individuals who have engaged in consensual kissing, individuals on suicide watch, and people who have participated in hunger strikes (Woodman et al. 2019). Some reports record detainees “mutilating their genitals, gouging their eyes, cutting their wrists... smearing their cells with feces” and committing suicide. These are clear indicators of extreme pain detainees are suffering psychologically and physically through such segregation (Woodman et al. 2019). These segregative efforts are regularly used, and the numbers mentioned above only include solitary confinement periods longer than 14 days (Woodman et al. 2019). These accounts do not cover any of the reports from mid-2017 to present-day. That information has not easily been made traceable. These reports from 2012 through early-2017 were only released through the whistle-blowing of Ellen Gallagher, the current supervisor of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and investigative journalists from six organizations in multiple countries (Woodman et al. 2019).

It is obvious through the unnecessary shackling of detainees, the culturally inappropriate food given to detainees, their physical abuse, and their forced confinement, that migrants being detained do not have

bodily autonomy. They are rarely afforded the right of choosing how their bodies move, how their bodies interact with the spaces and people around them, the food that nourishes their bodies, as well as what can be inflicted upon their bodies. Their connection to their bodies is vastly important to their survival. Physical health and mental health are very much intertwined. By being imprisoned, one’s hope and liberty can be taken away. Now, it can be said that their bodies are not their own. And, they may never be entirely their own. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a common mental illness many people face after traumatic experiences such as detainment (American Medical Association [AMA] 2018). The United States government is taking away bodily and mental autonomy by interning migrants. There are very high likelihoods that these individuals are not only experiencing anxiety, depression, and PTSD while being detained, but well after (AMA 2018). These consequences, may I reiterate, are the consequences of human mobility.

Office of Refugee Resettlement Shelters

The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) shelters are the detention spaces where migrant youth are held if they have crossed the border alone or have been separated from family members when entering the United States. The children in these spaces theoretically can apply for one of four different types of visas, although acceptance of their claim is not guaranteed. The four types of visas include the Asylum Right visa, Special Immigrant Juvenile visa, U visa, and T visa. Just like the adult migrants in detention centers, they are allowed access to legal representation and knowledge.

Although the ORR shelters or group homes are literally centers of detainment, many organizers and staff of these spaces refuse to call them ‘detention centers.’ These spaces may be tent cities, old gyms, group homes, or other relevant locations to detain migrant children. These are the spaces I have come across in my research, but because of the nature of information dispersal about detention spaces for migrant children by ORR, these locations are not publicized traditionally. It should be continually noted though that these are spaces of detention. Migrant youth are not allowed to leave without a viable sponsor (Danny personal communication 2019). They are being kept in these spaces until government forces let them know otherwise. If children are not found a viable sponsor within a certain amount of time, ORR shelters offer the option of short-term and long-term foster care (Administration for Children & Families [ACF] 2012). Otherwise, detained migrant children “are removed to their country of origin by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Immigration officials” (ACF 2012).

Danny continuously described ORR spaces as “fascinating”. This word was used repetitively to describe Danny’s uncomfortability with these spaces. He often paired the word “fascinating” with “creepy” and “strange.” Danny went on to discuss with me the inappropriate rhetoric used in these spaces as well as the overall environment. Staffers within these spaces are encouraged to be referred to as ‘teacher’ by migrant youth detainees. While those being detained are referred to as ‘students.’ Staff members do not use phrases such as ‘detained’ or ‘released’. Instead, staff members work towards ‘reunifying’ the relationship between migrant children and a ‘viable sponsor.’ One criterion of being viewed as a ‘viable sponsor’ is governmental requirement of an address by that adult. In each of these centers, approximately 15-16 kids reside.

The rhetoric surrounding these spaces raises a concern about the amount of information the public would genuinely have about these spaces. When referring to the ORR website, the same terminology is used such as ‘reunify,’ ‘group homes,’ and other positive language drawing attention away from the reality that these are children being forced away from their families in a government-ruled center. Very little information outside of the services they offer is listed on their website. Unless someone has personal connections with ORR centers, ORR can stay hidden to the public eye unless current legislation is changed. ORR centers do not have to report their numbers of migrant children or their facility inspections under the title of migrant children holding facility to the public. ORR-affiliated centers may report failing inspections, but it is not included in the public record whether migrant children are residing in these shelters or not (Bogado and Michels 2019; ACF 2018). We, the public, have no idea where all of the detained migrant children are in the United States on any given day.

ORR centers appear to be modeled after middle schools or summer camps, Danny discussed with me. There are classes for these ‘students’ such as mathematics, science, English, and even soccer. Children are given three different cafeteria style meals and two snacks a day. At night, ‘students’ sleep on bunkbeds.

Children in these spaces have discussed many instances of sexual abuse by staff members. Danny even noted that these instances were “common, not unusual.” One of two staff members are required to stay each evening with the children. This is yet another example of a loss of bodily and mental autonomy in detention. Children are even more vulnerable and unable to stand up for themselves. The likeliness of this to occur more than migrant adult and abuse in detention does

seem far greater given the information provided by those I interviewed. Every form of abuse and assault is unacceptable.

Tender Age Shelters

For the sake of this paper, I have chosen to define ‘tender age’ shelters as the detention centers of migrant children and babies under the age of five. Most of the references I have found regarding ‘tender age’ shelters have pointed towards the age groups of those under five including Border Patrol officials (Karson 2018). However, just like many of the other topics I have gathered information, most of the terminology is ambiguous, amplifying the problem when trying to reveal the conditions behind these forms of internment. In this particular example, Border Patrol’s definition of ‘tender age’ differs from that of the Department of Health and Human Services, “tender age children we define as under 13 would fall into that category” (Karson 2018). As I have shown numerous times throughout my research, rhetoric is extremely powerful. Rhetoric can create so many obstacles for the public to discern to finally understand what is happening without the manipulation of language. The access available to the public on issues of detention in the United States is unacceptable. In this particular example, changing the definition of ‘tender age’ to mean someone under 13 is to give slight relief to those who are imagining the toddlers and babies in detention. Both of these definitions are taken from authorities within the immigration system. Examination of this ambiguity must make others question the capabilities of those handling the thousands of vulnerable people of all ages going through detention. An alternative question that stems from this ambiguity is whether or not this inconsistently is intentional. Either way, I and the public’s distrust in the current immigration system and its procedures only grows. For my research, I state the most discussed definition of this term, ‘tender age’.

‘Tender age shelters’ are the detention centers for migrant children, toddlers, and babies, under the age of five, “who have been forcibly separated from their parents at the U.S.-Mexico border” (Burke and Mendoza 2018). Although, family separation under the ‘zero-tolerance’ policy was declared to end in June 2018, reunification of families has not been completed almost a year later due to time of separation, locating ‘viable sponsors’ by the government’s standards and if [parents] are considered plaintiffs in a class action lawsuit against the Trump Administration (Aguilera 2019). In short, ‘tender age’ shelters are still active today. Doctors and lawyers who visited a few of these shelters reported that they were “fine, clean, and safe” but children were “hysterical, crying, and acting out” (Burke and Mendoza 2018). According to administration officials, “children [in permanent shelters]

are provided [services for] education, nutrition, hygiene, recreation, entertainment, medical, mental health and counseling” (Karson 2018). Additionally, children are under “constant supervision and observation to address any health or medical concerns” while they are in these shelters (Karson 2018). Steven Wagner, an official of the Department of Health and Human Services notes, “[tender age shelters] are not government facilities per se, and they have very well-trained clinicians, and those facilities meet state licensing standards for child welfare agencies, and they’re staffed by people who know how to deal with the needs -- particularly of the younger children” (Burke and Mendoza 2018). However, mental and physical health can be affected for these migrant children for many years down the road, not just in these centers. The act of being detained and separated from parents creates a multitude of problems, as stated previously.

Decades of studies show early separations can cause permanent emotional damage specifically for this age range, said Alicia Lieberman, who runs the Early Trauma Treatment Network at University of California, San Francisco. “Children are biologically programmed to grow best in the care of a parent figure. When that bond is broken through long and unexpected separations with no set timeline for reunion, children respond at the deepest physiological and emotional levels,” Lieberman says. She additionally notes, “their fear triggers a flood of stress hormones that disrupt neural circuits in the brain, create high levels of anxiety, make them more susceptible to physical and emotional illness, and damage their capacity to manage their emotions, trust people, and focus their attention on age-appropriate activities,” (Burke and Mendoza 2018).

A year later, tender age shelters are “quietly expanding” throughout the United States (Bogado, 2019). “The Department of Health and Human Services has awarded grants to three new facilities” for tender age children through as late as January 2022 (Bogado 2019). One shelter, Child Crisis Arizona, was cited for “hazardous conditions” such as “toy shelves that could easily be tipped over,” “unsanitary toys,” and “chipped paint” before migrant toddlers arrived (Bogado 2019). Bethany Children’s Home in Pennsylvania is functioning as a ‘tender age’ shelter and currently holding 11 unaccompanied children as of July 10, 2019 (Bogado 2019). RevealNews.org discusses major concerns in Bethany Children’s Home in the past:

They’ve also had some pretty serious issues in the past. Weeks before Bethany Children’s Home got a Federal grant to house unaccompanied minors it lost a wrongful death suit and a jury awarded 2.9 million dollars to the father of a kid who lived there... A

16-year-old girl left the facility and walked about a mile to some train tracks where she took her own life. And a jury ruled that Bethany failed to properly supervise her. In January, Bethany Children’s Home employee pleaded guilty to assault after setting up a teen to be beaten up by two others on a school bus. Yeah, and for the last two years, I found a long list of violations by Pennsylvania’s Department of Human Services. There were problems with children’s medication logs, an allegation of sexual abuse by a Bethany staffer wasn’t immediately reported to the state as it should be, and monitors also found that a staff member improperly restrained a kid who kicked a radiator and was being verbally aggressive (Bogado 2019).

These are just two newly funded ‘tender age’ shelters that have been investigated. RevealNews.org also comments that in June 2019, “the Trump Administration ordered the Office of Refugee Resettlement to stop funding certain educational, recreational, and legal services for children in the agency’s care” (Bogado 2019). I was unable to find any additional information about conditions and the lives in ORR’s ‘tender age’ shelters. However, the numbers of children separated from their families by this administration is estimated to range between 2,654 and 5,500 children (American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU] 2019; Da Silva 2019). The DHS inspector general reported that “DHS struggled to provide accurate, complete, and reliable data on family separations” (ACLU 2019).

Conclusion

Immigrant detention are spaces and policies of harsh internment employed simply because of an outsider status. These are spaces where there are no standards. And, transparency is non-existent. The public does not have access to understanding the true conditions and workings of the United States immigration detention system.

Not only are migrants being criminalized and punished for their mobility, they are also suffering from basic human rights abuses. Basic humanities such as safety from assault and abuse, dependence as a child on one’s parents or siblings, bodily autonomy and freedom from being handcuffed without reason, and a lack of guaranteed legal representation, and indefinite detention are the biggest human rights violations seen today. But unfortunately, the public is not completely seeing them.

The very act of making information not accessible to the public by the government despite so many lives affected showcases the lack of concern the government has for these lives. These people are not valued and neither is the American public. (It is worth

noting, during the writing of this thesis, animal cruelty was named a national felony by the United States [Gonzales 2019]. It is evident that the abuse of humans is considered nationally more acceptable than the abuse of animals.) These spaces of exception created by a state running on exception and feeding a narrative of exception and war-like fear is a space where rights are uncertain. These spaces indicate clearly that rights are not a priority for anyone involved.

Whether the state is intentionally not being transparent, I do not feel equipped to answer. However, I do believe the lack of comprehensible transparency could be a consequence of an already legislatively complicated system, an overwhelmed immigration system due to the amount of individuals migrating as well as the sweeping measures taken by the Trump administration to locate every migrant for possible deportation, and the treatment of migrants like United States criminals and minors (their information being privatized). These factors may affect the amount of information needed to be processed and simplified for the public, as well as excuses for the public to not even be told of migrant physical and psychological statuses. The administration may be more concerned about 'solving the problem' of immigration instead of how to address this 'problem'.

I would not argue that the public does not care about the rights of immigrants or the conditions of current detention centers at the border. Instead, I would argue that the public does not have enough access to what is going on in these centers. The access to clear information on the processes, policies, and conditions of detention centers is not present. This is unacceptable. If the U.S. public does not understand how the immigration system works, how can the US public expect immigrants to?

Through writing this thesis, it has been my effort to create transparency within the United States immigration detention system. Unfortunately, there are many more questions to be answered about detention in the United States, but I believe the research I have done as an academic scholar is a great starting point for the public and other scholars to engage in the very real, horrific conditions and processes of migrant detention. Through engaging with this material, the public can begin to become self-aware of our own militarization of consciousness, creation of identity, as well as become more empathetic. These steps create an opportunity for the next step of change to happen. Ultimately, detention should be abolished. However, detention conditions being made visible to the public and changeable by the public is our very next step. A life lived without borders and fear is a life everyone should seek.

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Visually Re-Remembering the Eastside: Trajectories of Belonging and Displacement in Austin

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Abstract

Historically the home to Black, African-American, Hispanic, and Chicanx communities, the Eastside of Austin, Texas is being confronted with the distinct pressures of the city's rapid growth. Residents of the Eastside are experiencing significant loss of physical spaces in the communities of the Eastside, such as in the closures of schools, local businesses, and in housing. This research explores the effects of these pressures and losses in the day-to-day lives of residents who are most vulnerable through visual and anthropologically-informed methods. Through the visual approaches of photovoice and social mapping, this research challenges traditional photographic practice by facilitating community members in the creation of their own visual representations of the Eastside. This research also explores the value of these visual methods to cultural anthropology, as they may serve to complement more established ethnographic research methods. This research examines the complex, ambivalent experiences of long-term residents living in a gentrifying space, where senses of belonging, home, and place are being actively challenged or subverted by the incoming demographic. These senses are also able to remain fixed both within and because of community practice. Considerations of agency and representation are reviewed for future visual inquiry of urban space and place, belonging, displacement, and other relating issues in social research.

Background: The Eastside of Austin

The City of Austin boasts many supposed exceptionalisms such as its reputation as a desirable and unique place for many to live, work, and play, and as a tolerant and socially liberal city (Auyero 2015). These sentiments are evidenced in one of the city's beloved slogans, 'Keep Austin Weird', a popular catchphrase for the city which implies a sort of unique inclusivity of a quirky, or diverse, social scape. The city also claims the title as being the 'Live Music Capital of the World', pulling people from all over the country and the world into its urban centers and downtown neighborhoods for music and multimedia festivals year-round. The city's exceptional reputation, booming population, and industry growth overshadow the far less enchanting experience for many community members who occupy historically vulnerable and relegated neighborhoods to the east of the city's downtown.

The Eastside of Austin, Texas, for purposes of protecting the anonymity of the participants in this research, will be loosely defined as any neighborhood community area east of the main highway, Interstate 35 (I35), which runs north and south through the heart of the city. Austin is a city fundamentally shaped by the separate but equal doctrine in both its infrastructure and its practice. In order to understand the social and spatial scapes of the city today, it is important to first understand the historical context of segregation practices of the city, both in municipal as well as social practice. The City of

Austin, in order to maneuver zoning laws and to continue segregation for the city's growing population, developed and implemented the 1928 Koch and Fowler City Plan, or Austin's "1928 Master Plan". As this plan came into effect, it set the boundaries for what would be the designated "Negro District" of the city. This plan saw the removal of non-whites, particularly Blacks or African-Americans, from white areas by relocating all Black facilities east of East Avenue, which is now I35 (Busch 2017; Houston 2018). Part of the plan reads:

It is our recommendation that the nearest approach to the solution of the race segregation problem will (be) the recommendation of this district as a negro district; and that all facilities and conveniences be provided the negroes in this district, as an incentive to draw the negro population to this area. This will eliminate the necessity of duplication of white and black schools, white and black parks, and other duplicate facilities for this area (Koch and Fowler 1957:62).

This plan ultimately segregated the city racially as well as in land use (Busch 2017) -- the Eastside became the neglected, non-white side of Austin. This divide lives on with I35 bearing proof of the hard line between the West and East sides of Austin. I35 did not merely set an infrastructural divide for the city; it became a symbol of the socioeconomic relegation of residents in East Austin, serving as an institutional tool of segregation for the city for many decades. To live on the Eastside of Austin was

traditionally to be neglected by city and civic attention, to be deprived of many of the rights and opportunities afforded to white, west Austin residents, and to be deemed the bad and dangerous, 'other' part of town (Auyero 2015; Busch 2017). As this negative stigma of 'the hood' and 'the barrio' were carried for generations by non-Eastside occupying residents of Austin, the Eastside remained the undesirable, dangerous part of the city for many white Austinites up until the early 2000s during the city's revitalization efforts (Busch 2017; Way et al. 2018). The revitalization endeavors on the Eastside, according to the City of Austin, were intended to create economic opportunities and to stimulate the development of an "improved and culturally rich area". Institutionalized spatial and social segregation remained the norm in Austin, in part because of the racialized stigma of the Eastside, as well as the municipal and social practices in colorblind racism, where Eastside discourse often claims 'cultural' issues instead of identifying racially-rooted issues (Cheng 2013). Possessive investments in whiteness, the discriminatory economic practice of investing in the development of white spaces, which also sought the removal of non-white minority groups from invested or improved areas (Busch 2017), ensured that white residents of the city have received the greater socioeconomic advantage. Members of non-white communities, such as Black or African-American and Latinx, Chicana or Hispanic groups, were largely left to create communities without equal civic attention and support.

Though Eastside residents were largely excluded from Austin's narrative of exceptionality for much of the city's recent history (Auyero 2015), many Eastside residents might argue that the Eastside was always beautiful and exceptional -- it just wasn't receiving the same municipal treatment as other parts of town. In spite of the negligence from the city which touched most aspects of life in East Austin, the de facto segregation of the city brought communities of color together, and small businesses were set to thrive by the communities who built them (Busch 2017).

In recent years, the Eastside has seen a dramatic boom in commercial and real estate development, intervention from the city for parks and recreation restorative projects, and a sharp increase in much of the area's property values each year. The Eastside is where the consequences of the city's economic and social growth of the moment are being disproportionately shared. Eastside communities are facing the severe predicaments of gentrification as they bear witness to the complete physical and cultural alterations of their communities and their homes. These changes are most apparent in the spatial identities of the communities, such as in the demolition of homes, which often have been occupied

by the same family for generations, in the demolition to government-assisted housing communities, in the changes of many small businesses, and in commercial development. The effects of gentrification are also evident in the changes of the social and cultural identities of the Eastside, such as a large influx of whiteness into non-white neighborhoods (Romero 2017). The gentrification of Eastside Austin is contributing to the significant loss of the physical spaces which are integral to the daily practices of the area's original residents, thus affecting fundamental senses of belonging, of home, and place -- of what the Eastside is, is not, and what it ought to be.

The Eastside and Me

I must first address the lack of Black and African-American collaboration in this work. It was my initial intention to focus on one particular neighborhood within East Austin which seems to be undergoing the most rapid, visceral changes of gentrification, and which also happens to be historically Latinx and Hispanic, so as to keep a tight, geographical fence around this project. In order to protect the anonymity and privacy of my collaborators as well as the neighborhood itself, I chose to pull back and refer to all of the East Austin as the 'Eastside', as there are a few collaborators that reside in varying Latinx or Hispanic neighborhoods of East Austin. Thus, this project may only speak to the Latinx and Hispanic voices and experiences of East Austin as represented by the collaborators. In addition, on the day of the final interview for the fifth and final collaborator of this research, I opted to self-quarantine as the first cases of COVID-19 had just been announced in Austin, and the city was beginning to go into shut down. The lack of Black and African-American experience in this project is due to the time and circumstantial limitations arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as my failure to recruit community members from the historically Black and African-American neighborhoods of the Eastside, communities which are similarly experiencing the plights of gentrification.

The questions grounded in this research project first arose from a personal photographic essay about my coming of age. I spent the summer of 2018 photographing my friends as we revisited our beloved childhood places, enjoying our days off. In the long, balmy days of that summer, I began to pay closer attention to those spaces, as I considered how and why we loved them, what attributes made them so sacred for us, and what it meant that so many were disappearing to the growth in Austin as we were also growing up. Most of these places happened to belong to the Eastside of Austin, an area of Austin that was all at once wonderfully familiar and mostly unknown to me, as I had grown up in neighborhoods in South or West Austin and only began to spend time in the

Eastside to visit friends in high school. One such sacred place I wanted to understand is the childhood home of a friend, as it became the place I went to almost every day as we all sought shelter from the heat. For my friend, it held the memories of nearly his entire life. The house was hand-built by his father who had passed away a few years ago, and my friend hadn't really lived in any other house. It seemed that every other week my friend would receive letters in the mail or have people knock on the door offering obscene amounts of money to buy the house from him. He wondered if he should keep his home and everything that was, and is, a part of it. I've thought a lot about what it would mean for that house to no longer exist, and if any amount of money could ever match its true value. Since that summer, I've thought a lot about the Eastside. I wanted to explore how gentrification not only alters the outward cultural identity of a neighborhood or community, but how it shapes daily life, how it complicates place-making for traditionally neglected populations in Austin, and perhaps how the resulting losses carve trajectories of both belonging and displacement for many Eastside residents.

As a documentary photographer-turned beginning career anthropologist, I've been compelled to re-examine the approaches of traditional documentary photography and also to reconsider the ethics of using photography to explore such sensitive issues as the loss of a home. Many photographers, documentarians, and news media have gone into the Eastside neighborhoods to chronicle the effects of gentrification. These efforts include taking photographs of the closures of locally owned restaurants, the demolitions of houses, and of the people living in close proximity to these changes, ultimately creating a visual record of development of Eastside neighborhoods within the past few decades. In this record, however, depictions of the Eastside sometimes seem to lack the community itself, or seem to be redundant in their approaches. The images of the Eastside sometimes seem to be mere depictions of a place lost, captured by a concerned outsider. In the depictions that do incorporate members of the community, it often appears to lack a greater collaborative effort in the processes of photographing. My primary concern in incorporating photography as a means to explore the issues and the effects of gentrification was that I would come in as the outsider to offer a 'voice for the voiceless'. This common sentiment and well-known phrase in journalistic and documentary photography, though well-meaning, can be a disempowering assumption on behalf of the practitioner, and thus deny the community a telling of its own story. As I considered these concerns of photographic practice, as well as my awareness of issues regarding representation, confidentiality, and agency, I

found that the arts-based research method of photovoice remedied much of what was problematic in the ethics of photographing a disappearing place.

Storytelling of the Community, By the Community

Photovoice, a community-based participatory and an arts-based research method, which incorporates the use of photography in the equitable and collaborative pursuit of data (Camar 2015), allowed for the facilitation of community members to retell or re-member their own stories in this research. Photovoice recognizes the potential of photographs as representational visual data, as the images can serve as artifacts or otherwise as expressive mechanisms in the research (Golden 2020). Based on their needs and perceptions, my informants were able to create photographs on their own for use as immersive and communicative devices in this project. In sum, I chose to use photovoice as the central procedure of this project, as the method advocates for the importance of storytelling of the community by the community itself. Through the encouragement of self-representation and advocacy for the participants' agency, this method generated knowledge, a more critical inquiry into the topic of gentrification, and allowed for expression and photography to serve as a way of knowing.

Collaborators and Research Methods

The five informants of this project, which I will refer as my collaborators, first were each individually interviewed at a location of their choosing. Each collaborator was then given a Polaroid instant film camera with up to twenty instant photographs, and roughly a week to take Polaroids of what was important to them in their sense of home or life in the Eastside. I did not provide further instruction or direction as to what they should or should not take pictures of, nor was I present when they took the Polaroids. I ensured that each collaborator knew how to operate the camera, and made myself available for troubleshooting via email should they need any assistance or support in using the camera, changing film cartridges, etc. When each collaborator felt they had finished taking their Polaroids, we met again in a place of their choosing, where they would photomap the Polaroids and discuss their experiences and images in a final interview. Each collaborator was asked to assemble the Polaroids into a 'map', not necessarily to depict a geographical representation of their neighborhood or home, but instead to incorporate them into a singular, cohesive, and representational object of what they photographed. I was present for each collaborator's photomap activity, and provided materials such as paper, tape, scissors, and markers, should they wish to use them. My collaborators had full creative autonomy in this exercise and were

not given specific directions by me. The final interview prompted discussion about their experiences using the cameras, the subjects or locations of their Polaroids, and the final products -- the photomaps.

I introduce each collaborator in their own 'subheading' to allow for the space and exploration of their individual and complex perspectives. In each, I introduce the collaborator, their social map, and the themes that emerged for each person based on their interviews, the photovoice exercise, and their photomap.

Photovoice: Privacy and Protection Concerns for Collaborators

Before I introduce each chapter, I must first address the issues of privacy and confidentiality in using photovoice, as this research certainly relied on the photographic representations of typically identifiable places in the Eastside of Austin, such as well-known parks and businesses. Per the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board of Texas State University, all identifiable information such as names, street signs, business logos, and other recognizable features, must be altered or assigned aliases in order to protect the anonymity of those participating in the social research. Another concern of using photovoice is the digital privacy of each collaborator, where the use of digital photographs might create potential for compromising information to be used or distributed outside of this research, such as the taking of metadata from a digital photograph which can display the global-positioning (GPS) and time information of the image.

The use of the instant Polaroid film largely remedies these concerns. The dark shadows or underexposure of many images, as well as the occasional hiccup in the chemistry development on each Polaroid, aided in making each location not easily identifiable. The use of Polaroids also allowed for the immediate existence of the photograph as an object the collaborators could hold in their hands and interact with freely without intervention from me, the researcher. They could lay them out to look over with their families, they could put them away and forget about them -- they were free to interact with the objects as they desired. The use of film also ensured that each photograph is unique in terms of pixel patterns, further protecting the sensitive information of collaborators and the locations that were photographed.

I digitally scanned the photomaps in order to create a digital JPEG image of each map. Then, using Photoshop, I cropped each map so that every Polaroid could be reverse image searched through Google, or images.google.com. This was done to ensure that the locations of each photograph had no existing match on the available internet based on pixel patterns. In

other words, if the pixilation in the JPEG versions of the Polaroids matched other images on the Internet, it would be likely that those places would be easy to identify. Fortunately, every Polaroid photograph and accompanying keyword, such as the explicit name of the depicted location, did not match anything available on the internet. Thus, it would be difficult to find these locations without having prior knowledge of them.

In addition to reverse image searches, I scrutinized each Polaroid and photomap for identifiable names or signage. I once again used Adobe Photoshop to pixelate and rename each compromising element of the photomaps, if there existed any. Navigating this aspect of photovoice was certainly not a straightforward endeavor, and any digital alteration I did to a photomap I did only out of absolute necessity to maintain privacy. This was done minimally, and the alterations are obvious for the sake of the integrity of the photographs and out of respect to the informants who made them. Finally, each photomap was returned to the collaborator. Out of the five participants, only one declined to keep the map.

Ema: Where Everybody Knows Everybody

There's a lot of sad, sad feelings that come with the change. It's sad to see things go, or sad to know that you know, you knew that owner and their business just got bought out. Whatever it is. It makes you feel like a foreigner after a while.

I will first introduce Ema J., the first collaborator to join this project. She contacted me by email after seeing a flyer on Facebook. Ema describes herself as a 24 year old female, as Hispanic, and as having lived for 15 years in the Eastside. When we met and began the first interview, Ema immediately stated that she loves her neighborhood and life in East Austin. She explained that it felt like the Eastside is where everything is, describing her community as a place where "everybody knows everybody", and explained her sense that she and her family would never have to leave East Austin -- almost. We then discussed if Ema's feelings had recently changed about life on the Eastside, she explained that she and her husband often discuss what they will do when they're ready to buy a house and where they will go, because they can't afford to live in East Austin anymore. "But this is where everything is," she told me, "you know, your mom lives up the street, this is where all the cousins live. So... it's hard to think that one day we won't be able to be in the Eastside."

In this first interview, Ema recalled childhood memories of a bakery where her grandfather would buy pink cake for her before school every morning and how happy she is to see that this place still exists, of going to Mister's when she was in high school, a convenience

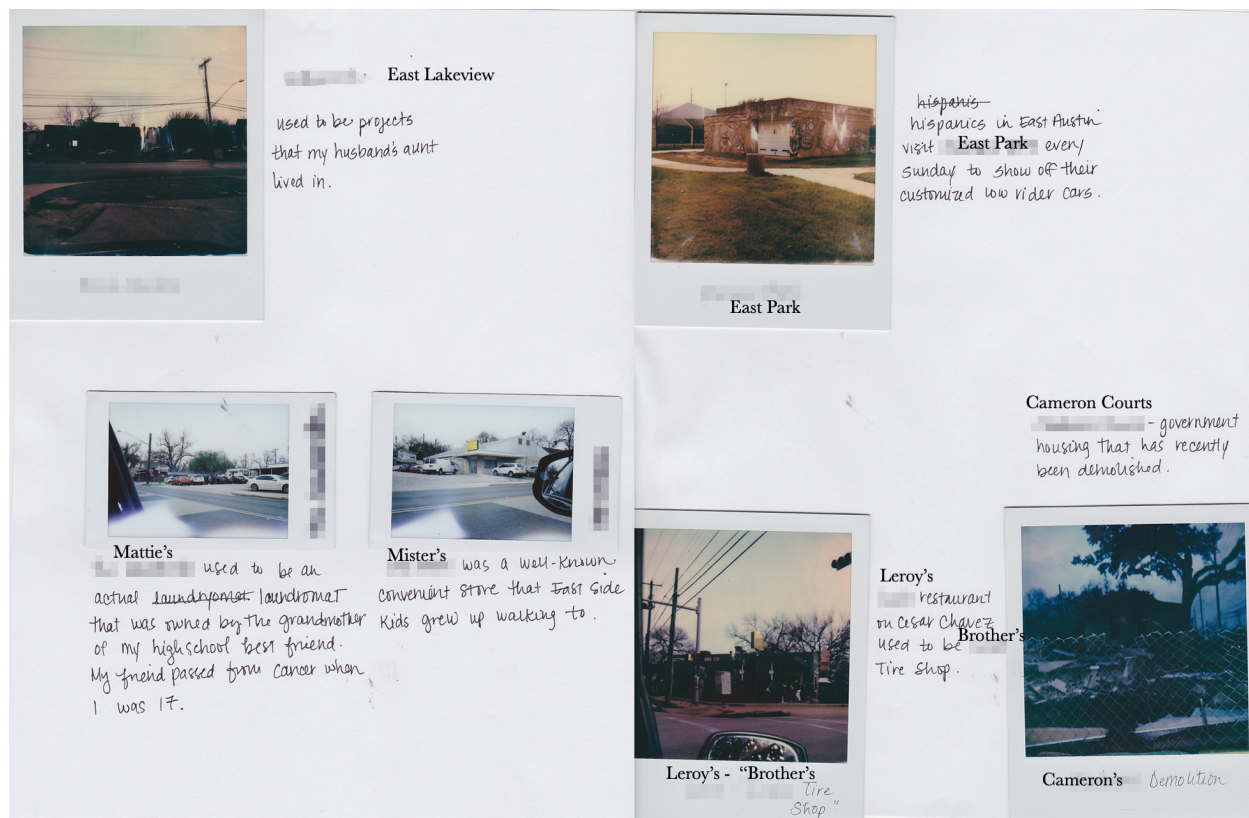


Figure 1. Ema's Photomap. The image has been altered to anonymize the locations depicted.

store owned by the family of a best friend who died too young. She told me about walking by the cemetery with her young children, about her husband's family living by government housing projects a few blocks away, and about feeling that home comes from a sense of her family being so close to her. She professed her love for local H.E.B., a Texas grocery store chain, and how it was the same for years and years, that she could probably have gone through the store blindfolded and found what she needed before the marketing and products changed to meet demands of the new, incoming demographic.

For Ema, her husband, and her children, living where they know everybody makes them feel safe and feel good, that they can walk in an area where many people probably wouldn't normally feel secure in doing so. Ema explained to me that she knew her neighbors kept eyes on her house when they weren't home, watched their kids play outside if her or her husband's back happened to be turned for a moment. Ema described a sense of home, which for her is constituted in the proximity of her family living around the corner from her, from her neighbors having her back, and from having a sense that they know everybody, and everybody knows them.

Ema has a strong sense of knowing when someone in the neighborhood is not from the

neighborhood -- "you can just tell when someone is from the neighborhood and when someone is not." She told me about pulling into her driveway one day during one of Austin's many festivals and seeing a random man sitting on her front porch charging his phone in an outlet. In this and other instances she shared, Ema expressed a strong sense of a lack of respect from these nonmembers of her neighborhood, stating that for people who didn't grow up there, maybe the Eastside isn't home for them but just where they live. She described a sad feeling knowing that a lot of people moving into the neighborhood probably don't know that many of the houses on the Eastside are the homes that people built themselves, how so many have been developed for expensive, luxury housing. She described how sad it is "to feel like something's yours -- that you built with your bare hands, and that they can just tear it down."

Ambivalence and Belonging

Ema's images are each accompanied by a caption to explain the significance of the place for her and her family, such as the government-assisted housing projects where her family and friends once lived, and what is left of her childhood convenience store, Mister's (Figure 1). Ema took photographs of places that are important

not only for her sense of home, but also locations that are significant for many members of her community. She included a Polaroid of East Park, a public park that has been an important gathering place for community members for decades. East Park is home to a weekly lowrider car show, where people come together to show off their customized cars, play games, and cook out. For her, seeing East Park and the lowriders, with everyone dressing in a similar style, is the Eastside. She explained that "it's nice to see that not all the traditions, despite all the changes that have taken place, that not everything has changed."

In contrast, Ema also included locations which, for her, signal the change and gentrification occurring on the Eastside. There are images of two former businesses in the communities and the new restaurants that now occupy those spaces (Mattie's and Leroy's) and the Cameron Courts and East Lakeview government-assisted housing projects that were recently demolished.

Ema's feelings should strike one as a complex entanglement of ambivalence, where all at once she maintains her sense of community while also engaging in an internal conflict about the greater civic attention her neighborhood is receiving. She resents the loss of the familiar spaces and is saddened by the thought of knowing that something like a home that was hand-built by their occupants could be demolished without a second thought; but is also glad to see that the neighborhood is no longer so neglected.

This complex relationship with her neighborhood is evident in the Polaroids. Each location she photographed is a site where the threat of gentrification looms, or where it has already taken effect. She chose these locations as each place reminded her of a certain time or certain person in her life -- locations that are emotionally significant to her. She told me, "I wanted to find places... to help me feel ways I maybe haven't felt in a long time." For Ema, each special place has been touched by gentrification, with the exception of East Park which seems to stand as evidence that traditions have not yet been eliminated. In particular, she expressed a deep sense of feeling disrespected in the instance of Mattie's and Leroy's, both new and expensive restaurants, and how these new businesses had incorporated murals that had existed on the buildings prior to the new businesses. Ema wonders if the incorporation of the murals was done out of respect for the community, or if it was to capitalize and attempt to make the murals a commercial benefit for the new businesses -- a conundrum of gentrification.

Ema says the amount of time one has been in the Eastside makes a difference -- knowing the history of the neighborhood also makes a big difference. If nobody knows you, it's like you don't belong here. Ema says that sentiment might sound mean or possessive, but

that's how she feels about it. To see people at Leroy's or Mattie's leaves a bad taste in her mouth -- like seeing a stranger in her territories. She feels that her space has been invaded when she sees businesses that are evidently not serving the community where they are located, but nonmembers of East Austin.

Ema considers the effects of gentrification and how so many familiar places are being altered for the benefit of nonmembers of East Austin. Seeing the Polaroids in the photomap in front of us, Ema said her mind goes to the thought:

It didn't matter when our side of town was shitty before, when we lived here. Now people with money moved here and suddenly things need to be nice -- to be nice for them. Suddenly they want to put effort into fixing things, into making it look nice. When it was us, they didn't care.

Ema's ambivalence suggests a particular situation that the many conundrums of gentrification present -- that gentrification affects the sense of belonging for those who previously belonged to a sanctioned, racialized space. This ambivalence is further complicated by Austin's historical racist practices, as the Eastside was willfully neglected for decades as Black or African-American and Latinx, Hispanic, or Chicanx occupied those spaces. As possessive investments in whiteness (Busch 2015) shape the spatial landscapes, many nonwhite members of the Eastside struggle with the sense that they are being pushed out.

Rey: Wellsprings Proud

Rey Z. was the final collaborator of this research. I find that his discussions are in some ways similar to Ema's, but that the theme I will discuss both deepens and contrasts the theme which arose from Ema's chapter. Rey identifies as a 39 year old Latino and has lived in East Austin for 30 years. Rey told me he wanted to participate in order for his neighborhood, Wellsprings, to have some representation in this project. This neighborhood differs slightly from Ema's, and coincidentally the other collaborators, in that it was not always traditionally Black or Latinx, and so perhaps was not under the same racialized pressures. Wellsprings, Rey told me, was not always predominantly non-white. A military base was located nearby, which means that the neighborhood saw a high turnover rate with a change in demographics each decade; from white in the 1980s, to Black in the 1990s, and then to predominantly Latinx in the early 2000s. Rey shared that because of this, growing up in Wellsprings was unique in that he was able to experience a wider range of people with varying backgrounds. The Eastside neighborhoods Ema and the following collaborators

discuss are quite different -- they were historically Hispanic, Latinx, Chicanx, or Black and African-American. Wellsprings was not.

Rey told me that the community members of varying racial identities all grew up together in Wellsprings. For him, it doesn't matter if someone has a differing racial, social, or political identities than him; "There's a different sense here -- you're still Wellsprings, don't matter what party, what ethnicity you are -- you're still Wellsprings." For Rey, if you shared the same laundromat or H.E.B., went to the same high school, recreation center, or lived down the street -- if you went to the same places that's all that mattered in the sense of being a part of Wellsprings. Of these places in Wellsprings, Rey conveyed a strong sense of pride. In fact, he's the president of a group called Wellsprings Proud Group. "You gotta be proud of where you're from," he told me. This group organizes weekly community gatherings to discuss the goings-on in the community, and they also put together emergency funds for members of their community and facilitate scholarships for kids from Wellsprings going into college. Rey said he has always loved his neighborhood and his community, even as a kid, when it was a tougher place to live. Rey explained that he felt that the neighborhood was getting left out of government support when he was a kid, that back then nobody paid attention to what was going on, but now Wellsprings receives a lot of attention. When he was a kid, nobody went to Wellsprings unless they were from Wellsprings.

Rey talked about a new subdivision in Wellsprings, and described it as one of those new subdivisions where not everybody wants anything to do with the old neighborhood. He said having different people with different levels of income move into the neighborhood and having new homes in the area brings better property value are all good things. However, Rey describes a sense that new members of Wellsprings didn't want to identify as being a part of Wellsprings community but rather to identify with their individual neighborhoods with Home Ownership Associations (HOA). Rey is not okay with new members of the community isolating themselves in their HOA, and that he doesn't agree with newcomers not wanting to be a part of the old neighborhood. Rey wonders if the newcomers might think that community members like Rey see new residents as the new gentrifiers, if his community wouldn't be accepting of them, and so they are probably wary to participate in his community. Rey says he understands this concern. Rey also wonders if they think they're better than the old neighborhoods in Wellsprings, or that they don't want anything to do with the rest of the neighborhood, and that that's the part he's not okay with.

Rey described a new Ferrari car dealership that replaced a beloved movie theatre in the older part of

his community. "Now all of the sudden there's a Ferrari dealership in the neighborhood, so you come here to buy a Ferrari in this neighborhood -- people that would never ever be caught dead in our neighborhood." It's wild, he told me, how evident it is that this new business was not there to serve the community in which it now occupies a storefront.

A Wellsprings Community of Practice

Rey conveyed a strong sense of belonging in his Wellsprings neighborhood and community. Similar to Ema, this sense of belonging is shaped by the places frequented by members of the community, places which he chose to depict in his photovoice activity. Where my interpretation of Rey's interviews, photovoice, and photomap differs most notably from Ema's is in how integral the specific locations are to that sense of belonging. Rey took photographs of the Wellsprings Recreation Center, the fire station which displays a neighborhood banner, his preferred H.E.B., and the contested Ferrari dealership (Figure 2). Rey visits or drives by each of these locations on a regular basis. Rey took a photograph of the local video store, a place where community members can pick up a neighborhood t-shirt to display neighborhood pride -- something you don't get unless you're from the neighborhood. Rey says you can go anywhere in Austin wearing that shirt, and everyone will know you're from Wellsprings. Rey shared that as he was taking the photographs, different memories came into his head for each location -- having his son's first Easter egg hunt at the recreation center, getting lost as a kid in the aisles of the H.E.B., and attending the only all-Spanish middle school in the district.

If you went to certain places and that's where you -- that's all that mattered. On Saturday, you went to Roosevelt Park. That's the oldest park in the neighborhood, so, if you have memories going to Roosevelt Park, that's pretty much -- I don't care who you are -- if you went to Roosevelt Park, you went to Roosevelt Park. Everybody knows that.

Rey's sense of belonging to the Wellsprings neighborhood is characterized by the history one does or does not have with the neighborhood facilities, stores, and parks. The neighborhood is centered around these common practices and activities of sharing or attending the local facilities and businesses. The social meaning behind these shared practices that are spatially-specific, for Rey as well as the other members of this project, can be best understood through the analytical lens of community of practice. This conceptual framework is helpful in understanding how society and social groups are shaped by day-to-day practices (Mendoza-Denton 2008), where the mutual participation in developed ways of doing certain thing within that group



Figure 2. Rey Z's photomap. The image has been altered to anonymize the locations depicted..

help to construct a common sense of identity within that group. The community develops a constructed sense of itself because of as well as through these shared practices and the common goals within them.

The Wellsprings community of practice is built from the tenure of local establishments and those who frequent them, where the common enterprise within this practice is the identity of the neighborhood itself (Mendoza-Denton 2008). Here, mutual ways of spending a Saturday at Roosevelt Park as a kid, picking up a "Wellsprings Proud" t-shirt from the video store, or having attended a particular middle school set the parameters of belonging to the communities.

This framework of communities of practice is also helpful to understand how communities might differentiate themselves from one another, such as how members of Wellsprings might identify with Wellsprings or their particular HOA. The whole of the community, at least those like Rey who identify as being Wellsprings Proud, is built by that local context and the characteristics of those shared spaces. The Wellsprings community of practice is shaped by its relationship to outside or differing communities of practice, such as in Rey's assertion that if you go there, you belong there. If you don't, then perhaps that choice is an intentional means of differentiating one's self from Wellsprings Proud, or a signal that one isn't from Wellsprings. For Rey, it seems that this community of practice is salient to being a part of Wellsprings, but not an exclusive practice, as he hopes

that new members of the community will participate in his community meetings.

In regard to alterations in the neighborhood, the good changes in Wellsprings have good effects, and the negative changes have negative effects, Rey explained. The incoming demographic has caused an increase in property values, which has varying effects, depending on the context. Wellsprings doesn't have the same high crime rate it did in the 90s, and there are new libraries, recreation centers, and swimming pools in Wellsprings. Rey described two negative aspects to the neighborhood changes -- that people are moving into Wellsprings who want nothing to do with the communities of the old neighborhood, and that businesses are starting to crop up that are clearly not meant for Wellsprings residents, such as the arrival of the Ferrari dealership. Rey expressed frustration in seeing such a high-end, luxury car dealership in Wellsprings. The base price of a new Ferrari is something close to \$250,000, while the median household income in 2018 for Wellsprings zip code was \$67,000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).

I don't think there's anybody in that neighborhood gonna afford a Ferrari, so, that's definitely not for us. But it's in our neighborhood. So that's gentrification right there. There's a Ferrari dealership in an inner-city neighborhood.

Rey expressed opposition to nonmembers or new members of his Eastside Wellsprings community

who do not contribute to, partake in, or that differentiate themselves or their businesses from the community of practice of Wellsprings. It seems that Rey's Wellsprings -- the beloved video store, the Wellsprings Proud gatherings, and the community practice of supporting the members of the community, much like the many other neighborhoods of the general East Austin area, are being set on a trajectory of their own as community leaders like Rey hope for a middle ground in Wellsprings where new and old community members may stand.

Rudy and the Barrio: Loving, Not Fighting It

East Austin had soul. It had a feeling of struggle. It was scary for other people to go to that neighborhood but for us, it was beautiful. Everyone felt that way. I've never met a person from East Austin who's ever said they disliked East Austin. There's a reason why they stayed.

Rudy G. and I met at a coffee shop on the Eastside, a popular study spot for many college students in Austin. This location, we remarked, seemed rather out of place in terms of the surrounding businesses and homes, as it was newer and extremely busy into the evening hours. Rudy told me about growing up in 'the Barrio', he discussed his family's histories, his origin story on the Eastside, and about seeing the very end of the Eastside as he knew it. In the first few minutes of our meeting, Rudy joked that he has never experienced fear while living on the Eastside, in spite of its reputation, until he saw a white person walking their dog down his street at night. He marked this instance as the moment he first became aware that things were changing in his neighborhood. Rudy identifies as a 20 year old, Mexican-American male who has lived in the Eastside his entire life. Rudy described the Eastside, or particularly his Chicana, Latinx, or Hispanic neighborhood, which he endearingly referred to as the Barrio, as a site of struggle and inimitable beauty. He stated that because of this dualistic history of struggle and sense of cultural celebration in his neighborhood, East Austin had soul.

Of the changes occurring in the Barrio, Rudy stated that he sees no point in resisting or fighting the imminent changes, as the forces of gentrification seem to be unstoppable. The neighborhood can't just return to what it was, no matter how much they might fight or resist it. He told me about a friend of his who digitally collects photographs from various decades of the old Eastside, which range from family albums to pre-digital era photographs of storefronts. In this effort there's a sense of preservation and remembrance Rudy admires, as he told me that his friend is "just recognizing how this part of town used to be", and that this was a perfect way to do it -- to accept the changes, but also

remember what the Eastside was. When Rudy spoke about gentrification, he spoke about its apparent positive influences on his views of racial divide in the United States and admitted that his family has benefited from gentrification. Regarding racism in the U.S., Rudy stated that seeing white people willingly live next to people of color in the Eastside -- particularly Mexican-Americans and Blacks or African-Americans -- was astonishing to him. The phenomenon of whites and non-whites living right next to each other in a neighborhood where this rarely happened before gave him a sense of hope that the practices of racism are perhaps lessening. He spoke about sometimes playing basketball with these new, white members of the Eastside, and that it was surprising for him to experience not being treated differently because he is Mexican-American. He also said he was surprised that the non-white members of his basketball games weren't treating the white members any differently, either.

Of the collaborators in this project, Rudy spoke most openly and directly about racial or ethnic experiences. Given that I am a white, nonmember of the Eastside, I was glad that he did not seem to feel discouraged or swayed by my positionality in bringing the topic of race into our discussion, as it is a critical one to any conversation regarding the Eastside and gentrification. To leave race unaddressed in this topic, especially in how it has shaped the lived experiences of generations of Eastside communities, would be to leave a glaring chasm in the conversation. For this reason, I am grateful Rudy was open to sharing his thoughts and experiences about race. Rudy told me that if the new white members of the Eastside are scared of the non-white members, that they must be good at hiding it. He quipped, "how can they be scared of us if we're not even here anymore, right? So that's where it's kind of weird."

On the one hand, Rudy echoed a sentiment that other members of this project expressed. New white members of Rudy's Barrio, a historically Latinx neighborhood, don't seem to be buying into racially-based fear, aversion, or bias, nor do they seem to subscribe to the area's former reputation as the bad side of town as had previous generations of white Austinites. On the other hand, Rudy expressed a frustration with many new white members of the community as apparently having no familiarity with or recognition of the neighborhood's substantive history as being a place fundamentally shaped by racist municipal practice, or its importance as a site of struggle for the groups that were relegated by those racist practices. Following this thought, Rudy told me that sometimes he notices new white members of the Barrio giving him harsh looks -- "they look at me like I'm a new person in their neighborhood" -- and that he feels angry at being othered, when he perhaps sees this incoming demographic as the other.



Figure 3. Rudy's photomap. The image has been altered to anonymize the locations depicted.

They're not from here. They don't know the history, you know, they don't know the struggle, they don't know why I'm here – the reason I'm here is because 50 years ago, we weren't allowed to buy west of I35. If you had a Latino last name, you weren't allowed to buy West of I35.

Practiced Remembrance as a Device for Localized Identity

Rudy's photomap suggests a complex relationship with the current state of changes sweeping his neighborhood, not unlike the other collaborators in this project. In our second meeting, this time in a community college library, as he was making this map, he told me it felt weird to walk around his neighborhood taking Polaroids of the places he grew up looking at and that he sees every day. In this way, he told me, the places he sees aren't extraordinary -- they are a part of his every day. In the same breath, he told me also that these places are a part of him.

Part of this seemingly contradictory sentiment is Rudy's frustration with the fact that suddenly nonmembers of East Austin seem to care about the histories and preservation of Old East Austin, now that many of the old inhabitants of the communities are gone. The contradictions of Rudy's experience with new members of his neighborhood or interested nonmembers is noteworthy, as he expressed feeling hope in seeing white people living next door to Black and Latinx, but also a sense of frustration in this new white attention in his neighborhood. The complexity of feeling hope and resentment simultaneously in the presence of new white members of a formerly predominantly non-white community seems to highlight the pervasive and multitudinous ways living in a gentrifying space may be experienced by a lifelong community member. The experience of living in a gentrifying space can be full of contradictions and conflicting emotions.

Identifying himself as part of the last generation of the Barrio, Rudy said that it's as if previous generations are the dinosaurs, and interest from nonmembers into issues of gentrification is like searching for their bones. If we follow this analogy and liken the murals Rudy depicted to artifacts left by previous inhabitants, we might find that the murals function as a device for Rudy to locate his heritage and sense of place in East Austin amidst the changes. As one may notice, the content of the Polaroids are deeply concentrated to portray a specific cultural meaning and experience. In the Polaroids, it appears that Rudy not only took photographs of vivid murals, but specifically the components of the murals which are most important to him (Figure 3). One mural portrays a banner reading "INDEPENDENCIA" and another with a banner reading the word "JUSTICIA".

In the process of photographing the murals and recalling the histories or the events they symbolize, he appears to locate his social identities -- his Mexican-American, Chicano, and Last-of-the-Austin-Barrio selves. Rudy explained that people like his parents who have immigrated from Mexico to the United States perhaps feel that their cultural history is taken in processes of acculturation upon arriving in the U.S., or that it is otherwise washed out by the hegemonic narratives of U.S. history many are taught in schools. Rudy expressed that the most dangerous thing to do is to take someone's history away "because it makes them feel like they are nothing", and that this is what he felt growing up with an ethnocentric and Americanized version of his family's Mexican heritage. When Rudy sees the mural of the dancing woman, he's reminded that in spite of the erasure he describes, "we still keep dancing", and that he feels connected to his Mexican-American history and cultural lineage. As he was explaining what each figure in the murals stood to represent in Mexican and Mexican-American history, or the greater context of the murals, he stated that he feels as though the murals are

his. He said he loved that they were done by members of the community when he was growing up, and not by nonmember artists, and that they weren't big-budget commissions done by the city. They were created by the community for the community.

Rudy also took Polaroids of a family member's house, a familiar convenience store, and a park where he has spent a lot of time. Of the house, he explained that his family member who previously owned it was one of the first Mexican-American educators in the City of Austin, and that they were an integral facilitator in seeing that Latinx and Hispanic youth were educated in times of segregation. The house is currently under scrutiny as to whether it should be made into a preserved and designated historical site or if it will be torn down for property development. Rudy described a resentment in knowing that his family member's house, a place where spent many Saturday mornings and afterschool time growing up with his family and an important site in Austin's Eastside history, could face destruction based on the fiscal value of the property on which the home resides. In this sentiment, Rudy also conveyed a sense that this home perhaps would not be recognized as a historical site and thus preserved and protected in part due to a lack of recognition that it is truly an important part of Austin's collective history -- and especially a collective non-white history.

Though many spaces within the Barrio are being altered by gentrification, Rudy chose to photograph the unaltered spaces which are both personally reflective and declarative of his sense of belonging to the Eastside. It seems that although the forces of gentrification threaten to take away the physical spaces of the Eastside, a practiced remembrance of its history preserves the Eastside for Rudy. For him, this practice and acceptance are better than fighting a battle he explains the Barrio is set to lose. The conundrum of gentrification that Rudy is faced with is that perhaps one day he will no longer see these sites that are so culturally and personally valuable to his sense of self as well as of the Barrio. At the end of our final interview, Rudy told me he wished that inquiries like this project always existed, that nonmembers of the Eastside knew that the Eastside was always beautiful:

I wish people still looked at it as a beautiful place to be, because there's a lot of culture here, there's a lot of struggle here, there's a lot of soul here. People who -- before our time -- who dealt with segregation and real, harsh racial discrimination, you have that here -- it's beautiful. They have stories. It made them stronger, I think. East Austin made me who I am today.

Kirk: This is Mine Forever

Kirk C., a 22 year-old male who identifies as having a mixed Hispanic ethnicity and lives in the same house in which he grew up. He and his younger brother inherited the house when their father, who built it by hand, passed away a few years ago. As we spoke about his home, Kirk professed a love for the way the orange and pecan trees of the Eastside show the seasons, how the alleyways behind his and other houses offer peaceful refuge from the sounds of the city, and how he spends free time being outside in the neighborhood with his friends. In watching the Eastside become home to new businesses, luxury condominiums, and restaurants, Kirk expressed that his feelings about the Eastside hasn't changed -- he loves the Eastside and knows that affection is fixed. He feels an initial sense of curiosity and cautious optimism as a new business is developed. However, once it is complete, Kirk is left with a sense that these new sites just don't feel right. He explained this as a feeling of a clash in the energies of the new members with the old members of the Eastside. He feels that the calmness and peace he grew up with in his neighborhood is starting to disappear.

Of the gentrification of the Eastside, Kirk could classify the effects into three categories: his personal mental state, the culture of the neighborhood, and the financial effects of gentrification on the community of longtime residents. Speaking to his personal experience, Kirk told me that he feels disconnected from his community as he sees new faces and new businesses he hasn't been able to register yet. He explained he is wary of these new members of his community, such as in the case of Mattie's, an expensive restaurant which replaced a laundromat, first introduced by Ema in her collaboration, as there are certain qualities to places like Mattie's which borrow elements of the old establishment in unsavory ways. In particular, Kirk explained his dislike for the restaurant by stating that it's visibly distinct from the surrounding historical Eastside community style which rooted in decades of Latinx culture and history. Mattie's not only appropriates former elements of the laundromat that came before it, such as a mural, some community members, like Ema and Kirk, feel that this appropriation or borrowing of the community's art is interpreted as an affront to the community, not as a nod in tribute. This offense for Kirk is reinforced by the patrons of this restaurant who he feels are dismissive of the historical aspects of the neighborhood:

Every time I'm biking up that road, and I bike it every day, I always get a mean look. I just see the difference in the people there, because of how they're acting, how they're acting with each other. Even how they're sitting in the environment. Just looking around, not

sure of what they're looking at. It's really people that don't belong in that area – who don't appreciate it....The neighbors did their laundry at that spot. They were chillin' while their laundry's being done. You know? So, it feels super separated – in my head and in the environment. It doesn't fit right.

Kirk elaborated that no one from the neighborhood, except the newcomers, would go there for a meal as it was so expensive and out of place. He felt that the restaurant was a snobby façade in the middle of the realness of the neighborhood, as the restaurant exists in the middle of a community where no member of that community can afford to or would care to have a meal. In this way, Kirk's community of practice is being challenged by the alteration of familiar and formerly frequented spaces.

Furthering the discussion on the culture of the 'old' neighborhood, Kirk feels that the community is still going strong in spite of the new demographic moving in. As evidence of the withstanding old Eastside culture, he listed the weekly lowrider gathering at East Park, the "unhindered" monthly car show at a recreation center, and the quinceañeras still frequenting the Lakeview Gardens down the street from him. He feels that the community is strong enough in maintaining these community traditions that the gatherings and celebrations go on uninterrupted. The locations of these events, such as East Park, have gone mostly unaltered in the wake of gentrification, which surely helps to sustain the sense there are pockets where the old Eastside culture remains unwavering.

For the financial category Kirk addresses in regard to changes on the Eastside, he feels that this is the one force which touches all actors involved in the Eastside, though not equally. Those who benefit from the incoming businesses and residential property development see increased wealth and economic opportunity, while those who can't keep up with the increasing property taxes, rental rates, and overall cost of living in the Eastside, have to eventually leave. He feels that things will gradually improve for all members of the Eastside, but that this positive affect will come more slowly, as those who have to leave because they are not able to afford or able to cope with the changes will not be experiencing the new East Austin. For Kirk and many others in his neighborhood, leaving the Eastside will mean leaving behind the house he grew up in, and living outside of Austin as the cost of living increases.

On the one hand, Kirk feels frustrated with the changing faces in East Austin as well as in Austin itself, enough that he considers leaving for this reason. In addition, the wealth that selling his home would secure him is an extremely tempting offer. On the other hand, he feels an obligation to maintain and preserve his late

father's home -- "I should keep this home and make it be something that's historic, cultural, long-lasting -- it's got all of my father's art in it. That's even more of a bonus."

Irresolution: Personal or Financial Value in Homeownership

I am constantly back and forth about wanting to keep it forever, and cherish it, or just to completely relinquish it, and give it away to some maniac to just tear it down. I always get stuff in mail, and stuff on my doorstep offering very large amounts of cash for my house.

Kirk took the Polaroid camera with him on a daily bike ride around his neighborhood, taking photographs of sites in the Eastside close to home he either cherishes or detests. The Polaroids depict the inside of his house, his front yard, a pedestrian bridge ("Paradise") he and his friends frequent, and Ovation, a corporation visible from Kirk's house which he says ruins the view of the horizon (Figure 4). Kirk's disillusionment with the new business fronts in his neighborhood was portrayed in the image of the former tax assistance agency. He told me, "is just a perfect example of taking away something important from the community" and that he is "sure it'll be replaced with something not so important."

In the photomap, it appears that Kirk didn't settle in on only illustrating disenchantment of his home. He said there was something sad in going around his home looking for sites he didn't like for the photovoice exercise, so he instead took Polaroids of places that remind him of his deep attachment to his home. In recalling taking Polaroids of his home, Kirk shared a realization that the photographs assumed greater significance for him in that they might one day stand to represent a place which will someday no longer exist. In this discussion, Kirk seemed to be more resolute in his desire to maintain his home, whereas in our first interview, he appeared to be experiencing a lack of certainty as to whether the increasing disconnection he has been experiencing would be enough to push him out -- if he should leave before he would no longer recognize the spaces of his neighborhood.

In addition to the disillusionment with the possessed spaces for new investments and the harsh looks he's given by the newcomers, a quandary Kirk seemed to be most confounded with in both of our interviews is the fact that his property is being actively pursued by developers and investors, and that their offers for the land are difficult to turn away from. This consequence of gentrification is a complicated one many like Kirk and his family are compelled to navigate as their properties become highly valuable investment opportunities for developers or 'house flippers' who are profit motivated (Lee and Choi 2011). Kirk considers how his brother's and his own life would become quite different if they



Figure 4. Kirk's photomap. The image has been altered to anonymize the locations depicted..

were to sell the house, as well as the benefits of having greater financial means.

Kirk's irresolution offers another insight this specific predicament of gentrification, where he seems forced to choose whether the personal significance of his home is more valuable than the money being offered for the property. Kirk must one day decide if money can speak louder than the part of him that is compelled to keep the house indefinitely. Outside of our discussion, his house no longer existing is not something he ever really thinks about. "Now I live in my house, so I don't think about that at all. I just live in it every day. I don't second guess it -- it's there, it's mine." Kirk's photomap depicts that for the moment, he maintains autonomy in that choice, and that his choice is to stay:

I wrote this is mine forever around the photos of my home because I just have a strong desire to try to hold onto this as long as possible, because I love it so much. I know it would be destroyed if I ever let it go.

Jess: Anticipated Bereavement and Dispossession

It's like I'm going to be grieving from having to move from here. I'm going to be grieving from seeing my childhood home torn down... it's going to be hard. It's going to be really hard.

Jess, a 43 year-old self-identifying Hispanic, began our collaboration by stating that the Eastside doesn't feel like home anymore. It is still home, she says, because that's where her family is, but it's no longer comfortable for her. She's overwhelmed with the back-to-back changes and that there seems to be no time to take in each change and allow it to settle. Her family members who live on the same street are highly protective of one another, especially in the cases of acquiring new neighbors. She told me her family will tell her, "Hey watch out, there's new people moving down the street. Be on the lookout." These new neighbors aren't exactly neighborly, she explains. They have had disagreements and will sometimes tell her to keep her dog quiet when he's outside in her yard. Most importantly, she says, her newer neighbors are not protective in the ways she and her family and long-term neighbors are of each other.

In addition to the new traffic congestion she experiences in her neighborhood, Jess explained that her daily commute to and from work are exacerbated by her noticing older homes being torn down, and the frequency in which they are demolished. As she notices the new homes, she's reminded that the neighborhood is no longer what it used to be. In these new homes, she doesn't see a warmth or sense of home like she does in seeing the original Eastside homes. She talked about the

things she felt wouldn't be around for much longer such as murals done by people she knew in high school, her house, her dad's house, and her grandfather's house.

An Anticipated Loss of Togetherness

I asked if Jess had arranged the Polaroids in any particular way. Initially she declined that she had arranged the images in any conscious way, but after a moment of looking over the photomap, she stated that the arrangement was completely unintentionally done, but that the arrangement did in fact organize her sense of home and neighborhood. In the left portion of the photomap, one can see Jess's house in the middle of the other six Polaroids, with her father's house to the left (just as it is positioned when looking at the houses from the street), and the Polaroids of her grandfather's house and his wedding portrait are beneath the Polaroid of her house.

I guess I was subconsciously thinking we're always going to be together. You know – we're always together, and pretty soon that's not going to happen anymore. A year from now, it's not going to be that way anymore. I think it's what I'm used to. But it's not going to be that way soon.

Jess stated that each Polaroid seemed to allude to imminent changes, as she suspects that within five years none of the depicted spaces in her Polaroids will exist. Jess talked about her grief, and how the mourning has preceded the actual loss of her home and her family's homes. Jess lamented about being forced to give up her roots without any control over the timeline she faces.

In talking more about her grief, she spoke about the grief of recently losing her grandfather. She said the grief of having her grandfather pass, and then to very soon see his home torn down and redeveloped into another home for someone else was difficult to come to terms with. Anticipating the bereavement that will follow within a few months as she will also see her childhood homes torn down is more difficult to reconcile. Jess hopes to be open to the new chapter that will follow these losses, but that she's scared of the unknowns of the next few months.

In this predicament of gentrification, Jess does not have agency in the fate of her house or her family's houses -- she has just a few months to figure out where she and her father will live. In this way, Jess's community of practice is facing an imminent force which will determine how she and her family navigate their shared senses of closeness in the future. As she faces the dispossession of the spaces she has always known, Jess said she will savor every little thing that she can about her house, even if it's just taking out the trash. She says she will enjoy the common moments and to accept the difficult moments

as they come. As her grieving proceeds the actual losses, Jess is also confronted with the coinciding alterations of the residential scapes of her community, a situation she describes as being extremely hard. Her photomap depicts what will be lost -- not just the physical structures of the houses, but the tightly knit proximity of her family and the lifetimes of memories that were created by the houses.

Concluding Thoughts

Gentrification sets and shapes trajectories of belonging and displacement for Eastside community members by complicating these senses for those confronted with the predicaments of gentrification. These trajectories are complicated not only in instances of being taxed out, or having a generational home possessed, or in the seemingly inevitable decision to sell one's home, but in seeing familiar spaces altered to no longer meet or agree with one's needs, social identities, communities of practice, and one's roots. Gentrification can deepen one's sense of belonging to a disappearing space, and it may also complicate, or dilute that sense.

This project seeks not to remedy any dilemma of gentrification in Austin, nor do the thematic discussions offer any resolutions to the conundrums some of my collaborators face. This project also does not seek to generalize all experiences relating to the Eastside of Austin or its residents. Rather, the project aims to problematize these discussions by challenging the hegemonic, visual cultural archaeology (Leavy 2015) of the typical inquiries of gentrification in the Eastside. Just as Rudy told me, it feels as if they are the dinosaurs and the flurry of media and documentarians seeking to visually salvage the remaining elements of his home are like the outsiders discovering their bones. In recognition of this, I set out to place the experiences of the collaborators at the forefront of knowledge building in this inquiry of the effects of the current moment of East Austin. The art made by my collaborators offers visual representations of their individual or collective identity struggles within the contexts of a rapidly altering and whitening space through self-representation.

This project intends to build upon the tradition of the photograph or photographic essay in ethnographic practice, as well as to offer the photomaps as visual phenomenology for investigating these particular experiences. By facilitating the collaborators in the creation of their own photographic depictions of what was important to them in their sense of home on the Eastside, the photomaps function as communicative and expressive devices for exploring the experiences of gentrification and in the re-memorializing of their homes.

Future Directions

I have reflected on the narrow scope of this work and the consequential implications and failings. In thinking about carrying on this work, I wish to center additional collaborators which represent the whole of the Eastside's demographic -- specifically the Black and African-American communities of East Austin. Though this research is titled "Visually Re-membering the Eastside," it fails to provide a complete picture of what life is like in gentrifying spaces for the Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) in Austin, as all collaborators happened to be Latinx or Hispanic identifying individuals. I have reflected on the lack of Black and African-American voice in this work, as I have now been able to connect with Black leadership in Eastside communities through the Black Lives Matter movement occurring in the summer months of 2020. As much as I sought to examine and consider every aspect of these considerations, it seems there is always room to develop and improve. Listening to the BIPOC leadership in my city in these recent months has been a tremendous privilege and I hope that any continuation of this work will center Black experiences and voice as much as other non-white experiences.

It is my hope that the use of photography may secure its place in social research and inquiry as a functional complementary method for generating data, or as a primary means of meaning-making and knowledge-building in social research. Photography is wrought with potential for disempowerment and subjugation of its 'subjects', as evidenced in a well-known photojournalism mantra, "I give voice to the voiceless", which assumes that the group or individual in question have no voice on their own and that it is only through the photographer that these stories and ideas may be shared. This thought is a dangerous one. I hope that photographic practitioners continue to question this existing paradigm of photographic practice, where it's as if those who take the photograph withhold the power, profit, and narrative of that image.

Photovoice seeks to remedy this paradigm, as the photographers or collaborators in this project maintained an agency in our collaborative effort to explore the conundrums of living in a disappearing space. They took the photographs on their own time, at their discretion, and received no constraints as to what they could photograph. It was our coming together to discuss the images as they assembled them where the pre-existing power dynamic of photographer and subject was disseminated into a collaborative approach to meaning-making. We became collaborators. Photographic practitioners and social scientists alike may find photovoice to be an effective, collaborative tool for conceptualizing or constructing meaning in future social inquiry. The use of visual art may also perhaps provide what words cannot.

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Evaluating Sustainable Alternatives for Menstruating Individuals in the 21st Century

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Abstract

The approaching issue of living in a post-peak oil society has elicited a concern among menstruating individuals regarding how they will safely and sanitarily manage their menstruation without the aid of conventional manufactured menstrual hygiene products (MHPs). This research, using convenience sampling methods, evaluates twenty-two menstrual hygiene products that are marketed as sustainable alternatives to traditional MHPs. This research attempts to gauge the reality of sustainable MHPs and the impact on sustainability when individuals cannot afford to purchase sustainable MHPs over conventional ones.

Introduction

The world is well into the twenty-first century and approaching post-peak oil, if it has not reached that point already. With the threat of declining fossil fuels, the possibility of sustainable living and sustainable production is a promising solution to the shortcomings of modernization. The reality that women compose over half the global population highlights the urgent need of managing menstruation in a post-peak oil society. Lack of access to proper menstrual health violates basic human rights to water, sanitation, and hygiene as explicitly addressed by the United Nations General Assembly through resolution 64/292 (United Nations Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF] 2016). The inability to safely and sanitarily manage menstruation can also be the leading cause of certain health problems. These health issues include but are not limited to: irritation, discomfort, urogenital symptoms, and sometimes infections that compromise a woman's ability to participate in society with dignity. Despite the necessity for women to manage their menstrual health in a safe and hygienic fashion, doing so in a sustainable manner is not always a priority. When given the option between a meal and menstrual hygiene products, 46 percent of low-income women in America choose a meal (Free the Period 2019). Menstruating individuals who are living in poverty should not be forced to choose between access to basic forms of sanitation and the opportunities that education, employment, and sustainability provide.

Question: Are widely branded sustainable menstrual hygiene products (MHPs) truly sustainable? If they are not, what must these brands accomplish to become truly sustainable? If true sustainability is achievable then how does today's society create an incentive for individuals participating in a free market to choose a sustainable product over a conventional one?

Theory

John Elkington (1999) first proposed the 'triple bottom line' theory. Here he recommends that corporations commit to focus on social and environmental concerns just as they do on profits. The triple bottom line insists that instead of one bottom line, there should be three: profit, people, and the planet.

When applied to this study, in order for a truly sustainable MHP to exist, MHP businesses must address social and environmental issues across the board. Using inductive reasoning, this paper analyzes the dimensions of the three criteria to the triple bottom line and how they apply to sustainable menstrual hygiene products. These problems and challenges are not unique to one region, one industry, or one type of firm. Instead, these dilemmas cut across the entire supply chain and must be viewed broadly if sustainable and ethical change is to be made in MHP industries, as well as industries in general. Due to the intertwined nature of the global economy, steps towards improving the sustainability of other supply chains also moves towards the production of truly sustainable MHPs.

Literature Review

Peak Oil

Peak oil is the theorized point in time when the maximum rate of global oil production is reached, after which the rate of oil extraction is expected to gradually decline (Kenton 2020). This concept is derived from geophysicist Marion King Hubbert and his Peak theory which states that oil production follows a bell-shaped curve (Chappelow 2019). Peak theory has allowed for the prediction of post peak oil with the aid of forecast models. Hubbert himself, created the first forecast model in 1956 that predicted peak oil to occur in the United States sometime around the year 2000 (Figure 1).

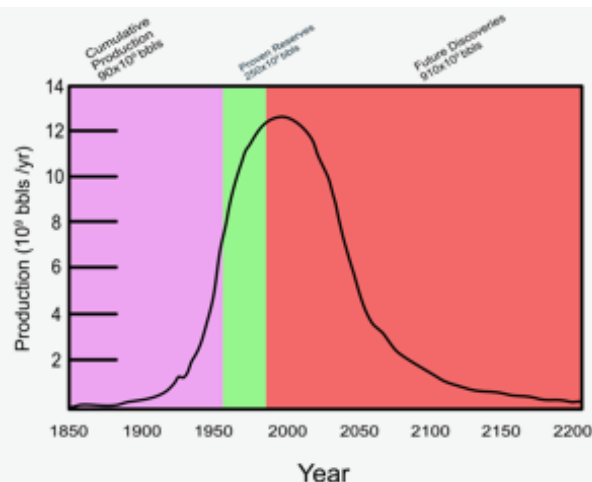


Figure 1. 1956 Peak Oil forecast model. After Chappelow 2019.

However, during the late 1970s, global oil consumption dropped due to the shift towards electricity and natural gases for heating and the rise of energy efficient cars (Toth and Rogner 2006). Thus oil production did not peak around the 2000s, and has since then climbed to more than double the rate initially projected (Birol et al. 2009). Following Hubbert's failed prediction of peak oil came an ensemble of both pessimistic and optimistic forecast models anticipating peak oil happening anywhere between tomorrow to the next 100 years (Caruso 2005).

Despite the array of peak oil predictions, oil still consummates the majority of energy consumed globally (Birol et al. 2009). Peak oil forecast data are susceptible to various factors, including but not limited to the discovery of new oil field reserves, governmental policy, and the response of market demand all while taking into account the pre-existing conditions of oil fields. However, in a 2013 study of 733 giant oil field, only 32 percent of recoverable oil, condensate, and gas remained (Patterson 2015). Some of the largest oil fields in the world including Ghawar, Burgan Field, and Cantarell Field were in decline before 2009 as agreed by The Associations for the Study of Peak Oil and Gas (Alekkett 2006). Regardless, of the decline of existing oil field, new oil reserves are being discovered yearly. The annual rate of new discoveries has remained remarkably constant at 15-20 Gb/yr (Johnson 2010). As new discoveries are made with each year, it doesn't avail the fact that oil is a finite resource and global consumption is rising (Patterson 2015).

Benefits of Sustainable MHPs

The burgeoning popularity of sustainability is due to growing concerns over climate change, industrial effects on the environment, and the interest of consumers (Ellsmoor 2019). The average menstruating individual

throws away 250 to 300 pounds of "pads, plugs, [and] applicators" in their lifetime (Stein 2009). Convenient MHPs are made up almost entirely of plastic, with menstrual pads containing up to 90 percent plastic (Friends of the Earth 2018). Plastics on average take 500 to 800 years to decompose. Some sustainable MHPs reduce menstrual related waste by providing products that are reusable and have a shelf life of multiple years. Other sustainable options are still single use, but instead they are biodegradable or compostable. The consumer can also benefit from sustainable MHPs by understanding product transparency. This allows consumers to know the types of MHP products they are putting in their bodies and the kind of supply chains and business models they are supporting through their purchases.

Another motivation to switch to sustainable MHPs, is the concern about pesticide use during the agricultural process of traditional MHPs. This worry is eliminated through the purchase of organic, GMO-free MHPs made from raw materials produced without pesticides. However, little to no research examining the effects of pesticides on MHP consumers have been conducted, even though chemicals used for synthetic fragrances found in convenient MHPs have been linked to carcinogens, allergens, irritants, and endocrine-disrupting chemicals (Scranton 2013). Despite hard evidence to suggest that these pesticides do in fact carry these risks, the argument that pesticides potentially lurking in MHPs have influenced the purchases of sustainable menstrual products (Singh et al. 2019). Regardless of the motivations behind the purchase of sustainable MHPs, purchasing power holds substantial influence over companies who respond to what profits them the most. Therefore, following the law of supply and demand, if sustainable MHPs are more profitable and desirable than convenient MHPs, then the production of convenient MHPs will decrease and inventory for sustainable MHPs will increase. This will benefit future generations by reducing the harmful environmental side effects of the production of convenient MHPs. Sustainable MHPs also provide social and economic benefits. These benefits are primarily seen in developing countries where nonprofit organizations such as The Pad Project and AFRIPads not only help local communities create sustainable MHPs using regional raw materials, but also help create jobs employing women, break social taboos about menstrual cycles, and help educate community members about reproductive health (Weiss-Wolf 2019).

Issues of Sustainable MHPs

It is difficult to argue for sustainability when there are more than 3 billion people worldwide living in poverty who cannot afford the price tag of sustainable living. 500 million of those 3 billion individuals are people who endure

period poverty (International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics [IFGO] 2019) -- meaning these women, typically due to financial constraints, cannot afford the essential tools such as sanitary products and private washing facilities to properly manage menstruation.

Sustainable MHPs are typically marketed at a higher price than traditional menstrual products, which often results in women who live in period poverty choosing the cheaper, conventionally marketed MHPs. In addition to the issue of affordability is the question of availability, since sustainable MHPs are often not easily accessible (Davidson 2012). These products are not generally found at local gas stations or grocery store chains. Typically, the majority of sustainable MHPs are found and sold on the Internet, where consumers must actively seek a product to purchase it. Such digital inequity is itself a social issue. Roughly three-in-ten adults with household incomes below \$30,000 a year do not own a smartphone, more than four-in-ten do not have home broadband services or a traditional computer, and a majority of lower-income Americans are not tablet owners (Anderson and Kumar 2019). This digital divide makes accessibility to sustainable MHPs difficult, even if individuals are capable of making a sustainable purchase. Therefore, in order to promote sustainable living, equity must first be established to ensure everyone is given the same opportunity to make a sustainable choice.

Equity, however, is not as easily obtainable. A step towards equity within the United States would be the removal of taxation on personal care products, including menstruation hygiene products. Sales taxes are levied against items that are considered non-essential. Items that are exempted from or partially exempted from sales taxes include groceries, medicine, medical devices, and in some instances clothing (Bizfilings 2020). State and local sales taxes differ from state to state but combined could be anywhere between 9.53 percent to 6.00 percent (Cammenga 2020). This means in states like Arkansas, with a combined State and Local sales tax of 9.47 percent, consumers are paying roughly 10 percent of their product in taxes. This would make a \$10 box of sustainably labeled MHPs an additional one dollar, which to some individuals might be a deterrent when a conventionally marketed box of tampons is priced at an average of \$7. There are currently 33 states that tax menstrual products as luxury items (Free the Period 2019). Repealing this "tampon tax" removes unequal tax burden and could lighten the hardship of individuals who are faced with period poverty, potentially making the choice between sustainable menstruation products and conventional products a less expensive and more viable one.

Sustainable Education

As previously mentioned, there are quite a few barriers to the global use of sustainable MHPs. However, there is a bigger issue of sustainable education. Individuals could have the resources to regularly obtain sustainable MHPs, but be completely unaware of their ability to do so. If individuals are not educated in sustainability, they will continue to make the choice of traditional MHPs over sustainable ones, simply because they do not know better (Kaur et al. 2018). This issue of education alone effects not only developing countries but developed countries as well. In order for a truly sustainable product to be successful in the global market, sustainable education programs need to be implemented for people in all walks of life (Weiss-Wolf 2017).

Sustainability in the United States compared to Latin American Countries

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was adopted in 2015 (United Nations [UN] 2015). These 17 new Sustainable Development Goals, also known as Global Goals are applicable to all 193 UN Member States and aim to motivate countries to mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities, and tackle climate change, all while ensuring that no one is left behind (UN 2015). These goals are outlined by the U.S. National Statistics for the U.N. Sustainable Development (2015):

1. No poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Good health and well-being
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable and clean energy
8. Decent work and economic growth
9. Industry, innovation, and infrastructure
10. Reduced inequalities
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Responsible consumption and production
13. Climate action
14. Life below water
15. Life on land
16. Peace and justice
17. Partnerships for the goals

When comparing the sustainability of the United States with Latin America, the results are well defined by each region's ability to participate in the SDGs and the SDGs national voluntary review.

In 2017 the meeting of the high-level political forum (HLPF) convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council to review in-depth seven goals out of the 17 SDGs (High-Level Political

Forum [HLPF] 2017). This review included goals, 1-5, 9, 14, and 17, in accordance with paragraph 84. These voluntary reviews include developed and developing countries as well as relevant UN entities and stakeholders (HLPF 2012). In 2017, 43 countries have volunteered to present their national voluntary reviews to the HLPF (2017). Included in the 43 countries are 11 Latin American countries. United States did not volunteer their HLPF reviews. In 2018, HLPF reviewed SDG goals 6, 7, 11, 12, 15, and 17. Eight Latin American countries and United States volunteered to present their national voluntary reviews to HLPF (2018). In the 2019 HLPF review, which reviewed SDG goals 4, 8, 10, 13, 16, and 17, four Latin American countries volunteered to present their national voluntary reviews to HLPF, however, United States did not volunteer their HLPF reviews (HLPF 2019). As of 2020, HLPF reflected on how the international community can respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in a way that puts them back on track to achieve SDGs (HLPF 2020). Forty-seven countries carried out voluntary national reviews, nine of them were Latin American countries. United States did not volunteer their HLPF review (HLPF 2020). The United States has failed all but once, to submit the SDGs national voluntary reviews, while Latin American countries have consistently made an effort to report the SDGs national voluntary reviews.

The global SDG Index score can also be used to interpret the percentage of achievement the United States and Latin American countries have obtained towards the Global Goals. As of 2020, the United States SDG Index score is 76.43 percent, which suggest that the U.S. is on average 76 percent of the way to the best possible outcome across the 17 SDGs (Sachs et al. 2020). As for Latin American countries, Argentina sits at a 73.17 percent, Brazil at a 72.67 percent, Peru is 71.75 percent, Mexico is at 70.44 percent, and Chile at 77.42 percent (Sachs et al. 2020). These five Latin American countries paint a rough picture of Latin America's sustainability as a whole.

Another way to quantify the United States and Latin American countries commitment towards sustainability is looking at the Environmental Sustainability Index (ESI). The ESI score quantifies the likelihood that a country will be able to preserve valuable environmental resources effectively and avoid major environmental deterioration over the period of several decades (Socioeconomic Data Applications Center [SEDAC] 2005). The ESI is a unit-less score ranging from a minimum of 0 (bad) to a maximum of 100 (good). The United States is scored between 50.1-60.0 while the Latin American countries rated as such: Chile 50.1-60.0, Argentina 60.1-70.0, Brazil 60.1-70.0, Peru 60.1-70.0, and Mexico 40.1-50.0 (SEDAC 2005).

When evaluating the SDG and ESI index scores, along with the HLPF voluntary review submission, it indicates that the United States and the Latin American countries are similar in their ESI scores. As both regions strive to meet the SDG global goals, while also ensuring that the environment is well preserved, these global efforts influence the MHP market and push for more sustainable MHP supply chains.

Green Energies

As peak oil is becoming a tangible reality, growing concern for energy security is stimulating investment in "alternative energy" (Matuszak 2010). Green energy is defined as "energy generated in ways that do not deplete natural resources or harm the environment, especially by avoiding the use of fossil fuels and nuclear power" (Green Energy 2020). There are five recognized types of alternative energies, which include solar power, wind power, biomass energy (including biofuels), geothermal energy, and hydropower. Renewable energy falls into two categories: 1. Substitutes for existing petroleum liquids, both from biomass and fossil feedstock, and 2. Alternatives for the generation of electric power, including power storage technologies (Fridley 2010). Generating energy that produces no greenhouse gas emissions helps reduce air pollution and improve water quality, which in turn can improve public health and lower overall healthcare costs (Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] 2019). Diversifying energy supply and reducing dependence on imported fuels can help stimulate economic development and provide jobs in manufacturing, installation, and other sectors (EPA 2019). Employing the use of alternative energies in the process of manufacturing sustainable MHP will ensure that MHPs will be able to continue to provide their benefits to menstruating individuals after post-peak oil.

However, David Fridley (2010) outlines major drawbacks preventing the execution of alternative energy globally. These challenges include scalability and timing (the ability to produce the amount of alternative energy equipment needed, to the scale needed, within the time that it is needed), commercialization (the ability to mass produce and market alternative energy), substitutability (the ability for alternative energy to replace fossil fuels), required material inputs (finite materials needed for certain alternative energies equipment that limits the scalability, substitutability, and commercialization of some green energies), intermittency (the inability to always acquire a steady source of renewable energy), energy density, water usage (the amount of water need for the construction of alternative energy equipment and infrastructure), the law of receding horizons (the tendency for a goal to just stay on the horizon no matter how hard you struggle towards it), and energy return on investment

(is the energy return worth the investment?). These challenges must be assessed and overcome if renewable energy is to make any impact on the production of MHPs, as well as reducing society's reliance on fossil fuels. These challenges must also be addressed if sustainable MHPs are to be marketed globally, and supplied internationally, for consumers during post peak oil. It is important that these products are mass produced using sustainable means in order to continue to provide the comfort and convenience of pre-assembled MHPs for the public.

There are other drawbacks that are associated with each distinctive alternative energy, as well, that counteract the long-term benefits. For instance, alternative energy technology is typically more expensive initially than traditional generators (Kádár 2014). The different types of green energy can inadvertently cause deforestation, surface instability, the destruction of local ecosystems, and suffer from low efficiency and practicality (Cho 2010; Azarpour et al. 2012; Kádár 2014).

Social and Environmental issues of Supply Chain

In the past decade, the rise in concern for sustainable and ethically produced commodities has also increased scrutiny and debate over the lack of transparency in supply chains in MHPs that are marketed as sustainable, but also in supply chains of conventionally marketed products as well (Weiss-Wolf 2017). Social issues are defined as human safety and welfare, community development, and protection from harm (Klassen and Vereecke 2012). Some common social issues most frequently faced by firms are labor condition, child labor, human rights, health and safety, minority development, disabled/marginalized people inclusion, and gender (Yawar and Seuring 2015). However, it should be noted that these social issues are not the only ones confronted by corporations.

Corporate social responsibility and sustainability performance literature claims it is a firm's best interest to address social issues in their supply chains (Chen 2020). The mismanagement of social issues can lead to consumer backlash if stakeholder expectations are not met (Chen 2020). Corporations can also use the management of social issues as a potential way of reducing risk (Klassen and Vereecke 2012). Taking environmental responsibility has also proven to help business reduce potential risks (Toptal and Çetinkaya 2015). Government regulations and customers' increased awareness of environmental issues are pushing for businesses' supply chain management to reduce the negative influence of their operations on the environment. Supply chains often represent a large percentage, approximately 40-60 percent, of an organizations environmental footprint (EPA 2018). This study analyzes not only the production of MHPs, but also their supply chains and their environmental footprint, which can include issues pertaining to toxic waste, water

pollution, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, long-term damage to ecosystems, and hazardous air emissions, as well as greenhouse gas emissions and energy use (EPA 2019). Jeremy Kingsely (2019) discusses how being sustainable and environmentally conscious allows companies to save money, avoid present and future regulation costs, and improve public reputation with 85 percent of consumers being more likely to buy from a company with a reputation for sustainability than from a company that does not market sustainability, even if their prices are equal.

Sustainability Standards Defined

Sustainability satisfies the needs of the present without adversely affecting conditions for future generations. Sustainability is equity in all manners. Equity can only truly be reached when products are sustainable and equitable at every level. Sustainability standards and certifications are voluntary and usually third party-assessed. Companies adopt norms and standards relating to environmental impacts, social, ethical and food safety issues to demonstrate the performance of their organizations or products in specific areas.

There are over 400 such standards across the world (International Institute for Sustainable Development [IISD] 2019). Standards are mostly subjective in nature and likely to change in accordance with what stakeholders and NGOs deem appropriate (Hueting and Reijnders 1998). Despite similarities in goals and certification procedures, there are significant differences in terms of target groups, geographical diffusion, and emphasis on environmental, social, and economic issues (Hagen et al. 2010). Major differences can be seen in the strictness with which standards are enforced. Some standards push sustainability expectations, promoting the strongest social and environmental practices (Weban-Smith et al. 2012). Other certification criteria are less rigorous, choosing only to eliminate detrimental practices and make minimal changes to attempt to sway large portions of an industry towards more sustainable methodology (Weban-Smith et al. 2012). Additional differences include that some standards can be applied internationally. Whereas other standards are developed entirely with a regional or national focus (Weban-Smith et al. 2012). Some minor differences between standards might relate to the certification process and whether it is conducted by first, second, or third parties. The traceability systems that are put in place might differ and whether or not they allow for the segregation or mixing of certified and non-certified materials. The types of sustainability claims that are made on products also vary. The multitude of standards makes it difficult to assess the sustainability of any product, especially MHPs.

The problems caused by the multiplicity of certifications and standards initiatives led to the launch of The State of Sustainability Initiatives (SSI) project, which was facilitated by the United Nations Conference Trade and Development (UNCTD) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). The United Nations Forum on Sustainability Standards (UNFSS), a joint initiative by the Food and Agriculture Organization, International Trade Centre, UNCTD, United Nations Environment Programme, and United Nations Industrial Development Organization, was also established to in effort to standardize sustainability standards. The UNFSS uses Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) to help ensure that consumer products adhere to the three principles of sustainability. The United States federal government within the past couple of decades has established organizations such as The Environmental Protection Agency, National Science Foundation, National Center for Sustainability Standards, and the American National Standards Institute. All of these organizations, however, work inside the public sector of standardization, which means they can only extend their efforts for sustainability as far as the federal government will allow (Yawar and Seuring 2015). The actions these government-funded institutions take to regulate sustainability standards, would only have limited authority over the use or disuse of sustainability standards applied within the private sector, which includes organizations composed of external stockholders, consumers, and NGOs.

Methodology

The methodology used was quantitative in nature and consists of comparing and contrasting numerous variables associated with sustainability. Products already available on the market were compared in terms of sustainability, method of sustainability, and price. The products chosen for the sample were split into three major categories: menstrual cups, sustainable disposals, and reusable menstrual underwear and pads. Sustainability was determined by looking at the product's disposal methods. It is bio-degradable or compostable? Does the product retail that it is zero waste? Method of sustainability refers to the process by which raw materials are refined into a final product. This includes water usage per product unit and water used during the production of raw materials (Postel 2010), the treatment of land used for agricultural production of raw materials (Jackson 2010), ethical treatment of employees and animals during all steps of production, and if green energy was used at any point during the manufacturing of the products (Fridley 2010). These variables were assessed using the following questions:

- What were the materials used for the final product?

- Was the packaging recyclable?
- Did the product's company have any sustainable certifications?
- Did the business use alternative energy at any point during the manufacturing of the product? If yes, then what alternative energy?
- Did the business employ third party suppliers or manufacturers? If yes, how did they make sure third parties were adhering to sustainably and ethically sound practices? Sustainability refers not only to the type of disposal method for the final product, but its affordability as well.
- Who is able to purchase the sustainable product rather than a conventional one? The question used to address this variable was: Does this company promote any accessibility programs to aid menstruating individuals who do not have the means to afford sustainable MHPs?

The questions used to evaluate the sustainability of the 22 selected products were developed by myself through my research conducted throughout the literature review. These questions were influenced by the authors in the Post Carbon Reader (Fridley 2010), but they do not stem from previously published works.

Companies were contacted directly through customer service emails or contact submission boxes when there was a need for clarifying answers to the above questions. Companies who could not be reached through email or through their website were contacted over the phone. If representatives of the companies could not be reached, then research was conducted by using product location services provided by manufacturers. Stores that carried the selected products and were within a 50-mile radius of Conway, Arkansas were visited to examine the product in an attempt to answer any unclarified questions. If information about a product was unavailable, despite the efforts described above, then "non-applicable" was recorded in the final data. Data was collected and final results were compiled into tables and graphs.

Sample Selection

Samples were chosen using convenience sampling. Sustainable menstrual hygiene products are typically not located at conventional grocery stores or pharmacies. The majority of sustainable product purchase are made online, with a sustainable purchases accounting for 16.6 percent of the United States market in 2018 (Kronthal-Sacco and Whelan 2019). Between 2013 and 2018, these products accounted for 50 percent of consumer packaged goods growth (Kronthal-Sacco and Whelan 2019). Amazon is the most popular online shopping site, with average monthly traffic of 200 million users and available to over 13 countries (Clement 2019). The

samples selected from Amazon were broken down into three categories: menstrual cups, sanitary disposables, and reusable pads and menstrual underwear. These categories served as key words used in the search engine and are considered the most commonly used sustainable alternatives. The initial guidelines for each category were that samples chosen must have a company website and could not come from an independent seller. The following number of items were chosen from the three categories of products: seven menstrual cups, seven sustainable disposables (tampons only), four reusable menstrual pads, and four reusable menstrual underwear. The products chosen included the most expensive and the cheapest product, along with five products in-between those prices. A product was more likely to be chosen if that product showed up more than once on the first page of Amazon. In the instance of the category of reusable pads and menstrual underwear, eight products were chosen in total, with four in each sub-category. The highest and lowest priced products were selected with two products priced in-between. Seven products could not be chosen for each sub-category because there was a lack of products that were from a company with an established website. The brands selected are as follows: for menstrual cups, LenaCups, PixieCups, Saalt, DivaCup, OrganiCup, Flex, and The Keeper; for sanitary disposals, My Box Shop, Cora, L., o.b. Organic, Rael, Veeda, and Seventh Generation; for reusable pads, LunaPads, Charlie Banana, Gladrags, and ZeroWasteStore; for menstrual underwear, LunaPads, Dear Kate, Ruby Love, and Thinx. Replication of brands was avoided if possible. There is a possibility of selection bias as the sample selection was not random. However, for this research, convenient sampling was necessary.

Study Results

Table 1 compares the prices of the seven selected menstrual cup brands. The price of each brand in U.S. dollars is represented by the Y axis. Menstrual cup brands are represented by the X axis. The product count per retail unit is one. PixieCup prices one menstrual cup for \$15.95. The brand DivaCup prices one menstrual cup for \$22.50. The brand LenaCup prices one menstrual cup for \$24.90. OrganiCup prices one menstrual cup for \$28.00. The brand Saalt prices one menstrual cup for \$29.00. The brand Flex prices one menstrual cup for \$29.99. The Keeper prices one menstrual cup for \$35.00. The most expensive menstrual cup brand is The Keeper at \$35.00 per cup and the cheapest menstrual cup brand is Pixiecup at \$15.95 per cup.

Table 2 compares the prices of the seven selected sanitary disposables brands to their retail unit. The product count per retail unit is represented by the Y axis and the blue line. The Price in U.S. dollars is



Table 1. Menstrual cup prices per brand.

represented by the X axis and the orange line. The brand o.b. Organic prices 24 sanitary disposables at \$5.99. The brand Rael prices 16 sanitary disposables at \$6.00. The brand L. prices 30 sanitary disposables at \$6.99. The brand Seventh Generation prices 18 sanitary disposables at \$6.99. Veeda prices 16 sanitary disposables at \$9.97. The brand My Box Shop prices 16 sanitary disposables at \$9.99. Cora prices 18 sanitary disposables at \$12.00.

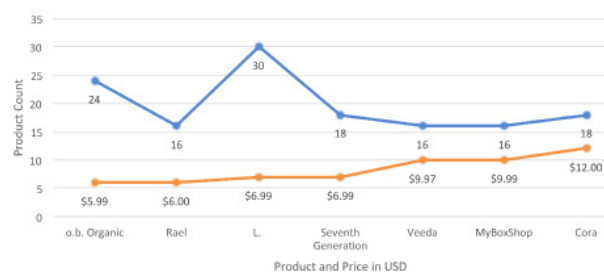


Table 2. Sanitary disposables brand prices compared to their product count per retail unit.

Table 3 compares the prices of the four selected reusable menstrual pad brands to their retail units. The product count per retail unit is represented by the gray line. The price in U.S. dollars is represented by the Y axis with the blue line representing the lowest marketed price and the orange line representing the highest marketed price. The brands are represented by the X axis. The brand LunaPads has one reusable menstrual pad priced between \$12.99 to \$23.99. Charlie Banana has three reusable menstrual pads prices between \$17.99 to \$24.99. The brand Gladrags has one reusable menstrual pad priced between \$14.99 to \$19.99. the brand ZeroWasteStore has one reusable menstrual pad priced between \$15.99 to \$19.99.

Table 4 compares the prices of the four selected reusable menstrual underwear brands. The price in U.S. dollars is represented by the Y axis. The reusable menstrual underwear brands are represented by the X axis. The orange line represents the highest marketed price for that particular brand. The blue line represented the lowest marketed price for that particular brand. The area between the orange and blue lines represents the



Table 3. Reusable menstrual pad brand prices compared to their product count per retail unit.

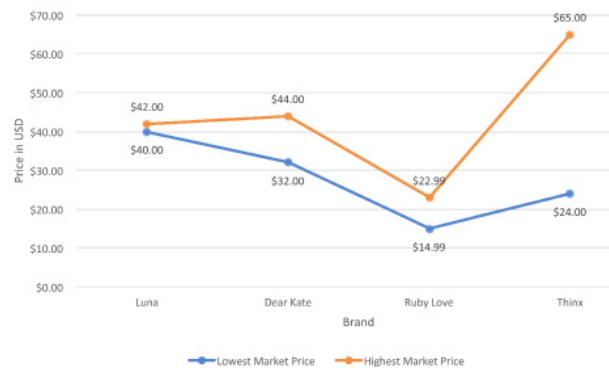


Table 4. Reusable menstrual underwear price per brand.

range of prices found in-between the highest and lowest marketed price for that particular brand. The brand LunaPad's highest marketed menstrual underwear price is at \$42 and their lowest marketed menstrual underwear price is at \$40. Dear Kate's highest marketed menstrual underwear price is at \$44 and their lowest marketed menstrual underwear price is at \$32. The brand Ruby Love's highest marketed menstrual underwear price is at \$22.99 and their lowest marketed menstrual underwear price is at \$14.99. The brand Thinx's highest marketed menstrual underwear price is at \$65.00 and their lowest marketed menstrual underwear price is at \$24.00. LunaPads has the smallest range between prices. Ruby love offers the cheapest marketed menstrual underwear

with prices ranges from \$14.99 to \$22.99. Thinx has the most expensive marketed menstrual underwear with a high of \$65.00. Thinx also offers the widest range of menstrual underwear prices with a range from \$24.00 to \$65.00.

Table 5 displays the seven menstrual cup brands chosen for this research and their response to a set of questions used to evaluate the sustainability of their product. The questions were: 1) Is the material used for the menstrual cup 100 percent medical grade silicone? 2) Is the packaging the product comes in recyclable? 3) Did the brand at any point during the production process use green energy? 4) Did the brand at any point during the production process employ a third party? 5) Does the brand sponsor accessibility programs? The brand LenaCup answered yes to the questions 1-3 and 5. The brand PixieCup answered yes to questions 1, 4, and 5. Saalt answered yes to questions 1 and 5. DivaCup answered yes to questioned 1-5. The brand OrganiCup answered yes to questions 1, 2, and 5. Flex answered yes to only question 1. The Keeper answered yes to only question 2.

Table 5.1 displays the seven menstrual cup brands chosen for this research and marks if the brand has any sustainability certifications. LenaCup is Forest Stewardship Council certified. PixieCup has no sustainability certifications. The brand Saalt is a Benefit "B" corporation. DivaCup is a Benefit "B" corporation

| Menstrual Cup Brand | Sustainability Certifications |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| LenaCup | |
| PixieCup | |
| Saalt | |
| DivaCup | |
| Flex | |
| The Keeper | |

Table 5.1. Menstrual cup brands that do and do not have sustainability certifications.

| Menstrual Cup Brand | Material is 100% Medical Grade Silicone | Packaging is Recyclable | Green Energy Used | Employ Third Parties | Sponsors Accessibility Programs |
|---------------------|---|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| LenaCup | | | | | |
| PixieCup | | | | | |
| Saalt | | | | | |
| DivaCup | | | | | |
| OrganiCup | | | | | |
| Flex | | | | | |
| The Keeper | | | | | |

Table 5. Menstrual cup brand's responses to research questions.

| Menstrual Cup Brand | Company had to be contacted to answer clarifying questions | Company Responded to Contact | Company was able to answer all questions | Company was unable to answer all question | Company did not respond to contact |
|---------------------|--|------------------------------|--|---|------------------------------------|
| LenaCup | | | | | |
| PixieCup | | | | | |
| Saalt | | | | | |
| DivaCup | | | | | |
| OrganiCup | | | | | |
| Flex | | | | | |
| The Keeper | | | | | |

Table 5.2. Menstrual cup brands and their response to contact to answer clarifying questions.

| Sanitary Disposables Brands | 100% Organic Cotton Used | Packagings is Recyclable | Green Energy Used | Employ Third Parties | Sponsor Accessibility Programs |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| My Box Shop | | | | | |
| Cora | | | | | |
| L. | | | | | |
| Rael | | | | | |
| o.b. Organic | | | | | |
| Veeda | | | | | |
| Seventh Generation | | | | | |

Table 6. Sanitary disposables brand's responses to research questions.

and is Forest Stewardship certified. The brand Flex has no sustainability certifications. The Keeper has no sustainability certifications.

Table 5.2 displays if the seven menstrual cup brands chosen for this research had to be contacted to answer clarifying questions. If they had to be contacted, then table 5.2 also displays if the company responded to the contact, was able or unable to answer all the clarifying questions, or if the company did not respond to the contact at all. All brands had to be contacted to answer clarifying questions. The brands LenaCup, PixieCup, DivaCup, OrganiCup, and Flex responded to contact. The brand Saalt was the only company that did not respond to contact. None of the companies that responded to contact were able to answer all the clarifying questions.

Table 6 displays the seven sanitary disposables brands chosen for this research and their response to a set of questions used to evaluate the sustainability of their product. The questions were: 1) Is the material used for the sanitary disposables 100 percent organic cotton? 2) Is the packaging the product comes in recyclable? 3) Did the brand at any point during the production process use green energy? 4) Did the brand at any point during the production process employ a third party? 5) Does the brand sponsor accessibility programs? The brand My Box Shop answered yes to questions 1, 2, and 5. Cora answered yes to questions 1, 3, and 5. The brand L. answered yes to questions 1, 2, and 5. Rael answered yes to only question 1. Veeda answered yes to questions 1 and 2. The brand Seventh Generation answered yes to questions 1, 2, and 5.

Table 6.1 displays the seven sanitary disposables brands chosen for this research and marks if the brand

| Sanitary Disposables Brands | Sustainability Certification |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| My Box Shop | |
| Cora | |
| L. | |
| Rael | |
| o.b. Organic | |
| Veeda | |
| Seventh Generation | |

Table 6.1. Sanitary disposables brands that do and do not have sustainability certifications.

has any sustainability certifications. The brand My Box Shop is Forest Stewardship Council, USDA, and Global Organic Textile Standards (GOTS) certified. Cora is GOTS and Benefits "B" corporation certified. The brand L. is GOTS and Benefits "B" corporation certified. Rael has no sustainability certifications. The brand o.b. Organic has no sustainability certifications. The brand Veeda has no sustainability certifications. Seventh Generation is Forest Stewardship Council, USDA, GOTS, and Benefits "B" corporation certified.

Table 6.2 displays the seven sanitary disposables brands chosen for this research and if their products used BPA-Free applicators or plant-based applicators. The brands My Box Shop, Cora, L., Rael, and Veeda use BPA-free applicators. The brands o.b. Organic and Seventh Generation use plant-based applicators.

Table 6.3 displays if the seven sanitary disposables brands chosen for this research had to be contacted to answer clarifying questions. If they had to be contacted,

| Sanitary Disposables Brands | BPA-Free Applicator | Plant-Based Applicator |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| My Box Shop | | |
| Cora | | |
| L. | | |
| Rael | | |
| o.b. Organic | | |
| Veeda | | |
| Seventh Generation | | |

Table 6.2. Sanitary disposables brands and if they use BPA-free or Plant-based applicators.

| Reusable Pad Brands | Sustainable Certifications |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| LunaPads | |
| Charlie Banana | |
| Gladrags | |
| ZeroWasteStore | |

Table 7.1. Reusable menstrual pad brands that do and do not have sustainability certifications.

| Sanitary Disposables Bands | Company had to be contacted to answer clarifying questions | Company responded to contact | Company was able to answer all questions | Company was unable to answer all questions | Company did not respond to contact |
|----------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------------|
| My Box Shop | | | | | |
| Cora | | | | | |
| L. | | | | | |
| Rael | | | | | |
| o.b. Organic | | | | | |
| Veeda | | | | | |
| Seventh Generation | | | | | |

Table 6.3. Sanitary disposables brands and their response to contact to answer clarifying questions.

then table 6.3 also displays if the company responded to the contact, was able or unable to answer all the clarifying questions, or if the company did not respond to the contact at all. All brands had to be contacted to answer clarifying questions. The brands My Box Shop and L. were the only companies that responded to contact. My Box Shop and L. were unable to answer all the clarifying questions. The brands Cora, Rael, o.b. organic, Veeda, and Seventh Generation did not respond to contact.

Table 7 displays the four reusable menstrual pad brands chosen for this research and their response to a set of questions used to evaluate the sustainability of their product. The questions were: 1) Is the material used for the sanitary disposables 100 percent organic cotton? 2) Is the packaging the product comes in recyclable? 3) Did the brand at any point during the production process use green energy? 4) Did the brand at any point during

the production process employ a third party? 5) Does the brand sponsor accessibility programs? The brand LunaPads answered yes to questions 1, 2, and 5. The brand Charlie Banana answered yes to none of the questions. Gladrags answered yes to questions 1 and 2. The brand ZeroWasteStore answered yes to only question 1.

Table 7.1 displays the four reusable menstrual pad brands chosen for this research and marks if the brand has any sustainability certifications. The brand LunaPads is Benefit "B" corporation, OEKO-TEX, and GOTS certified. Charlie Banana has no sustainability certifications. The brand Gladrags is Forest Stewardship Council and Benefit "B" corporation certified. The brand ZeroWasteStore has no sustainability certifications.

Table 7.2 displays if the four reusable menstrual pad brands chosen for this research had to be contacted to answer clarifying questions. If they had to be contacted,

| Reusable Pad Brands | 100% Organic Cotton used | Packaging is Recyclable | Green Energy Used | Employ Third Parties | Sponsor Accessibility Programs |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| LunaPads | | | | | |
| Charlie Banana | | | | | |
| Gladrags | | | | | |
| ZeroWasteStore | | | | | |

Table 7. Reusable menstrual pad brand's responses to research questions.

| Reusable Pad Brands | Company had to be contacted to answer clarifying questions | Company responded to contact | Company was able to answer all questions | Company was unable to answer all questions | Company did not respond to contact |
|---------------------|--|------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------------|
| LunaPads | | | | | |
| Charlie Banana | | | | | |
| Gladrags | | | | | |
| ZeroWasteStore | | | | | |

Table 7.2. Reusable menstrual pad brands and their response to contact to answer clarifying questions.

| Reusable Menstrual Underwear Brands | Brand provides comprehensive list of materials used | Packaging is Recyclable | Green Energy Used | Employ Third Parties | Sponsor Accessibility Programs |
|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| LunaPads | | | | | |
| Dear Kate | | | | | |
| Ruby Love | | | | | |
| Thinx | | | | | |

Table 8. Reusable menstrual underwear brand's responses to research questions.

| Reusable Menstrual Underwear Brands | Sustainable Certifications |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| LunaPads | |
| Dear Kate | |
| Ruby Love | |
| Thinx | |

Table 8.1. Reusable menstrual underwear brands that do and do not have sustainability certifications.

then table 7.2 also displays if the company responded to the contact, was able or unable to answer all the clarifying questions, or if the company did not respond to the contact at all. All brands had to be contacted to answer clarifying questions. The brand LunaPads was the only company that responded to contact. LunaPads was unable to answer all clarifying questions. The brands Charlie Banana, Gladrags, and ZeroWasteStore did not respond to contact.

Table 8 displays the four reusable menstrual underwear brands chosen for this research and their response to a set of questions used to evaluate the sustainability of their product. The questions were: 1) Does the brand provide a comprehensive list of materials used in their product? 2) Is the packaging the product comes in recyclable? 3) Did the brand at any point during the production process use green energy? 4) Did the brand at any point during the production process employ a third party? 5) Does the brand sponsor accessibility programs? LunaPads answered yes to questions 1, 2, and 5. The brand Dear Kate answered yes to questions 1 and 5. Ruby Love answered yes to only question 1. The brand Thinx answered yes to questions 1, 4, and 5.

Table 8.1 displays the four reusable menstrual underwear brands chosen for this research and marks if the brand has any sustainability certifications. The brand LunaPads is Benefit "B" corporation, OEKO-TEX,

and GOTs certified. Dear Kate has no sustainability certifications. The brand Ruby Love has no sustainability certifications. The brand Thinx is Organic Content Standards (OCS), Registration Evaluation Authorizations and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH), GOTS, and OEKO-TEX certified.

Table 8.2 displays if the four reusable pad brands chosen for this research had to be contacted to answer clarifying questions. If they had to be contacted, then table 8.2 also displays if the company responded to the contact, was able or unable to answer all the clarifying questions, or if the company did not respond to the contact at all. All brands had to be contacted to answer clarifying questions. The brand LunaPads was the only company that responded to contact. LunaPads was unable to answer all clarifying questions. The brands Dear Kate, Ruby Love, and Thinx did not respond to contact.

Discussion

After evaluating the twenty-two selected menstrual hygiene products, none were found to be truly sustainable. When evaluating the sustainability of the chosen MHPs it was apparent that sustainability is intertwined with every aspect of the production process and effects variables outside of the control of manufacturers. As John Muir puts it "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe". Every MHP chosen relied on fossil fuels during some, if not all, parts of manufacturing. Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8 use the question "Did the brand at any point during the manufacturing process use green energy" to evaluate if the products relied more so on fossil fuels or green energy. Only three companies responded that they used green energy during their manufacturing process; Those companies are LenaCup, DivaCup, and Cora. LenaCup uses biogas for the production of all menstrual cup packaging. DivaCup and Cora do not specify which green energies they use,

| Reusable Menstrual Underwear Brands | Company had to be contacted to answer clarifying questions | Company responded to contact | Company was able to answer all questions | Company was unable to answer all questions | Company did not respond to contact |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------------|
| LunaPads | | | | | |
| Dear Kate | | | | | |
| Ruby Love | | | | | |
| Thinx | | | | | |

Table 8.2. Reusable menstrual underwear brands and their response to contact to answer clarifying questions.

only that they use it. The 19 remaining companies did not indicate their use of green energy as displayed in tables 5, 6, 7, and 8.

Despite the reliance on fossil fuels 45 percent of the companies had recyclable packaging to help lighten their brands carbon footprint. Shown in tables 5, 6, 7, and 8 these companies are LunaPads, Gladrags, My Box Shop, L., Veeda, Seveth Generation, LenaCup, DivaCup, OrganiCup, and The Keeper. The Keeper does not have traditional packaging, but instead uses 100 percent organic cotton bag. The 100 percent cotton bags not only make for more space when transporting products, but the bags themselves are biodegradable.

More importantly as Tables 5, 6, and 7 points out that 88% of the brands use sustainable/ biodegradable materials for the final product. Table 5 shows that all except The Keeper use 100 percent medical grade silicone for their menstrual cups. Silicone menstrual cups have a shelf life of 10 years, this prevents menstruating individuals from adding hundreds of pounds of menstrual waste from accumulating in landfills. Thought silicone takes roughly 500 years to decompose, it is a more sustainable solution compared to the one time use traditional MHPs. The Keeper actually uses rubber for their menstrual cups, this is an alternative to individuals who are allergic to silicone so that they too can participate in sustainable menstruation. Tables 6 and 7 display that all but Charlie Banana use 100 percent organic cotton in their sanitary disposables and reusable menstrual pads. 71% of sanitary disposables use BPA-Free applicators while the remaining 29 percent of sanitary disposables use plant-based applicators as shown in table 6.2. BPA-free means the applicators do not use bisphenol A. This doesn't mean the applicators are plastic free. Plant-based, however, infers that bio-plastics are used in the applicators and are therefore biodegradable. The materials used for reusable menstrual underwear is different and not as sustainable considering panties need to be made to stretch and breathe. All companies presented in table 8 were able to give a comprehensive and complete list of the materials used in their reusable menstrual underwear.

Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8 also demonstrate that 19 (excluding ThinX, PixieCup, and DivaCup) of the 22 MHPs chosen did not imply that they hired third parties. The brands LenaCup, Cora, L., and Seventh Generation explicitly state on their websites/blogs that they do not hire third parties. The brands ThinX, PixieCup, and DivaCup directly state on their websites/blogs that they hire third parties and they strictly adhere to International Labour Laws. PixieCup hires inspection agencies to ensure partnered manufacturers are meeting standards. However, the remaining 15 companies did not definitively state they did not hire third parties, nor did they state they hired third parties. There was a lack of information.

This could suggest a lack of transparency in who they hired. Clarifying questions were sent to these companies. Tables 5.2, 6.3, 7.2, and 8. 2 exhibits that 54 percent of the companies chosen did not respond to emails sent in order to clarify questions not answered on their websites. These companies were: Saalt, Cora, Rael, o.b. Organic, Veeda, Seventh Generation, Charlie Banana, Gladrags, ZeroWasteStore, Dear Kate, Ruby Love, and ThinX. The 46 percent companies that did respond were not able to answer all of the clarifying questions.

This lack of response or inability to answer clarifying questions can be due to a number of reasons, one being that the business of MHPs is simply supply and demand. Traditionally MHPs manufacturing companies do not need to advertise their product as adamantly as other companies providing goods because individuals will purchase the product regardless based on their needs. Due to this lack of advertising, MHPs companies might also fall short on their consumer service representatives. The same can be compared to toothpaste or other hygiene products. There aren't a whole lot of questions pertaining to the use of these products, and more likely than not consumers can answer their own questions via the internet. This is simply a speculation of the experience this research has presented. Another reason could be seen as not a lack of a MHP companies' personal, but a lack of transparency. The lack of transparency can be viewed as a type of greenwashing. Greenwashing refers to "disinformation disseminated by organizations so as to present an environmentally responsible public image" (Oxford dictionary 2018). Greenwashing provides companies with the benefits of selling "sustainable" products without the effort to reform any manufacturing practices. The companies from this study that exhibited signs of potential greenwashing were: Charlie Banana, ZeroWasteStore, Ruby Love, and o.b. Organic. These companies were chosen for a number of reasons. All of these brands did not respond to contact as seen in tables 6.3, 7.2, and 8.2. These companies were unable to answer basic questions demonstrated in tables 6, 7, and 8 such as "What materials were used for the product?", "Is the packaging the product comes in recyclable?", "Did the brand at any point during the production process use green energy or employ third parties?", and "Does the brand sponsor accessibility programs?". Tables 6.1, 7.1, 8.1 displayed that none of these companies had any sustainability certifications to hold their products accountable. All of the companies mentioned product details such as "eco-friendly" on their websites or blogs but failed to explain how.

However, some companies are making great strides towards reducing their existing carbon footprint and moving towards zero-waste through obtaining sustainability certifications. These companies are

LenaCup, Saalt, DivaCup, My Box Shop, Cora, L., Seventh Generation, LunaPads, Thinx, and GladRags as outlined by Tables 5.1, 6.1, 7.1, and 8.1. These companies showcase sustainability certifications such as Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), which ensures that products come from responsibly managed forests that provide environmental, social, and economic benefits. B Corporation, which refers to businesses that meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability. Cruelty-free, which certifies a product that doesn't test on, harm, or kill animals during any process of manufacturing. Global Organic Textile Standards (GOTS), which is a worldwide leading textile processing standard for organic fibers, including ecological and social criteria backed up by independent certification of the entire textile supply chain. Organic Content Standards (OCS), which applies to any non-food product containing 95-100 percent organic material, verifies the presence and amount of organic material in a final product, and tracks the flow of the raw material from its source to the final product. USDA approved means organic foods and products are grown and processed according to United States federal guidelines, which addresses soil quality, animal raising practices, pest and weed control, and use of additives. OEKO-TEX, which certifies a product to be completely free from harmful chemicals and safe for human use as defined by the International Association for Research and Testing in the Field of Textile and Leather Ecology. Registration Evaluation Authorizations and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH), which is a regulation of the European Union adopted to improve the protection of human health and the environment from the risks that can be posed by chemicals. The brands LenaCup, Saalt, DivaCup, My Box Shop, Cora, L., Seventh Generation, Thinx, and LunaPads sponsored accessibility programs which can be seen in Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8. These accessibility programs often take the form of MHP donations to partnered organizations that then distribute the products to areas in need. These accessibility programs not only aid in the donation of MHPs, but also in sustainable menstrual education. Women who would otherwise not have an option to participate in sustainable menstruation are given the opportunity to engage in safe, sustainable menstrual hygiene. The women who are benefiting from these accessibility programs, who live in developing countries have huge potential growth in the free market. The purchasing power they will bring to the globalization table has the capacity to drive market change. If these women are educated in sustainable menstrual hygiene, they will be more likely to make sustainable MHP purchases. They will be more likely to teach their children to make sustainable MHP purchases. These accessibility

programs have the possibility of making profound impacts for the future market of sustainability.

However, as of right now, out of the 22 MHP brands chosen for this research, though none were found to be truly sustainable, 9 were close. These 9 companies are LenaCup, Saalt, DivaCup, My Box Shop, Cora, L., Seventh Generation, LunaPads, and Thinx. These brands all shared two key factors. They are sustainably certified by third parties and they offer accessibility programs.

Conclusion

It would be ideal if twenty-first century menstruating individuals did not have to manufacture a truly sustainable MHP in order to manage basic human bodily functions for the upcoming event of post peak oil society. However, due to the generational tyranny placed on twenty-first century menstruating individuals by the exploitative mindsets born from industrialization, creating a truly sustainable MHP is a reality that must be addressed if menstruating individuals wish to continue to safely and sanitarily manage their cycles through post peak oil. Despite the efforts made in this research to understand the possibility of a truly sustainable MHP, there are still thousands of "sustainable" MHPs on the market beside the twenty-two selected for this sample that have not been evaluated for true sustainability. Twenty-two products cannot possibly fill the gap between where global productions of MHPs are and where they need to be to accommodate the ever-growing problem of climate change. The research available over sustainable MHPs and their relationship with post peak oil is limited. To date, few longitudinal studies have been conducted that examine what effects sustainable MHPs might have in helping to alleviate the impacts of climate change or what solutions they might offer for managing menstruation in a post peak oil society. There is simply not enough collected data. If this research is not conducted now, it might be too late to do so later. Meaning, that if a truly sustainable product is capable of being produced currently, then it needs to be refined and globally marketed as soon as possible in order to make the transition between oil society and post peak oil society comfortable, safe, and affordable for menstruating individuals.

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An Analysis of Avatar: The Last Airbender's Final Episodes

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Introduction

Nickelodeon's hit show *Avatar: The Last Airbender* is dear to many young adults today. It has a little something for everyone: action, adventure, romance, comedy, and drama. As people grew and they watched the series again, it became more and more apparent how many grown-up themes slipped into this beloved children's series. With scenes containing themes of domestic violence and abuse, self-sacrifice, loss of autonomy, genocide, and ethnocide, one may wonder where society draws the line about what is appropriate for children's viewing.

Cinema rating systems are trusted to accurately analyze the content of cinema and give it an appropriate rating label based on those analyses. When trying to figure out the rating that was given to the television series *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, there are two different ratings listed for this show: TV-Y7 and TV-14. This presents an issue of which rating is more accurate and whether either is an appropriate rating label. I analyze the physical, interpersonal acts of violence that occur in the last episode of each season of *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and compare it to the ratings that it received.

Literature Review: Violence in Children's Media

One might believe that the Disney Corporation can be trusted to produce films that are appropriate for families, particularly children, to watch. However, the movies have scenes containing the death of loved ones, miscarriages, and even deadly family rivalries. Disney is often a child's introduction to the concept of death, and it is not in short supply (Colman et al. 2014). It is common for shows aimed at children and adolescents to portray harsh realities that depict themes and issues that are important to young individuals. This changes over time. Observing the plot points of children's movies through the years can attest to this; the plots of *Cinderella*, an abused step-daughter/step-sister who sneaks out to a ball for a night off and finds love, and *Zootopia*, the first ever bunny cop moves to the capital and uncovers a plot to increase fear towards predators, which are a minority in this society are just two examples. Analyses of the *Harry Potter* series turned up themes of religion, gender, race, class, and social issues. All of which are topics that may not have been covered in earlier years. The violence shown tends to lack gore and a graphic nature but is meant to strike fear into the hearts of its viewers (Finley 2019).

Colman et al. (2014) found that the loved ones of the protagonists and nemeses of kids shows are most likely to be the targets of on-screen deaths. The loss of loved ones, especially parents, can be difficult for children to cope with and experiencing such a theme repeatedly can harm the child via anxiety (Colman et al. 2014). This is work examining, given that kids around the world spend at least 50 percent more time in front of a screen than participating in extracurricular activities, in addition to the U.S. National Television Violence Study estimating that almost two-thirds of TV shows contain violence, averaging approximately six acts per hour (Dogutas 2013). Sakarasih et al. (2015) found that five out of six students whose answers contained the presence of third-person point-of-view said that they were old enough not to be affected by media violence, but that media violence would have undesirable effects on younger children.

Cook et al. (2015) found that exposure to media violence was associated with greater perspective taking; in lay terms, that exposure to media violence could help people put themselves in other people's shoes. For example, media can help someone relate to others in various scenarios, such as the loss of someone close, survival situations, and even combat. Waddell et al. (2019) found that viewers felt significantly more sympathy to film characters when the violence was portrayed in a negative light. Here, the mean was 6.15, while the standard error was 0.23.

Having children mimic violence is another concern. Parents and others may be concerned about kids mimicking the violence that they see. Mimicry can be conscious, such as when children play pretend, and unconscious, such as when children mimic the language that they hear adults using. Mimicry is not exclusive to little children either; it applies to adults as well. Aysun Dogutas (2013) supported this conclusion in the study *The Influence of Media Violence on Children* in a brief paragraph that attempted to link exposure to media violence with a rise in community violence among youth. Dogutas (2013) explained that the violent behavior modelled on TV is mimicked by kids who are exposed to it via modeling, positive reinforcement, and rehearsal.

This relates to the Vossen et al. (2017) study, because it sought to test whether media violence was negatively correlated to sympathy, affective empathy, and cognitive empathy. Sympathy was defined as "an automatic response to or awareness of suffering and the urge to alleviate the suffering" (Vossen et al. 2017).

Empathy was also defined as the “effortful process to understand and share emotional states of another person via mimicry and imagination” (Vossen et al. 2017). Vossen et al. (2017) found that gender correlated significantly with media violence, affective empathy, cognitive empathy, and sympathy with exposure being significantly greater for boys than girls. Hypotheses 1a, which claimed that affective empathy was negatively correlated to media violence, and 2a, which claimed that cognitive empathy was negatively correlated to media violence, were rejected when the study could not find any causal relationships between affective empathy and media violence. It was found that hypothesis 3a, or that sympathy was negatively associated with media violence, appeared to be true.

Why include violence in cinematic media if it's so bad? In Sekarasih et al. (2015) study, participants named a total of four reasons that violence would be included in media: entertainment, profit, realism, and violence being fitting for the genre or plot. Only one participant said that the creators included violence in their media in order to make a profit. The participant used the popular game *Modern Warfare* as their example.

Enjoyment of media violence accounts for 27 of the total 47 surveys in the Sekarasih et al. (2015) study. Participants of the study who wrote about the enjoyment of media described it as exciting, funny, attractive, interesting, or dramatic. This would indicate that violence increases the odds of enjoyment of the media, yet Waddell et al. (2019) finds that enjoyment of violence decreases when the violence is portrayed in a negative light. Here, the mean for this is 2.97 and the standard error is 0.18. Waddell et al. (2019) finds that the difference between the control and pleasant violence are not statistically significant. The results of the study find that the differences between the reactions to unpleasant versus pleasant violence are statistically significant. The Sakarasih et al. (2015) study found that the most common trend in the violence is entertaining portion of their study was the belief that violence is funny. This trend can be seen in films such as *Tangled*, where the main protagonist repeatedly hits the main love interest over the head with a cast iron pan for humor and entertainment purposes, and even in some scenes of *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, where in one episode Sokka is told that his misfortune is a result of his actions, seconds later he kicks a rock in anger and is attacked by a goose (DiMartino and Konietzko 2005).

The next trend in the Sakarasih et al. (2015) study is that 17 out of 47 said that violence was fitting for the film. One participant used the Pixar movie *The Incredibles* as an example and used the reasoning that superheroes fight the bad guys (Sakarasih et al. 2015). Another used the example of *CSI: Miami* and explained

that as a crime show violence is needed to show how the person died. This also applies to shows like *Supernatural*, where two brothers hunt monsters, and *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, where the main plot is that a boy has to stop a world conquering nation from completing their mission.

Eight out of the 47 responses in the Sakarasih et al. (2015) study said that violence is realistic or that violence was included because violence occurs in the real world. Some participants who were placed into this category listed reality shows as their examples, because “it actually happened” but also because it does happen (Sakarasih et al. 2015). One example of this would be violence being included in a movie about the U.S. Civil War.

The participants in the Sakarasih et al. (2015) study were asked whether media violence was a good thing. Sixteen out of the 47 participants said that it was a good thing, 22 were unsure, and only 3 stated that media violence was a bad thing. Many participants who said that media violence was good and those who felt uncertain about media violence claimed that media violence enhanced the viewing experience and helped create tension to keep the viewer interested; the shows *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *NCIS* were given as examples. One participant discussed *The Pirates of the Caribbean* when asked whether media violence was good and stated that including violence in this film was okay, because pirates are violent (Sakarasih et al. 2015). In 9 of the 47 participant responses, violence was downplayed. In some responses the violence was described as benign and minimal (Sakarasih et al. 2015).

How is Cinema Rated?

Cinema rating help parents and guardians decide what may be appropriate for their children to see. The United States uses a system called the TV Rating System for television and a system called the Motion Picture Association of America system (MPAA) for film and movies. The TV Rating System does not just rate a whole show, but also rates each episode.

The Motion Picture Association of America is an important rating system to know and understand in full. This system operates with the categories: G, PG, PG-13, R, and NC-17. The G rating stands for General Audiences and tends to mean that the film contains nothing that would offend parents or keep parents from allowing their kids to view it. This rating is the most child appropriate of the ratings. “This rating contains no nudity, drug use, sex scenes, and has minimal violence. This rating is voted on by the Rating Board” (Motion Picture Association of America 2010). Perhaps the most widely known films in this rating category come from popular studios such as Disney or Pixar. For example, *Finding Nemo*, *Monsters Inc.*, and *The Land Before Time*.

PG stands for Parental Guidance Suggested and urges parents to make sure that the film does not contain content that they deem as inappropriate for their children to view. This rating applies to younger children, however, the MPAA Rating System manual does not elaborate on what classifies as a “younger child.” The more adult themes found in films rated PG can include profanity, violence, and brief nudity. However, the rating board must vote on these themes to determine whether they are intense enough to require a higher rating (Motion Picture Association of America 2010). Drug use is not included in films with this rating, and such depictions will result in a higher rating. Some popular movies in the PG category include *Mary Poppins Returns*, *Minions*, and *The Princess Bride*.

PG-13 warns parents that content may be inappropriate for pre-teenagers. This is a sterner warning to parents to check the movie to see if it will be appropriate for their child’s viewing. Content that will automatically result in a PG-13 rating includes any sort of drug use; anything more than brief nudity, which typically will not be sexually oriented; and a one-time use of a harsher expletive. The rating board may take a vote about whether the film should be rated as PG-13. If the vote gets two-thirds for yes, then the cinema is given the rating of PG-13 (Motion Picture Association of America 2010). Violence may be included in a PG-13 movie, but it is not typically life-like, extreme, or constant. Popular PG-13 movies include *Captain Marvel*, *Alita: Battle Angel*, *Interstellar*, and *The Fault in Our Stars*.

An R rating urges parents to investigate the film before taking their kids with them to see it. An individual under the age of 17 cannot see an R rated film without a parent or guardian present (Motion Picture Association of America 2010). Cinema with this rating may contain adult themes such as hard language, sexually oriented nudity, drug abuse, intense or persistent violence, adult activity, multiple harsher expletives, and other elements. Because of this criteria, parents and guardians are strongly urged to take this rating seriously (Motion Picture Association of America 2010). Some movies with this rating include: *Good Will Hunting*, *A Star is Born*, and *The Kindergarten Teacher*.

NC-17 means No Children Under 17 regardless of if they are accompanied by an adult. This does not necessarily mean that the cinema is pornographic. This rating can be applied based on violence, sex, abnormal behaviors, and even drug abuse (Motion Picture Association of America 2010). This also may include other elements that parents may consider to be too adult for kids under 17 years of age. Some examples of these kinds of movies would be *The Dreamers* and *Blue is the Warmest Color*.

The TV Rating system contains an audience and a content descriptor. Parts of the TV Rating System audience refers to an age group where viewing this show is appropriate. Some of the audience labels include TV-Y, TV-Y7, TV-G, TV-PG, TV-14, and TV-MA. TV-Y7, TV-MA, and TV-14 which indicate a specific age at which viewing this content would be considered appropriate.

Television that is deemed appropriate for younger children, approximately ages two to five years old is given the rating TV-Y. TV-Y7 to shows that include some comedic violence or fantasy. TV-G contains little to no violence, no strong language, and little to no sexual dialogue or situations (TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board 2019). To receive the TV-PG rating, a show must include one of the following: moderate violence, some sexual situations, infrequent crude language, or suggestive dialogue (TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board 2019). A TV-14 show contains either intense violence, intense sexual situations, strong coarse language, or intense suggestive dialogue (TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board 2019).

As well as the basic ratings, one or more letters used as content descriptors can be found. These include D, FV, V, L, and S. D refers to suggestive dialogue (TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board 2019). FV stands for fantasy violence (TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board 2019). Fantasy Violence is unrealistic violence. An example of this from *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, would be a scene in which Katara, a water bender, seizes control of the rain, freezes it, and essentially throws the frozen shards at the man who killed her mother (DiMartino and Konietzko 2005). Such actions are not possible in the real world. Meanwhile, V stands for violence (TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board 2019). An example of this from *Avatar: The Last Airbender* would be the forms and movements of the different bending styles, which are based on different styles of martial arts. L refers to the presence of crude language (TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board 2019). S stands for sexual situations (TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board 2019).

Methods

The Smith et al. (2003) article is exclusively analysis research and breaks down their methodology wonderfully. They analyze how saturated with violence the games are that they chose by counting the number of violent incidents per minute. Smith et al. (2003) analyze the depictions of violence and classify what is the immediate result of the violence. The depictions of violence are divided into four categories: none, mild, moderate, and extreme. The none category criteria is that there are no physical or verbal depictions of injury; the mild category consists of depictions such as grunting or staggering backward (Smith et al. 2003). Moderate

| | Yes | | | | No | | | |
|----------|--------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------|--------------------|---------------|-------|
| | Protect Life | Protect Property | Retaliation | Competition | Anger | Mental Instability | Personal Gain | Other |
| Season 1 | 12 | 0 | 23 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| Season 2 | 7 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 5 |
| Season 3 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 6 |

Table 1. The justifications for every individual act of violence in the analyzed episodes. Competition accounts for the least amount, while retaliation accounts for the most.

criteria is visible bloodshed, bruising, or injury and finally, extreme is defined as: lots of bloodshed, severed limbs, or disfiguring injuries (Smith et al. 2003). Next up, the reasons for violence are divided into two categories: justified and not justified. Justified is then divided up into four subcategories. These categories are to protect life, to protect property, in retaliation, and competition. The not justified category is also divided into four subcategories: anger, mental instability, personal gain, and other.

Punishments are also analyzed. They are divided into three categories of, no punishments inflicted by someone other than the intended target, self-inflicted, and other-inflicted (Smith et al. 2003). Other-inflicted is divided into two subcategories of violent and non-violent. The other-inflicted category does not apply to the reactions of the intended target of the violent act; it applies to actions by third parties in response to the violent act (Smith et al. 2003). Finally, the graphic nature is analyzed. This is an analysis that is determined by whether the acts of violence are displayed on screen. If the violence is shown on the screen, it is categorized as graphic. If the violence is not shown on screen, it is categorized as not graphic.

I am analyzing the last episode of each of the three seasons of *Avatar: The Last Airbender* by using the Smith, et al. (2013) research methods and adapting them for film analysis. Analyzing the last episode of every season allows a set amount of time for each analysis, which would not be possible analyzing the finales. These span multiple episodes of varying quantity. This allows an easier viewing the concentration of violence in an episode, whereas analyzing a season finale would affect the concentration in the analysis. Because every season finishes off with a battle (season one ends with an invasion of the Northern Water Tribe; season two finishes off with the invasion of Ba Sing Se; and season three ties everything up with the final battle against the Fire Nation) the finales are potentially the most violent parts of the series (DiMartino and Konietzko 2005). Analyzing what is potentially the most violent part of a series will provide data that will help rate the show more accurately. This analysis represents the violence displayed in the last episode of the seasons. The choice of episodes does not reflect or consider violent scenes or incidents that take

place in other episodes in the series. This analysis also does not take into account the emotional and mental abuse that occurs in these and other episodes, nor does this analysis include the violence on the cultures within the series.

Results

In Total

The acts of violence of the last episode of each season total out to one hundred and four acts of violence. This leads to an average of thirty-four acts of violence for each of the approximately twenty-five-minute long episodes.

The sum of 65 justified acts is averaged to 21.66 justified violent acts per episode. Of the 104 total acts of violence, 62.5 percent are classified as justified. Thirty-seven and a half percent of the total violent acts are classified as not justified. The 39 acts of violence that are not considered justified are averaged to thirteen acts of violence per episode.

While most violent acts in the show are considered justified by this analyzing system, the two highest justifications are personal gain (not justified) and retaliation (justified) (Table 1). The least used justifications used are protecting property and mental instability. Mental instability is only brought up in the third season, where Princess Azula participates in an Agni Kai with her brother, Prince Zuko (DiMartino and Konietzko 2005). However, this does not include justifications such as competition since this did not occur.

When it comes to consequences of the violent acts, the None category takes the cake with 66 of violent acts not having any depictions of injury (Table 2).

| | None | Mild | Moderate | Extreme | Sum |
|----------|------|------|----------|---------|-----|
| Season 1 | 36 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 46 |
| Season 2 | 18 | 14 | 1 | 0 | 33 |
| Season 3 | 12 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 24 |
| Sum | 66 | 34 | 3 | 0 | |

Table 2. How many violent acts were met with consequences and which type. Sixty-six of the 103 violent acts met no consequences from the victim and no acts of violence resulted in an extreme consequence, such as loss of limbs or a disfiguring injury.

| | Other-Inflicted | | Self-Inflicted | None |
|----------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|------|
| | Violent | Non-Violent | | |
| Season 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 44 |
| Season 2 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 24 |
| Season 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25 |

Table 3. How the individual acts were met with punishments
Most of the violent acts were not met with punishments outside that of the intended victim.

Meanwhile, three of the violent acts were met with consequences befitting the Moderate category. No acts of violence fell under the Extreme category.

A majority of violent acts are not met with a punishment outside of the intended target. Only one act is met with self inflicted punishment. This is when Zuko feels as though he has betrayed his uncle by switching sides. Meanwhile, the next is the violent punishment (Table 3). One example of which is when Iroh fires upon his niece and nephew after they attack the avatar.

Whether a violent act is determined by whether or not the act is depicted on screen. Ninety-one of the violent acts are classified as “graphic” since they occur on screen. Thirteen of violent acts do not occur on screen and are thus classified as “not graphic” (Table 4).

By Episode

The last episode of the first season contains 46 acts of violence, thus making up 44.23 percent of the total violent acts recorded (see Table 2). Thirty-five acts of violence fall under the “justified” category, with twelve acts being to protect life and twenty-three violent acts being done in retaliation. (see Table 1) Eleven violent acts are not justified by the methodology used. Four acts have occurred out of anger. Seven violent acts are done for personal gain. Of the forty-six acts of violence in this last episode, zero consequences are deemed to be of a moderate or extreme depiction (see Table 2). Ten acts of violence produce mild depictions, which are largely grunts or staggering. Thirty-six acts result in no depictions of injury and includes violent acts that are deflected or missed. Two of the violent acts are met with violent punishments from individuals other than the intended victim. For example, when Commander Zhou kills the moon spirit, Iroh immediately reacts by shooting fire at all parties involved in the killing (DiMartino and Konietzko 2005). Forty-four acts are not met with punishments outside the intended target of the act (see Table 3). Of the forty-six acts only seven are not shown on screen. A whopping thirty-nine violent acts occur on screen (see Table 4).

The last episode of the second season contains 33 individual acts of violence, providing 31.73 percent of the total violence between the three episodes that are analyzed (see Table 2). Eighteen of these acts fall

| | Graphic | Not Graphic |
|----------|---------|-------------|
| Season 1 | 39 | 7 |
| Season 2 | 29 | 4 |
| Season 3 | 23 | 2 |

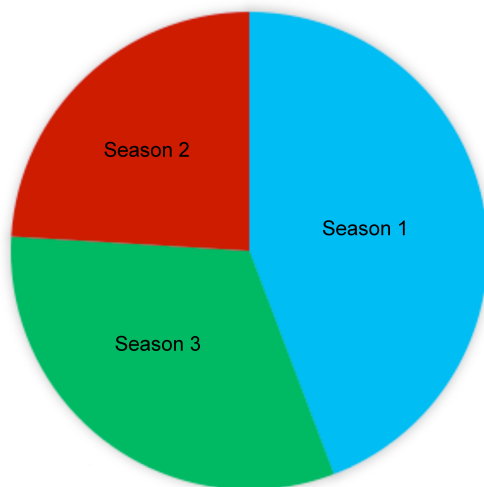
Table 4. Quantity of violent acts that occur on screen and off screen.

under the “justified” category. Seven of the violent acts are done to protect life and 11 are done in “retaliation” (see Table 1). Fifteen of these violent acts fall under the “not justified” category (see Table 1). Five are classified as “other,” such as when the Dai Li simply followed the orders of Azula or Long Feng (DiMartino and Konietzko 2005). Ten acts of violence fall under the justification “personal gain” (see Table 1). One example of this being when Azula assumes control of the Dai Li (DiMartino and Konietzko 2005). Only one of these acts, when the main character is struck by lightning, results in a moderate consequence. Fourteen acts result in mild consequences. Most of these depictions consist of stumbling and yelling. Eighteen of these acts have no depictions of injury (see Table 2). One punishment is self-inflicted, when Zuko expresses feeling guilty and feeling as though he had betrayed his uncle. One punishment is nonviolent, when Iroh looks away from his nephew in shame and disappointment (DiMartino and Konietzko 2005). Six punishments are violent, such as when Iroh throws fire at his niece and nephew in response to them attacking the avatar (DiMartino and Konietzko 2005). Twenty-five of the violent acts displayed in the episode are not met with punishments outside of the ones inflicted by the intended victim (see Table 3). Twenty-nine of the violent acts are shown on the screen and so are classified as “graphic.” Only four violent acts do not appear on screen, thus earning them the classification of “not graphic” (see Table 4).

The last episode of the third and final season contains 25 individual acts of violence, making up 24.03 percent of the sum of violent acts of all three episodes (see Table 2). Twelve of these acts falls under the “justified” category, with ten acts done to protect life (see Table 1). One act is performed to protect property. One violent act is done in retaliation. Thirteen acts of violence fall under the “not justified” category. Three of these acts fall under the justification of “mental instability,” as seen in the agni kai between Azula and Zuko (DiMartino and Konietzko 2005). Four violent acts are done in the name of personal gain. Six acts are classified as “other” (see Table 1). None of the acts of violence are met with punishments outside of the intended victims (see Table 3). This is, in part, due to the fact that the battles that occur are either isolated, such as with the climactic battle

between Fire Lord Ozai and Aang (DiMartino-Konietzko 2005), or occur on such a large scale that anyone who is not on one team is one the other. Twelve acts of violence do not result in a physical or verbal indication of injury. Ten result in mild depictions, such as grunting or landing on their leg wrong and falling. Two acts result in moderate depictions like when Aang is jolted as he is pushed by flames into a sharp rock (see Table 2). Twenty three of the violent acts in the episode are shown on the screen, thus earning them the category of “graphic.” Only two acts of violence are not shown on screen and thus are not categorized as graphic (see Table 4).

The below graph shows the number of individual instances of violent acts that occur in the episodes that were analyzed. The last episode of the first season contains forty-six acts of violence. The final episode of the second season contains thirty-three acts of violence. The season three final episode contains twenty-five acts of violence.



Discussion

Avatar: The Last Airbender has received two ratings of TV-14 and TV-Y7. When focusing solely on the violence aspect of the last episode of each season, the show best fits the TV-PG rating due to the moderate violence of the seasons' last episodes. This is because most of the violence does occur on screen. Few acts occur out of anger, yet many occur to protect life, out of personal gain, and retaliation. Because so many acts of violence occur to protect life, the perceptions of the violence could be seen in a more positive light. Another popular animated television show of the same era was *Naruto*. *Naruto* was marketed to kids about the same age as *Avatar: The Last Airbender*'s target audience. This show received a rating of TV-Y7-FV. Other popular animated shows, such as *Bleach* and *Code Geass*, received the same or higher ratings.

Colman et al. (2014) found that the loved ones of protagonists and nemeses of kids shows are most likely to be the targets of on-screen deaths. In the episodes that were analyzed, no villains are victims of on-screen deaths. In the last episode of the third season, Aang finds a nonviolent solution, despite the overwhelming peer pressure to kill the conquering Fire Lord. While the television series does show tragic deaths of loved ones, such as mothers, these events do not occur in the episodes analyzed.

Some instances are more difficult to classify and analyze. For instance, there is a scene in the last episode of season one in which the princess of the Northern Water Tribe, Princess Yue, sacrifices herself for the Moon Spirit and her people, which at this point has recently been killed (DiMartino and Konietzko 2005). It is difficult to analyze, because while it is clear that the princess has died, the way that it is depicted is that she places her hands on the dead fish and shortly after falls back (DiMartino and Konietzko 2005). There is no indication of injury or pain and she does not seem to face any punishments for it.

The theme of self-sacrifice is not a stranger to popular movies and shows. One example resides in the newest remake of *Wonder Woman*. In this film Trevor flies a plane filled with toxic explosives to save the lives of others. Unfortunately, by doing this, he forfeits his own life.

I initially expected there to be more acts of violence the further into the series that the viewer gets. The reason for this may be that the violence was spread out over the episodes of the finales. The number of finale episodes may affect the concentration of violent acts per episode. The first season finale stretches across two episodes, whereas the season three finale is spread across four episodes.

Further research could expand to investigate the ratings of other pieces of cinema. Perhaps the violence in Disney or Pixar movies is worse than it is believed to be. Perhaps the movie *Mrs. Doubtfire* is not as family friendly as it seems. Further research may analyze other episodes of the hit show *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and help provide analyses for more accurate ratings.

Conclusion

Nickelodeon's hit show *Avatar: The Last Airbender* is lacking in analyses of the violence or questions throwing doubt on the show's rating. This show is dear to many young adults today. With scenes containing themes of domestic violence and abuse, self-sacrifice, loss of autonomy, genocide, and ethnocide one may wonder which rating that the show received is more accurate or whether either rating is accurate at all.

By looking at the number of violent actions, the justifications behind them, the consequences of those actions, punishments for them, and the graphic nature of the action, I was able to analyze the violence in Nickelodeon's hit series *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and assess the ratings that the show has received.

An analysis of the violence of the last episode of every season reveals that the TV Systems rating is inaccurate when looking solely at the violence. Scenes of more moderate violence coupled with the show's portrayal of the violence within the last episode of each season seems to give the show a better fit for the TV-PG rating. As perceptions and attitudes towards violence change the ratings for cinema can become more and more inaccurate and need to be revisited and evaluated.

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